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THRIVING LIVES FOR SERVICE CHILDREN

## *Welcome to the Thriving Lives Toolkit Webinar series*

### Session 7: Staff are Well Informed

- All delegates are muted
- Please introduce yourself in the chat

<https://www.scipalliance.org/thriving-lives-toolkit>



TWO THINGS...



Service Children's Progression  
**ALLIANCE**

## Whole Person, Whole Journey

**SCiP Alliance Conference 2025**  
Join us for our annual conference for the community supporting thriving lives for Service children.

 **26 November**  
Wednesday

 **Glasgow**  
Voco Grand Central  
99 Gordon St, G1 3SF

 **Tickets**  
scipalliance.org

**Early Bird Rate**  
**£110**  
Available until  
31st August



Connect. Equip. Inspire.

Service Children's Progression  
**ALLIANCE**

## COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Hosted by  **UNIVERSITY OF  
WINCHESTER**

Supported by  **Ministry  
of Defence**

### Have Your Say

Do you have an interest in supporting children and young people from Armed Forces families? Please help inform our work and activity plans by taking part in our questionnaire.

We're inviting schools, colleges, researchers, policymakers, funders to take part in our Community Consultation.

Your views will directly shape the SCiP Alliance's future priorities and plans.

The SCiP Alliance is a UK-wide community working to help children in Armed Forces families thrive. We want to hear about your successes, challenges, and support needs—and how well we've helped you connect with others, with evidence, and with support.

The questionnaire will be open for the next three weeks. Please respond by Thursday 26 June.

Thank you for being part of our community and for all you do to support Service children.

Funded by:  **GREENWICH  
HOSPITAL**



## TODAY'S CONTRIBUTORS

- **Philip Dent**

*Director, SCiP Alliance*

- **Vicki Fisher**

*Engagement Manager,  
SCiP Alliance*

- **Dr Anne Chappell**

*Head of Department / Reader –  
Education, Brunel University London*

- **Dr Ellen McHugh**

*Senior Lecturer in Education, Brunel  
University London*

- **Emma Thompson**

*Principal Policy Officer, East Riding  
of Yorkshire Council*

# 7 Staff are well-informed

**Supportive training and networks ensure all staff understand and support each Service child.**

- Do you have a named point of contact to help staff support Service children and families?
- Do you provide appropriate time for professional development around Service children?
- Do you ensure that all staff and those with responsibility for school governance have access to high quality training about supporting Armed Forces children?
- Do staff apply research and evidence-based resources in their support for Service children and families?
- Do staff engage in local and national networks focused on supporting Service children and families?

Please  
share your  
**FEEDBACK**



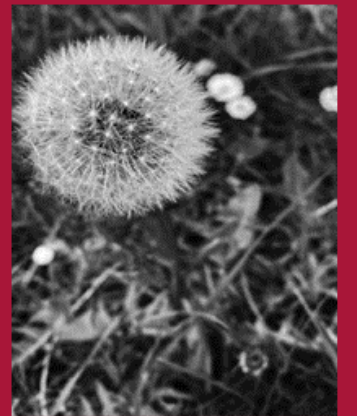


# **SCiP Thriving Lives Toolkit Webinar:**

## **Principle 7: Staff are well-informed**

**18<sup>th</sup> June 2025**

### **Grown Up' Children from Armed Forces Families: Reflections on Experiences of Childhood and Education**



# Who Are We and What We Do?

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# Thriving Lives Toolkit

Helping schools support Armed Forces children

## 7 Staff are well-informed

**Supportive training and networks ensure all staff understand and support each Service child.**

The extensive research that powers The Thriving Lives Toolkit found that many young people growing up in Armed Forces families experience a very different childhood to their civilian classmates and want their complex lives to be understood by the people supporting them.

Effective schools work to understand the life of an Armed Forces family and reach out to local networks. Supportive and well-informed school staff can be protective factors in situations such as deployment.



# ‘Grown Up’ Children from Armed Forces Families

- ‘The overlooked casualties of conflict’: need to ‘understand the pressures’ on these children (RNRMCF, 2009: p.4).
- Service Pupil Premium school funding introduced in 2011 to support specific challenges (MoD, 2021).
- Office for Students notes that children from military families face ‘equality gaps’ and have ‘support needs’ (OfS, 2020: p. 36).
- ‘Grown-up’ children are currently absent from research, policy and practice: focus on serving military, veterans, spouses and school-aged children.
- ‘Missing persons’ (Evans, 1999) because they are not in the military and not the responsibility of the military.
- High levels of mobility amongst families in this community (Walker, Sealous and Misca, 2020).

