Supporting Service Children in School: An Organisational Improvement Framework

International Centre for Guidance Studies
University of Derby - December 2019

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A history of the Centre is available in the book:

Hyde, C. (2014). A Beacon for Guidance. Derby: International Centre for Guidance Studies. University of Derby.

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Recent iCeGS publications

Dodd, V. and Hooley, T. (2018). The Development of the Teachers' Attitudes toward Career Learning Index. *Teacher Development,* 22(1): 139-150.

Dodd, V. and Hanson, J. (2018). Give Yourself the Edge: Evaluation Report. Derby: International Centre for Guidance Studies, University of Derby.

Everitt, J., Neary, S., Delgardo, M.A. and Clark, L. (2018). Personal Guidance. What Works? London: The Careers & Enterprise Company.

Dodd, V. (2017). CPD for Teachers Developed by Employers. What Works? London: Careers & Enterprise Company

Hanson, J., Codina, G., and Neary, S. (2017). Transition programmes for young adults with SEND. What works? London: The Careers & Enterprise Company.

Moore, N. Vigurs, K., Everitt, J. and Clark, L. (2017). Progression for success: Evaluating North Yorkshire's innovative careers guidance project. Final report. Northallerton: North Yorkshire County Council.

Acknowledgements

Executive Summary

This report has been commissioned by the Service Children's Progression (SCiP) Alliance and funded by six National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP) Partnerships. It has been produced by the International Centre for Guidance Studies at the University of Derby.

Background

The SCiP Alliance defines a Service child as a person whose parent, or carer, serves in the regular Armed Forces, or as a reservist, or has done so at any point during the first 25 years of that person's life. Quoting the 2016 School Census, McCulloch and Hall (2016) report that there are 68,771 Service children in England. Service family life may involve repeated relocation, deployment and separation; literature highlights the impact this lifestyle may have on Service children's progression.

The empirical research detailed in this report provides a robust evidence base to support the development of an improvement framework, a simple way for schools to identify improvement priorities and strategies for their work supporting Service children.

Methods

The research comprised a literature review, a survey of 479 schools educating Service children and in-depth qualitative case studies involving focus groups and interviews in six schools with Service children enrolled. An improvement framework was then developed using a grounded theory approach informed by:

- Previous literature
- Service children's challenges as highlighted by teaching staff in the web-based survey and school case study research
- Approaches to supporting Service children highlighted by teaching staff in the web-based survey and school case studies
- Issues highlighted by students during the school case study research
- Potential approaches to supporting Service children highlighted by students in the school case study research
- Feedback from schools and SCiP Alliance stakeholders during user-

testing of an initial version of the framework

- Feedback from an education adviser with many years' expertise in the education of Service children
- The resulting framework was then reviewed by two focus groups, one conducted with members of the SCiP Alliance Executives, the other conducted with NCOP Project Steering Group members. Seven stakeholders with key, relevant positions in the Ministry of Defence (MOD), Department for Education (DfE), NCOP, Office for Students (OfS) and Ofsted also reviewed the framework and fed back their views during semi-structured telephone interviews with the research team.

This approach provided robust evidence for both improvement priorities and potential strategies to address the issues of existing practice which were raised by participating Service children and staff. During the research process, the following principles of good practice emerged:

Figure 1 *Principles of Good Practice*
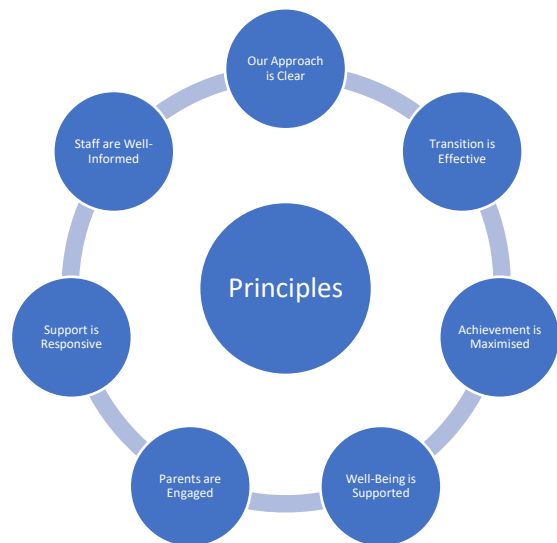
Pupil voice

In the design of this research, first-hand accounts from Service children to provide a pupil voice was a leading priority. Pupil voice from secondary level pupils was collected through traditional focus groups and invited survey responses. Pupil voice from primary school pupils was collected using innovative interactive methods.

Findings and the development of the improvement framework

1. Our Approach is Clear

This principle aims to ensure that there is clear and transparent representation, expenditure and support for Service children.

Representation at a strategic level in a school has been argued to benefit both Service children and schools by ensuring school staff understand the context for Service children and the support they might need. Previous research (DfE, 2010) makes the case that representation, such as including members of the Armed Forces on school governing bodies, ensures strategic "cultural awareness" of the life of a Service child.

While a minority of schools participating in the primary research (30%) had Armed Forces representation on their school governing bodies, over 50% employed other strategies to ensure Service children's needs were represented, for example, some reported on Service children as a targeted group and around half of participating schools had an admissions policy specific to Service children.

Both the secondary and primary research demonstrated the benefits of representation at a school's strategic level. Benefits ranged from increased institutional awareness to opportunities for parental agency. The findings and analysis point to the need to ensure that there is clear and transparent representation, expenditure and support for Service children and provide the rationale for the inclusion of the "our approach is clear" principle within the framework.

2. Transition is Effective

This principle aims to ensure that there is a collective institutional strategy to support Service children when they transition in and out of a school.

Repeated relocation, both nationally and internationally, is a common aspect of Service family life. As such, transition is one of the defining characteristics of many Service children' experiences. Previous research (DfE, 2010; OfSted, 2011; Noret et al., 2014; MoD, 2016) has illustrated the issues associated with repeated relocation, including emotional displacement and the potential impact on academic achievement. Schools who participated in the online survey identified transition as being a distinct challenge for Service children.

The need for a robust and supportive transition procedure for pupils both entering and leaving schools was a central finding of this research. The majority of schools participating in the survey (73%) did not have a transition policy. However, the majority of these schools (61%) did still provide pre/post-transition support. The research identified strategies to

identify Service children and provide specific pastoral support during transition. Schools involved in both the survey and the qualitative school case studies reported similar strategies, such as buddy systems, liaising with previous or next schools or prioritising support on a Service child's first day.

Both the literature review and the primary research illustrated the many issues Service children face as a result of repeated relocation. For some, being in a state of semi-permanent transition cast a long shadow. While attainment issues will be discussed below, there are numerous social and emotional issues caused by repeatedly having to establish new social networks whilst trying to develop a sense of identity. These findings highlight the need for a collective institutional strategy to support Service children when they transition in and out of a school and the rationale for the inclusion of the "transition is effective" principle within the framework.

3. Achievement is Maximised

This principle aims to make sure that Service children are supported to ensure that Service life is not an obstacle to achievement.

The literature (MoD, 2016; DfE, 2010; Ofsted, 2011; Noret et al., 2014; DfE, 2013) highlights how the disruption and stress of mobility, separation and deployment may impact on achievement. Schools participating in the primary research echoed these arguments, discussing, among other things, the stress of deployment or separation, the impact of curriculum misalignment and the challenges of moving between education systems.

A small majority (58%) of schools surveyed, and the case study schools, described strategies to address curriculum gaps or repetition and to align exam provision. Provision for advice and guidance on progression pathways was also examined by the research. Both the literature review and primary data highlighted additional progression challenges for Service children. The potential impact of disruption and misalignment of pedagogical practices and content, and the increased levels of anxiety caused by deployment and separation, highlight the need for a policy or strategy to ensure that Service children are supported to ensure that Service Life is not an obstacle to achievement. This provides the rationale for the "achievement is maximised" principle.

4. Well-Being is Supported

This principle aims to ensure that schools have a pastoral strategy taking into account the needs of Service children.

The research examined well-being in the context of the Service child's life, particularly during times of deployment or separation. Service children interviewed as part of the qualitative school case studies spoke of the impact that deployment and separation had on their well-being. They also talked about how these change over the stages of deployment and separation and identified the benefits of support such as targeted clubs and activities. The vast majority (85%) of survey respondents reported the provision of additional pastoral support to Service children during times of deployment or separation. Both survey participants and case study schools discussed a wide range of support such as an Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA), embedding deployment and separation in the curriculum and after school clubs.

Repeated transition, deployment and separation are significant events with a range of potential emotional consequences for Service children. It is this impact which provides the rationale for the construction of Principle 4, "well-being is supported", to ensure that schools have a pastoral strategy taking into account the needs of Service children.

5. Parents are Engaged

The rationale behind this principle is that schools will establish a working relationship with parents to support both Service children and Service families.

Broader pedagogical literature (Gorard et al., 2012; Burke, 2016) highlights the benefits of engaging parents when supporting young people. The majority (83%) of survey respondents described engagement with parents and carers. Schools participating in both the survey and qualitative research discussed the benefits, in particular the opportunity to hear about and respond to upcoming deployments or separations or to support the parents themselves.

Previous literature and empirical findings have illustrated both the benefits of parental engagement when supporting Service children and the additional pastoral support Service families may require, leading to the development of Principle 5, "parents are engaged", which provides both the rationale and possible strategies to ensure that schools will establish a working relationship with parents to support both Service children and Service families.

6. Support is Responsive

This principle aims to ensure that Service child support will be revised and updated based on Service child feedback.

The research examined the role and presence of Service child voice. Empirical research found that, while the majority of schools (85%) had a form of school council, less than 10 percent had specific Service child representation which would provide an avenue for Service children to feedback on provision. Previous literature and findings from primary data collection demonstrates the practical benefits of Service child representation within school councils. Furthermore, the multifaceted nature of Service child life points to the need to ensure that "support is responsive". This principle points to the need for a mechanism that ensures Service child support will be revised and updated based on Service pupil feedback.

7. Staff are Well-Informed

This principle aims to ensure that the whole school understands the needs of Service children.

Previous sections of this executive summary have discussed the benefits of Armed Forces representation on governing bodies and the positive impact of specialist staff in providing pastoral support. For schools with limited resources and less established relationships with the Armed Forces, this research has identified the importance of current and potential provision of training to ensure staff understand Service child life.

44% of schools surveyed did not provide specific staff training on Service children. Where training was provided, it was generally facilitated by a Service child lead or by a teacher with a personal connection to the Armed Forces. The research suggests that there are however issues concerning up-to-date information and sustainability when schools rely on teachers with a personal connection. The research examined CPD priorities for schools; these included transition, deployment and separation, the Service lifestyle and military logistical information. Many schools felt that any CPD would be welcome; suggesting a lack of awareness of what CPD is available. Previous literature and empirical findings point to the benefits and practical need for a whole school approach to this and, as such, forms the rationale for Principle 7, "staff are well-informed".

Stakeholder Review findings

There was a universally positive response to the framework from stakeholders. They believed its development was timely, coming during a period when there is a policy focus on the welfare of Service families and on Service child education. The framework was said to be structured in a way that was accessible and easily understood. It 'ticks the right boxes' because it addresses all topics that are necessary to better support Service children in schools of various types and in different circumstances. In promoting a holistic approach to Service child education, the framework is consistent with Ofsted's new Education Inspection Framework.

While the ways that the seven principles work together was important, *Transition is Effective* was a key issue for some stakeholders. Issues relating to improving the successful transition of Service children are gaining prominence in policy circles and the framework will help schools better assess how they can support the cohort. The successful sharing of information between schools is important in ensuring that Service children access the full curriculum and are able to achieve their potential. Service children have a range of knowledge and experience which can be utilised, transition can be an opportunity for development, rather than necessarily a problem.

Although the current framework is a step in the right direction, it is not yet a finished product. In schools where there are relatively few Service children, the current framework might be too large to gain attention and be successfully implemented. The language used and aspects such as the colour coding and columns contribute to its usability and it will be important to maintain these successful characteristics if the framework is condensed or amended for different contexts.

The research did not identify a particular dissemination method or audience that was agreed by all stakeholders. However, it is clear that the stakeholders consulted have networks and contacts that will enable them to disseminate the framework effectively and it is encouraging that there is a willingness among stakeholders to contribute to this.

Recommendations

- Policymakers should encourage engagement with the framework in order to better support Service child education.

- The SCiP Alliance and partners should consider if the framework adequately reflects the potential contribution that Service children can make to school life.

- The SCiP Alliance and partners should develop a dissemination strategy.

- Dissemination activities should be piloted in the first instance and their success or otherwise in obtaining buy-in should be assessed before further activities are undertaken.

- The SCiP Alliance and partners should consider how best to ensure that the framework is accessible in a variety of different contexts.

- A piloting strategy should be developed and an initial pilot of the implementation of the framework should be undertaken.

- An evaluation strategy should be developed.

1. Introduction

This report seeks to set out a robust and evidence-based account of issues Service children face and current or potential school provision to underpin an organisational improvement framework. The report has been commissioned by the Service Children's Progression Alliance (SCiP Alliance) and funded by six National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP) Partnerships. It has been produced by the International Centre for Guidance Studies at the University of Derby.

Background

Within the UK Armed Forces context, a Service child is a person whose parent, or carer, serves in the regular armed forces, or as a reservist, or has done so at any point during the first 25 years of that person's life. Quoting the 2016 School Census, McCulloch & Hall (2016) report that there are 68,771 Service children in England. Ofsted (2011) highlights the difference in experience and characteristics of Service child life based on which area of the Armed Forces a parent or guardian is serving in. While there are differences and contrasts within the Service child category, Service children may also share a number of unique experiences including transition, deployment and separation.

Transition

Relocation, and often multiple relocation, is a common aspect of Service family life. Previous research has argued it affects all Service children in that 'moving house, moving schools and even moving to a different country is an inevitable part of life for many children with parents in the Armed Forces' (Children's Commissioner, 2018: 4). There are a number of consequences stemming from school-to-school transition, which are both academic and personal in nature. A commissioned study from the DfE "*The Educational Performance of Children of Service Personnel*" (2010) reports that Service children appear to perform the same or higher across Key Stages than their non-service child counterparts. Similar findings have been reported in the USA where military connected students continue to outperform their peers on state administered standardised tests (SC Education, 2018). However, this trend is complicated through the impact of mobility, with non-mobile Service children having a higher level of educational

attainment than mobile Service children (DfE, 2010). Research examining the potential factors influencing this disparity between mobile and non-mobile Service children has highlighted a number of trends. Due to the higher than average number of school moves mobile Service children experience, it can be difficult for teachers to set targets for transitory pupils (Ofsted, 2011) and there is the danger of a repeated curriculum where Service children are taught the same topic more than once (Noret et al., 2014). In addition to the repeated curriculum, mobile Service children are at higher risk of gaps in their curriculum where topics have been taught out of sequence with previous schools or a Service child's current GCSE or A-Level subjects not being offered at their new school (Noret et al., 2014; McCullouch & Hall, 2016). These trends affect potential educational progression (MoD, 2016). An additional consequence of multiple school moves is the reduction in parental autonomy as Service families are not normally given a choice of educational provision. School places are allocated by the local authority therefore reducing their ability to be proactive regarding their children's educational experience and attainment (DfE, 2013).

Alongside attainment and progression issues, mobile Service children experience substantial disruption in their social networks. Previous research (Noret et al., 2014; Rowe et al., 2014) discusses the anxieties and frustrations Service children experience when having to leave established friendship groups behind and build new groups in their next location. There is an increased likelihood of bullying due to school moves and issues with making friends or wanting to make friends (DfE, 2013). In addition, the research from the DfE suggests that mobile Service children have an increased chance of risky behaviour and experiencing behavioural, social or emotional difficulties.

Deployment and Separation

White et al. (2011) state that in the literature, deployment is often described as a 'cyclical process rather than a single event, consisting of stages including pre-deployment, deployment, post-deployment and re-deployment'. A report from the Children's Society (2017) states that parents might have increased periods away before a deployment. They may come home for short periods at a midway point and then have post-

operational tour leave afterwards. Research has shown the different stressors which children can face, depending on the stage of this cycle.

Alongside transition between schools, Ofsted (2011) highlight parental/guardian deployment as having considerable consequences for Service children. In terms of attainment, the "*Service Children in State Schools Handbook*" (DfE, 2013) suggests deployment can lead to significant issues for Service children. In the USA, Engel et al. (2010) found that there were educational difficulties for students when a close family member was deployed. Issues associated with deployment and its impact on Service children are further complicated by a range of mediating factors including proximity to wider family, media and previous experience of deployment (DfE, 2013).

