

The SCiP Alliance Building Bridges Conference Report: Outputs, Outcomes, Learning, Priorities and Evaluation

Context

The new Service Children's Progression Alliance welcomed 67 delegates from universities, colleges, schools, local authorities, the MoD and military charities to the University of Winchester's historic West Downs building on 28th June 2017.

Outline of the day

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|--------------|--|
| 09.00 | Arrival and Registration |
| 09.45 | Welcome <i>Joy Carter DL, Vice Chancellor of the University of Winchester</i> |
| 09.50 | Conference Keynote <i>Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP</i> MP for Berwick-upon-Tweed, Chair of the APPG for the Armed Forces Covenant |
| 10.10 | Q and A with Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP |
| 10.30 | Panel Discussion Chair: <i>General Sir John McColl (Chairman, Cobseo)</i> What bridges will help service children make smooth and confident transitions? <i>Russell Collier (Principal Education Officer, DCYP, MoD)</i> <i>Ken McQuillan (Welfare Support & Regional Liaison Officer, Northern Ireland Service Children's Education Forum)</i> <i>Graham Razez (Principal, Canterbury College and East Kent College)</i> <i>Andy Heyes (School Improvement Manager, Hampshire County Council)</i> <i>Jack Smith (Head of Programmes, Office for Fair Access)</i> |
| 11.10 | Break |
| 11.30 | Introducing the Service Children's Progression (SCiP) Alliance <i>Phil Dent (Chair, The SCiP Alliance)</i> <i>Dr Judith McCullouch (The SCiP Alliance Research Group Chair)</i> |
| 12pm | Research Keynote <i>Professor Nicola Fear, Director, King's Centre for Military Health Research</i> |
| 12.30 | Lunch |
| 13.15 | Effective Practice Workshops |
| 14.15 | Effective Practice Workshops |
| 15.15 | Conference learning: priorities for policy, research and practice <i>Phil Dent, University of Winchester and workshops chairs</i> |
| 15.45 | Closing remarks |

Opening Plenary Sessions

Opening Keynote

The keynote was delivered by Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP, who outlined her strong support for the SCiP Alliance mission and her personal commitment to this agenda. She announced that she had recently been appointed as Parliamentary Private Secretary to Ministers in the Ministry of Defence where she will continue to speak up for service families, including their children. 97% of delegates found this useful or very useful.

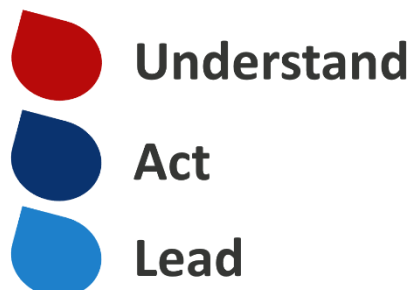
Panel Discussion

The panel discussion tackled the role of the MoD, universities and FE colleges, the challenges in the devolved nations and the opportunities in schools. Issues with data collection and sharing were also highlighted. 86% of delegates found it useful or very useful.

The SCiP Alliance Launch

The SCiP Alliance Director, Phil Dent, and Research Group chair, Dr Judith McCullouch, outlined the Alliance's vision to coordinate and develop work to understand and improve service children's progression through education. Phil Dent introduced the Alliance as a collaborative effort needing allies and invited the sector to work together to understand the needs and what works in addressing them, to act to make a positive difference in your own sphere of influence, and to lead others to do the same.

Together, let's



Research Keynote

Professor Nicola Fear's keynote presentation describing findings by King's Centre for Military Health Research that the impact on children of a father's deployment is significant was rated useful or very useful by 97% of delegates. Professor Fear outlined her work over the last 14 years and also highlighted the finding that 52% of personnel in her cohort study believed their career had a negative impact on their children.

Key Messages from the Opening Plenary Sessions

- Jack Smith, Head of Programmes at the Office for Fair Access, stated that service children should be viewed by HE providers as a target group for support to reach their potential through HE participation. This is now clearly stated on the OFFA website.

- The SCiP Alliance has a role to play in encouraging and coordinating activity and bringing networks together.
- There is potential to partner with the new NCOP networks across the country.
- Schools and universities would like clear guidance informed by research detailing practice that works.
- Systems and guidance exists, it just needs to be used consistently. There is an awareness-raising job to do.

