

Service Children's Progression



YOUNG PEOPLE FROM ARMED FORCES FAMILIES:

POST-16 EDUCATION AND TRAINING

TOWARDS A NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR SERVICE
CHILDREN'S POST-16 SUCCESS

KATHERINE LAWRENCE

FACULTY OF EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY OF WINCHESTER

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FOREWORD

The lives of children in Armed Forces families (both serving and veterans) are extremely diverse and can be hugely complex. That diversity and complexity is matched in the 16-19 education landscape, where providers, courses, qualifications and regulation create a dizzying prospect for the students navigating through it and an ever-changing challenge for those trying to make it work for them.

It is the overlapping complexity and diversity of learners and landscape in the 16-19 phase that may account, in part, for the lack of dedicated attention to the unique experiences and needs of these students – both in research and practice – but also for the considerable challenges to making meaningful progress.

Taken as a group, Service children perform well at GCSE, but are under-represented in higher education. We suspect this masks considerable variation within the cohort, but the fact that we don't know adds important weight to the prevailing narrative of low awareness and understanding of Service children in 16-19 education found in this report. The scoping research, testimony and debate brought together in the policy summit that this report summarises identify problematic gaps in data, systemic barriers, patchy and inconsistent practice, and a lack of levers for change. Government, agencies, colleges, all of us must do more. But there is cause for optimism.

The diversity and comprehensiveness of the stakeholders engaging in the summit demonstrates the significant interest in the agenda and the quality of discussion and proposals reflects a shared will to make meaningful change. The SCiP Alliance's considerable growth in the five years since its foundation in 2016 is an indicator of the degree to which the unique experiences and the success of Service children have become significant to thousands of professionals in stakeholder organisations throughout the UK. And the Alliance's existence and ongoing funding from the Ministry of Defence is testimony to a sustained will to translate the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant into thriving lives for Service children. This is good news. But it's a start, not the end.

 Government, agencies, colleges, all of us must do more. But there is cause for optimism.

The recommendations in this report – both quick wins and long-term ambitions – represent simultaneously a great challenge and a timely opportunity. Perhaps, what is missing from the recommendations, is a call to action to the Alliance and its members. A call to make another leap forward: to bring together still more of the communities, practice and research needed to realise change; to articulate for all of us a cohering and compelling rationale and vision to collaborate and act over the long-term; and to support leaders and staff in the 16-19 sector to ensure its diversity represents not a world of uncertainty but of opportunity for every Service child.

Graham Razey OBE
Chief Executive Officer, East Kent Colleges
Summit Chair

Philip Dent
SCiP Alliance Director

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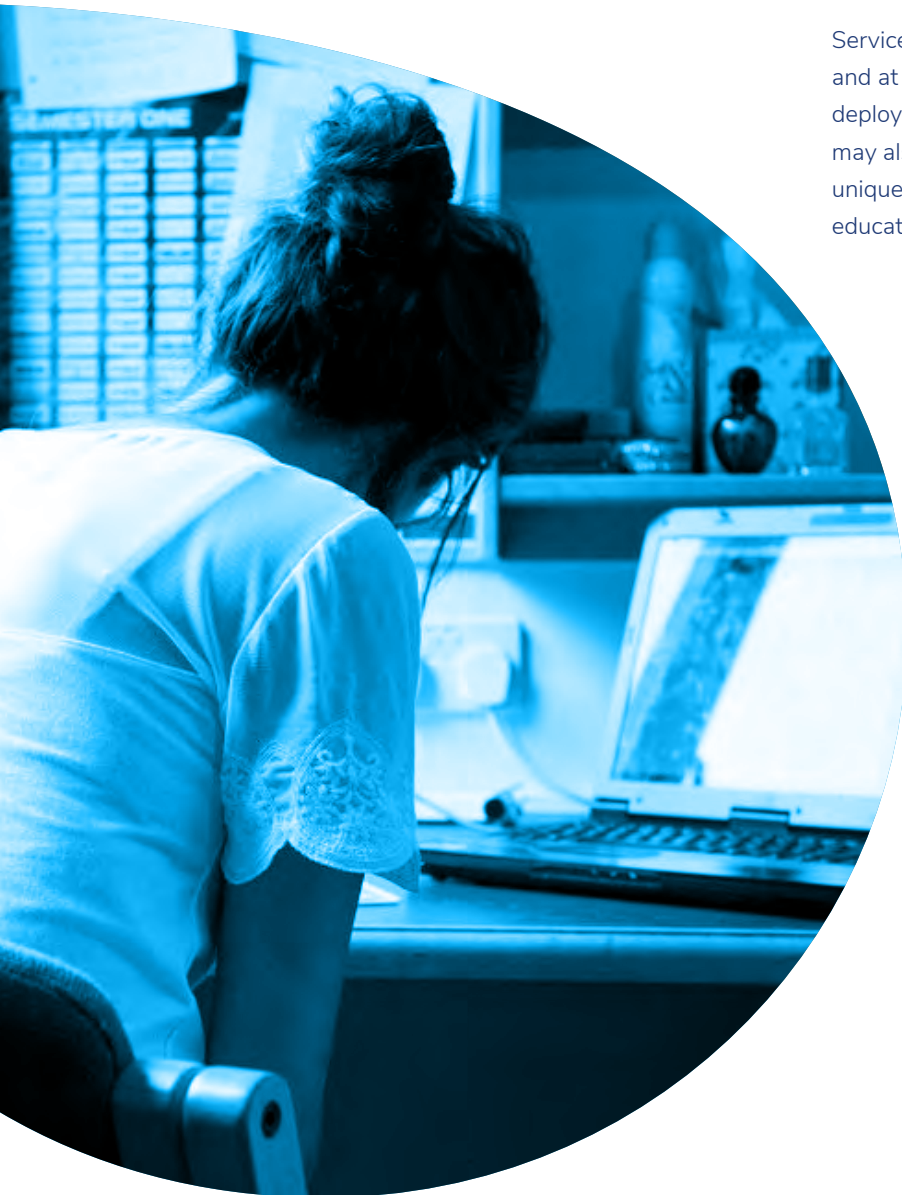
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CONTEXT