Deployment has been reported to impact on Service children's health and wellbeing (Noret et al*.,* 2014). Research from the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Children's Fund (Bateman, 2009) showed that media coverage of conflict has a significant and negative influence on well-being. Deployment also has subsequent

consequences for family/home dynamics, further affecting Service child wellbeing. Previous research has highlighted the additional domestic tasks Service children take on during times of deployment (Noret et al*.,* 2014; McCullouch & Hall, 2016). Skomorovsky et al. (2016) add that these domestic tasks are likely to fall to older Service children where there are siblings in the household. Research from the DfE (2010) discusses previous findings on increased levels of anxiety for girls and older children during times of deployment.

School Support

There are a number of issues concerning school support and provision for Service children, including a general lack of institutional understanding of what it is like to be a Service child (Noret et al*.,* 2014), schools not being able to identify students as Service children (DfE, 2010; Ternus, 2010) and a lack of communication between schools regarding pupil records (McCullouch &Hall, 2016). However, some schools have deployed a number of strategies to support Service children. These strategies include military representation on a school's board of governors which

increases the institution's "cultural awareness" (DfE, 2010: 11) and flexible admissions policies, including the authorisation of term-time holidays due to the returning deployed family member (O'Neill, 2010; McDonald & Boon, 2018). In supporting the development of social networks, schools have established after-school clubs, support groups and formalised chapters of national Service child organisations (MoD, 2017; OfSted, 2011; Noret et al., 2014). For incoming students, schools have provided pre-entry contact and support including support for Service families moving to a new location (DfE, 2013; Gewirtz et al., 2014). Within the curriculum, schools supported Service children through including positive representations of the military within course content and the inclusion of teachers with military backgrounds (McCullouch & Hall, 2016; Noret et al., 2014). A number of these interventions have been supported by the Service Pupil Premium (SPP) for schools in England. Alongside after school clubs and societies, expenditure has included providing technical support for Service children to contact deployed relatives (McCullouch & Hall, 2016).

It is within the context of issues experienced by Service children and their families, gaps in schools' understanding and lack of continuity of provision for support that this organisational improvement framework has been written. The central aim is to provide schools with a resource to identify improvement priorities and examples of previous practice in support of Service children.

2. Research Methods

The empirical research element of this project was designed to provide a robust evidence base to support the development of an organisational improvement framework, allowing schools at all levels to identify priority areas to develop to support Service children. As such, the empirical research focused on a number of key research questions:

- What is the current provision offered to Service children in schools in England?
- What issues do teachers and members of school Senior Leadership Teams (SLT) identify as being problematic for Service children?
- What strategies have schools employed to support Service children?
- What issues do Service children identify as being problematic?
- How effective have school strategies been for Service children?

The empirical research was a combination of a large-scale survey and a multiple-case study of six schools. Ethical clearance was applied for and granted by the University of Derby; the ethical application included provisions for: harm to respondents, right to privacy and informed consent, including parental consent for respondents under 18 years of age.

Survey

A web-based survey was designed (Appendix A) for dissemination to UK-based schools/colleges which currently have Service children registered. The focus of the survey included:

- Demographic information
- School/college historic relationship with Service children
- Service child composition
- Use of Service Pupil Premium
- Issues concerning Service children
- Approaches to address Service child issues
- Engagement with Service families
- Current careers and advice provision.

The survey design was supported by a literature review and consultation with the research steering group. The literature review examined both academic and grey literature examining issues that Service children and families face as well as previous institutional strategies to provide support. While the initial survey design was influenced by previous literature, to preserve epistemological vigilance, the majority of the questions in the survey were open questions. The inclusion of open questions provided

schools with an opportunity to discuss their experiences and practices. It also permitted alternative and additional issues and practices to present themselves beyond what had been discussed in previous literature.

To protect the anonymity of schools, access to schools was secured through respondents in terms of school size, number of Service children in attendance, geographical location and school type. There were 479 schools who responded to the overall survey but not all schools answered all questions. The following analyses reflect data from those schools

gatekeepers within the SCiP Alliance. Schools were provided with an information sheet and link to the web-based survey by SCiP Alliance gatekeepers. While the sample for this survey was a convenience sample of self-selecting schools, there was a range of

who answered that specific question, therefore the sample size varies across analyses. As can be seen by the responses below (Table 1 & Figure 2) there was a mixture of types of school and a range of geographical locations.

Table 1 *Region of school (N= 392)*

Answer Choices	Responses - %	Responses – N
East of England	8.42%	33
East Midlands	5.36%	21
London	1.02%	4
North East	4.34%	17
North West	4.85%	19
Northern Ireland	0.00%	0
Scotland	1.28%	5
South East	23.98%	94
South West	25.26%	99
Wales	4.08%	16
West Midlands	7.65%	30
Yorkshire and the Humber	13.78%	54
Total		392

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Figure 2 *School type (N= 375)*
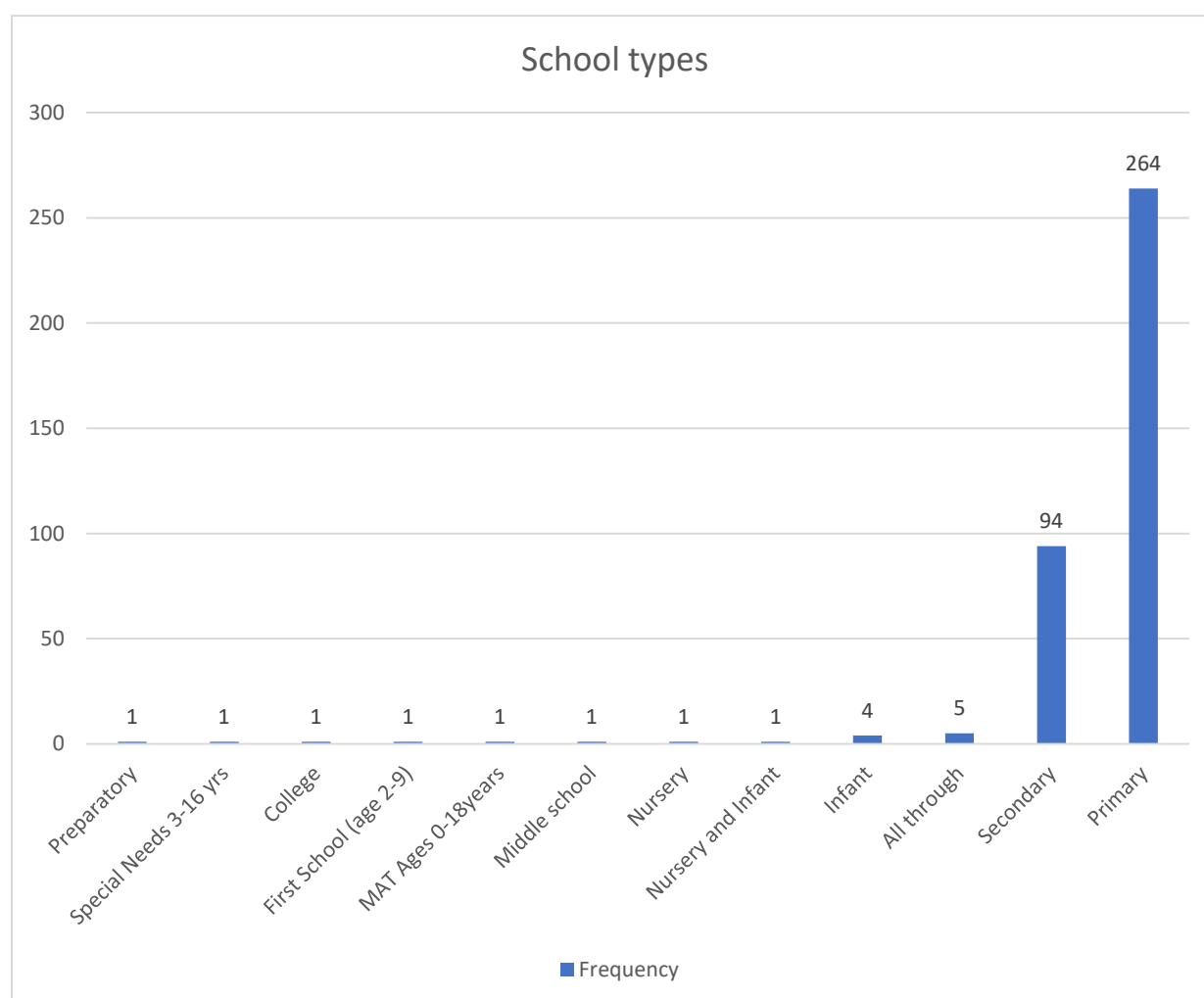
School Multiple-Case Studies

In addition to the large-scale school survey, the research applied a multiple-case study design (Bryman, 2004; Ritchie & Lewis, 2003) to provide an in-depth examination of six schools in England which currently have Service children registered. The rationale for this design was to allow the research to create a detailed and in-depth understanding of each school and then compare schools to examine common practices and bespoke strategies. The number of schools for this element of the research was strategically kept to six to provide capacity for a detailed examination. As such, intended respondents for each school included Service children, teachers and a member of the school's SLT. As per the requirements of a case-study design, respondents were required to be

currently enrolled or employed by one of the six schools to mediate other influences on attitudes, experiences and practices.

Schools were identified and initially contacted by a SCiP Alliance gatekeeper. As part of the sampling strategy, the six schools were purposely stratified by level (primary/secondary) and the main military force it supports (Army, RAF, Navy). Schools were given the following pseudonyms:

- Navy Primary
- Navy Secondary
- Army Primary
- Army Secondary
- RAF Primary
- RAF Secondary.

Table 2 *Demographic information on case study schools*

Name	Level	Main Service	Location	Service child proportion %
Navy Primary	Primary	Navy	South West	<10%
Navy Secondary	Secondary	Navy	South West	10%-50%
Army Primary	Primary	Army	South West	> 50%
Army Secondary	Secondary	Army	South West	10% - 50%
RAF Primary	Primary	RAF	South East	10% - 50%
RAF Secondary	Secondary	RAF	South East	<10%

Case studies were supported by separate focus groups with teaching staff and Service children[1]. Each focus group had a specific focus and schedule. The focus for staff was:

- Demographic questions
- Experience of teaching Service children
- Awareness of issues Service children face
- School attitude toward issues Service children face

- Strategies to address issues Service children face
- Examples of existing practice.

The focus for pupils was:

- Demographic questions
- Information about parent/guardian military service
- Experience of education (examples of good and poor practice)
- Problems in school related to service category (disruption,

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[1] Where face-to-face focus groups were not possible with teaching staff or students, these respondents were sent an additional web-based survey containing an amended focus group schedule.

moving, parent/guardian deployment)
- Coping mechanisms with problems related to service category
- Sources of support (parents/teachers/other)
- Plans for future (including education and careers).

For Service children who were in secondary level education, a traditional focus group format was employed; however, for Service children in primary school, focus groups were conducted using artistic and interactive methods. This primary school data collection strategy had three stages. The first stage was an arts-based activity where children made "happy faces" and "sad faces" with crayons and large sheets of card. Children were then introduced to an interactive educational puppet where scenarios surrounding Service child life were discussed and children could indicate whether these scenarios made them happy or sad using their sheets of card. Following this session, a limited traditional focus group was conducted to follow up on responses to the scenarios provided.

Children provided powerful and honest accounts of Service family life including the stress and anxieties they experience due to this lifestyle. Crucial to the development of the framework was an appreciation of not only the everyday experience of Service child life, but also the experiences that have a cumulative and lasting impact on this group of pupils. As such, pupil voice played a key role in the design of a number of principles within the framework concerning well-being, effective transition and the importance of school staff being well informed. Pupil voice provided an alternative perspective and set of priorities in the pursuit of greater support for Service children.

Alongside school staff and Service child focus groups, members of the senior leadership team at the six selected schools were interviewed.[2] The focus of the interview included:

- School/college historic relationship with Service children
- Use of Service Pupil Premium
- Issues concerning Service children
- Approaches to address Service child issues
- Current careers and advice provision.

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[2] Where interviews were not possible, these staff members were sent an additional web-based survey containing the interview schedule.

Additional interviews were conducted with representatives from each main force within the Family Federations. The focus of these interviews included:

- Remit of specific group within the Family Federation
- Experience of support to families
- Capacity to support schools
- Issues facing Service children.

Complementary study

On the successful completion of the Organisational Improvement Framework, the International Centre for Guidance Studies was commissioned to undertake a complementary study. The complementary study assessed key stakeholders' views of the framework in order to gain an understanding of how schools could be supported to achieve the seven framework principles and to provide recommendations for policymakers and stakeholders.

The SCiP Alliance initially facilitated access to nine stakeholders; the research team were able to arrange telephone interviews with seven of them, key staff representing five organisations.

- Department for Education (DfE)
- Ministry of Defence (MOD)
- National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP)
- Office for Students (OfS)
- Ofsted.

Stakeholder interviewees had responsibilities for areas such as policy development and coordination, educational outcomes, protecting students' interests, programme management and inspection frameworks. Most were directly involved with the education of Service children as at least part of their role. All stakeholders held organisational and personal roles that enabled them to view the framework from a number of educational, policy, dissemination and school-level perspectives.

Two focus groups were undertaken prior to the stakeholder interviews:

- Focus group with three members of the SCiP Alliance Executive
- Focus group with five representatives of different NCOPs, including Directors, Manager, and Evaluation Co-ordinator. They were asked to participate because of their roles on the NCOP Project Steering Group.

Both strands of research, interviews and focus groups, set out to identify participants' views on the following:

- Reaction to the framework

- Strengths and weaknesses of the framework
- Stakeholder priority areas
- Potential stakeholder support for educational providers to implement the framework
- Practical barriers to the implementation of the framework.

Stakeholders received and reviewed an Informed Consent form before data collection commenced. These outlined the research, its purposes and how issues such as anonymity and data-handling would be addressed. Interviewees were given the opportunity to ask questions before interviews began. All stakeholders reviewed the framework prior to participating.

A topic guide was developed (Appendix B) which operationalised the research topics into a semi-structured interview schedule which was used with the focus groups and individual interviews.

Analysis

The analysis of the survey results and focus group/interview transcripts was conducted by the research team using two models of analysis as recommended by Angrosino (2007). Analysis was initially a descriptive analysis, essentially breaking down the data into themes to appreciate patterns. This was followed by a conceptual analysis, employing concepts to make sense of these themes or regularities. Similar to the survey design, while codes were influenced by previous literature, the analysis also employed open codes, i.e. codes grounded up from findings (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) in order to provide a robust and accurate account of respondent's experiences, attitudes and strategies. As such, the analysis adopted Miller's rebuttal on binary deductive and inductive analysis: 'after deducing, one must induce' (2000: 15). As Figure 3 shows, the analysis is cyclical process where each element is informed, reinforced and questioned by the other elements.

Figure 3 Summary of analysis process
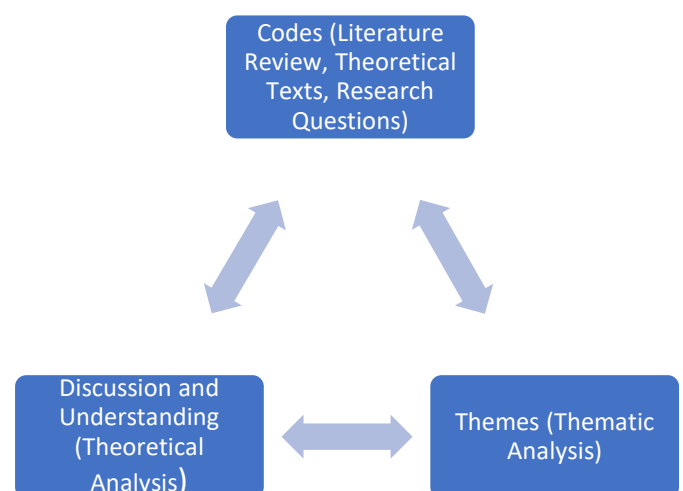
3. Organisational Improvement Framework

The culmination of the findings from the literature review, web-based survey and school case studies was the development of an organisational improvement framework. The central purpose of this framework was to enable educational institutions to identify improvement priorities through an evidence-based self-evaluation tool. Through adopting a grounded theory approach, the organisation improvement framework was informed by:

- Previous literature
- Service child issues highlighted by teaching staff through both the web-based survey and school case studies.

Issues were divided into:

- Issues Service children face
- Institutional issues affecting provision of support to Service children
- Approaches to supporting Service children by teaching staff through both the web-based survey and school case studies
- Service child issues highlighted by students through school case study research
- Potential approaches to supporting Service children highlighted by students through school case study research.

The dual focus of issues and provision allowed the framework to highlight potential priorities for improvement through robust evidence and potential strategies of implementation through existing practice. Through the multi-staged research process, the following themes emerged:

- Leadership and Governance
- Teaching, Learning and Assessment
- Pastoral Support
- Parental Engagement
- Careers Provision
- CPD
- Pupil Voice.

