

Service Children's Progression



# COMMUNITY + IMPACT

How building our  
community will enhance  
our impact on Service  
children's lives

THE SCIP  
ALLIANCE  
STRATEGY  
2022-26



The Service Children's Progression Alliance is led by the  
University of Winchester and supported by the MoD



Ministry  
of Defence

# COMMUNITY + IMPACT MEANS...

## BUILDING OUR COMMUNITY

Every day, throughout the UK and overseas, thousands of professionals – in education, research, governments, charities and more – contribute to UK Service children's wellbeing and success. They come together as part of the Alliance Community to enhance their work for Service children by sharing challenges, solutions, resources and the successes made possible through their collaborations.

## ENHANCING OUR IMPACT

Rigorous research and its systematic application to practice and policy are in the Alliance's DNA. Allies repeatedly cite the robust foundations of the support the Alliance provides – whether practical tools, training, guidance or resources – as key to improving the scale and quality of their work with and for Service children. Demonstrating and understanding the impact of that work will enable us to sustain and grow our impact.



Our ambitions for building our community and enhancing our impact support the long-standing vision and mission of the SCiP Alliance captured in our theory of change.

**Impact is why the community exists, and the community makes that impact possible.**

## OUR VISION

THRIVING LIVES FOR SERVICE CHILDREN

## OUR MISSION

WE BRING TOGETHER PRACTITIONERS, RESEARCHERS, POLICYMAKERS AND FUNDERS TO BUILD A STRONGER EVIDENCE-BASE, BETTER POLICY, AND ENHANCED SUPPORT FOR SERVICE CHILDREN'S EDUCATION AND PROGRESSION, PLACING THEIR VOICES AT THE HEART OF ALL WE DO.

# OUR STRATEGIC APPROACH

Our independent community consultation demonstrated the high value placed on the Alliance and its activities, and it highlighted the significant potential of existing assets to achieve even more. In response, our strategy focuses on investing in existing strengths and targeted new developments to maximise our support for the community and our support for collective impact on Service children's lives. The strategic goals that follow demonstrate how we will embed, enhance and expand existing work, and establish key developments to achieve our community and impact goals.

## OUR STRATEGY: COMMUNITY + IMPACT

By building the community that our research says is one of the Alliance's most valued assets, we will increase the number of allies working together and the quality of the support we provide for Service children - and the impact on their lives. By deepening our understanding of that impact and sharing that knowledge with the sector, we will continually strengthen the case for collaborative action - and engagement in our community. That is the Community Impact cycle.