The Service Children's Progression (SCiP) Alliance community identified a low awareness and understanding of the challenges, strengths and pathways of young people in Armed Forces families (Service children) in post-16 education. In response, the Alliance carried out scoping research and convened a summit of key stakeholders in July 2021 to consider the way forward. This report examines these inputs and draws recommendations for a national strategy to address support for Service children in the 16-19 phase.

Service families may move frequently, with little agency and at short notice. Frequent separation, anxiety during deployment and the stress of transition out of the military may also present considerable potential for diverse and unique impacts on young people as they approach post-16 education and training.



THE EVIDENCE SUMMIT

The SCiP Alliance policy summit brought together leaders from key agencies and organisations such as the Department for Education, the Education and Skills Funding Agency, National Association for Managers of Student Services (NAMSS), Ofsted, the Ministry of Defence and the Office for Students together with education providers, higher education (HE) researchers and practitioners, local authorities as well as Service children with recent experience of the tertiary education system.

The SCiP Alliance scoping research presented at the summit found low awareness of Service children in providers of 16-19 education at leadership, management and student-facing levels. There is little targeted policy, practice or research in relation to Service children in this sector, which is characterised by a complex and diverse landscape of providers and courses. A paucity of data, the lack of financial or regulatory mechanisms and the dispersed nature of the cohort mean that support is patchy and inconsistent. The principal challenge is the sheer complexity and diversity of individual Service children's experiences and circumstances, as well as of the post-16 provider and learning landscape.

The SCiP Alliance community will therefore need to develop specific new approaches to helping institutions support their Service children. Networks, tools and terminology will need to take into account the heterogeneous landscape, so different from schools, which came through strongly in both the scoping research and the discussions at the SCiP Alliance's July 2021 policy summit. The policy makers, practitioners and researchers at that summit concluded that addressing these challenges should be a priority, not only for 16-19 education and training providers, but also for governments, schools, local authorities, universities and in fact the whole SCiP Alliance community. The 2021-22 Armed Forces Bill will need to encourage this cross-sector collaboration.

The evidence and debate at the policy summit indicated a clear need for comprehensive research focused on this sector. In order for this to be tackled effectively, mechanisms to track Service children post-16 are urgently needed. This chimes with the Government's response to recommendation 22 in Andrew Selous MP's 2020 Living in our Shoes report¹, committing to strengthening and expanding the evidence base on Service children's experiences and outcomes in education in response to a 'potential gap of tracking opportunities in further education colleges'.