To ensure that all aspects of themes were addressed in the framework, themes were sub-divided and adapted into seven principles:

- Our Approach is Clear
- Transition is Effective
- Achievement is Maximised
- Well-Being is Supported
- Parents are Engaged
- Support is Responsive
- Staff are Well-Informed.

Alongside these principles, a series of questions was designed to facilitate self-reflective evaluation. Questions were designed in such a way as to be applicable to schools at different levels, regions and development of Service child support. In

addition, questions were phrased in a reflective tone to encourage engagement.

The organisational improvement framework is organised on three levels:

- Level 1: this level contains framework principles and vision statements – the purpose of this level is to allow the central focus of the framework to be internalised by readers before going into more detail. It will allow schools with limited time an opportunity to review the framework.
- Level 2: this level contains framework principles and vision statements, along with examples of what these principles look like in practice, self-reflective questions and a scoring system to support self-reflective evaluation.
- Level 3: this level provides more detail of examples of existing practice in support of these principles. All examples are from schools involved in the research and, importantly, include examples from schools with limited experience or resources as a result of having relatively few Service children enrolled.

The draft organisational improvement framework was disseminated to a range of stakeholders, including schools who participated in the qualitative case studies, additional schools with varying proportions of Service children, and the SCiP Alliance board. The user-testing of the organisational improvement framework focused on the following areas:

- Clarity of rationale
- Strengths and weaknesses of examples of existing practice at Level 2 of framework
- Strengths and weaknesses of examples of existing practice at Level 3 of framework
- Framework application
- Level of content
- Usefulness
- Approach to schools recording self-reflection
- Tone of self-reflection questions
- Any other comments.

Throughout the user-testing questionnaire, respondents were generally supportive of the organisational improvement framework. In particular, respondents provided positive feedback concerning the clarity of the rationale, with one respondent stating:

> *A clear and concise rationale. Vision statements should be very helpful in getting establishments to reflect on their practice.*

In addition, the examples of existing practice at both Level 2 and Level 3 of the framework were seen to be clear,

encouraging and helpful, with respondents commenting:

> *Good strong examples, good to capture the 'school voice' and different contexts / sizes etc.*

In terms of limitations or weaknesses, respondents cautioned the framework against encouraging schools to provide support that would cause friction with local authorities; this was specifically to do with admissions, with one respondent commenting:

> *Re: admissions policies, many schools are beholden to Local Authority admissions policies. We therefore cannot make reference to SPs within these specifically or offer favourable treatment (however much we would like to!)*

As such, the framework was edited to include the phrase "where possible" when discussing admissions issues. The other limitation or weakness highlighted was concerning the need for a critical mass of Service children before the framework would be applicable:

> *Those with only a few students may not prioritise its implementation.*

Low representation of Service children was an issue the research team attempted to address in the framework by including examples of existing practice from schools with very few Service children to highlight the possibilities of support in the context of a limited Service Pupil Premium.

4. Principles of the Organisational Improvement Framework

The organisational improvement framework is organised along seven principles. The rationale behind each principle is supported by previous literature and empirical findings. In addition, examples of practice applying these principles come from Schools participating in the research. The seven principles are:

- *Our Approach is Clear*
- *Transition is Effective*
- *Achievement is Maximised*
- *Well-Being is Supported*
- *Parents are Engaged*
- *Support is Responsive*
- *Staff are Well-Informed.*

Our Approach is Clear

The first principle within the framework is "our approach is clear". The purpose of this principle is to ensure that there is clear and transparent representation, expenditure and support for Service children.

Through the research which informed this framework, representation of Service children at the strategic level of schools has been argued to benefit both Service children and schools in terms of providing an accurate context of Service child life and requirements for support. Previous research (DfE, 2010) makes the case that representation, such as including members of the military on school governing bodies, provides greater opportunities for "cultural awareness" of the life of a Service child at the strategic level of the school. Stemming from the potential benefits, the research examined the level of military presence on school governing bodies:

Figure 4 Military Representation on School Governing Body (N= 297)

YES   NO

29%   79%
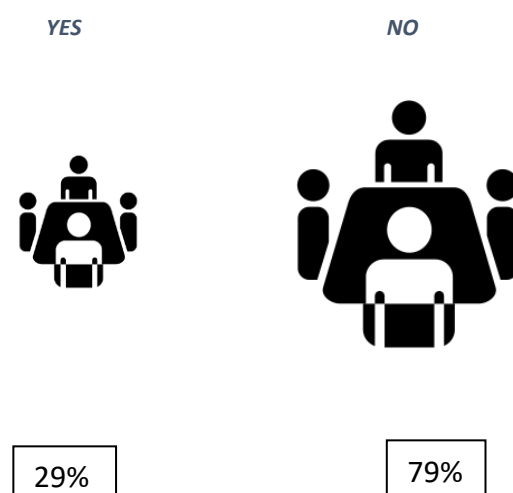
As can be seen on Figure 4, there is limited military presence, with only 29% of schools reporting such membership. This finding can, in part, be explained by logistical issues and proximity to military personnel with appropriate experience. While there is limited military

representation on school governing bodies, Figure 5 shows one alternative that half of participating schools employ is to specifically report the performance of Service children to the school's governing body:

Alongside representation, transparency concerning Service Pupil Premium (SPP) spending is a central aspect of a clear approach. The Service Pupil Premium is additional government funding pr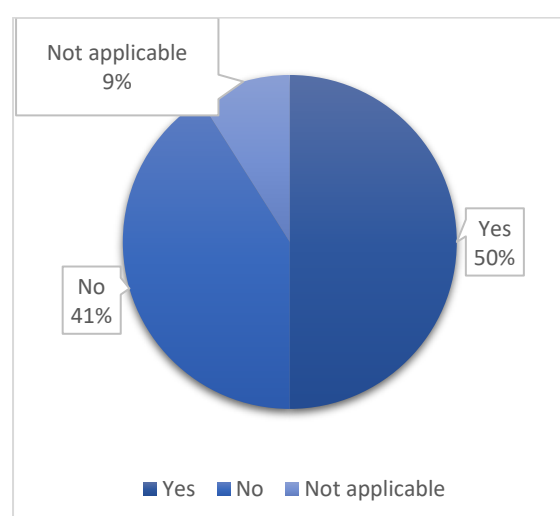ovided to state schools, academies and free schools in England. Schools receive £300 per year for a Service child who meets the eligibility criteria as set out by the MoD (2019):

- One of their parents is serving in the regular armed forces
- They have been registered as a "service child" on the January

school census at any point since 2014
- One of their parents died whilst serving in the Armed Forces and the pupil receives a pension under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme or the War Pensions Scheme
- Pupils with a parent who is on full commitment as part of the full-time reserve service.

The purpose of the SPP is to allow schools to provide additional pastoral support for Service children, including during times of distress caused by family deployment and separation or changing schools.

The rationale for the SPP's inclusion in this principle comes through the elevation of awareness of Service children – in terms of their presence within a school and their specific needs – through publishing SPP expenditure. This approach is also key in increasing parental/guardian agency, which can be affected by transition to a new location and/or school system (DfE, 2013). Providing information of SPP expenditure allows parents/guardians an understanding of what SPP-funded support is available, what are reasonable requests and the limits of support via the SPP.

In terms of current levels of transparency on SPP expenditure, Figure 6 shows that just over half of participating schools (52%) report specifically on spend/impact of the SPP. However, a larger figure of 71% of participating schools, illustrated in Figure 7, are able to detail what the SPP was spent on at their school. This increase of nearly 20% of schools suggests that formal reporting could be possible; what may be needed is a clearer rationale of the merits of formal reporting.

Figure 7 Can you detail what the Service Pupil Premium was spent on at your school? (N = 299)
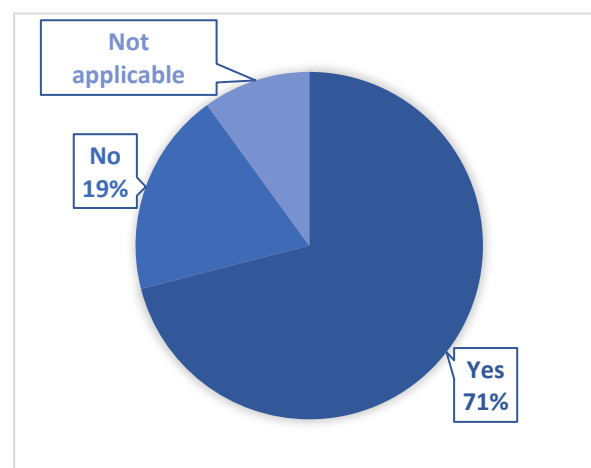
From participating schools who completed the survey, the three most common areas the SPP was spent on were:

- Pastoral support/intervention
- Extra-curricular activities
- Additional tutoring/academic mentorship.

Figure 6 Specific reporting on spend/impact of Service Pupil Premium (N = 300)

Survey responses further articulated SPP expenditure on pastoral support and academic support:

> *Emotional Literacy Support Assistants, Educational Psychologists, Curriculum enhancements and enrichments, social skills interventions. (Infant School, South West, 30 SC /156 P)[3]*

> *Support for transition between schools as well as additional TA (teaching assistant) support in the*

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[3] 30SC/156P points to 30 Service Children in a school of 156 pupils, this shorthand will be used throughout the report.

classroom for catch-up (Secondary School, North East, 250 SP /520 P)

Similar patterns emerged from qualitative case study schools where the SPP was spent on a range of activities and resources:

- ELSA support
- Additional educational resources looking at the military
- Field trips
- Residential activities
- Class release time for teachers
- Transport (to and from school)
- After-school clubs.

A member of a school's SLT in a secondary school provided a detailed account of SPP expenditure, highlighting its application in both pastoral and learning and teaching activities:

> *SPP has several different functions, it goes into the departmental budgets to address the need of Service children in the curriculum and that can be used in a number of things and often I'll be asked for advice on how this can be spent. So, in English or History, this can be used for additional resources when discussing topics including the military. Then an additional part of the funding is passed to me for pastoral support including trips … There are pots that they can bid into. I also run a residential that comes out of the SPP money for all KS3 Service children, where the*

children act as mentors for younger children to create a family ethos within the school. SPP is also used to buy out some of my time so I am free to do mentoring and some of the money is used to liaise with the service community counselling organisations. It covers a lot of things, but I have oversight of about three-quarters of the premium. The SPP is more about pastoral than financial. (SLT, Navy Secondary)

The final element of this principle is transparency of support. Within this principle, support is primarily focused on Service child enrolment. Similar to transparency concerning SPP expenditure, Service child admission policies (including ensuring Service child siblings are able to attend the same school when appropriate) elevate institutional awareness and provide additional parental/guardian agency. The addition of this policy to flexible admissions, discussed previously by O'Neill (2010) and McDonald & Boon (2018), can provide proactive information to parents/guardians who have limited time and choices during relocation (DfE, 2013). In terms of current provision for a Service child enrolment policy, just under half of participating schools (49%) have a specific policy to accept Service children, and a

similar figure of 54% of participating schools have a policy of accepting Service child siblings.

Respondents from the user-testing phase of the framework suggested a caveat should be included concerning enrolment policy. The caveat regards the authority *some* schools have to formalise policies without consultation and agreement from the Local Authority. What is not clear, however, is the level of transparency concerning these policies. Similar to SPP expenditure, a clear rationale for the benefits of a policy may ensure that any policies which are not advertised are given greater exposure.

Summary

Through reference to previous literature and findings from primary data collection, the benefits of clear representation of Service children and support of Service children at a school's strategic level are wide-ranging. These benefits include increased institutional awareness, support for Service children and increased opportunities for parental/guardian agency. These findings and analysis point to the need to ensure "there is clear and transparent representation, expenditure

and support for Service children" and provide the rationale for the inclusion of the "our approach is clear" principle within the framework.

Findings have demonstrated that it was a minority of participating schools who had military representation on their school governing bodies; however, a much higher percentage of participating schools had employed strategies to ensure Service child representation through reporting on Service children as a targeted group to the school's governing body. Findings demonstrated that a moderate majority of participating schools reported specifically on SPP expenditure, but a much higher number of participating schools could account for SPP expenditure, suggesting that what is required is not the capacity to report expenditure but, rather, a rationale which comes from increased awareness. SPP expenditure included extra-curricular activities, additional academic support, ELSA support, class release time for teachers and transport (to and from school/clubs). Finally, findings demonstrated that around half of participating schools had a policy to accept a Service child and/or sibling from a Service Family.

There are a number of mitigating factors for these findings, including institutional cultural awareness, resources and level of Service child representation. As such, the framework includes a number of examples of practice from a range of schools based on institutional culture, historical relationship to the military, resources and Service child representation. To support schools when reflecting on the need for a clear approach, the following reflective questions have been included in the framework:

- Is there a member of the governing body who has oversight for Service children?
- To what extent is that person able to access information and resources to support Service children?
- To what extent are all leaders, including governors aware, of the Service Pupil Premium? (English government-funded schools only)?
- To what extent do you record how and for what the Service Pupil Premium is spent?
- To what extent is the Service Pupil Premium strategically used to address Service children issues?
- To what extent is expenditure of the Service Pupil Premium informed by examples of practice?

- When possible, to what extent does your admissions policy include specific reference to accepting Service children and/or additional siblings?
- To what extent do you support non-standard enrolment?
- To what extent is careful consideration given to admitting Service Children mid-year, even if this means going above the published Pupil Admission Number or the Infant Class Size regulations (England)?

Transition is Effective

The second principle within the framework is "transition is effective". The purpose of this principle is to ensure that there is a collective institutional strategy to support Service children when they transition in and out of a school.

Repeated relocation, both nationally and internationally, is a common aspect of Service family life. As such, transition is one of the defining characteristics of being a Service child. Previous research (DfE, 2010; Ofsted, 2011; Noret et al., 2014) has illustrated the issues associated with repeated relocation, including academic attainment and emotional displacement, leading to potential disadvantages. In addition, schools who

participated in the web-based survey identified transition as being a distinct challenge for Service children; one respondent describes the issues stemming from transition:

> *Pupils disengaging with the current school which can often display behaviour issues. Pupils can become withdrawn and emotional outbursts occur. New pupils transitioning in can find it difficult, friendships groups can be changed and friction occurs. Progress and attitudes to learning can very often be affected. (Primary School, South West, 70 SC/ 105 P)*

Through both previous literature and primary data which informed the framework, a robust and supportive transition procedure for pupils both entering and leaving schools was a central focus of this research. Focusing on participating schools in the web-based survey, while the majority of schools (73%) did not have a transition/mobility policy (Figure 8), the majority of schools (61%) did provide some pre/post-transition support.

Yes 27%

No 73%
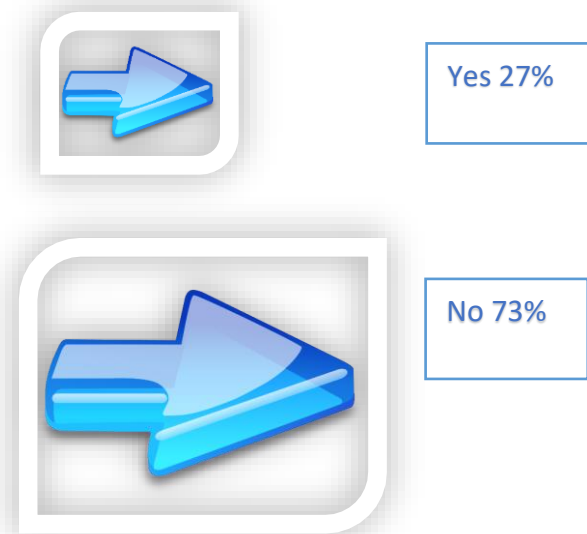
The disparity between provision and formal policy could suggest that the problem is not always that there is a lack of provision in participating schools but that it is not always formalised or communicated.

Building on the emotional and personal issues Service children face through repeated transition documented in previous literature, the research focused on strategies to identify Service children and pastoral support specific to transitioning in/out of a school. In terms of Service child identification, while the introduction of the SPP in England has increased the likelihood of Service child declaration, there are still issues concerning how a school identifies Service

children, in particular, those schools without a longstanding history of Service child representation. Among participating schools who completed the web-based survey, the most common ways in which Service children are identified were:

- Application form
- Request to parents for information.

The qualitative school case studies identified that they utilised similar strategies for identifying Service children as those schools who participated in the web-based survey, relying primarily on application forms and declarations from parents. In addition to having a formal strategy to identify Service children, participating schools reported the general tendency to inform all staff members when a student was identified as a Service child. Eighty seven percent of participating schools inform all staff about the Service child cohort in their school. Schools involved in the qualitative school case studies provided an account of how Service children are regularly identified to all staff:

> *We have a daily meeting and on Mondays we talk about pupils including anyone coming or going from the school. (SLT, Army Primary)*

Alongside other pastoral support, which will be discussed in subsequent sections, it is clear from previous literature and primary data that Service children require bespoke pastoral support for repeated transition. The rationale for this argument is that not only do Service children relocate more than non-Service children, but this can very often be outside of normal term-time transitions, for example, the beginning of a new academic year. The research explored the presence of school strategies to support non-standard time enrolment (Figure 9) which showed that the majority of responding schools did not have them. However, most schools (65%) noted they had a presence of a central element within a school transition strategy (a named staff member for incoming students to contact).