# Research Aims

The specific aims were:

1. Investigate how childhood and education were experienced and understood by 'grown up' children from the diverse community of armed forces families, and their perceptions of the impact of their experience.
2. Seek the advice of the 'grown up' children to understand what they think is important for the current children and those who work with them.
3. Use the knowledge generated by research with the 'grown up' children to inform policies and practices for families, schools, armed forces charities, and government to better support current children from armed forces families.

# Methodology and Methods

- Questionnaires and in-depth interviews to examine the auto/biographical experiences of this absent and under-researched group of 'missing persons' (Evans, 1999; Scott, 2009).
- Participants aged 18-80, from a range of geographical locations (UK and overseas) and across all armed forces.
- Two stage data collection:  
Stage 1: Online questionnaire with 119 respondents who self-identified as being from a military family (28 complex questions) (March and August 2021)

# Main Findings

The participants outlined their experiences of:

- challenges and opportunities that arise from hyper-mobility;
- identification and sense of pride;
- friendships;
- talking with parents about the experience of growing up in their family;
- stability/instability and (re)integration to 'civilian' life;
- the uniqueness of growing up in an armed forces family;
- the nature of their childhoods in relation to others and the perceived impact of their experiences.

They also gave advice for the Ministry of Defence and armed forces, schools and teachers, parents/guardians, and current children.

# Findings: Themes

- Challenges;
- Opportunities;
- Friendships;
- Sense of pride and identification;
- Talking with parents/guardians and siblings;
- Community, belonging and (in)stability;
- Transition from armed forces life;
- University attendance;
- Uniqueness of growing up in an armed forces family;
- The impact.

# Findings: Challenges

Challenges	Number of mentions
Transitory nature of life	41
Making new friends	37
Maintaining and retaining friendships	34
Moving from place to place	28
Adjusting to a new school	8
Isolation and loneliness (including boarding school)	12
Saying goodbye to friends	10
Civilians (children and adults)	8
Bullying at school	7
Anxiety and confidence	6
Lack of belonging to a 'place'	6
Shyness	2
Feeling negatively different	1

# Findings: Opportunities

Opportunities	Number of mentions
Sense of belonging to a community	31
Meeting new people	19
Friendships	15
Making new friends	9
Feeling positive about being different to other children	7
Development of social skills	3
Connecting and reconnecting with other children from Armed Forces Families	3



*I think some of the other things that I probably reflect back on are the amount of moving we did. I went to seven primary schools. I was really fortunate, even though my dad was posted three times when I was in secondary school, that I was able to stay at the same school, really fortunate, because that was a one-off...(Yasmin – Interview).*

*...education wise, I definitely think it [moving] did have an impact because I couldn't study what I was studying before, I had to change some of my subjects, and as I say, the curriculum wasn't the same either, it was different books that we were studying, so I'd lost sort of about six weeks of term already prior to moving there. So yeah, it definitely had an impact (Donna – Interview).*

*...the schooling was very different, the syllabus was different...everything was different, and it's so weird, but by this point how many schools had I been to? So, I just kind of got on with it and you just learn to go with the flow. I knew that an entire year pretty much in my GCSE work had been erased and I had to start again (Annie – Interview)*

*I found it very difficult, you know, moving to a new school and making new relationships and fitting in - I did find that really hard (Hannah – Interview).*

*So, I did my A-Levels and do you know what? I will say this to you, university was never mentioned to me...I just thought right, I'll go back to the UK and get a job (Yasmin – Interview).*

*Didn't attend university, although I had a place, as at 18 - parents still living in Germany and I didn't feel support in the UK (Questionnaire 57).*

*...it was good though because when I came to the university, they actually gave me a pack that they give to all the international students...yeah, they kind of flagged it up and they were like, oh OK military child, we'll give them all of this stuff...some of it was good...it did give a lot of information...I can't quite remember exactly what it was but I looked through it and some of it was like, oh OK, that's good to know (Ava – Interview).*

# Advice for Schools and Teachers

The advice given by the 'grown up' children was as follows:

1. Be understanding;
2. Show kindness, patience and inclusion;
3. Ask the children about their experiences and find out their perspectives;
4. Be aware of what leads to their experiences, including mobility, separation, bullying, abuse and trauma;
5. Be especially understanding in schools with a small or no armed forces community;
6. Offer emotional support, including counselling;
7. Check for gaps in knowledge and provide support for the gaps;
8. Support integration with other children, again particularly where the community is small;
9. Follow the National Curriculum and choose exam boards carefully;
10. Communicate detail effectively with previous and subsequent schools;
11. Don't penalise the 'temporary' status of the children.