Discussions at the policy summit highlighted four key areas:

1. Priorities for action are fourfold: mitigating systemic barriers, establishing sector-wide tracking mechanisms, increasing the scale and depth of rigorous research and coordinating cross-sector collaboration.
2. Delegates identified the importance of data, of robust research and of strategic levers to engaging and influencing education leaders in driving change.
3. Quick wins for the community were identified at the summit as raising awareness with key influencers and actors such as student bodies, staff and leadership, seeking out and sharing effective practice and using the Armed Forces Covenant as an engagement mechanism.
4. In the long term, summit experts would like to see embedded support for young people in military families aged 16-19 within a whole life-course approach. This will necessitate evidence-based frameworks, training and support for staff and long-term research and policy initiatives.

¹ UK Government response to Walker, J and Misca, G (2020) Living in our Shoes: Understanding the Needs of UK Armed Forces Families. Recommendation 25. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/974334/20210229-FINAL_Selous_Response_0.pdf

RECOMMENDATIONS

FOR POST-16 LEADERS

- Identify students who are from Armed Forces families on enrolment; they may fall under the radar. Start by building relationships with feeder schools.
- Start by listening to young people's perspectives; Service children's experiences are extremely diverse. Engage with the Students' Union.
- Explore how existing provision needs to be tailored to take account of the specific circumstances of students from Armed Forces families.
- Ensure your whole organisation is equipped to recognise and respond to potential impacts on Service children's learning and wellbeing.

FOR POLICY MAKERS

- Develop consistent systems for identifying and reporting Service children's distribution, choices and outcomes
- Consider what key systemic drivers, such as regulation and funding, could be used to improve the impetus for providers to act
- Consider the education of the children of Armed Forces personnel and veterans post-16 when developing policies, legislation and guidance aimed at "getting it right for every Service child".
- Develop an approach to consistent Armed Forces Covenant guidance on how 16-19 education providers can address their duties under the Armed Forces Bill.

FOR THE RESEARCH COMMUNITY

ADDRESS THE FOLLOWING GAPS:

- The numbers of Service children currently in post-16 education and training across the UK
- Service child distribution (by location and by type of provision and pathway)
- How and why Service children make their post-16 choices?
- Attainment and destinations
- Evidence of need: what are the specific barriers, challenges and strengths for these young people at this stage of their education, including in relation to their earlier and subsequent experiences and outcomes?
- To what extent are these needs being met and strengths being maximised?
- What impact may post-16 experiences have on progression to HE?
- How effective is careers advice for Service children and what does effective support look like?
- What format, content and approach would be necessary for training to speak specifically to staff in this sector?

FOR THE UK AND NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS AND THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

- Lead the embedding of the commitment to "getting it right for every Service child" in UK and national governments' policy through a whole-system, whole life-course approach.
 - Promote links between local Armed Forces representatives and 16-19 providers focused on Service children's success and progression.
 - Support providers in understanding the local context for the Armed Forces community and the potential impacts on Service children.
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SERVICE CHILDREN, THE SCiP ALLIANCE AND THE FUTURE

The Service Children's Progression Alliance is a UK-wide partnership bringing together practitioners, researchers, policymakers and funders to build a stronger evidence-base, better policy, and enhanced support for Service children's education and progression. The Alliance community connects hundreds of stakeholders in schools, colleges, universities, local authorities, the MOD and the charity sector, all with a shared vision of thriving lives for Service children.

For the purposes of the SCiP Alliance's work, a Service child is defined as:

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.

The new Armed Forces Covenant duty to be introduced through the Armed Forces Bill in 2022 is set to strengthen the existing Armed Forces Covenant pledge, by placing an obligation on some public bodies to ensure that no member of the Armed Forces community, including dependants, is disadvantaged in access to public services. The SCiP Alliance community is dedicated to ensuring that the promise of the Armed Forces covenant is realised for every Service child.

While this is, in general, an under-researched field, several studies of school-aged Service children in recent years (Gribble and Fear, 2019², McCullouch et al., 2019³) have demonstrated diverse and complex impacts on progression and wellbeing associated with Service children's experiences. Many military families are required to move frequently, with little agency and often at short notice. By the time these young people reach post-16 education, they may have been uprooted to new communities and schools as many as eight or more times and may have experienced prolonged periods of separation, parental deployment or even bereavement. Evidence suggests that while many flourish and develop considerable personal strengths, there is also considerable potential for emotional stress, academic discontinuity and the settling of a transitory mind-set⁴. Anxiety, lack of support and a higher potential for assuming caring roles during typically long and repeated periods of separation and deployment, may have impacted on the wellbeing of many of these young people. Support for

additional needs or mental health issues may have been patchy, or needs may have remained undiagnosed due to frequent mobility. Moreover, the upheaval of transition out of the military has far reaching impacts on many military families.