Figure 9 Are there school strategies to support non-standard time enrolment?

Buddy system, Nurture room. (Middle School, South West, 16 SC/ 201 P)

Supporting child when they arrive at the school and meeting other Forces children. (Primary School, East Midlands, 24 SC/ 360 P)

We meet parents and children often. Pupils spend a morning or afternoon to get a feel for the school. Our ELSA will visit pupils in the current setting where possible. Conversations with current school HT or CT to get an understanding of the child. (Primary School, South West, 70 SC / 105 P)

It is possible to book tours with the Headteacher via the office or school website. During these tours, parents are issued with admissions packs with all of the information and paperwork they need. We can also provide temporary uniforms and equipment. (Primary School, East of England, 70 SC/ 126 P)

In a similar trend to overall school transition support, there is a disparity between the formalised strategy of supporting non-standard enrolment, with 42% of schools reporting they have a strategy and 65% of schools reporting that they have a named person for incoming students to contact. While the majority of participating schools did not have a formal strategy to support non-standard time enrolment, the most common strategies for schools who answered yes to this question included:

- Buddy system for students
- Broader pastoral provision (including ELSA)
- Liaising with previous school.

Survey responses further articulated approaches to support non-standard time enrolment:

Similar approaches were evident from schools participating in the qualitative school case studies. Schools provided a range of activities to support incoming Service children. These included a formal transition system for new students:

Before they start we send them a welcome pack and they fill in things all about them to make their past important. They'll talk

about things in their old school and then we give them some information about who's who in the school and information about the school and pictures of the classroom and a feelings sheet about how they're feeling about coming to the school … when we don't get paperwork, we phone up previous schools and have a chat as some schools are very proactive. If there's an issue with a child then we also phone their next school so they don't miss anything. (SLT, RAF Primary)

In addition, many schools prioritised an incoming Service child's first day experience:

We would make sure that everything is set up for them like a name label and a peg label. We do show and tell for someone new to tell them where they are from. (SLT, Navy Primary)

Many Schools organised a buddy system for incoming students to begin to formalise social networks:

If they (student) were coming mid-way through the year we would make sure they're part of the buddy system and we also do that for the parents too, so they're linked to a parent as well. (Teacher, Navy Primary)

The benefits of the buddy system were highlighted by students involved in the school case studies. Students praised the support they received in forming new networks:

The buddy system helps. It makes you have an automatic friend. (Service child, Army Secondary)

Summary

Stemming from previous literature and findings from primary data collection, the issues Service children face as a result of repeated relocation and, for some, being in a state of semi-permanent transition, cast a long shadow. While attainment issues will be discussed in the next section of this report, there are numerous social and emotional issues caused by having to leave established social networks, creating new friendship groups and finding a sense of identity when faced with the transitory nature of Service family life. These findings and analysis highlight the need for a "collective institutional strategy to support Service children when they transition in and out of a school" and the rationale for the inclusion of the "transition is effective" principle within the framework.

While the majority of schools participating in the web-based survey did not have a transition/mobility policy, a majority of these schools did still provide pre/post-transition support – suggesting a friction between formal and non-formal provision rather than a lack of provision. This research focused on strategies to identify Service children and the pastoral support specific to transitioning in or out of a school. Strategies for Service child identification for both schools which participated in the web-based survey and schools involved in the qualitative school case studies included reviewing admissions forms or requests from parents. In terms of pastoral support, the majority of schools who participated in the web-based survey did not report a specific school strategy to support non-standard time enrolment; however, the majority of these schools did have a named person for incoming students to contact. For those schools which did have a strategy to support non-standard time enrolment, these included a buddy system, use of ELSAs and liaising with previous schools. Schools involved in the qualitative school case studies reported similar strategies of buddy systems and liaising with previous or next schools and, in addition, discussed the importance of prioritising a Service child's first day. There are a number of factors impacting provision, including institutional cultural awareness, resources and level of Service child representation. As such, the framework includes a number of examples of existing practice from a range of schools based on institutional culture, historical relationship to military, resources and Service child representation. To support schools when reflecting on how to ensure that "transition is effective", the following reflective questions have been posed in the framework:

- To what extent does your school identify Service children?
- To what extent do you have systems in place to support a positive 1st day experience
- To what extent do you liaise with a Service child's previous and next school?
- To what extent do you use transfer records to pass on pupil information that you would find helpful to receive yourself?
- To what extent do you minimise the need to re-start assessments when Service children with SEND join the school?
- To what extent do you have a buddy system in place for new students?

Achievement is Maximised

The third principle within the framework is "achievement is maximised". The purpose of this principle is to ensure that Service children are supported to ensure that Service Life is not an obstacle to achievement.

The key characteristics of Service child life include transition, deployment and separation. Previous research (MoD, 2016) has highlighted the impact that both of these characteristics can have on Service children's academic attainment. Previous literature (DfE, 2010; Ofsted, 2011; Noret et al., 2014) has highlighted how transition impacts on attainment in a range of ways, including the disruption of moving, non-alignment of current subjects and new subjects, different exam boards, missing curriculum and repeated curriculum. Similarly, for deployment and separation, the emotional impact and stress that deployment and separation have on Service children affects academic attainment (DfE, 2013). Schools participating in the web-based survey echoed these arguments from previous literature when discussing key challenges Service children face:

Gaps in knowledge, coming from different education systems in the devolved regions, different assessments and ways of teaching. Different subjects being taught especially when it comes to languages as they are not teaching all the same one. Missing out on option subjects. Different core subjects. Different exam boards, work cannot be transferred between them. Additional learning needs might have been missed as they have moved around so much this might mean they are missing out on support. (Secondary School, Wales, 40 SC/ 477 P)

Gaps in understanding, have been taught different methods in different schools, often have some understanding of all topics, rather than chunks that can be easily taught from the beginning. They may repeat learning due to schools having different sequences or teaching topics in varying orders. (Primary School, Yorkshire and Humber, 3 SC/ 299 P)

Stemming from emotional distress, students also discussed academic distractions associated with deployment and separation. A student commented on the challenges they face when their father is deployed:

Sometimes I find I can't really concentrate and sometimes people make fun of my parents and that

can be quite lonely. (Service child, RAF Secondary)

Through both previous literature and primary data, the need to support Service children in achieving well became a central aspect of the framework. Initially driven by issues highlighted by previous literature, the research examined academic provision for Service children and examples of practice. Focusing on participating schools in the web-based survey, a small majority (58%) reported a school strategy to address curriculum gaps for recently enrolled Service children (Figure 10).

Figure 10 School strategy to address curriculum gaps

No 41%   Yes 59%
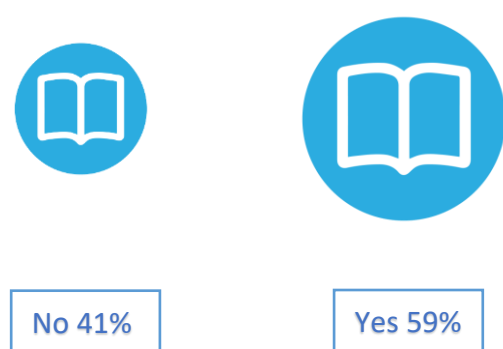
For participating schools, the most common approaches to addressing curriculum gaps were:

- Entry level assessment
- Academic interventions
- Monitoring assessment.

Survey responses further articulated approaches to address curriculum gaps for Service children:

In-year admissions are tested on entry and any gaps are planned into teaching and interventions. New topics begin with diagnostic of previous knowledge in order that any gaps can be identified and filled. (Primary School, East of England, 70 SC/ 126 P)

Head of inclusion allows a setting period of less than a month before meeting with parents and pupils and taking information from staff to discuss any gaps. Catch up in the form of alternative homework. (Middle School, North East, 3 SC/ 512 P)

Academic mentoring from our Pupil Premium mentor. Help with funding academic trips. A late bus so that students can attend revision sessions etc. after school and still get home. (Secondary School, North West, Secondary, 38 SC/ 1024 P)

We employ some extra staff to help fill these gaps with 1:1 or small group catch-up sessions. (Primary School, East of England, 34 SC/ 330 P)

Similar approaches were evident from schools participating in the qualitative school case studies. Schools provided a

range of activities to support school-to-school transition. These included trying to align an incoming student's current subjects with those delivered in their new school:

> *The options are matched up as much as possible. (SLT, Army Secondary)*

When matching subjects was not possible, schools positively focused on a topic that an incoming Service child has studied elsewhere and is not on the syllabus in their new school:

> *Also, we'll try and celebrate a topic that a new student has covered that we don't do, so we'll ask them to talk to the class about that theme. (Teacher, Navy Primary)*

Supporting achievement at a level suitable for an individual also includes the provision of information and guidance about a variety of progression pathways. As such, this research examined careers provision within schools and, specifically, additional support and guidance provided to Service children. The majority of schools participating in the web-based survey (72%) did not offer formal careers provision. Of the schools which did have formal careers provision, all but one school was secondary level. For

participating schools who did have formal careers provision, the majority (68%) reported that they did not offer additional careers support to Service children. However, the vast majority of participating schools (93%) did include the military when engaging with employers.

An issue, however, stemming from the combination of lack of additional careers support for Service children, and the tendency for schools to include the military when engaging with employers, is that Service children may not be exposed to alternative trajectories. While a limited number of schools offer additional careers support to Service children, common approaches included:

- Liaising with the military
- Showing preference to Service children
- Adding events for Service children.

Survey responses further articulated approaches to provide additional careers support to Service children:

> *They are always timetabled first. (South West, Secondary School, 82 SC/1000 P)*

> *Links with MOD are facilitated; MPCT sessions on site. (Wales, Secondary School, 65 SC/ 950 P)*

We ensure they all have a one-to-one careers interview. Our PP mentor also regularly meets with Service children. (North West, Secondary, 38 SC/ 1024 P)

Within the schools participating in the qualitative school case studies, a similar absence of attention to bespoke careers provision for Service children was evident. When discussing careers provision, schools commented on Service children's opportunity to avail of on-line careers resources, which are available to all students and do not specifically consider Service children. One participating school did provide an account of additional support:

When they're making their choices for GCSE they [Service children] sit down with year head and me [Service child liaison] to talk though options. They do a work experience in year 10 and extra support for Service children is provided during any transition stage within the school. (SLT, Navy Secondary)

This member of the school's Senior Leadership Team continued to explain that many Service children from their school progress into the military, either as an immediate transition or after higher education:

A large amount of Service children go to pre-service courses or straight into Services or local apprenticeship. The military link is very strong. You see a lot of Service children following their family footsteps… there are some students planning on attending higher education with the intention to then enter the military at a higher rank. (SLT, Navy Secondary)

Summary

Previous literature and findings from primary data collection show there are issues of achievement for Service children and progression pathways carry additional dimensions for Service children. The impact of both transition – including disruption and poor alignment of previous and current pedagogical practices/content – and increased levels of anxiety caused by deployment and separation on academic achievement highlights the need for a policy or strategy to ensure that "Service children are supported to thrive and achieve at a level suitable for the individual" and rationale for the inclusion of the "achievement is maximised" principle.

Focusing on participating schools in the web-based survey, a small majority

reported a school strategy to address curriculum gaps for recently enrolled Service children. The research focused on these strategies and found that the most common ones included entry level assessment, interventions and monitoring assessment. Similar strategies of entry level assessment and monitoring assessments were present within the schools participating in the qualitative school case studies. In addition, those schools discussed attempts to align exam boards/subjects and, when that was not possible, positively engaged with students and encouraged them to produce a presentation of those subjects to their new classmates. Alongside academic support, provision for advice and guidance concerning a variety of progression pathways was also examined by the research. The majority of schools participating in the web-based survey did not have a formal careers provision, probably since most of the schools were primary. In those schools that did have a formal careers provision, the majority reported that they did not provide additional careers support to Service children; however, this is coupled with the vast majority of schools including the military when they engage with employers. The issue with this combination is the limited "possible selves" (Henderson et al., 2019) Service children will consider through the lack of additional careers provision. For those schools that did provide additional careers support to Service children, common provision included liaison with military, preference to Service children and additional events for Service children. There are a number of factors impacting provision, including institutional cultural awareness, resources and level of Service child representation. As such, the framework includes several examples of existing practice from a range of schools based on institutional culture, historical relationship to military, resources and Service child representation. To support schools, when reflecting on how to ensure that "achievement is maximised", the following reflective questions have been posed in the framework:

- To what extent do you undertake entry level assessment for new pupils?
- To what extent do you monitor assessments to highlight curriculum gaps?
- To what extent do you have a strategy to address curriculum gaps?
- To what extent do you have a strategy to address SEND Service children's needs?

- To what extent do you provide additional learning support for Service children?
- To what extent do you provide regular reviews of Service children's progress?
- To what extent does your careers strategy specifically consider Service children?
- To what extent do you provide additional careers support for Service children?
- To what extent is the military included in examples of potential employment pathways?
- To what extent are non-military options provided to Service children?
- To what extent do you liaise with the MoD for careers support?

Well-Being is Supported

The fourth principle within the framework is "well-being is supported". The purpose of this principle is to ensure that Schools have a pastoral strategy taking into account the needs of Service children.

Previous sections of this report have discussed literature and presented findings on the impact of key Service child characteristics, transition, deployment and separation, on academic achievement. Furthermore, the

immediate short-term pastoral response for incoming Service children is discussed in Principle 2, "transition is effective". However, the issues that impact on attainment beyond the impact of moving to a new area and starting a new school – i.e. issues of everyday well-being – also need to be addressed. As such, the underpinning research examined issues of everyday well-being in the context of Service child life. In particular, the research focused on support during times of deployment and separation. Beyond the potential achievement issues of deployment and separation, Service children interviewed as part of the qualitative school case studies commented on the impact that deployment and separation had on their everyday well-being:

> *Sometimes I get sad about it, but then on the last day before he comes back it feels like he hasn't been gone a long time. (Service child, Navy Primary)*

In addition, pupils highlighted the importance of appreciating the deployment cycle and different experiences/emotions at different stages during deployment and separation:

> *For the first month they're away you can tell yourself 'oh maybe*

they're on nights', but after that it becomes real. I find I miss them the most during the middle, it's really hard when they get delayed. (Service child, RAF Secondary)

Focusing on schools participating in the web-based survey, the majority of schools (85%) provide additional pastoral support during times of deployment and separation.

The vast majority of participating schools provide support to Service children during times of deployment and separation. From participating schools who completed the survey, the most common forms of support these schools offered to Service children included:

- Using after school clubs
- Using ELSA
- Offering broader pastoral support
- Monitoring attendance
- Using Service Pupil Premium expenditure
- Embedding deployment/military life in the curriculum.

Survey responses further articulated approaches to supporting Service children when a family member was deployed or away from the family home for an extended period of time. Pastoral support was often provided by specialist members of staff within the school:

Learning manager for each year group/key stage (non-teaching staff) would support the student and inform teaching staff to ensure we offer as much support as possible. We have a sixth form mentoring programme which could also help along with mentoring and our formal mentoring programme every Friday. (Secondary School, Yorkshire and Humber, 20 SC/ 600 P)

The services of our ELSA who works with children and provides an after school 'Forces Fun Club'. She also meets weekly with any child who has a parent away on deployment and supports with letter writing. Every child whose parent goes away gets a 'knitted doll' of their parent and the parent has a small knitted 'child'. The premium is used for resources and knitting costs. We also part fund a Family Liaison Officer, part of whose role is to support families in the home during deployment or at times of any stress. (Primary School, South East, 57 SC/180 P)

In addition to specialist staff, some schools also have dedicated sessions for Service children to discuss issues:

We have adapted Forces Reading scheme to allow time to discuss these issues as they arise. (Primary School, South West, 12 SC/ 365 P)

Similar patterns emerged from schools participating in the qualitative school case studies. These included providing positive learning about where a parent/guardian is stationed:

> I did have a child whose dad was deployed for six months last year; a teacher worked regularly with him and worked through a map of where his Dad was going and then he'd tell everyone in the class where he was. They found out information about the country and then face-timed (in the school). He was able to tell him about the country. This was both before he left the country and while he was there. (Teacher, Navy Primary)

Participating schools also provided practical examples for ensuring that pastoral support for Service children does not take away from teaching time:

> After lunch we have cool down time so we used this time for children to do these extra tasks. (Teacher, Navy Primary)

Schools reported making special allowances for Service children, including adapting the uniform code:

> We facilitate Service children with their needs; a student can wear their dad's t-shirt without breaking the rules. (Teacher, Navy Primary)

Schools also ran a range of after school clubs for Service children to talk about issues, including deployment. One participating school ran a specific "deployment club":

> Parents fill out paperwork of when they're going and that's kept on file. Any child with a parent away for any reason is able to come along to the deployment club. It's mostly craft-based activities and talking about their feelings and how their mum is doing. (Teacher, RAF Primary)

Service children interviewed as part of the qualitative school case studies commented on the benefits of such clubs. One Service child stated:

> Yeah, it helps because they're in the same experience as you are and people who don't have mums or dads in the military don't know how you feel. (Service child, Navy Primary)

Summary

Previous literature and findings and analysis from primary data collection have highlighted the everyday well-being issues that Service children face. Alongside transition, deployment or separation is a significant event which has a range of emotional consequences for Service children. It is this impact which provides

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the rationale for the construction of Principle 4, "well-being is supported", to ensure that "Schools have a pastoral strategy taking into account the needs of Service children".

