

The SCiP Alliance Building Bridges conference

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.

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.

4 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 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