### EMBED

FOCUS ON MAKING THE MOST OF CORE STRENGTHS

### ENHANCE

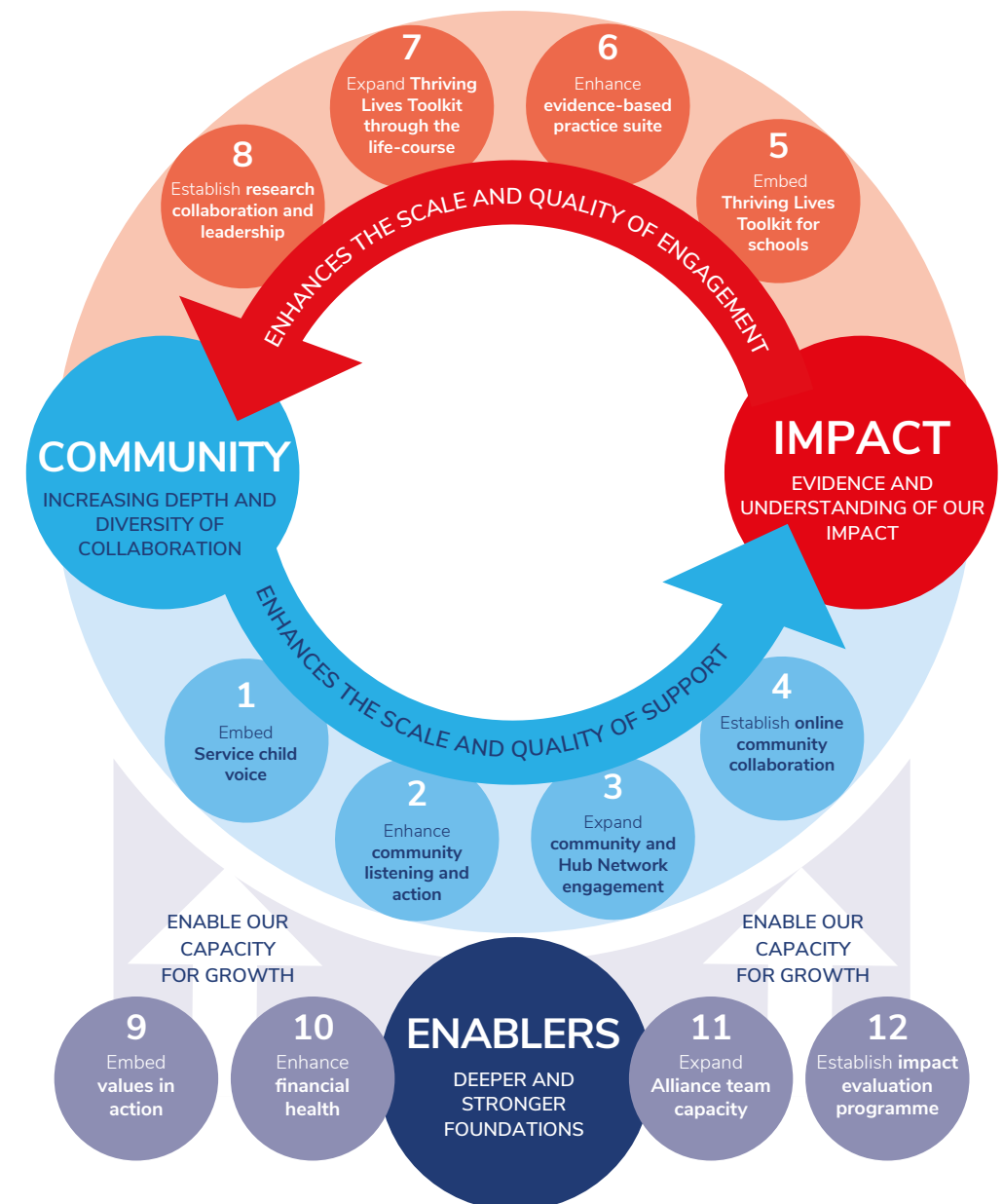
REFINE AND STRENGTHEN VALUED ACTIVITY

### EXPAND

EXTEND THE REACH AND APPLICATION OF KEY ASSETS

### ESTABLISH

DEVELOP NEW ACTIVITY TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY AND IMPACT PRIORITIES



# BUILD THE SCIP ALLIANCE COMMUNITY

## OUR COMMUNITY GOAL

WE WANT THE FULL DIVERSITY OF STAKEHOLDERS SUPPORTING SERVICE CHILDREN TO BE DEEPLY AND SUSTAINABLY ENGAGED IN COLLABORATIVE ACTION ON OUR SHARED MISSION AND VISION.



**1**

**SERVICE CHILD VOICE**  
Embed meaningful engagement with Armed Forces children and young people throughout the Alliance



**2**

**COMMUNITY LISTENING & ACTION**  
Enhance our leading role as a trusted advocate for the sector, through the cycles of listening to and action for our community



**3**

**COMMUNITY AND HUB NETWORK ENGAGEMENT**  
Expand the reach and diversity of the SCiP Alliance Community and Hub Network throughout the UK and overseas, and with Armed Forces partners



**4**

**ONLINE COMMUNITY COLLABORATION**  
Establish an online SCiP Alliance Community platform, with support for community-led and themed collaboration

*We place the voices of Armed Forces children and young people at the heart of all we do.*

We do this because we believe the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is right that children and young people should be involved in work affecting their lives. We do this because our work supporting Service children will be more effective when we listen genuinely and act accordingly. We do this because it can be transformative for the children and young people themselves, enhancing skills, opportunities and agency.