The diversity of family experiences and the interplay of unique factors touched on here can have considerable impacts on young people as they approach post-16 education and training. The SCiP Alliance community has identified a low awareness and understanding of the challenges, strengths and pathways of young people in Armed Forces families in post-16 education and training and a significant knowledge gap within this under-researched field. In response, the Alliance's scoping research (Hall, 2021⁵) begins to characterise the context and its summit of key stakeholders in July 2021 considered the priorities, levers, and actions key to a first national strategy for supporting Service children in and through post-16 education.

The Alliance views this report as the foundation of future work to address the findings. That work will necessarily be founded upon the collaborative, cross-sector approach which is the hallmark of the SCiP Alliance. Such an approach is already commonplace across the school sector, and a likely key theme in the MOD's next UK Armed Forces Families Strategy. The evidence and recommendations presented here make it clear that that partnership will need to take account of the needs of young people aged 16-19.

² Gribble, R. and Fear, N (2019) The effect of non-operational family separations on family functioning and well-being among Royal Navy and Royal Marines families. Available at: https://nff.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/NFF_KCMHR_Full_Report.pdf.

³ McCullouch, J., Hall, M. and Ellis, S. (2019) The Education of Children from Military Families: Identity and Agency, Educational Futures. 9 (2) Available at: <https://www.scipalliance.org/assets/files/BESA-Journal-EF-9-2-1-mccullouch.pdf>.

⁴ Reference Rose C. and Rose P. (2018) Identifying shared priorities for action to ensure the educational success of Service children, and to better enable their progression through further and higher education into thriving adult lives and careers A stakeholder consultation. Available at: https://www.scipalliance.org/assets/files/TILL_2020_SCiP_consultationreport_FINALv2.1.pdf

⁵ Hall, M. (2021) The perceptions of FE leaders in supporting Service children: challenges and opportunities for further work. Available at: <https://www.scipalliance.org/assets/files/16.19-scoping-research-report-Dr-Hall-2021.pdf>

THIS REPORT

This report provides a snapshot of the state of the SCiP Alliance community's knowledge about the education of the children of Armed Forces personnel and veterans aged 16-19. It examines the Alliance's initial scoping research, testimony at the July 2021 summit and the ideas of the delegates developed in response, to draw recommendations for further action. Summit inputs and research were England-based due to the funding but the policy summit brought together representatives from across the UK, including key agencies and organisations such as the Department for Education, the Education and Skills Funding Agency, National Association for Managers of Student Services (NAMSS), Ofsted, the Ministry of Defence and the Office for Students together with education providers, higher education (HE) researchers and practitioners, local authorities as well as Service children with recent experience of the tertiary education system.

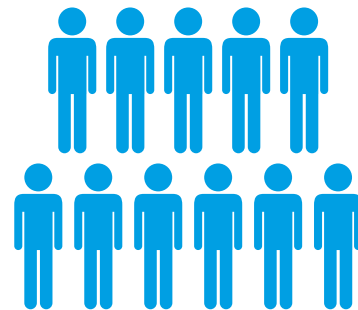
The summit inputs, summarised below, and subsequent delegate discussions, explored the current understanding of the context for these young people. Building on that understanding allows this report to synthesise the themes and present policy recommendations for a national strategy to address the priorities for addressing support for the children of Armed Forces personnel in post-16 education.

THE 16-19 SECTOR IN ENGLAND

This section will outline the 16-19 sector in England in general, before commenting on what we know about the context specifically for Service children.

Dr Hall's scoping research for the Alliance found that the post-16 education and training sector is diverse, with heterogeneous providers offering a broad range of qualifications, governed by different regulatory and financial mechanisms. England's post-16 providers include:

- Colleges (general FE, sixth form, and specialist)
- State-funded schools (including local authority, academies, free schools and special schools)
- Independent schools (mainstream and special)
- Private training providers
- Adult community providers