Workshop Content and Outcomes

Children's University for Mobile Families

(Richard Barry, West of England Children's University of the West of England)

Content summary:

The Forces Children's Education Trust sponsors the Children's University West of England specifically to support children from Service Families. The scheme is particularly valuable to mobile children as it provides continuity. Evaluations demonstrate that participation raises aspirations and awareness.

Priorities:

- Improve communication between schools
- Service families, particularly in Northern Ireland, don't necessarily want to be identified
- Teacher training currently does not raise awareness of service children. Can we change that?
- 'Service children' are not a homogenous group. Remember reservist and veterans' children. And the children of separated parents
- Spread awareness among professionals of factors such as deployment
- Support isolated children
- Conduct further research:
 - Where do these young people go if not to HE?
 - Destination mapping exercise needed
 - Who are the target groups? Tracing educational journeys and narrowing cohort for study

Bridging International transitions: mobility overseas

(Mandy Cyprus-Slater, Acting Principal Educational Psychologist, DCYP MOD)

Content summary:

'Transition' is an experience over a longer timeframe than the change it deals with; it is the process by which the individual responds to and copes with that change.

Four key areas for effective practice:

1. **Information sharing** Pupil Information Profile (PIP) templates should be shared with receiving military/educational body. SEND Transition Information MOD template being piloted
2. **Consider the voice of the child:** EG. Children's response to pictures can be a non-intrusive approach
3. **Prepare for moving** by creating opportunities throughout the transition cycle to talk and make memories
4. Reflect on **transition experiences** and the positives over the child's lifetime. Consider Dai Williams' 'Transition Cycle'

Priorities:

- Improve the flow of information between schools and phases, including internationally
- Raise awareness around the impact of transition and the effective practice which exists

Career Aspirations of armed forces students at secondary school and sixth form college

(Matthew Thorne, EdD student, University of Reading)

Content summary:

Why do students pick the subjects they do and does coming from an army family make a difference?

Issues in college:

Admissions, mismatch of paper applications, records, catching up with student and school of choice.

- Emotional wellbeing
- Have to self-identify
- Transfer of information from school to college

Impact of service life:

- Parental posting to warzone had greater impact as student got older
- Mobility and friendships

Priorities:

- Devolved nations have varying systems and outcomes so there is a challenge for service children moving between different curricula, examination systems, HE funding and inspectorates
- The challenge is in aspiration and choices as service children seem to meet educational potential

A Case Study: Partnerships working and networks

(Dr Sally Griffin, Bath Spa University, Kath Lawrence, University of Winchester, Andy Heyes, Hampshire County Council)

Content summary:

Bath Spa University: Adaption of progression framework to accommodate children moving in and out of locality through Widening Participation access agreement. Aim is for HE to be a natural, normalised routine aspiration for all

University of Winchester: Working with Hampshire County Council to bring children from forces families onto campus to raise aspirations, support teacher CPD and awareness raising and give children a voice.

The SCiP Alliance UK wide practice hub: Created to spread targeted outreach activity for service children, raise awareness of the need and OFFA support for this work and engage with the SCiP Alliance research group.

Hampshire County Council District Network: New initiative to ensure county wide communication and awareness and support schools in delivering on the strategic principles of the Armed Forces Covenant.

Priorities:

- Share and foster effective practice across the county and the country
- Opportunity to engage with NCOP leads targeting wards with high numbers of service families
- **Summary:** Collaboration, Coherence, Continuity, Communication, Champions, Celebration, Co-ordination

Bridging the gaps for young carers in Armed Forces Families

(Helen Leadbitter, The Children's Society)

Content summary:

Young carers face multiple stresses in a service family. Additional stresses on the family leading to children taking on caring roles (deployment, mobility, impact of service, particularly in a war zone, on serving parent and spouse) are exacerbated by mobility.

At both the strategic level and in welfare provision, young carers in armed forces families are a hidden group of children and young people

Priorities:

- Raise awareness of this hidden group within a hidden group
- Address challenges:
 - Lack of data
 - Increased reluctance to self identify
 - Families not recognising children as young carers
- Challenge stigma and promote self-identification
- Address young adult carers joining the armed forces
- Advocate for the children
- Awareness raising and trickle down of information within schools
- Research, evaluation and advocacy

The SCiP Alliance research group: Priorities and plans

(Michael Hall, University of Winchester)

Content summary:

Research to improve understanding and provide evidence is vital to developing policy. The SCiP Alliance Research Group will create an interdisciplinary hub to:

- Identify research questions and priorities
- Secure 2 way engagement

The research hub has initiated:

- Feasibility study
- Data set refinement
- PhD studentship investigating the educational progression of children from military service families

Priorities:

- Communication is key – parents, schools, colleges, researchers
- Identify key research questions relating to:
 - individual students
 - professional practice
 - systemic environment
- Parents' impact on young people's choices is particularly strong for service children
- Identify the optimum age for intervention
- Investigate the effect of broken relationships on access to support.