**For our listening to make a difference, we must be deliberate, be open, be child-centred and be willing to change (Hall, 2021). We will work to embed these principles and grow engagement with Service children throughout the Alliance that is meaningful, ethical and impactful.**

*Key strengths of Alliance are its diversity and collaborative action.*

The SCiP Alliance Management Group works through the two complementary cycles of listening and action, so that the rich diversity of experiences and expertise in our community is represented and understood, and that the action we take together in response reflects a more systematic account of the sector and a shared set of priorities for improving the lives of Armed Forces children and young people. This listening to and action for our community is central to the group's – the Alliance's – mission.

**We want the good work done establishing this approach to be enhanced by piloting a complete cycle of listening and action, by learning together what works and why, and by demonstrating how rigorous consultation and planning can realise meaningful change for the community and the Service children they support.**

*The SCiP Alliance Community and Hub Network are a driving force for change in the sector.*

In only a few years, the innovation, commitment and practical action of hundreds of allies – supported by pioneering Hub leaders – has created a thriving community of practitioners, policymakers, researchers, and supporters. The Hub Network helps allies do together what they cannot do alone. And each Hub is a connection point between local action addressing local needs and national action on the biggest priorities. We have seen huge growth, especially with practitioners in education, but we want to bring more allies into active engagement with our community.

**We will work to better understand the geography, sectors, and roles of stakeholders connecting effectively through the Hub Network and we will develop plans to grow the scale, diversity and depth of engagement throughout the SCiP Alliance Community.**

*Genuine, active and impactful partnership is at the core of our mission.*

The growth of the Hub Network, the creation of community-led, themed activity like the SCiP Alliance Funders' Forum, and the evidence of our Community consultation demonstrate both the power of partnership and the desire among partners to do more – to achieve more for Service children, together. One impact of the global pandemic is an accelerated drive to more flexible, engaging, effective online collaboration.

**We will work with our community to develop and continually enhance an online collaboration space that supports allies to develop communities of practice around themes of shared interest and priority. And we will work together to explore what makes community work online, and the values that will help it thrive.**

# ENHANCE THE COMMUNITY'S IMPACT

## OUR IMPACT GOAL

WE WANT EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE AND POLICY TO SET THE STANDARD AT EVERY PHASE OF SERVICE CHILDREN'S LIVES AND TO BE THE VANGUARD OF RIGOROUS RESEARCH UNDERPINNING IT.



**5**

**THRIVING LIVES TOOLKIT FOR SCHOOLS**  
Embed the Thriving Lives Toolkit suite as the quality standard for evidence-based practice in schools

*The Thriving Lives Toolkit is central to our ambitions for evidence-based practice in schools.*

Independent research identified the Thriving Lives Toolkit as a "step-change development". Robust research identifying seven principles of effective support and thorough testing in diverse settings have created a practical continuous improvement tool, highly valued by school leaders and teachers, as well as partners in local authorities, trusts, and support agencies. The potential for the Thriving Lives Toolkit, with the supporting suite of training, case studies and other resources, is huge. And so are our ambitions for the impact it can have on the scale and quality of support for Armed Forces children and young people.

**We will work to turn early success into sustained impact, so that the Toolkit becomes the widely recognised and highly valued, go-to suite of support for schools in all settings. And we will explore ways of turning the Toolkit into a trusted sign of quality allowing schools to demonstrate their commitment.**



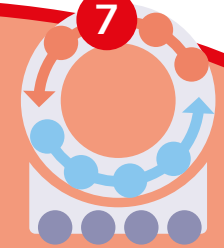
**6**

**EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE SUITE**  
Enhance the suite of support for evidence-based practice

*Easily-accessible, evidence-based resources and support are a foundation stone of the Alliance.*

Our first ever sector consultation told us that people wanted to be better connected to each other, to evidence and to support. The provision of evidence-based resources, training and events that help organisations achieve impact for Armed Forces children and young people in ways that fit their context has been a key part of that. Subsequent research has shown that we have already had a significant impact on practitioners' access to resources and their confidence providing support. It is a great foundation to build on.