1.1 MILLION LEARNERS



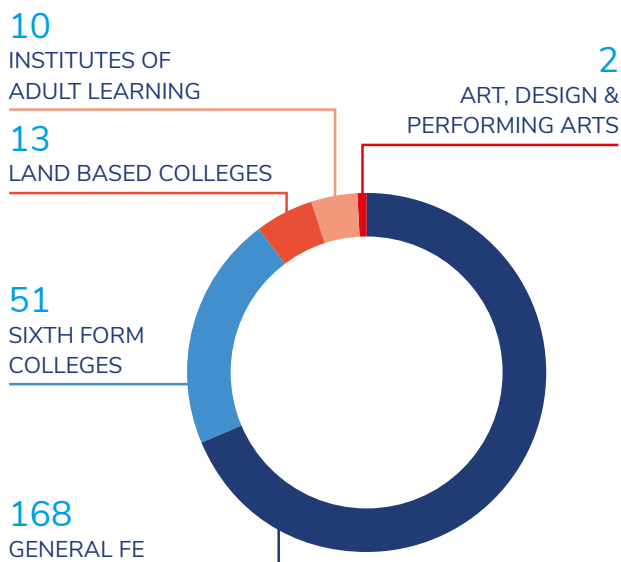
244 COLLEGES

Dr Hall's report captures the massive scale, complexity and diversity of the sector in terms of learners and providers. The Association of Colleges identify 244 colleges educating almost 1.1million 16-24 year olds⁶. The majority of 16 to 17-year-olds are educated in colleges or state-funded schools, with the majority studying for level 3 qualifications. The majority of those studying in schools and sixth form colleges pursue A levels. The FE college sector plays an important role in providing a diverse range of options, primarily Applied General Qualifications at level 3 such as BTECs and level 2 qualifications such as GCSEs. Geographical variation is the key factor influencing whether a young person stays at their secondary school or moves to colleges or other training providers. In some areas of the country the majority of schools offer a sixth form. In other areas it is the exception. This is particularly important for Service children, who may remain known to their peers and

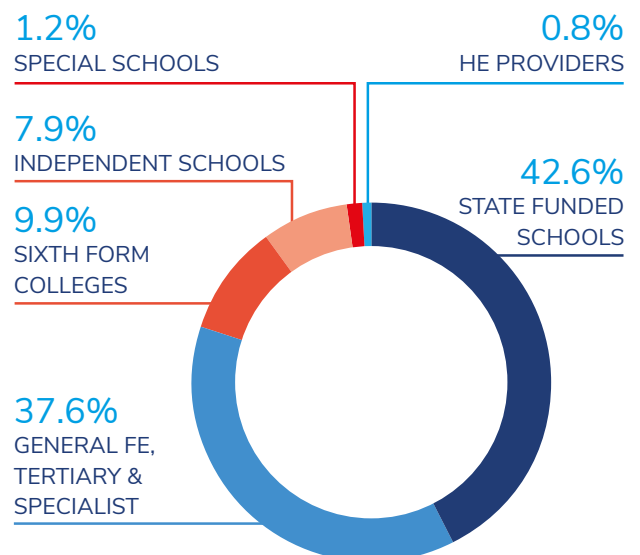
staff in a school despite the loss of dedicated funding at age 16. In a large FE college with no identification mechanism, their background may be less likely to be considered.

Given this diversity and the lack of consistent data on the number or characteristics of Service children in this phase of education, providers may be hard to reach and find it challenging to engage. Moreover, evidence suggests a heightened impact on young people as they approach post-16 education and training. Approaches which work in the school context are unlikely to translate easily to this sector, not only due to the huge diversity of contexts, but also because students at this age are on the cusp of adulthood, forming very different relationships with their education provider.

COLLEGES BY TYPE (2019)



LEARNERS AGED 16/17 BY PROVIDER TYPE (2019)



⁶ Association of Colleges (2021) College Key Facts 2021/22. Available at: <https://www.aoc.co.uk/sites/default/files/AoC%20College%20Key%20Facts%202021-22.pdf>

EVIDENCE PRESENTED TO THE SCIP ALLIANCE POLICY SUMMIT, JULY 2021

THE SUMMIT ON 7TH JULY 2021 CONSIDERED THE FOLLOWING INPUTS:

1

EXPLORING UNDERSTANDING OF SERVICE CHILDREN AMONGST 16-19 EDUCATION PROVIDERS



<https://www.scipalliance.org/assets/files/16.19-scoping-research-report-Dr-Hall-2021.pdf>

DR MICHAEL HALL, SCIP ALLIANCE RESEARCHER

Dr Hall's report triangulates the literature, survey results and one-to-one interviews to present key learning and recommendations arising in this mixed methods research. Following the literature review, a survey distributed to college principals by purposive sampling and follow-up interviews gave a snapshot of the perspectives of staff in the FE and sixth form college sector. The report also provides a helpful description of the sector, which the previous section of this report drew on heavily.