Focusing initially on schools who participated in the web-based survey, the vast majority of schools reported the provision of additional pastoral support to Service children during times of deployment or separation. There were a wide range of forms which this support took, including ELSA support, embedding deployment and separation in the curriculum and after school clubs. Service children discussed the everyday issues they experience during times of deployment or separation and the benefits of support, including after school clubs for Service children. As is the case with previous Principles within the framework, there are many factors impacting provision, including institutional cultural awareness, resources and level of Service child representation. As such, the framework includes several examples of existing practice from a range of schools based on institutional culture, historical relationship to military, resources and Service child representation. To support schools when reflecting on how to ensure that "well-being is supported", the following reflective questions have been posed in the framework:

- To what extent do you provide pastoral support to Service children?
- To what extent do you provide pastoral support to Service children who are young carers?
- To what extent do you support Service child clubs and societies?
- To what extent do you have mechanisms in place to provide additional pastoral support for Service children during times of deployment/separation?
- To what extent do you complete proactive work with Service children during deployment/separation?
- To what extent do you include opportunities to promote the military in the curriculum?
- To what extent do you include opportunities to discuss deployment/separation in the curriculum?

Parents are Engaged

The fifth principle within the framework is "parents are engaged". The purpose behind this principle is that schools will establish a working relationship with parents to support both Service children and Service families.

Broader pedagogical literature (Gorard et al., 2012; Burke, 2016) identifies the benefits of engaging parents when supporting potentially vulnerable young people. Consequently, this research examined ways in which schools engaged with parents/guardians to support Service children. A central benefit of engagement came through having a reliable source for updates on events affecting Service children such as transition or deployment and separation. Schools reported that they often relied on parental engagement for updates on deployment or separation schedules. Schools participating in the web-based survey highlighted the importance of parental engagement when updating such information:

> *Close liaison with parents means we know when separation/deployment is likely and can support, if required. (Primary School, Yorkshire and Humber, 2 SC/ 57 P)*

> *Parents let us know, parent liaison support is offered including coffee mornings, support in form time, 1-1 support. (SEN School, Yorkshire and Humber, 20 SC/ 214 P)*

When discussing potential improvements for Service child support, Service children interviewed as part of the qualitative school case studies commented on the benefits of a school system to record deployment and separation times:

> *I think teachers should be aware of when parents are away, having a system to know when it happens but we'll know that they'll know. (Service child, RAF Secondary)*

Literature discussed in previous sections of this report (DfE, 2013) has highlighted the impact of transitions, deployment and separation not only on Service children but on Service families, including lack of agency and social/emotional upheaval. Alongside how engagement with parents supports Service children, this research also examined levels of support offered to Service families. The vast majority of schools offered pastoral support to engage with parents or guardians (Figure 11).

Figure 11 Opportunities for pastoral support engagement with parents or guardians

83% of schools participating in the web-based survey reported opportunities for pastoral support to engage with parents or guardians.
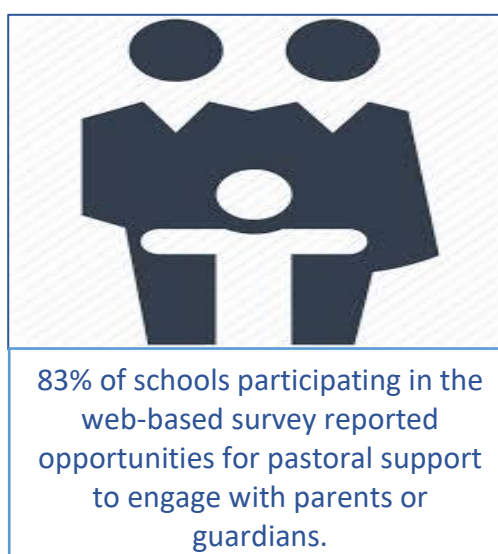
Amongst survey responses related to Service Family support, the most commons forms of support were:

- Coffee mornings/social engagements
- Sustained contact
- Family support worker.

Schools participating in the qualitative school case studies discussed how they worked quite closely with parents to support changes in the home dynamic during deployment. A teacher commented on a specific case when a Service child's father had been deployed:

> *We worked a lot with the mum as well – she worked with our Parent Advisor to help her realise that she was doing the right thing and strategies to work through behaviour changes in the kids and someone who was there to talk to as well. We've worked with her to see if she was using behaviour charts then we'd do the same in the school. (Teacher, Navy Primary)*

In addition, there was careful support provided to families when a family member had returned home from deployment:

> *We have done a lot of work with families when dad comes home, we have sit-down meetings with the parents to think about how it will work when one person re-*

enters the family home. (Teacher, Navy Primary)

Summary

Previous literature and empirical findings have illustrated both the benefits of parental engagement when supporting Service children and the additional pastoral support Service families require. The potential benefits of engaging with parents illustrates the justification for the construction of Principle 5, "parents are engaged", which provides both the rationale and possible strategies to ensure "schools will establish a working relationship with parents to support both Service children and Service families".

Schools discussed the benefits of close engagement with parents/guardians. This engagement was particularly beneficial in keeping up-to-date with deployment and separation events. Alongside engaging parents/guardians to support Service children, many schools also provide pastoral support for Service families. This support came in a range of forms, including coffee mornings/social events, sustained contact and interaction with a family support worker. Schools also discussed how they would align classroom practices with parental practices to

support families during times of deployment and separation. In addition, some schools took an active role in supporting families when a family member came back from deployment. There are a number of factors impacting provision including institutional cultural awareness, resources and level of Service child representation. As such, the framework includes a number of examples of existing practice from a range of schools based on institutional culture, historical relationship to the military, resources and Service child representation. To support schools when reflecting on how to work effectively with parents, the following reflective questions have been posed in the framework:

- To what extent do you liaise with parents/guardians to update deployment and separation information?
- To what extent does the school provide pastoral support to parents/guardians of Service children?

Support is Responsive

The sixth principle within the framework is "support is responsive". The purpose of this principle is to ensure that Service child support will be revised and updated based on Service child feedback.

Research which informed this framework (DfE, 2010) has discussed the benefits of military representation and understanding at a strategic level within the school – specifically, to provide increased awareness of Service child issues. However, there are limits and logistical issues for military representation in schools. As such, this research also examined the role and presence of Service child voice within school councils. The vast majority of schools (85%) have a form of student council. However, fewer than 10% of these schools purposely had Service child representation. From the small number of schools which did have purposeful Service child representation, this included liaison with the military in the form of representation and involvement in MOD forums and ambassador groups.

> *MOD community forum and MOD ambassador group. (Secondary School, Wales, 65 SC/ 950 P)*

Bespoke support group for Service children was also included:

> *There is a support group for Service students where their concerns are heard. (Secondary School, South West, 22 SC/ 1051 P)*

Summary

Through reference to previous literature and findings from primary data collection, the practical benefits of Service child representation within school councils and the multifaceted nature of Service child life, mediated by areas of the military, point to the need to ensure that school "support is responsive". This principle is supported through having a mechanism that ensures *"Service child support will be revised and updated based on Service child feedback"*. Empirical findings showed that, while the majority of schools had a form of school council, very few purposely had Service child representation providing an avenue for Service child feedback on provision. As with previous principles, there are several mitigating factors for these findings, including institutional cultural awareness, resources and level of Service child representation. To support schools when reflecting on the need for responsive support, the following reflective questions have been posed in the framework:

- To what extent do you seek feedback from Service children and their families on the support provided?
- To what extent do you act upon feedback from Service children and their families?

Staff are Well-Informed

The seventh principle of the framework is that "staff are well-informed". This is to ensure that "there is a whole school awareness of the needs of Service children".

Previous sections of this report have discussed the benefits of military representation on governing bodies to increase awareness of Service child needs and the positive impact of specialist staff in providing pastoral support. However, for schools with limited resources and less established relationships with the military, this research examined current provision of training for staff to understand Service child life. As Figure 12 illustrates, a large proportion of schools participating in the web-based survey (44%) did not provide any training for staff. A significantly lower number of schools (12%) provided CPD via internal training, which was supplied by a named Service children's point person in the school, whereas 6% of schools received additional support from the MoD. In addition, a further 8% of schools did not have formal support or training for teaching staff but, instead, relied on teaching/support staff who have

experience of the armed forces either through previously serving or coming from a Service family.

The research also focused specifically on CPD training on the two key issues Service children face: transition, and deployment and separation. Figure 13 shows that neither of these issues are targeted in the majority of schools, with only 36% of schools focusing on the "transition cycle" and 29% of schools focusing on "stages of deployment".
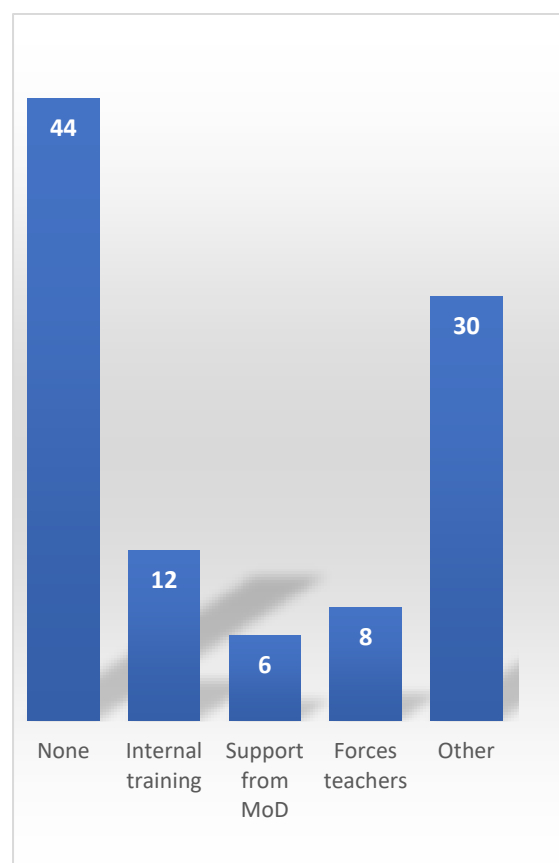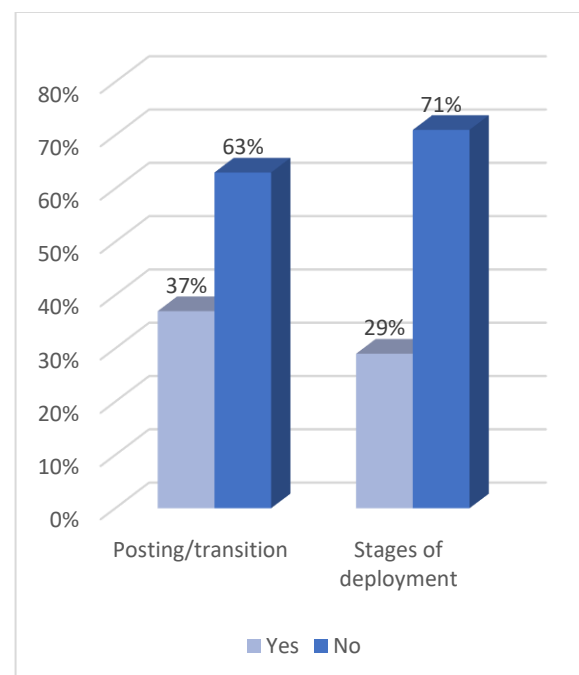
Survey responses further articulated the role of a named Service child point of contact person:

> *A member of the SLT is responsible for ensuring staff are aware of the needs of Service children across the school. The head teacher and the member of the SLT as a whole read the latest research and ensure information is disseminated.*
> *(South West, Infant School, 50 SC/ 300 P)*

In addition, comments were made on the reliance on staff with previous experience of the armed forces:

> *Pastoral support worker is an RAF wife and grew up as a child of RAF*

officer. (South East, Primary School, 32 SC/ 380 P)

Similar patterns emerged from qualitative case study schools, where they provided a range of training for teachers including:

- Stages of deployment
- Transition cycle.

Again, similar to the web-based survey, CPD training and general information was often delivered by staff who had a military background. One teacher who was new to Service child issues commented:

> *I'm a new teacher to the school and I have a lot of military children in my class. With no experience of the military myself, I rely on advice from Katy who is very much in it. (Teacher, Army Primary)*

There is a potential issue with relying on staff with previous, personal experience of the military regarding scale and sustainability; a similar member of staff will not be present in every school which has a Service child. In addition, when teaching staff rely on their personal experience of being in the military or coming from a military family, this may not be representative or up-to-date. In an effort to make Service child support more cost effective, schools also focused on

training that could speak to the broader school; a member of the SLT explained:

> *We've also had separation disorder training – we try to maximise this by having training that can be spread across the school for more students. (SLT, RAF Primary)*

In addition to current CPD/support provision, the research also examined priority areas, as defined by staff and students, for further provision.

As Figure 14 demonstrates, the most common response, from 30% of schools, was that they needed support on issues of transition and deployment. This was followed by 18% of schools being unsure what support they required, suggesting a lack of awareness of what support could potentially be available. A further 14% of schools identified CPD support which raised awareness of Service child issues. Alongside schools identifying areas for support, an additional 14% of schools

reported that no additional support was required.

Survey responses further articulated priority areas for CPD/support:

> *An overview of how postings work/family experiences. (South East, Primary School, 1 SC/ 374 P)*

> *Familiarisation with issues faced by Service families. (East Midlands, Secondary School, 40 SC/ 997 P)*

Figure 14 *CPD Priority Areas (N= 210)*
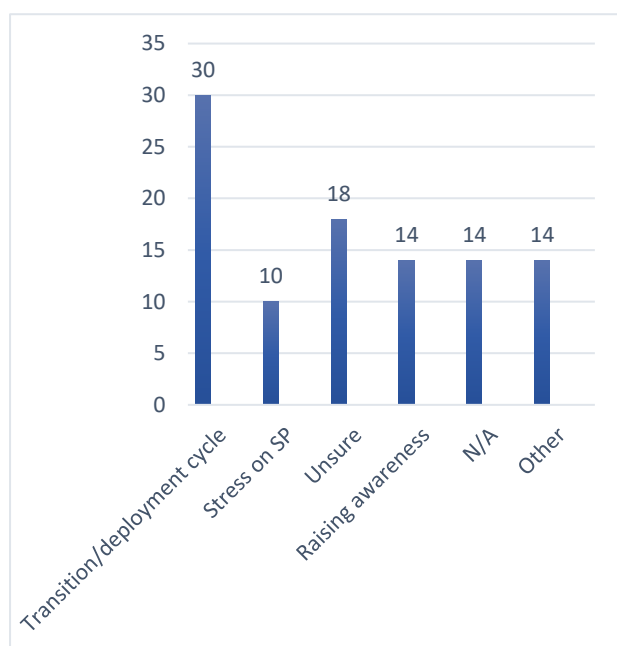
Alternatively, schools also rationalised why formalised CPD/support was not required, either because provision of support was not given by teachers or was deemed unnecessary:

> *None, counsellor does it all. (South East, Secondary School, 50 CP/ 1350 P)*

Our Service children families are stable. (South West, Primary, 3 SC/ 410 P)

Similar patterns emerged from qualitative case study schools where teaching staff identified the need for a clear explanation of how the military operates:

> *I would want to know what the roles are in the military. What does it mean to be a submariner, for example? How does deployment work – the mechanics of how it works? So a link to what a student's parent is doing so we can know what to expect. (Teacher, RAF Primary)*

In addition, practical advice on engaging with Service children and the types of support which are available was desired to direct them and their families:

> *I would want a list of some questions I could ask children to help them open up. (Teacher, RAF)*

> *I know that there is a lot out there for military families and so it would be better if schools were more aware of what's out there… (Teacher, RAF)*

Some teachers suggested the development of a mentor network, allowing inexperienced teachers to learn from existing practice:

Yes, I think a mentor network would be very helpful. We have a number of TAs who have experience with the Forces. These people understand both military and teaching. (Teacher, Navy Primary)

In addition, students from the qualitative school case studies highlighted the potential benefit of CPD raising awareness of Service child issues:

Teachers should be informed by problems and understand what we're going through, so maybe a PTA session so we can explain what we need. (Service child, RAF Secondary)

Summary

Previous literature and empirical findings point to the benefits and often practical need for a whole school approach in terms of awareness of Service child issues and, as such, forms the rationale for Principle 7, "staff are well-informed". To support the development of such an approach, CPD focusing on Service child issues and lifestyles can provide robust and standardised information.