**We will review the current suite of support, including resources, training and events, refresh our understanding of practitioners' needs, and refine our offering to better target support at those needs. And we will work with our community to enhance the awareness, use and impact of our support.**



**7**

**THRIVING LIVES TOOLKIT THROUGH THE LIFE-COURSE**  
Expand the Thriving Lives Toolkit throughout the learner life-course from early years to higher education and early careers

*The Thriving Lives Toolkit has "significant potential for transformative impact".*

The high value placed on the Thriving Lives Toolkit by schools and their supporters is testimony to its power to help diverse settings take coherent approaches to both common and unique challenges. Independent research highlights the significant potential for the Toolkit to benefit Armed Forces children and young people throughout their education journeys. Evidence is helping us understand Service children's needs from early years to higher education, and we need to respond accordingly to be true to our vision of thriving lives for Service children.

**We will work with partners – in research, policy, practice and funding – throughout the sector to extend the power of the Toolkit into every phase of the education life-course and to support successful transitions into thriving adulthoods.**



**8**

**RESEARCH COLLABORATION AND LEADERSHIP**  
Establish a research network, strategy and the foundations for a research centre to drive sustained and systematic improvement in our understanding of Service children's lives and what works to improve them

*Robust research lays the foundation for impact and the evidence of its realisation.*

Since the Alliance's inception, rigorous research has provided evidence for steering our course, insight into the complex lives of the Armed Forces children and young people we support, and understanding of what is working (or not) and why. The Alliance is a research-to-practice community, and research has demonstrated repeatedly how much stakeholders from all parts of the sector value that. We have seen growth in the scale of research investment, in our shared knowledge of Service children's lives and in research collaboration.

**We will create more structured mechanisms to bring more researchers from more diverse disciplines together to improve coherence and collaboration. And we will work with key stakeholders to put in place a research strategy and the foundation stones of a dedicated research centre.**



# STRENGTHEN THE ALLIANCE'S ENABLERS

## OUR ENABLERS GOAL

WE WANT SHARED VALUES, STRONG FINANCES AND AN EXPANDED CENTRAL TEAM TO PROVIDE STABLE FOUNDATIONS FOR OUR LONG-TERM COMMUNITY AND IMPACT AMBITIONS.



**9**

**VALUES IN ACTION**  
 Embed asset-based approaches, collaboration, and shared leadership as core features of work throughout the Alliance



**10**

**FINANCIAL HEALTH**  
 Enhance our financial security through sustainable, resilient, long-term funding growth



**11**

**ALLIANCE TEAM CAPACITY**  
 Expand the capacity of the SCiP Alliance team to support our ambitions for community engagement and leadership, policy influencing, research and impact evaluation



**12**

**IMPACT EVALUATION PROGRAMME**  
 Establish an impact evaluation framework and work to ensure the Community's impact is widely recognised and understood

*How we work is as important to us as what we do, or what we achieve.*

The Alliance is a long-standing advocate of approaches that celebrate the strengths and diversity of Armed Forces children and young people, and we have applied that same commitment to all our work. With a similar commitment to genuine partnership in both the leadership of our mission and the action to realise it, the Alliance has flourished. Evidence demonstrates the high value placed on the Alliance's role "bringing people within the sector together, developing a shared sense of purpose and creating fertile conditions for action" at both local and national levels.

**We will work with the Community to refine our understanding of the key character-traits of the Alliance, to formalise their expression and support their development.**

*An ambitious, long-term vision needs a sustained and stable funding model.*

The Alliance has achieved a huge amount for those supporting Armed Forces children and young people by bringing a robust evidence-base, strong collaboration and systematic approaches to funders keen to see investments bring meaningful change. Research demonstrates the scale of the need is beyond our current resource – and the Community wants the Alliance to do more.

**We will work to bring more funders into the Community and help allies work with them to address evidenced priorities. And we will enhance the stability of the Alliance's funding model, so that steady income growth over the long-term supports the scale of our ambitions for the Community and for the Service children we serve.**

*The SCiP Alliance central team is the hidden engine of the Community's impact.*

The SCiP Alliance's small staff team invests its very limited time with an acute clarity of purpose. So, a few people provide highly focused support and see considerable value added through the large network they enable. And our Community consultation highlights the desire among allies for the team to do much more: in expanding the Community, in influencing policy, in growing research and in demonstrating impact.