INDICATIVE PROMPTS FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

A sector-wide approach needs to consider the diversity of institutional contexts and differing levels of understanding of Service children's educational experiences.

- Service children may not have been considered as a distinct group in the context of educational support.
- There is a paucity of numerical data in the absence of specific processes or (regulatory) impetus for providers to identify young people as from Armed Forces families.
- Compared with schools, the relationships between FE providers and their students are distinct

2

EXPLORING SUPPORT FOR SERVICE CHILDREN IN 16-19 EDUCATION



<https://www.scipalliance.org/assets/files/AF-students-post-16-Focus-Group-Report.pdf>

LOUISA DOBSON, FUTURE HY PROGRAMME MANAGER

Three focus groups with Further Education college staff, Uni Connect practitioners and SCiP Alliance Hub leads explored support for Armed Forces students post-16.

INDICATIVE PROMPTS FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

- Current support for FE college students is limited
- There is a considerable appetite to do more with students from Armed Forces families in this age group
- There is little data on young people in Armed Forces post-16, and this needs to change
- Current barriers to engagement are not insurmountable but will take work to overcome
- Training and Continuous Professional Development delivered UK-wide would be hugely beneficial.

3

SERVICE CHILDREN'S EXPERIENCES OF MOVING THROUGH POST-16 EDUCATION AND TRAINING

KIERON ALLEN (UNIVERSITY OF WINCHESTER)

Kieron, studying Primary Education at the University of Winchester, moved six times and was educated in seven different schools, including Germany and Cyprus. Kieron reported mixed experiences in post-16 education, both receiving tailored support but also realising that a provider with very few Service children had little awareness of specific support needs during parental deployment. Kieron underlined the impact of a designated staff member who understood the context of being a Service child and could support him sensitively.

LIZZIE RODULSON (UNIVERSITY OF SURREY)

Lizzie lived in many locations during her childhood, including a primary school on a base. Lizzie explained the anxiety experienced during parental deployment and the fluctuating roles and pressures Service children may feel as they increasingly take on caring and leadership roles in the family as they mature, underlining the need for flexible support during this short stage of education.

Lizzie, as University of Surrey Student Union President, highlighted the impact which signing the Armed Forces covenant can have on an organisation's approach and encouraged colleges and universities to do so.



EVIDENCE DEVELOPED AT THE JULY 2021 SUMMIT

The summit was attended by representatives from the Department for Education, the Education and Skills Funding Agency, colleges and sixth forms, Uni Connect partnerships, universities, NAMSS, local authorities, Ofsted and the Office for Students. There is a full list of participants on the final page of this report.

Participants each shared their own perspectives about what they need and what they could do to enhance support and outcomes in the 16-19 phase, before breaking into smaller groups to explore and record future priorities and actions in response to three questions:

1. What are the priorities for policy, research and practice that will move us towards thriving lives for Service children in and through post-16 education?
2. What is needed to engage and influence education leaders in realising this change?
3. What are the "quick wins" and what ought to be the longer-term ambitions?

The summit found that there appears to be generally low awareness of Service children in providers of 16-19 education at leadership, management and student-facing levels. Participants noted little targeted policy, practice or research in relation to Service children in the 16-19 sector, which is characterised by a complex and diverse landscape of providers and courses. A paucity of data, the lack of financial or regulatory mechanisms and the dispersed nature of the cohort mean that support is patchy and inconsistent.

The summit's policy makers, practitioners and researchers concluded that addressing these challenges should be a priority not only for 16-19 institutions but for governments, schools, local authorities and universities.

The key themes highlighted the need for a whole-system approach:

PRIORITIES

Delegates' priorities for action were mitigating systemic barriers, establishing sector-wide tracking mechanisms, increasing the scale and depth of rigorous research and coordinating cross-sector collaboration.

- Systemic change to allow institutions to focus on needs for this cohort
- Establishing cross-sector tracking data and dedicated funding for research to understand knowledge gaps such as:
 - How are Service children distributed (by location and type of provision/course)?
 - What are the specific needs of this cohort?
 - How and to what extent may these needs be being overlooked?
 - What does post-16 decision-making look like for this cohort and how is it impacted by earlier experiences?
 - What existing support and knowledge in the sector could be shared and developed?
 - What are the potential institutional motivators to action?
 - What are the potential intersections at this age with other known impacts on education such as caring responsibilities?
- Nationwide cross-sector collaboration to share and develop evidence and practice

WHAT IS NEEDED TO ENGAGE AND INFLUENCE EDUCATION LEADERS IN REALISING CHANGE?