# Report Recommendations for Policy and Practice

## Recommendation 2:

Schools should continue to be supported in developing the awareness of all staff in identifying and recognising the challenges for children who are part of an armed forces family, including the issues that come with high levels of mobility, and how this presents both unique opportunities and challenges. This is particularly important for schools that have a small number of children from the armed forces families' community.

The identification of the children would be improved if the Ministry of Defence kept and shared records with and between schools and this would also enable the 'Service Pupil Premium' to be made available to all schools for all children.

# Report Recommendations for Policy and Practice

## Recommendation 1:

There should be greater acknowledgment of what can be gained from talking to 'grown up children' from armed forces families to inform policy and practice to better support current children from armed forces families. The **diversity and complexity of the experiences needs to be understood** as they are influenced by **a range of factors**, including the nature of **the work** that their serving parent/guardian does, **the people they meet**, and **the places they live**.

## Recommendation 5:

That **support, including allocated finance, should be consistent** for all armed forces children and those who support them across the four home nations, regardless of where they are located.

## Recommendation 6:

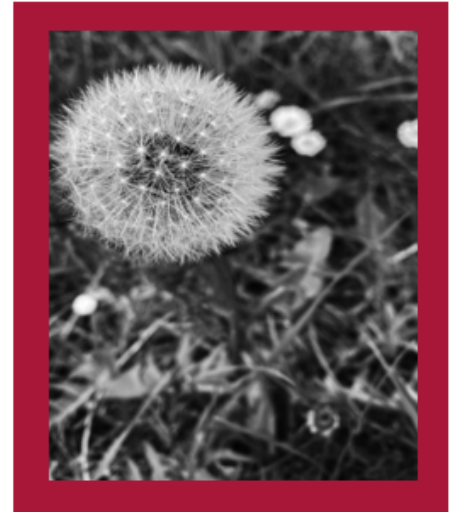
Organisations consider implementing **mentoring programmes** that make use of the experiences and wisdom of the 'grown up children' as mentors to support others who have had **similar experiences**.

# Children from Armed Forces families: past experiences, present support

Are you interested in finding out more about what you can do to support children and young people from Armed Forces families?

Join us to hear about the experiences of 'grown up' children from Armed Forces families and schools:

<https://www.brunel.ac.uk/research/projects/grown-up-children-from-armed-forces-families>



**Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> June 2025 1530-1700 online**

**Scan here to reserve your free ticket or follow the link:**

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/children-from-armed-forces-families-past-experiences-support-tickets-1360850734179?aff=oddtcreator>

Please contact [cbass-activities@brunel.ac.uk](mailto:cbass-activities@brunel.ac.uk) if you have any queries







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**'Grown Up' Children from Armed Forces Families:**  
reflections on experiences of childhood and education