Focusing on participating schools in the web-based survey, the majority of schools did not provide training for staff focusing on Service child issues or lifestyle. When training is provided, common sources of information were from named point people in the school and school staff with first-hand experience of the military. The research argues, however, that there are issues concerning up-to-date information and sustainability when schools rely on staff with first-hand experience for CPD. In addition, the research examined CPD priorities for schools; these included training around transition, deployment and separation, Service child lifestyle and military background information. In addition, schools responded that any CPD would be welcome, suggesting a lack of awareness of what CPD is available. As with previous principles, there are a number of factors impacting provision, including institutional cultural awareness, resources and level of Service child representation. As such, the framework includes a number of examples of existing practice from a range of schools based on institutional culture, historical relationship to the military, resources and Service child representation. To support schools when reflecting on how to ensure that "staff are well-informed", the following reflective questions have been posed in the framework:

- Do you have a named point of contact for staff to access support/information?
- To what extent does staff training include issues concerning deployment/separation?
- To what extent does staff training include issues concerning school-to-school transition?
- To what extent does staff training include life in the military?
- To what extent does staff training include engaging with parents?
- To what extent do staff who support Service children have links with staff in other institutions in order to share good practice?

5. Conclusion

Findings from both previous literature and primary research have highlighted a range of issues for Service children which can negatively impact on their well-being and achievement. In addition, this research has discussed the broader issues that Service families face. As is the case in other widening participation provision, schools play a significant role in supporting students from these backgrounds. This research has led to the development of an organisational improvement framework, the central purpose of which is to enable educational institutions to identify improvement priorities through an evidence-based self-evaluation tool. The three-level organisational improvement framework is included in this report's appendix (Appendix C) equipped with principles, examples of existing practice and self-reflective questions.

6. Complementary study

The following sections firstly describe the outcomes of the complementary study, outlining stakeholders' responses to research questions. The study is then summarised to describe the main themes that emerged from consultations. This is followed by a series of recommendations.

Reaction to the framework

Stakeholders came from different organisations or, in one case, from different roles within the same organisation, representing varied approaches to Service children's education. Therefore, the lens through which they reviewed the document was contextually specific. However, there was consistent agreement in their response to the framework, recognising its strengths and weaknesses.

Stakeholders' overall views of the framework were overwhelmingly positive. They observed that it had been informed by previous research into Service children's education and therefore had academic rigour but was written at a level considered appropriate for a range of relevant audiences. Overall, usability for the intended target audiences was thought to be good. Comments included:

> *It is quite easy to use from the perspective of a teacher.*

> *I think it is good, it's quite clear.*

> *Overall, I was very positive about it.*

> *It's easy to understand for someone who hasn't worked in the area very long.*

> *It's easy to follow. I think the seven principles are easy to understand and they mean something.*

Stakeholders thought it was encouraging that the framework is not just a 'tick box' exercise. On the contrary, it was seen to be a means through which schools could analyse their current provision, identify gaps, and implement improvements:

> *I like the way it's almost encouraging the school to go on a journey.*

> *It's useful to have the framework so people can work through the particular questions at senior leadership level at school to work out what kind of response they want … I guess, do a health-check of their provision and also think about what their action plans might be for the future.*

[It] can then drive them to actually implement and do the activity and start asking those questions across their own school, rather than just a tick-box 'Yes, it's done', it does pose those questions that can expand that area of activity.

Strengths and weaknesses of the framework

In discussing their positive responses to the framework in more detail, stakeholders described a range of strengths relating to the framework's structure, content and format. Overall, it was observed that the framework would be likely to achieve its aim of enabling schools to better support Service children:

I like the format, I like the structure, I like the tables, I like how the colour-coding works and things like that. I like the fact that there are examples and quotes. They are very well thought through examples of things that teachers … senior management teams, governors, hopefully, would say, 'I could take six or seven of those things and quite easily adapt them.'

The level of language is good.

It is written at the right level.

I think the response, Green, Amber, Red is useful.

In addition, stakeholders observed that a strength of the framework was that it did not treat Service children as necessarily being a problem group but acknowledged that Service children have positive experiences that they can bring to schools, enriching school life for themselves and for the wider school population:

It hits on the key issues but it doesn't labour the point about Service children being somehow a kind of alien species.

[Service children] may have had different experiences that can add value to the wider school population that schools could draw upon with the dual benefit of making the kids feel good, that they've got something to offer.

Stakeholders thought that the framework promoted good practice that would be relevant for all school pupils:

The framework could be used as a bit of good practice saying, 'actually, once you've looked at this, you could then look at other discrete groups you've got and use a very similar model'.

The seven principles are principles of good practice in relation to any child.

The framework was observed to represent a holistic approach to supporting the education of Service children. This approach was said to chime well with Ofsted's recently implemented Education Inspection Framework: [4]

Focusing on not just the basic education and outcomes is a strength. I think focusing on well-being, and focusing on that transitional element is positive … it isn't too data-focused, which is definitely a positive … I think focusing on parents is really positive.

Stakeholders also identified some weaknesses and areas for improvement. For example, it was observed that there was little evidence of impact:

At this stage in the development process … we are not providing impact evidence. The framework doesn't purport to say 'these people have done these things and they have some rigorous evidence that it had an impact that is transferable to your context', it just says, 'here are a range of questions that we think will be useful in helping you to work out,

as well as you possibly can, what might be impactful in your setting.

A focus group member observed that a weakness of the sector is that there is little rigorously evidenced impact on which to draw:

[Identifying that there are limited resources available] helped us to see where are the key areas that can be developed to go alongside the framework but until those are developed, it is a bit of a case of sometimes telling them that you need to go and find answers but the answers aren't there. We've got to make sure we've got some of those answers ready for when the framework goes live.

However, one stakeholder observed that although there is impact evidence in the literature, incorporating it into the framework might have the detrimental effect of making it more complicated:

[There are] examples in other countries [showing, for example,] that to support the parents settling into that school can be just as important as the child becoming settled …Things like that you could add to it but it doesn't need it.

Issues such as lack of school and teacher time and resources were identified by some stakeholders as a potential

[4] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-inspection-framework

weakness and will be discussed more fully in the later sections. Related to that issue, some stakeholders observed that the size of the framework could be a comparative weakness which would mitigate against its implementation in schools with a small percentage of Service children in their school population:

> *The framework has done a really good job of trying to be accessible to schools with large and small cohorts of Service children [but] there are big challenges to get engagement by schools which have got small Service child populations and where those children may be only at school for a very short time.*

Most stakeholders either directly stated or implied in their responses that the framework may need to be amended in order to improve its relevance to all schools. One stakeholder observed that three different versions might be required and suggested: the current version for schools with more than 60 per cent Service child cohort; a shorter version for schools with between 25 and 50 per cent Service children; and a short, summary version for schools with fewer Service children:

> *If this came to me as a chair of Governors, I would speak to the*

data manager and say, 'How many kids have we got in this cohort?' 'Two'. I would skim read it at best. If I had something that was a couple of pages long, I would read that and I would bring it up at the next meeting.

Smaller changes were also suggested, for example:

> *I thought it might be helpful if you could identify whether each of those examples [from practice] is from either a school with a lot of military children or [otherwise] because that might help with proportionality.*

Stakeholders also had differing views about how the framework should be presented. Options such as a printed booklet, a PDF to be printed on-demand, and an IT version that people can access as and when needed were described.

Stakeholders priority areas

The seven principles outlined in the framework relate to different areas of support for staff, schools and Service children, including:

- Supporting staff to better understand the topic and supporting their continuing professional development
- Enhancing school policies and procedures

- Supporting Service children's achievement and progression.

When asked about priority areas, a number of stakeholders said that no particular area was a priority for them, rather it is how the principles work together that is important:

> *My perception on this is that in order to be able to support a child and also their wider family, you've got to do all these things really.*

Service children tend to achieve well academically when compared to other cohorts. Therefore, there is potential for staff who are teaching Service children to not adequately consider the cohort's achievement and progression and also for there to be a lack of policy focus on their needs:

> *[The perception is] we don't need to do much about their academic progress.*

> *I'd say with policymakers the focus is much more on well-being. There is concern that attainment is missed because the Service children are doing well but it's, are they doing well enough?*

Nonetheless, *Transition is Effective* was considered by some stakeholders to be very important for the cohort. It was said

to be a key issue for Service children who experience frequent periods of movement and it was noted that those Service children who do less well in terms of achievement and progression tend to be those who move more. The issue is complicated because Service children transition between different countries and devolved education systems:

> *Stuff in there around progression is important. Transition stuff is also really important because we know that, from our policy perspective and from ministerial policy perspective, I know that the focus has very much been on under-achieving groups … I think we know that Service children who under attain are those who are more mobile.*

> *We still have monumental issues in terms of transition between education systems in the UK because of the devolved nature of education and differences in approaches.*

> *[An area that we have been asked by Ministerial Groups to look at is] the flow of pupils within the UK but between the four devolved administrations. That's an aspect of this that we're quite interested in. How pupils negotiate that and also how schools actually can support that. Particularly because the curriculums across the four*

devolved administrations are quite distinct.

A lot of work is around transition at the moment, both within England, devolved administrations, overseas. Transition is a big area of interest.

Stakeholders' roles

Almost all stakeholders said that they were able to support and disseminate the framework and would do so:

We don't dictate what schools do but we are very much in the business of wanting to signpost schools towards good quality sources of support to maximise the impact of the funding they receive. So it is exactly what we do with the Pupil Premium, we publish very limited information, 'the money you are receiving, this is what it is for, this is how you're going to be held accountable for its use' but then we also signpost them towards specific resources that they should be using.

There was a willingness among most stakeholders to disseminate the framework in different ways and to different audiences and users. It was clear that most had the ability, the capacity, and the organisational remit to undertake effective dissemination:

Our job, in many ways, over the last few years, has been to fund schools to ensure that projects can be delivered to support Service children. We've pushed things around the Service Pupil Premium so I think within all of that, our job is to push any initiative that is going to impact positively … We do talk at lots of different events, schools in the UK. I think it is our remit to make sure that people are aware of all of these sorts of projects.

We can take it out and promote it to our schools quite easily.

We can send this directly to schools … We also work closely with the National Governance Association, could look at getting it added to the NGA website, so it could be aimed at governing bodies as well. We do have a group called MODLAP who do work very closely with fifteen Local Authorities that have the most Service children in them and that equates to about two-thirds of all Service children in England. So, we could look for ways for distributing across that group, that would be easy.

Regarding accountability, stakeholders observed that it was incumbent on schools to support all pupils' education and that therefore they would be accountable for Service children along

with their wider school population. Promoting the framework alongside Service Pupil Premium was thought to be one way of incorporating accountability and one stakeholder reported:

> *We do try to hold the Local Authorities to account and then we ask them to sort of sign up to agreements about how they will work with us and Service children.*

Practical barriers to implementing the framework

It is positive that, as the preceding section shows, almost all stakeholders reported that they would be able to disseminate to a range of gatekeepers, using a variety of dissemination and engagement approaches. Stakeholders are, for example, able to engage Ministers, Local Authorities, Higher Education Institutions, Independent and Maintained schools, Academies and Free Schools, school governance bodies, School Leadership Teams, unions and teachers. A range of engagement methods have been proposed, including lobbying government, meetings with key gatekeepers, direct physical and/or email dissemination and presentations at relevant conferences.

One stakeholder observed that in order to disseminate successfully to schools, it would be necessary to develop a database of schools with Service child populations. During consultations with another stakeholder it became clear that such a database was being developed and should be going live in early 2020. The database would be available to facilitate the dissemination of the framework to English schools. However, the research did not find a consistent view on what the best method for disseminating the framework and achieving buy-in would be and approaching schools directly was not thought by some stakeholders to be the most effective method of engagement:

> *I think they [LAs] can be instrumental, and also Academy Trusts. It's about approaching them at that level rather than going to various schools … Teacher training providers as well, so getting this out to teachers before they've even started so that you've got a wave of enthusiastic, informed practitioners.*

> *[Disseminate to] the Local Authority. [But], depending on the relationship the LA have with local Academies and Free Schools, there's a need for another route there … We've got relationships with Regional Schools Commissioners which is potentially a route and I'd think you need to get buy-in at that level, then to the Academy Trusts they're*

responsible to, to highlight best practice.

Governance is really important. What we have found from other interventions and frameworks is that there needs to be a strategic direction. It needs the senior level buy-in so that people know that it's of strategic importance to the organisation.

Methods of improving the chances of successful implementation were outlined, potentially involving a two-tier engagement strategy. For example, signposting to schools which draw Service Pupil Premium would first necessitate ensuring that the framework was available from relevant sources:

So, any school looking at Service Pupil Premium strategy, we will explicitly signpost them to the Educational Endowment Foundation[5] and its resources and we'd do that in a number of ways.

Stakeholders did not generally think that 'school culture' would necessarily mitigate against the framework's implementation. On the contrary, it was observed that the format of the framework would help busy schools to use it effectively:

Teachers, in their DNA, they want to help and schools, it's often the

same sort of culture but it's, 'I don't know what to do for the best and I'm scared of making it worse'. So, actually, I think this sort of very simple framework will give them their starting point.

Everybody is very busy so if there's something they can pick of a shelf and use as a reference tool, then it's going to be beneficial.

However, it was pointed out that different areas of the UK are more or less involved with the education of Service children. In areas with a large proportion of Service children there will be good links between the local Command and schools and also military welfare services that could help engage parents. However, in areas where there are fewer serving personnel and therefore schools with a smaller proportion of Service children, it could be more difficult to engage schools:

[Some areas of the UK] have people who've been employed specifically … to push issues, Service children champions. And then there's other places that have nothing.

In places that [Service child populations] are really large, probably there's a good chance that the local Command might be

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[5] https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/

the Chair of Governors … Families Federation[6] Welfare service and the HIVES[7] . The HIVES is obviously really a first point of contact.

There are big challenges to get engagement by schools which have got small Service child populations and where those children may be only at the school for a very short time.

In addition to identifying barriers, stakeholders outlined enabling factors that would enhance the potential for successful implementation. These included utilising stakeholders' existing links with relevant policymakers, Service organisations, schools, etc. One stakeholder wondered if there are networks between schools that have a high percentage of Service children. If so, they could be vehicles for the sharing of the framework and effective practice, if not, the SCiP Alliance could promote the development of such networks. As discussed earlier, stakeholders also suggested that developing different versions of the framework for different audiences would be beneficial. In addition, the development of the framework was thought to be timely.

Service children are on the agenda now.

If we'd tried to do this five years ago, I don't know whether it would have got an awful lot of notice but I think there is a lot more recognition of this group of children.

While the SPP exists, that's a helpful link to make because it becomes real and tangible rather than something which is a bit more vague and less well understood.

There are a number of reviews [currently, such as] Andrew Selous' review[8] which will be released before the end of the year and will hopefully raise the profile of Service children a little bit more.

Conclusion

There was a universally positive response to the framework from stakeholders. Stakeholders were from key organisations who could be instrumental in contributing to dissemination of the framework and supporting its successful implementation. They believed its development was timely, coming during a period when there is a policy focus on the welfare of Service families and on Service child education.

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[6] https://www.raf-ff.org.uk/; https://aff.org.uk/
[7] https://www.army.mod.uk/personnel-and-welfare/hives/
[8] Independent Report on Service Families https://nff.org.uk/independent-report/

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The framework was said to be pitched at the right level, structured in a way that was, on the whole, accessible and easily understood. It 'ticks the right boxes' because it addresses all topics that are necessary to better support Service children in schools of various types and in different circumstances: maintained; independent; Academies; or Free Schools. In promoting a holistic approach to Service child education, the framework is consistent with Ofsted's new Education Inspection Framework.

While the ways that the seven principles work together was important, *Transition is Effective* was a key issue for some stakeholders. Although Service children tend to achieve well in schools, those who are most mobile do less well. Issues relating to improving the successful transition of Service children are gaining prominence in policy circles and the framework will help schools better assess how they can support the cohort. Service children potentially transfer into and out of schools located in different countries, into and out of the four UK nations and between Local Authorities and Academy Trusts. The successful sharing of information between schools is therefore important in ensuring that Service children access the full curriculum and are able to achieve their potential. In cases where a Service child moves to a school that is repeating part of a curriculum that they have already covered, they may be encouraged to share their learning with others, thereby helping them to gain confidence in their new situations. Service children have a range of knowledge and experience which can be utilised, transition can be an opportunity for development, rather than necessarily a problem.