Data, data, data...

Delegates identified the importance of data, robust research and strategic levers to engaging and influencing education leaders in driving change.

- Mechanisms for monitoring and data collection:
 - A coordinated national policy approach
 - Clarification around what we ask, how we ask it and why
- Robust research recognising the impact of diverse institutional contexts on effective support mechanisms and approaches to developing support sensitive to individual settings
- Strategic drivers
 - Ring-fenced dedicated funding to mirror the school sector
 - Clear supportive policy impetus
 - Evidence of impact on business drivers
 - High level awareness and guidance
 - Clarity over where this sits in competing priorities
 - A clear articulation to leadership and staff of the benefit for the students in terms of retention, achievement, wellbeing

WHAT COULD WE DO IN THE SHORT TERM?

Quick wins for the community were identified at the summit as raising awareness with key influencers and actors such as student bodies, staff and leadership, seeking out and sharing effective practice and using the Armed Forces Covenant as an engagement mechanism.

- Engage with student bodies, listen to post-16 young people and ensure they see their views are influencing action
 - Increase awareness among leadership, teaching and pastoral staff and the careers support sector
 - Develop a shared understanding of how to reassure students of the benefits to disclosing that they are from an Armed Forces family. Then communicate this to young people and families.
 - Seek examples of effective practice in 16-19 settings
 - Work with the Ministry of Defence Armed Forces Covenant team on specific guidance to prompt providers to consider including the education of young people in Armed Forces Covenant pledges
 - Update the SCiP Alliance Online Targeting Tool to reflect this sector's Armed Forces Covenant commitments
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WHAT OUGHT TO BE THE LONGER-TERM AMBITIONS?

In the long term, summit experts would like to see embedded support for young people in Armed Forces families aged 16-19 within a whole life-course approach. This will necessitate evidence-based frameworks, training and support for staff and long-term research and policy initiatives.

- Produce an evidence-based framework for 16-19 institutions to reflect on and develop their practice, building on the success of the Thriving Lives Toolkit received so well in the school sector
 - Develop training resources for the sector's professionals. Young people, particularly those who have benefitted from support in this phase, are best placed to co-produce training and engagement materials about:
 - The complex interplay of factors, how young people want to be supported and the significance of transition points in the student journey
 - The diversity of the Service child experience; they may need additional support, but this is not a given
 - How to harness the positive skills Service children could take into a career
 - How to locate support within the realities of the 16-19 setting
 - Develop quality, tailored careers guidance to support these young people to make the most of their strengths in applying for future careers
 - Support careers staff and Uni Connect progression mentors in colleges to develop one-to-one bespoke work
 - Fund longitudinal research on the impact of Service life on young people's educational outcomes through their educational journey
 - Prepare providers for and take advantage of the implications of the 2022 Armed Forces Bill
 - Resolve on a national data flag for Service children in 16-19 education
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CONCLUSIONS

a strong will and determination to get this right for Service children and families

The policy summit indicated a strong will and determination to get this right for Service children and families and to keep the agenda firmly on the table. This report has outlined the strands of evidence and the ideas of the experts gathered at that summit. Participants were clear that these must inform a coordinated national strategy to develop collaboration in support of the children of Armed Forces personnel post-16.

This chimes with a number of new regulatory drivers. The introduction to the Government's response to the recommendations made by Andrew Selous MP in his independent report, *Living in our Shoes*, highlights that a key theme identified in the original research was 'the impact of Service life on military children and young people' and commits the government to act.⁷ It will be important that the new Armed Forces Bill recognises the need for regulatory imperatives for 16-19 providers to be aware of and work to mitigate those cumulative impacts.

The recommendations below simplify the complex web of learning into actions and priorities we can take forward together to combat the identified lack of awareness, systemic drivers or coherent guidance. It will be particularly important to address the Service child support relationship,

of necessity very different to that in schools as it reflects the development of young adults post-16. In fact, a fundamental theme running through the research is that the highly individualised experiences and complex interplay of factors for the individual, of mobility, separation and transition out of the military, is made more complex still by the diversity of the sector. Recent research adds complexity which was not addressed in the summit but is nevertheless relevant to our considerations. Andrew Selous MP's *Living in our Shoes* report for example highlights not only the well documented challenges in access to provision to support additional needs, but also the impact of high mobility on continuity of access to mental health services.