- Link with the RCT to provide a network
- Link to Army Families Federation evidence
- Evaluate the impact of research

Conference Evaluation

This section pulls out the main themes of the evaluation, with some illustrative quotes, followed by a verbatim list of delegate responses.

Themes

Sharing and connecting

It was inspiring to meet others with a passion for service kids – this is encouraging and makes me want to do more

Making positive connections has been a real highlight

Opportunities to discuss issues with others and to swap experiences.

Opportunity to find out new information, make new connections and to have exposure to a much wider group of people than I would in my normal sphere

Forming and discussing new ideas

While my area of interest is schools, there were plenty of thoughts and ideas during the day.

Raised a number of thoughts and questions about possible outreach

Very helpful hearing about supporting service family children in my role and raising this awareness within schools

It was good to get a wider perspective than just my own cluster/district which enabled me to clarify my own thinking

Exploring research

Fascinating to hear first hand about the range of research and initiatives in this area

Very helpful to have the process of the research and it's remit in the spotlight. Refreshing to consider the process

I particularly enjoyed the talk by Nicola Fear. Some very enlightening information and websites I can study further

Policy insights

It was a good introduction to the policy agenda and the stakeholders

Gave me an understanding of the strategic work being done for service children

Getting to hear the perspective from Anne Marie Trevelyan about work at government level

Gaining and exchanging knowledge

Presented a great opportunity for learning about service children – an area I didn't have a lot of knowledge or expertise in previously

I'm excited about willingness and sharing of information through the SCiP Alliance.

Gave me more resources to access to further my understanding and therefore improve my provision in school

Conference structure

Well structured, good workshops and appropriate venue

Superbly organised and very slick

Since this is a UK wide issue, the words/items structure need to be explained for the devolved regions

It was a good day but felt rushed. More time for interactive discussion would have been welcome

Smooth operation and the breaks were well timed. Felt it worked to have the workshops in the afternoon

The most important thing that the alliance can do for me in my role

Delegates summarised where the SCiP Alliance can make a real difference:

- A central hub of research to collect evidence to influence policy and inform practical projects in schools, colleges and universities
- Support positive outcomes for all children (including those whose families are posted to devolved nations)

And captured the Alliance's potential role in the following words: raise awareness; research; network; collaborate; educate; support; share; communicate; disseminate; champion; collate; campaign together; inform; encourage; lobby; identify gaps; coordinate; resources; aspirations; partnerships; practice hub; peer support; best practice; knowledge; guidance and recommendations

Full details from evaluation forms

1. Was this day useful and if so how?

- Opportunities to share ideas and find out what others are doing
- Clearer understanding of the intent of the SCiP Alliance
- Better understanding of what the SCiP Alliance is about and it's objectives
- Generally yes, some useful information shared and meeting colleagues
- Very useful and informative day very relevant presentations and group discussions.
- The information and observations/questions from the floor contributed to the overall impact of the programme. While my area of interest of interest is schools, there were plenty of thoughts and ideas during the day.
- Yes, very informative, well structured and interesting
- Yes, a very helpful insight into the challenges faced by service families. It was also a good introduction into the policy agenda and their stakeholders
- Yes, very informative and a great opportunity to talk to likeminded people about this subject.
- It was very interesting to hear what is going on in other parts of the country.
- Yes, supported and increased knowledge regarding the SCiP Alliance research
- Useful insights from research keynote. Opportunities to discuss concerns/issues with others and to swap experiences. Excited about willingness and sharing of information through the SCiP Alliance.
- Yes, fascinating to hear first hand range of research and initiatives in this area.
- Very, apart from the learning, making positive connections has been a real highlight.
- Yes, opportunity to find out new information, make new connections and to have exposure to a much wider group of people than I would in my normal sphere.
- Yes, useful to find out more about the research and the SCiP Alliance plans. Very helpful to have the process of the research and it's remit in the spotlight. Refreshing to consider the process.
- Very. It was useful to learn more about current developments in this area.
- Hugely beneficial even for an old timer!
- Yes, It was really interesting to listen to all the research and reflect on how this could be put into practice.
- Yes, good to share my research and talk to others in the field.
- Yes, in raising a number of thoughts/questions about possible outreach with SFC.
- Yes, very helpful in hearing about how supporting service family children in my role and raising this awareness within schools.
- Excellent day. Very good to meet people from other professions with similar experiences. Links made with other organisations with the aim to support service children.
- Yes, networking and showing best practice for NCOP outreach targeted at service children.
- Yes, it was good to get a wider perspective than just my own cluster/district which enabled me to clarify my own thinking.
- Yes, very interesting and useful. Presented a great opportunity for learning about service children – an area I didn't have a lot of knowledge or expertise in previously.