Stakeholders either explicitly stated or implied that, although the current framework is a step in the right direction, it is not yet a finished product. In schools where there are relatively few Service children, the current framework might be too large to gain attention and be successfully implemented. The language used and aspects such as the colour coding and columns contribute to its usability and it will be important to maintain these successful characteristics if the framework is condensed or amended for different contexts. Consideration should also be given to what would be the appropriate format, e.g. printed booklet, PDF or online for example as a webpage or distance learning facility.

The research did not identify a particular dissemination method or audience that was agreed by all stakeholders. However, there was universal agreement that the framework is timely and that it can benefit from an increasing policy focus at ministerial level. The fact that there are developments such as the Armed Forces Covenant which operate across policy areas should ensure that Service children's education maintains visibility in the longer term. It is clear that the stakeholders consulted have networks and contacts that will enable them to disseminate the framework effectively and it is encouraging that there is a willingness among stakeholders to promote it. A database of schools with Service children in England will be finalised in early 2020 and can be used to facilitate dissemination of the framework at school level. Data is available for the level of Service Pupil Premium allocated by Local Authority and Parliamentary Constituency which, coupled with stakeholders' contacts and networks, could aid successful dissemination.

Recommendations

The following recommendations flow from the stakeholder research.

- **Policymakers should encourage engagement with the framework in order to better support Service child education.** This should be done at all government levels and in all UK nations in order to support achieving the aims of the Armed Forces Covenant and other measures being undertaken to support military personnel and their families.

- **The SCiP Alliance and partners should consider if the framework adequately reflects the potential contribution that Service children can make to school life.** Stakeholders noted that Service children can have a range of positive experiences gained through being members of Service families and communities and through living and attending school in different geographical locations and educational contexts. Being able to share those experiences could help Service children contribute to overall school life and simultaneously enhance their own well-being and transition.

- **The SCiP Alliance and partners should develop a dissemination strategy.** The strategy should include, at a minimum, a timetable, an outline of key dissemination audiences, a list of who will be undertaking the activities, dissemination methods, and follow-up activities.

Dissemination should be informed by stakeholders' existing contacts and activities and stakeholders should be closely engaged in the development of the strategy.

- **Dissemination activities should be piloted in the first instance** and their success or otherwise in obtaining buy-in should be assessed before further activities are undertaken.

- **The SCiP Alliance and partners should consider how best to ensure that the framework is accessible in a variety of different contexts.** There was general agreement that the existing framework has positive characteristics such as colour coding, columns, examples, and accessibility of language that should be maintained. One way of doing this could be to have at least two versions, one as it currently exists and another, shorter version with links to additional information and implementation guidance. If it is decided that different versions of the framework should be developed for different audiences, this is likely to necessitate a brief period of further stakeholder consultation to ensure that they remain suitable for implementation.

- **A piloting strategy should be developed and an initial pilot of the implementation of the framework should be undertaken.** When the framework is implemented it will be important to measure its impact in a range of schools: those with large Service child populations, those with fewer Service children, and those which have only a small number of Service child pupils. The pilot should assess the processes and mechanisms through which schools are engaged, as well as the success, or otherwise, of schools in implementing the seven principles and supporting the cohort. This would also capture good practice examples of differentiated implementation strategies which would add additional evidence.

- **An evaluation strategy should be developed.** A post-implementation evaluation strategy would assess at least two aspects of the framework's longer-term implementation:
  - The outcomes for end-users, Service children in schools. Has the education of Service children been improved, in what ways?
  - The outcomes for schools. Has the framework promoted structural change and improvements for the better education of Service children?

The evaluation strategy should be developed in tandem with any piloting activity and an evaluation

partner should be engaged at the earliest opportunity. Ideally that should be before piloting and implementation in order to advise on methods and approaches.

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Appendix A – Web-Based Survey

<u>Background questions</u>

- Location of school (region)
- Is your school primary or secondary level?
- Approximately how many Service children are in your school?
- Does your school have a long-standing relationship with Service children?

<u>Governance</u>

- Is there a military representative on the school's governing body?
- What types of thing is the Service Pupil Premium spent on at your school?
- Does your school have a student representative body?
    - If yes, are Service children purposely represented?
- Is there a school policy to accept siblings from Service family?
- How are Service children identified in your school?

<u>Teaching and Learning/CPD</u>

- Is there a strategy to address curriculum gaps for recently enrolled Service children?
    - If yes, can you briefly explain
- At KS3 and KS4, are there opportunities for recently enrolled Service children to complete a subject under the exam board of their previous school?
- What are the challenges Service children face in terms of teaching and learning?
- Are there opportunities for additional educational support for Service children?
    - If yes, can you briefly explain
- What training is available for staff to understand and act on issues Service children face?

<u>Pastoral support/CPD</u>

- Which internal staff provide pastoral support
- Are staff given protected time for pastoral support?
- Are all staff informed if a pupil falls into the Service child category?
- At times of parental separation/deployment/extended exercise is additional pastoral support available?
    - If yes, how is that identified and enacted?
- Are there opportunities for pastoral support to engage with parents and carers?
    - If yes, what form does this take?
- What training is available for staff to provide pastoral support to Service children?
- Does training include issues of:
    - Relocation
    - Stages of deployment?

- What training would be helpful?

School to school transition

- Are there strategies to support non-standard time enrolment?
  - If yes, can you briefly explain.
- Is there a named staff member for incoming students to contact before arriving?
- Does the school provide pre/post transition support?
- Are you aware of school to school transition issues?
  - If yes, can you briefly explain?

Careers

- Does your school have formal careers provision?
- Who is responsible for careers?
- Thinking about the main person delivering careers guidance at your school, what is their highest careers qualification?
- When engaging with employers, is the military included as an employer?
- Is additional careers support offered to Service children?
  - If yes, can you briefly explain

Appendix B – Focus group and stakeholder interview topic guide

1. Can I please check, have you had a chance to review the Framework?

        Yes / No – if no, arrange to call back

2. Can you please briefly explain your and/or your organisation's role with regard to Service children?

3. Briefly, what is your overall view of the framework?"

4. What do you think are the strengths of the framework?

5. And what do you think are the weaknesses?

6. Within the framework, what are the priority areas for you and/or your organisation?

7. What do you think is your and/or your organisation's role in:

Increasing awareness of the framework
Increasing schools' access to resources
Increasing school buy-in
Ensuring accountability

8. What might be the practical barriers to implementing the framework?

9. And what enabling factors are there?

10. What impact, if any, do you think school culture plays in the implementation of the framework?

11. Do you have any other comments about the framework?

Thank you for your time! If you think of anything else over the next day or two, please drop me an email.

Appendix C - Supporting Service children in School: An Organisational Improvement Framework

Within the UK Armed Forces context, a Service child is a person whose parent, or carer, serves in the regular armed forces, or as a reservist, or has done at any point during the first 25 years of that person's life. Quoting the 2016 School Census, McCulloch and Hall (2016) report that there are 68,771 Service children in England. Service family life may be characterised by experiences such as repeated relocation, separation and deployment. Literature often refers to the negative impact this can have on Service children's well-being and achievement.

Research carried out by the International Centre for Guidance Studies (iCeGS) at the University of Derby examined issues that Service children may face and school strategies to support them. The research comprised:

- Literature review
- Web-based survey with 479 schools/colleges with Service children enrolled
- Qualitative case studies with six schools with Service children enrolled identified for their good practice and with at least 'good' Ofsted inspection judgements. The schools provided a balance of primary and secondary and proportions of Service children whilst serving all three Services between them.

The findings from the literature review, web-based survey and school case studies were then developed into an organisational improvement framework. The central purpose of this framework is to enable schools to identify improvement priorities through an evidence-based self-evaluation tool. The framework development took a grounded theory approach, informed by:

- Previous literature
- Service child challenges highlighted by teaching staff through both the web-based survey and school case studies

- Approaches to supporting Service children by teaching staff described in the web-based survey and school case studies
- Service child challenges highlighted by students in the school case study research
- Potential approaches to supporting Service children highlighted by pupils during the school case study research.
- Feedback from a selection of schools and SCIP Alliance representatives during the user-testing of an initial version of the framework.

The dual focus of challenges and approaches to effective provision allows the framework to highlight potential priorities for improvement through robust evidence and potential strategies of implementation through existing practice. Through the multi-staged research process, the following seven principles emerged:

- Our approach is clear
- Transition is effective
- Achievement is maximised
- Well-being is supported
- Parents are engaged
- Support is responsive
- Staff are well-informed

Alongside these principles, the framework includes a number of examples of existing practice from schools with both high and low numbers of Service children enrolled. These examples are not intended to be prescriptive but rather highlight how other schools have addressed support needs for their Service children. Each principle within the framework has a set of self-reflective questions which school leaders are encouraged to answer. Questions have been designed in such a way to be applicable to schools at different stages of developing their support systems for Service children, as well as schools of different phases and in differing contexts. The self-reflective questions are answered using a Red, Amber, Green (RAG) system:

■	Not in place - support related to this self-reflection question is currently not provided or the response is very limited.
■	Emerging - support related to this self-reflection question is currently provided or the response is generally a positive one; however, support could be developed further to ensure continuity of provision throughout the school.
■	Established - support related to this self-reflection question is currently provided well, or the response indicates an area of strength, and it is established throughout the school.

School leaders are encouraged to first identify questions in which they would score themselves green. This will enable them to establish a baseline of strong provision before then going on to allocate either amber or red scores to areas which they may wish to consider strengthening.

The organisational improvement framework is organised in three levels:

- **Level 1:** this level contains the framework's principles and vision statements – the purpose of this level is to allow the central focus of the framework to be internalised by readers before going into more detail. It will allow school leaders with limited time an opportunity to review the framework.

- **Level 2:** this level contains the framework principles and vision statements, along with examples of what these principles look like in practice, self-reflective questions and a RAG scoring system support self-reflective evaluation.

- **Level 3:** this level gives further examples of practice used in some schools in support of these principles. All examples are from schools involved in the research and, importantly, include examples from schools with relatively few Service children enrolled.

Principle	Vision Statement
1. Our Approach is clear	There is clear and transparent representation, expenditure and support for Service children.
2. Transition is effective	There is a collective strategy to support Service children when they transition in and out of a school.
3. Achievement is maximised	Service children are supported to ensure that Service life is not an obstacle to achievement.
4. Well-being is supported	Schools have a pastoral strategy which takes into account the needs of Service children.
5. Parents are engaged	Schools will establish a working relationship with parents to support both Service children and Service families.
6. Support is responsive	Service children support will be revised and updated based on Service child feedback.
7. Staff are well-informed	There is a whole school awareness of the needs of Service children and good understanding of their context.

	Vision statement	What this might look like	Reflective Questions	Response – Green, Amber, Red
1- Our approach is clear	There is clear and transparent representation, expenditure and support for Service children.	There is a member of the Governing Body with responsibility for Service children. Examples from practice: *A member of the Governing Body has a champion and scrutiny role for the welfare and outcomes of Service children.* *Reporting to the Governing Body includes specific reporting on the progress of Service children and the support provided.*	Is there a member of the Governing Body who has oversight for Service children?	
			To what extent is that person able to access information and resources to support Service children?	

		There is a clear understanding of how any government funding to support Service children is used. Examples from practice: *School staff and governors are aware of the Service Pupil Premium (SPP). Leaders identify and resource specific support for Service children. Support may include:* • *Emotional Literacy Support Assistant work* • *Additional educational resources promoting/celebrating the military* • *Additional administrator hours* • *Specific field trips* • *Residential activities* • *Staff release time from teaching to support Service children* • *Resources such as iPads* • *Additional transport (to and from school)* • *Bespoke after-school clubs*	To what extent are all leaders including governors aware of the Service Pupil Premium (English government-funded schools only)?	
			To what extent do you record how, and for what, the Service Pupil Premium is spent?	
			To what extent is Service Pupil Premium strategically used to address Service children issues?	
			To what extent is expenditure of Service Pupil Premium informed by examples of practice?	
		The school admissions policy makes explicit reference to admitting Service children and their siblings. Examples from practice: *School leaders include specific guidance in school information, such*	Where possible, to what extent does your admissions policy include specific reference to accepting Service children and/or additional siblings?	
			To what extent do you support non-standard enrolment?	

		as the website or prospectus, on admissions policy and related support for Service children.	To what extent is careful consideration given to admitting Service children mid-year, even if this means going above the published Pupil Admission Number or the Infant Class Size regulations (England)?	
2- Transition is effective	"There is a collective strategy to support Service children when they transition in and out of a school"	Service children are identified prior to admission to the school/current pupils who become Service children are identified. Examples from practice: *Enrolment procedure identifies Service children.* *Parents are regularly asked for updates for changes that the school should be aware, such as whether they have become a Service child and this is tracked.*	To what extent does your school identify Service children?	
			To what extent do you have systems in place to support a positive 1st day experience?	
		There is effective liaison with the school where the pupil is transferring from/to. Examples from practice: *Records are transferred to support with educational progress and emotional/well-being, for both those pupils transferring in and those transferring on.*	To what extent do you liaise with a Service child's previous and next school?	
			To what extent do you use transfer records to pass on pupil information that you would find helpful to receive yourself?	

		Direct contact is made with the transferring or receiving school *Systems are in place to maximise the continuity of support for Service children with special educational needs and / or disabilities.*	To what extent do you minimise the need to re-start assessments when Service children with SEND join the school?	
		There is a positive experience from Day 1. Examples from practice: *The pupil's 'first day' is prioritised with resources and contacts in place. 'Temporary' uniform may also be provided.* *A buddy system supports the integration to the new school environment.*	To what extent do you have a buddy system in place for new students?	
3- Achievement is maximised	"Service children are supported to ensure that Service life is not an obstacle to achievement."	On entry assessment is undertaken for all Service children. Examples from practice: *On entry assessment is used at whatever point in the school year the pupil enters the school and includes non-academic factors such as social and emotional development.*	To what extent do you undertake entry level assessment for new pupils?	
			To what extent do you monitor assessments to highlight curriculum gaps?	
		On entry assessment is used to set targets/plan progress. Examples from practice:	To what extent do you have a strategy to address curriculum gaps?	

				To what extent do you have a strategy to address SEND Service children's needs?	
			Along with on entry assessment, the school is aware of the areas of the curriculum that have already been covered and differentiated support is provided.		
			Achievement is supported through additional learning support	To what extent do you provide additional learning support for Service children?	
			Examples of practice:		
			Staff recognise the additional barriers faced by Service children and provide additional learning support.	To what extent do you provide regular reviews of Service children's progress?	
			This may include support to catch up on topics that have not been covered by the pupil, as their previous curriculum was delivered in a different order. The pupil can also contribute to topics that have previously been covered.		
			A variety of progression pathways are presented and understood.	To what extent does your careers strategy specifically consider Service children?	
			Examples from practice:		
			School's careers strategies take into account the needs of those from Service families.	To what extent do you provide additional careers support for Service children?	
			Careers information, advice and guidance includes military and non-military options, with careers	To what extent is the military included in examples of potential employment pathways?	

				To what extent are non-military options provided to Service children?	
			guidance staff made aware that the pupil is from a Service family.	To what extent do you liaise with the MoD for careers support?	
4- Well-being is supported	"Schools have a pastoral strategy taking into account the needs of Service children"	Pastoral support takes into account the needs of Service children. Examples from practice: *Staff providing pastoral support have a high level of knowledge of issues facing Service children including deployment/separation (including weekending) and transition.*	To what extent do you provide pastoral support to Service children?		
				To what extent do you provide pastoral support to Service children who are also young carers?	
		Service children have opportunities to meet/have discussions with other Service children. Examples from practice: *Where there are several Service children in the school, this may be through a specific club/society.*	To what extent do you support Service child clubs and societies?		
		Effective support is put in place at the time of deployment/separation. Examples from practice:	To what extent do you have mechanisms in place to provide additional pastoral support for Service children during times of deployment/separation?		

		Schools may provide social and emotional support through opportunities to discuss feelings.	To what extent do you complete proactive work with Service children during deployment/separation?	
		The role of the military and knowledge of deployment is embedded into the curriculum. Examples from practice:	To what extent do you include opportunities to promote the military in the curriculum?	
		Schools focus on regions where parents are currently deployed allowing pupils to gain more information. *Schools include reading materials that offer a positive account of the military.*	To what extent do you include opportunities to discuss deployment/separation in the curriculum?	
5- Parents are engaged	"Schools will establish a working relationship with parents to support both Service children and Service Families"	There is close liaison with the family at the time of deployment or frequent periods of serving parents working away from home. Examples from practice: *Schools have a proactive approach to engaging with parents. This may include:* • *Close liaison with parents to know when separation / deployment is likely and how the school can support, if required.*	To what extent do you liaise with parents / guardians to update deployment / separation information?	