A response involving large-scale, one-dimensional policies and programmes is therefore likely to fail to answer the questions our policy experts and the evidence raise. Programmes which enable establishments to develop support which responds to the nuances of individual students and cohorts within their Service child population are likely to be more effective.

The SCiP Alliance community will need to develop specific new approaches to helping institutions support their Service children. Networks, tools and terminology will need to take into account the heterogeneous landscape, so different from schools, which came through strongly in both the evidence and the summit discussions. A priority for the Alliance needs to be to understand not only the need for this bespoke approach which speaks to the context for this sector but also how to tailor training and materials to this sector.

⁷UK Government response to Walker, J and Misca, G (2020) *Living in our Shoes: Understanding the Needs of UK Armed Forces Families*. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/974334/20210229-FINAL_Selous_Response_O.pdf

RECOMMENDATIONS: TOWARDS A NATIONAL STRATEGY

The evidence presented in this report indicates a number of key recommendations to support further research and development work. The findings here chime with other recent research and are timely given the various policy initiatives in this field. A key finding was that further research is critical. This chimes with the Government's response to recommendation 22 in Andrew Selous MP's Living in our Shoes report, committing to strengthening and expanding the evidence base on Service children's experiences and outcomes in education. That document identifies a 'potential gap of tracking opportunities in further education colleges'.

FOR POST-16 LEADERS

Identify students who are from Armed Forces families on enrolment; they may fall under the radar. Start by building relationships with feeder schools.

- Start by listening to young people's perspectives; Service children's experiences are extremely diverse. Engage with the Students' Union.
 - Explore how existing provision needs to be tailored to take account of the specific circumstances of students from Armed Forces families.
 - Ensure your whole organisation is equipped to recognise and respond to potential impacts on Service children's learning and wellbeing.
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FOR POLICY MAKERS

- Develop consistent systems for identifying and reporting Service children's distribution, choices and outcomes.
 - Consider what key systemic drivers, such as regulation and funding, could be used to improve the impetus for providers to act.
 - Consider the education of the children of Armed Forces personnel and veterans post-16 when developing policies, legislation and guidance aimed at "getting it right for every Service child".
 - Develop an approach to consistent Armed Forces Covenant guidance on how 16-19 education providers can address their duties under the Armed Forces Bill
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FOR THE RESEARCH COMMUNITY

Address the following gaps:

- The numbers of Service children currently in post-16 education and training across the UK
 - Service child distribution (by location and by type of provision and pathway)
 - How and why Service children make their post-16 choices?
 - Attainment and destinations
 - Evidence of need: what are the specific barriers, challenges and strengths for these young people at this stage of their education, including in relation to their earlier and subsequent experiences and outcomes?
 - To what extent are these needs being met and strengths being maximised?
 - What impact may post-16 experiences have on progression to HE?
 - How effective is careers advice for Service children and what does effective support look like?
 - What format, content and approach would be necessary for training to speak specifically to staff in this sector?
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FOR THE UK AND NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS AND THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

- Lead the embedding of the commitment to “getting it right for every Service child” in UK and national governments’ policy through a whole-system, whole life-course approach.
 - Promote links between local Armed Forces representatives and 16-19 providers focused on Service children’s success and progression.
 - Support providers in understanding the local context for the Armed Forces community and the potential impacts on Service children.
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WITH THANKS TO

SERVICE CHILDREN

- Kieron Allen, University of Winchester undergraduate, SCiP Alliance Board member
- Lizzie Rodulson, President, University of Surrey Students' Union

JULY 2021 SUMMIT DELEGATES

- Department for Education
- Education and Skills Funding Agency
- Farnborough Sixth Form
- Fife College
- Forces Children Scotland (formerly known as the Royal Caledonian Education Trust)
- Higher Horizons
- International Centre for Guidance Studies, University of Derby
- King's Centre for Military Health Research, Kings College London
- National Association for Managers of Student Services
- Ofsted
- Office for Students
- Ministry of Defence
- Rutland County Council
- Southern Universities Network
- Veterans and Families Institute, Anglia Ruskin University
- East Kent Colleges
- Future HY
- University of Surrey Students' Union
- University of Winchester

SURVEY AND INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

across the post-16 and policy sector

UNI CONNECT PROGRAMME COLLABORATORS AND FUNDERS

- Future HY
- Higher Education Outreach Network
- Higher Horizons
- Next Steps South West
- Southern Universities Network
- Wessex Inspiration Network

THRIVING LIVES FOR SERVICE CHILDREN



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