**We will work to at least double the capacity of the team to deliver our strategic objectives. And we will work with the Community to develop strategies for engagement, policy-influencing and research and refine our understanding of the support that makes the greatest difference.**

*Impact is why the Community exists, and the Community makes that impact possible.*

Independent research demonstrates "the SCiP Alliance has had a positive impact both on individual practice and on the community of professionals" – as well as "on the lives of children and young people from Armed Forces families". We need to enhance our understanding of that impact and how it is achieved, through the framework of our theory of change.

**We will develop and implement an impact evaluation framework to capture and better understand the impact of the SCiP Alliance through the framework of our theory of change. And we will develop rigorous and compelling communications of that impact to the Community and the sector.**

# THEORY OF CHANGE

OUR THEORY OF CHANGE TELLS THE STORY OF WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO: BOTH THE EVIDENCE FOR ACTION AND THE IMPACT WE WANT FOR ALL SERVICE CHILDREN.

## THE NEED

Like all children, the children of serving and ex-Armed Forces personnel are unique and have huge potential. But their lives can have complex additional challenges.

Evidence suggests this can have both positive and negative effects for Service children. And research with professionals tells us there's a need for high-quality, evidence-based resources and support, so they can have confidence that their support will enhance Service children's lives.

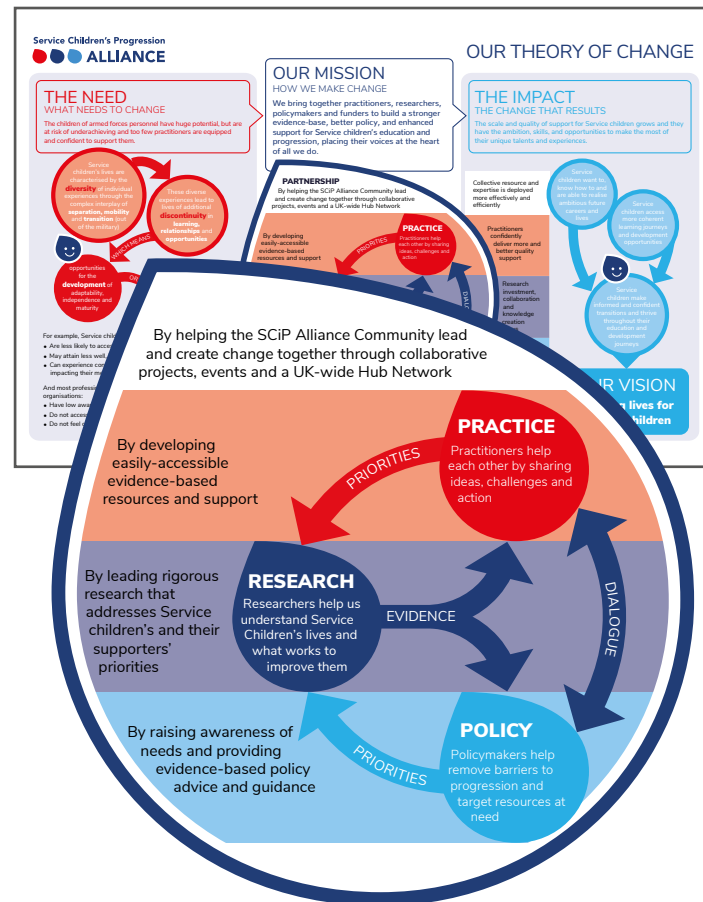
## OUR MISSION

Our stakeholder research told us people want to be better connected: with each other, with evidence and with support. So, we lead a UK-wide Hub Network and Community that connects practitioners, researchers, policymakers and funders with each other and evidence-based tools, guidance, training and resources.

- We help diverse stakeholders in defence, education, the charity sector and more bridge the divides between them and work more effectively together
- We develop easily-accessible, evidence-based resources and support
- We lead, commission and collate global research to build stronger evidence for action
- We help policy professionals understand Service children and their supporters so policy improves the targeting of resources and the environment for support

## THE IMPACT

We want to see the scale and quality of support for Service children grow. Better collaboration, more research, and evidence-based practice and policy will lead to more opportunities and a more coherent learning journey for Service children, and help them take full advantage of both.