		• Opportunity to use online communication software to talk to parents • Parent liaison support offered, including coffee mornings, support in form time, 1-1 support • Support to parents with any behavioral concerns relating to a Service child e.g. parental workshops • Support when the parent is returning and re-enters the family home	To what extent does the school provide pastoral support to parents / guardians of Service children?	
6. Support is responsive	"Service child support will be revised and updated based on Service child feedback"	Feedback is sought and used to shape support for Service children and their families. Examples from practice: Feedback is sought regularly through Service child representation on school councils.	To what extent do you seek feedback from Service children and their families on the support provided?	
			To what extent do you act upon feedback from Service children and their families?	

7. Staff are well-informed	"There is a whole school awareness of the needs of Service children"	There is a named person on the staff team who is the key contact and lead for Service children. Examples from practice: *A member of SLT has responsibility for maintaining up to date knowledge on the area of Service children and uses this to disseminate information to the staff team.*	Do you have a named point of contact for staff to access support / information?	
		Staff understand the issues facing Service children. Examples from practice: *Relevant staff know which pupils have military parents.* *Training may include areas such as: stages of deployment and the emotional cycle, transition cycle and life in the military.*	To what extent does staff training include issues concerning deployment / separation?	
			To what extent does staff training include issues concerning school-to-school transition?	
			To what extent does staff training include life in the military?	
			To what extent does staff training include engaging with parents?	
		Staff have the skills and understanding to support Service children effectively. Examples from practice: *You may link with a mentoring / peer support network for staff supporting Service children.*	To what extent do staff who support Service children have links with staff in other institutions in order to share good practice?	

Framework Level 3

Principle 1: Our approach is clear

Vision statement – "There is clear and transparent representation, expenditure and support for Service children."

Examples of Practice:

Through the research which informed this framework, representation of Service children at schools' strategic level has been argued to be of benefit. Previous research makes the case that such representation provides opportunities for flexible provision for Service children and a "cultural awareness" of the life of a Service child at this level of the school's organisation. This literature goes on to argue that a particular strategic intervention, which strong representation can support, is a clear policy of admitting Service children, especially at non-standard admission points, and prioritising eligible siblings being enrolled at the same school.

For instance, schools that understand the pressures of pupil transition at times of parental posting might go over their Pupil Admission Numbers and / or the DfE class size limit of 30 for infant classes to ensure they admit Service children mid-year, including siblings. Some schools also include these pupils in their over-subscription criteria as a way of playing their part in the Armed Forces Covenant.

Many schools ensure that Service children are a distinct group whose attainment and academic progress is reported on, alongside other potentially vulnerable groups such as ethnic minorities, young carers and pupils with SEND. Similarly, such schools' *Headteacher Reports to Governors* make reference to their Service child cohorts, and their Governing Body minutes evidences challenge from governors that these pupils are achieving well (and if not, what needs to change so that they do).

A central aspect of school transparency and the support of a clear approach is awareness of the Service Pupil Premium in England (SPP) and making it clear how this is spent effectively to support Service children. Participating schools in the research listed a range of activities on which they spend the SPP:

- *ELSA- Emotional Literacy Support Assistant work*
- *Additional educational resources promoting/celebrating the military*
- *Additional administrator hours*
- *Specific field trips*
- *Residential activities*
- *Staff release time from teaching to support Service children*
- *Resources such as iPads*
- *Additional transport (to and from school)*
- *Bespoke after-school clubs*

Schools that use this public money effectively often do the following:

- Have a clear strategy for their SPP spending, and consult relevant parents on this
- Publish their strategy, for example through the school website
- Evaluate the impact of the strategy, changing it when it is deemed not to be presenting good value for money

It should be noted, however, that for both security reasons and in line with GDPR regulations, any public-available strategy should not include pupils' names.

A participating secondary School's Service children lead provided a detailed account of how they spend their SPP: *"SPP has several different functions; it goes into departmental budgets to address the needs of Service children in the curriculum and that can be used on a number of things and often I'll be asked for advice on how this can be spent. So, in English or History, this can be used for additional resources when discussing topics including the military. Then an additional part of the funding is passed to me for pastoral support including trips … There are pots that they can bid into … SPP is also used to buy out some of my time so I am free to do mentoring and some of the money is used to liaise with the Service community's counselling organisations.*

A leader in a primary school with a low number of Service children (two pupils in a cohort of 360 pupils) explained that they use the SPP to allow their small number of Service children to interact with their Service child peers from other schools: *"Time for staff to be involved with local cluster group for Service families; transport costs for Service Children to participate in activities organised by the cluster; half-termly 'get-togethers' with the Service Children at our school and the neighbouring junior school."*

Principle 2: Transition is effective

Vison statement: "There is a collective strategy to support Service children when they transition in and out of a school."

Examples of Practice:

Through the research which informed this framework, a robust and supportive transition procedure for pupils both entering and leaving schools was a priority. Identifying Service children on entry to a school, or current pupils who become Service children, is fundamental to ensuring that they are supported. The main identification strategies included:

- Admission form
- Request to parents for updated information

One participating school highlighted the relatively simple inclusion of Service children in a daily staff meeting: *"We have a daily meeting and on Mondays we talk about pupils including anyone coming or going from the school."*

School staff discussed a range of ways in which Service children's transitions between schools were supported. These included:

- Liaising with a pupil's previous or next school, examples included:

  - *"Before they [Service children] start we send them a welcome pack and they fill in things all about them to make their past important. They'll talk about things in their old school and then we give them some information about who's who in the school, information about the school, pictures of the classroom and a feelings sheet about how they're feeling about coming to the school … When we don't get paperwork, we phone up previous schools and have a chat as some schools are not very proactive. If there's an issue with a child, then we also phone their next school so they don't miss anything … Before they leave, we have a sheet about how they're feeling about leaving, we go onto their new school website and try to find out how much we can and we phone the next school and talk on the speaker phone. Some parents do this but then others don't so it's helpful for us to do it."*

- Prioritising a Service child's first day experience, examples from schools included:

  - *"We would make sure that everything is set up for them like a name label and a peg label. We do 'show and tell' for someone new to tell them where they are from."*

- Organising a buddy system for new pupils, examples from schools included:

  - *"If they (Service children) were coming mid-way through the year, we would make sure they're part of the buddy system and we also do that for the parents too as things as new so they're linked to a parent as well."*

  Service children highlighted the benefits of a buddy system, with one commenting, *"The buddy system helps, it makes you have an automatic friend."*

While some provision for Service children is labour intensive and requiring expenditure from the Service Pupil Premium or other funding, schools with lower numbers of Service children often provide support via the curriculum alongside organising a buddy system. An example from a primary school with one Service child in a school of 137 students: *"PSHE work on building relationships, allowing children to discuss the impact of moving house and school at regular intervals. When we had a greater number of Service children we ran a specific group in order that they could share common experiences."*

Ensuring that a school receives sufficient and timely information about a pupil joining is critical for a smooth transition. Successful schools chase missing records relentlessly. There is an expectation that, **as a minimum,** schools in England and Wales complete the Common Transfer File (CTF) for any departing pupil, and September 2018 saw some helpful changes to this. When a Service child transitions between state schools in England, the outgoing school is asked to complete specific Service child 'fields' relating to how the individual child

manages during times of parental deployment, mobility and separation. Receiving schools should now receive an alert when a Service child enters their school.

A key feature of provision in this area is to have a clear 'mobility' policy / set of procedures which is rigorously followed and regularly reviewed for its effectiveness. For new pupil arrivals, this should include an opportunity after a settling in period for a relevant member of staff to meet with a Service child and his/her parents to check on how their induction is going, making adjustments as necessary. Many schools support pupil mobility by having well established leaving and arriving rituals, such as songs in assembly or special booklets of memories to keep. The benefits of individual adult time provided to pupils at times of transition to help them prepare and provide them with a safe space to talk, as well as to emphasise the positives of moving, cannot be over-stated. Arrivals and leavers display boards with photographs and affirming messages are a regular feature of effective schools' provision.

Principle 3: Achievement is maximised

Vision statement: "Service children are supported to ensure that Service life is not an

obstacle to achievement."

Examples of Practice:

Through the research which informed this framework, a commitment to support Service children to maximise personal levels of achievement was a clear priority. Schools managed to support Service children through a range of activities, these included:

- **On-entry assessments to evaluate Service children's prior attainment.** A participating primary school leader explained their policy: *"In-year admissions are tested on entry and any gaps are planned into teaching and interventions. New topics begin with diagnosis of previous knowledge in order that any gaps can be identified and filled."* However, it should be stressed that such assessments should not take place too soon since a new arrival needs to have a sense of security before undertaking assessments to improve accuracy.
- **Additional learning support.** A leader from a participating middle school with very few Service children (three pupils in a school of 512) provided an account of their strategy to identify and provide additional support: *"Head of inclusion allows a settling period of less than a month before meeting with parents and pupils and taking information from staff to discuss any gaps. Catch up in the form of alternative homework may be provided."*
- **Celebrating Service children's previous learning.** A participating primary school leader explained how school staff encourage and reward pupils for discussing topics they had previously studied: *"We'll try and celebrate a topic that a new student has covered that we don't do, so we'll ask them to talk to the class about that theme."*
- **Additional transition and careers support.** A participating secondary school provides bespoke advice and attention to Service children and incorporates the military into their careers provision: *"So when they're making their choices for GCSE they sit down*

with the year head and me to talk through options. They do a work experience in year 10 and extra support for Service pupils is provided during any transition stage within the school (subjects, SATS, work experience and further study), military come and talk to our students about possible jobs."

Some successful schools ensure that a strong focus is placed on ensuring that a Service child's emotional health and wellbeing is supported as a precursor to academic achievement (also see below – principle 4). Evidenced-based programmes such as Emotional First Aid (Solent NHS) are delivered to staff to support this, with trained Emotional First Aiders then able to provide bespoke support to pupils, and children themselves may be provided with support such as anxiety workshops. Some schools assess non-academic skills on entry, and tailor their pastoral provision accordingly.

Principle 4: Well-being is supported

Vision statement: "Schools have a pastoral strategy taking into account the needs of Service children."

Examples of Practice:

Through the research which informed this framework, participating schools outlined a range of approaches they have developed in order to ensure that Service child well-being is supported throughout their time in education. These included:

- **Staff providing pastoral support during deployment/weekending.** A leader from a participating secondary school with a low number of Service children (20 from a student population of 600 students) outlined the partnership model they have between non-teaching staff, teaching staff and student mentors to support Service children: *"Learning manager for each year group/key stage (non-teaching staff) would support the student and inform teaching staff to ensure we offer as much support as possible. We have a sixth form mentoring programme which could also help, along with […] our formal mentoring programme every Friday."*

- **Staff are aware when parents are on deployment.** A member of staff from another participating school with a low number of Service children (two students from a population of 57) discussed the importance of engagement with parents to be aware of upcoming deployments: *"Close liaison with parents means we know when separation/deployment is likely and can support, if required."*

Importantly, Service children commented on the importance of teachers being aware of when a deployment was coming up. *"I think teachers should be aware of when parents away; having a system to know when it happens so that we'll know that they'll know."*

- **Curriculum and deployment.** A participating primary school leader commented on how staff weave together Service child issues and the curriculum: *"We did have a child whose dad was deployed for six months last year; a teacher worked regularly*

with him and worked through a map of where his Dad was going and then he'd tell everyone in the class where he was. They found out information about the country and then Facetimed (in the school) [so that] he was able to tell him about the country."

- **Service children have opportunities to spend time with other students.** A participating school leader outlined how their school's deployment club worked: *"Parents fill out paperwork of when they're going and that's kept on file; any child with a parent away for any reason is able to come along to the deployment club. It's mostly craft-based activities and talking about their feelings and how their mum is doing."*

Service children praised the support they received from Service children clubs which allowed them to spend time with other Service children: *"It helps because they're in the same experience situation as you are and people who don't have mums or dads in the military don't know understand how you feel."*

A number of organisations and charities provide helpful resources to support Service children at times of parental deployment and separation, and effective school provision uses these flexibly. One school 'behind the wire' has a room dedicated to this type of work called 'The Zone', complete with map displays, clocks showing the time in relevant overseas locations and accessible supportive resources. Pupils at the school speak very highly of it.

The Royal British Legion now oversees the *Military Kids Club (MKC) Heroes* network. Many successful schools are registered with this peer support scheme, celebrating their Service children's unique identity and culture (also see principle 7).

Principle 5: Parents are engaged

Vision statement: "Schools will establish a working relationship with parents to support both Service children and Service families."

Examples of Practice:

Through the research which informed this framework, a commitment to work effectively with Service families was a clear priority. Schools managed to work with Service families through a range of activities, these included:

- **Regular communication with parents.** A participating school leader discussed an opportunity for regular meetings with Service families: *"We have Service parents' coffee mornings to bring them into the school."* Many schools ensure that communication includes parents who may be working away from home, or on exercise / deployment. This may be through the use of technology and by electronic means, and often includes opportunities for Service children to communicate with the 'away-from-home' parent.

- **Support with behavioural challenges of Service children.** A participating school staff member discussed approaches to align with Service families' behavioural strategies: *"We've worked with her [SP mother] to see if she was using behaviour charts then we'd do the same in the school."*

- **Support for family member when a family member returns.** A Headteacher in another participating school discussed her ongoing role in supporting families when the deployed parent or guardian returns: *"We have done a lot of work with families when dad comes home; we have sit down meetings with the parents to think about how it will work when one person re-enters the family home."*

Providing support for parents is a common feature of successful schools' approaches to supporting Service children. Some schools offer parental workshops; others provide strategies to help identified parents with their own emotional health and wellbeing (e.g. Emotional First Aid for Parents, Solent NHS).

Principle 6: Support is Responsive

Vison statement: "Service child support will be revised and updated based on Service child feedback."

Examples of Practice:

Previous research from the DfE has outlined the benefits of military representation/understanding at a strategic level within the school – specifically, to provide increased awareness of Service child issues. However, there are limits and logistical issues for military representation in many schools. As such, an alternative (or additional) strategy can be supporting the inclusion of Service child voice on school councils and other children's voice forums.

Through the research which informed this framework, responsive support was the least established principle in many schools with Service children on roll. However, participating case study schools were attuned to providing Service children a voice - this was through Service child representation at school councils or groups such as the Royal British Legion's Military Kids Club (MKC) Heroes. A leader at a participating school with low levels of Service children (22 students in a cohort of 1051) explained how they do this: *"There is a support group for Service students where their concerns are heard."*

In contrast, a school with a high proportion of Service children (57 students out of a cohort of 80) reported that while there is no policy of Service child representation, this often happens due to the high numbers of Service children, and Service children are purposely selected to serve as School Ambassadors: *"Our Young Governors are elected democratically so there is no requirement to have a Service child, although because of our high numbers there is almost always at least one Service child on the young governing body. We also elect school ambassadors who welcome new children. There are two in each class and one of those is always a Service child, as often the children arriving are from a Service background."*

Some schools, as part of their school to school transition procedures include opportunities for parents of Service children to complete an exit survey when they leave, providing helpful feedback on the effectiveness of their procedures. Others use survey feedback shortly on arrival to check that their induction support is effective. Some schools also invite parents to inform their Service Pupil Premium spending, using feedback to help evaluate the impact of this funding.

Principle 7: Staff are Well-Informed

Vision Statement: "There is a whole school awareness of the needs of Service children."

Examples of Practice:

Through the research which informed this framework, participating schools provided a range of activities and procedures to ensure that staff are aware of Service child needs, these included:

- **Senior member of staff who is responsible for informing and supporting staff.** A participating school staff member discussed the system the school has for dissemination of information: *"A member of the SLT is responsible for ensuring staff are aware of the needs of Service children across the school. The headteacher and the member of the SLT as a whole read the latest research and ensure information is disseminated."*

- **Training includes a range of issues which Service children face including deployment and transition.** A staff member at a participating school commented on the benefits of having training on issues which affect Service children but also the broader student cohort: *"We've also had separation disorder training – we try to maximise this by having training that can be spread across the school for more students."*

- **Staff may use networks of staff supporting Service children for best practice.** A participating school leader commented on how staff have learned and adopted policies of best practice from other schools: *"I found this online on a forum and it worked well for them [Daddy dolls] so we've been doing it here now."*

Many schools serving military communities often have a wealth of expertise on military family lifestyle within their staff teams, with support staff in particular often including spouses of serving personnel. Effective schools draw on this expertise in providing training and updates to civilian staff. During the research of this framework, many practitioners stated that they would benefit from learning more about what serving personnel's jobs actually entail, and what the various ranks used across the three services mean.