- Extremely useful insight into this cohort of applicants and food for thought in relation to HE admissions and how we view 'disadvantaged'
- Very useful finding out more about the issues and networking.
- Yes, lots of information about what is going on 'behind the scenes' on addressing issues facing service children.
- Yes, interesting and informative on the general situation of children from military families
- It was good to meet with a broad selection of people.
- Enabled me to network, communicate, collaborate and learn.
- Yes, gave me an understanding of the strategic work being done for service children. Gave me more resources to access to further my understanding and therefore improve my provision in school.
- Networking with other lead practitioners.
- Yes, networking with others, learning about issues faced by young people, particularly in transition.

2. Any comments or suggestions about the organisation of the day?

- Superbly organised and very slick. I personally don't need a cooked meal if it reduces costs to offer a cold option.
- Well structured, good workshops and appropriate venue.
- Very professional and well organised – good lunch!
- More space for coffee would have helped.
- Everything went very well – thank you.
- Since this is a UK wide issue, the words/items structure need to be explained for the devolved regions.
- It was a good day but felt rushed. More time for interactive discussion would have been welcome.
- Will all the slides used be shared online?
- The organisation went very well.
- It was excellent. Location, programme and content, venue and food.
- Excellent.
- The day was well organised and ran smoothly
- Very well organised.
- Quite tight timings.
- Enjoyed the workshops as it facilitated discussions.
- None, it was really good.
- Good organisation.
- Smooth operation and the breaks were well timed. Felt it worked to have the workshops in the afternoon.
- Very well organised.
- Well structured and well organised.
- Great mix of sessions and formats and speakers.
- Very well organised – excellent key note speakers.
- Very well planned with range of activities.
- Very well organised.

- Perhaps a teacher on the panel.
 - Brilliantly organised and run.
 - Very well organised.
 - Well organised, beautiful venue. Would have loved ad afternoon cup of tea :-)
 - Was a very good day.
3. Which aspects of the day were most beneficial or enjoyable?
- Workshops, chance to network.
 - Research keynote – professor Nicola Fear
 - It was inspiring to meet others with a passion for service kids – this is encouraging and makes me want to do more!
 - Workshops.
 - Research aspects on findings very interesting.
 - Good venue, accessibility etc.
 - Updates, information, discussion and networking
 - The Psychiatrist and Q&A sessions.
 - The research keynote and the main keynote.
 - The workshops and the opportunities to meet and talk to like minded people.
 - I think that it was all beneficial, especially the group workshops.
 - MP discussion regarding policy, practice and improvements.
 - Workshops.
 - Networking opportunities, workshops.
 - Workshops positive.
 - Having the different speakers.
 - Anne Marie Trevelyan's input – interesting perspective. Some of Nicola's date a was particularly interesting. Phil gave a useful outline of the SCiP Alliance and its plans.
 - Hearing about current developments in research.
 - The researcher's.
 - Listening to Professor Fear's Keynote speech. Getting to hear the perspective from Anne Marie Trevelyan about work at government level.
 - Furthering my research and talking to different practitioner's from around the UK.
 - Enjoyed the question's around the research questions/future research for The SCiP Alliance
 - Networking, hearing and being involved in a variety of discussions. Hearing directly from a young adult carer.
 - Transition workshops (International)
 - Hearing about the Health Research.
 - Research, keynote speech was very interesting and engaging. Workshops and choice of workshop were very good.
 - Opportunity to hear from a range of speakers and perspectives.
 - Break out sessions – good choices.
 - Initial info from Anne-Marie and Panel speakers too. Enjoyed workshops.
 - The panel was very interesting – good to hear about all aspects. The research was really interesting- look forward to seeing more.
 - Self chosen workshops.
 - Key note speaker.