VIEW OUR THEORY OF CHANGE IN FULL

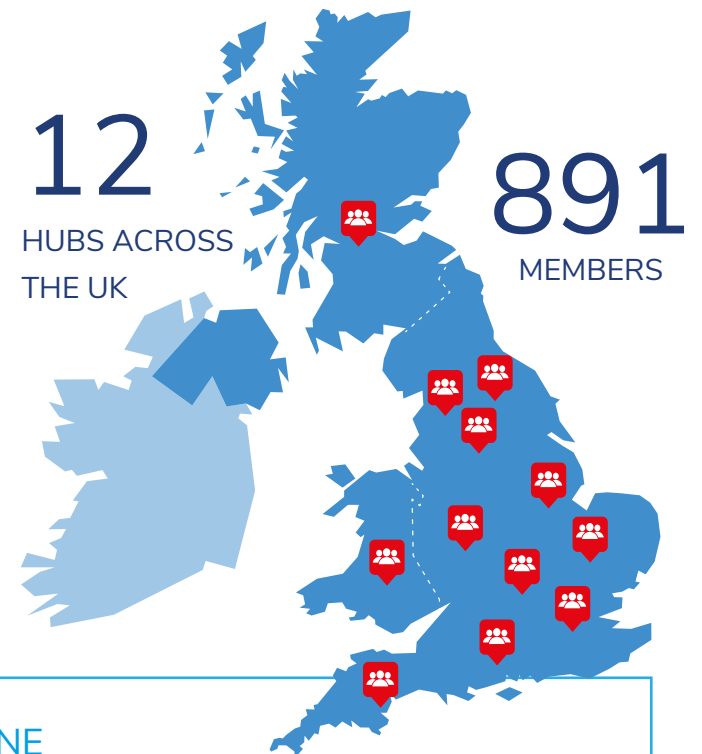
# THE ALLIANCE STORY... SO FAR

SINCE ITS LAUNCH IN 2018, THE ONLINE RESOURCE BANK HAS HAD ...

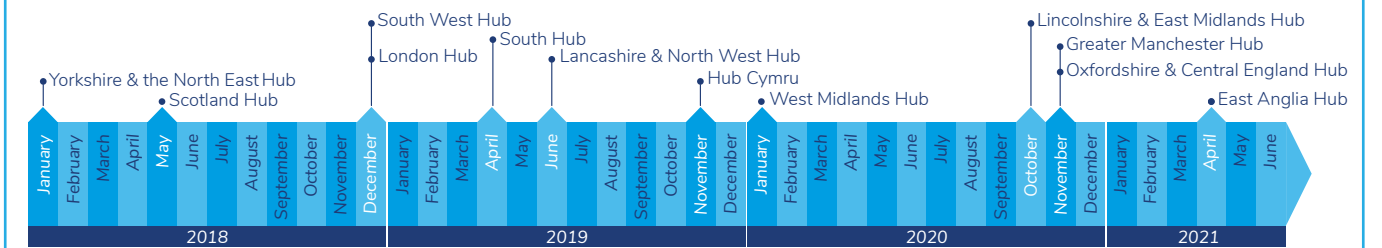
**80,421**  
PAGE VIEWS (2018-2022)

**23,750**  
UNIQUE USERS

**1,800**  
DOCUMENTS DOWNLOADED (2021-2022)



## SCIP ALLIANCE HUB NETWORK TIMELINE



**1500**  
TOOLKIT ENGAGEMENTS (2021-22)

**84%**  
OF USERS RATE THE TOOLKIT

**178** NETWORK EVENTS

**16** RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS

RESEARCH IDENTIFIES THE TOOLKIT AS A "STEP-CHANGE DEVELOPMENT"

# GET INVOLVED



GOT TO OUR WEBSITE  
TO FIND OUT MORE



ATTEND AN EVENT



USE THE  
THRIVING LIVES  
TOOLKIT



USE THE ONLINE  
TARGETING TOOL



JOIN A HUB



SUBSCRIBE TO  
OUR NEWSLETTER

# GET IN TOUCH



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