- I particularly enjoyed the talk by Nicola Fear. **Some very enlightening information** and websites I can study further.

4. What could we do to improve the event in future?

- Perhaps **more time to discuss topics in groups** and feedback to panels etc. Workshops could be more interactive to find out more about other people's practice.
- Maybe drinking water available to delegates.
- Perhaps more focussed discussion groups.
- **Perhaps build in more time for table discussion.**
- **Move around the country.**
- I liked the fact that the day was focused but provided opportunities to touch upon the wider agenda of service children and their needs. **Future events sharing good practice** and ideas would be welcome.
- Please build in more time for discussion.
- **Are there similar forums in the north of the country.**
- Group discussions, suggestions for improvements and areas missed.
- Can't think of anything.
- Move around the country.
- **Participation from military side** including those who are invested in postings, assignments, and career management.
- Water in the afternoon please!
- Cup of tea after lunch.
- Engage more school staff.
- I think as the Alliance grows, it would be good to return to the topic of best practice of working with SFC.
- Perhaps offer more workshops, although I thought the balance was good today.
- Ideas for delivery (to service children in schools and college) **invite all NCOPs.**
- Hear from military personnel.
- Perhaps a little more audience interaction/group discussion at points.
- Minor point – water on tables, please. Other than that a fantastic event!
- Publishing the event further afield, scope to have more delegates outside the region.
- As a teacher in a school, it would be very useful to be made aware of all the opportunities that schools serving service families can access – ideas that support this specific group of kids.
- More break time to allow conversations with other delegates.
- Copies of the slides?
- A great event, I look forward to the next one.
- Invite ideas prior to the event of what practitioners would like to learn about.

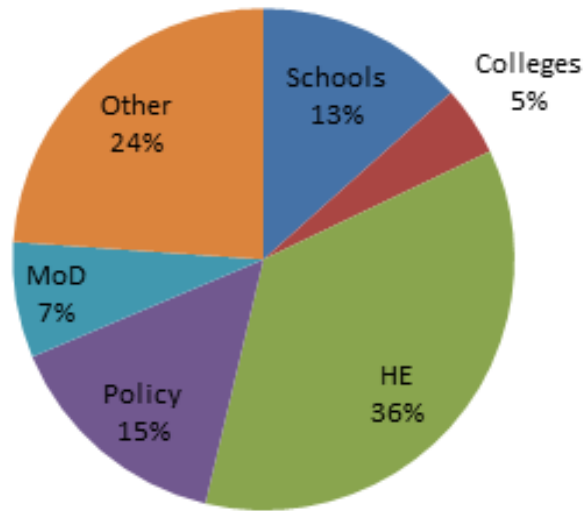
Final question: The most important thing that the alliance can do for me in my role?

- **Collect evidence from research to influence policy.**
- Using research as a basis for **practical projects in school** – getting to the heart of the issue and really supporting service children in school.
- **Collaboration and communication.**

- **Informing, researching, data, accountability, policy.**
- Provide knowledge/support in ensuring HE is an option for this group of students.
- Continue to provide information and support which is accessible and relevant to the wider issues surrounding service family children.
- **Support, inform, encourage.**
- **Share best practice for delivery.**
- **Continue to provide opportunities for collaboration and sharing of practice.**
- Partnership building with NCOP.
- Explore links with HE admissions (and SPA).
- Come to North Yorkshire!
- Provide opportunities for service children.
- Provide guidance and recommendations.
- Resources, support and aspirations.
- **Inform, partnerships, (provide) networks, campaign (together).**
- A central hub of research.
- **Facilitate effective rollout/implementation of systems** (some of which exist already) that could make a positive difference if just used consistently.
- **Collaboration, knowledge, support, research.**
- **Helping make real, active connections.**
- Dissemination, championing, collating, lobbying.
- Enabling collaboration with like-minded supporters (of service children) via practice hub and events.
- Inform, practice to support military children.
- Awareness raising, education, support, share.
- Peer support and best practice.
- Support positive outcomes for all children (including those whose families are posted to devolved nations).
- Highlight what makes a difference.
- Identify gaps and co-ordinate projects.
- Facilitate local/regional school/Local Authority networks. Share research/materials.
- Information and network.
- Support continuation of the MOD ESF.
- Sharing information and good practice.

Attendance summary

SCiP Alliance Building Bridges conference delegates 28th June 2017



Conference evaluation summary