**Research Team**  
Dr Anne Chappell  
Dr Ellen McHugh  
Dr Christopher Ince  
Mr Mamoon Bhuyan



<https://bura.brunel.ac.uk/bitstream/2438/30806/4/FullText.pdf>



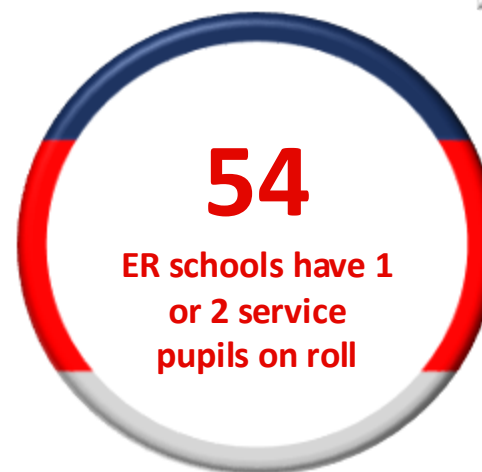
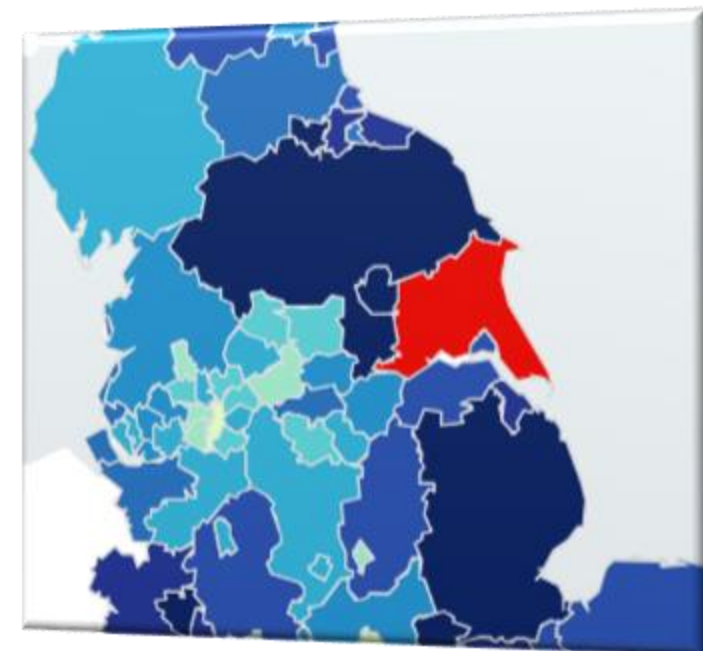
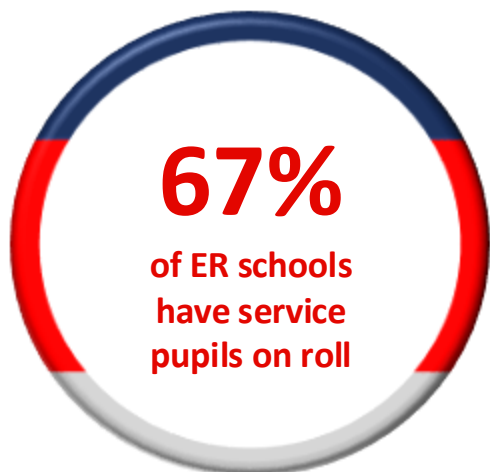


# Exploring the impacts of military culture and Service experience on Service children in education

*Emma Thompson*



# Service Children in the East Riding





***“We don’t want to  
be seen as  
different; we just  
want to be  
understood.”***



Est.  
1841

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UNIVERSITY

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Professional courses and CPD

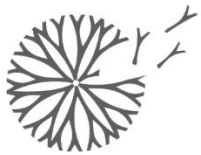
# The Military Human

These training sessions provide front line staff in council, community, health and social care and other professions with understanding of armed forces composition and highlight good practice and inequality.

[BOOK COURSE IN ONLINE STORE](#) →







SERVICE FAMILIES  
LIAISON OFFICER

# Supporting Service Children & Young People

Supporting our Armed Forces

Beccy Dixon  
Service Families' Liaison Officer



# Aims and objectives

- Overview of the Armed Forces Covenant duty in relation to education
- Understanding of military culture and the Service experience and its influences and effects on Service children
- Overview of the challenges, barriers and disadvantages that Service children can face
- Share and celebrate the positive impacts of military life
- Empower schools and professionals to reflect on and develop their support for Service children, with a particular focus on attainment and wellbeing
- Increased awareness of national resources and local support available





# Pilot

- 4 sessions
- 41 staff and partners
- Online 'twilight sessions'
- Schools
- Governors
- Education welfare
- Education psychology
- Military charities

## EXPLORING THE IMPACTS OF MILITARY CULTURE AND SERVICE EXPERIENCE ON SERVICE CHILDREN IN EDUCATION.

FREE staff CPD training for schools and other settings (all those working within Children, Families and Schools Services) supporting Service children and young people to live happy, safe and fulfilling lives



*'We don't want to be seen as different, we just want to be understood.'*

UK MOD © Crown copyright 2024

Delivered by the Armed Forces and Uniformed Services team at York St. John University and the Service Families' Liaison Officer, Ebor Academy Trust, York

### The training aims to:

- Provide a general understanding of military culture and the service experience and to explore its influences and effects on Service children.
- Provide an overview of the challenges, barriers and disadvantages that Service children can face.
- Share and celebrate the positive impacts of military life.
- Empower schools and professionals working with children to reflect on and develop their support for Service children, with a particular focus on attainment and wellbeing.
- Provide an overview of the Armed Forces Covenant duty in relation to education.

### Choose from one of the following 2 hour online training sessions:

- Tuesday, 27 February (3.30 - 5.30pm)
- Wednesday, 6 March (3.30 - 5.30pm)
- Tuesday, 12 March (3.30 - 5.30pm)
- Tuesday, 16 April (3.30 - 5.30pm)

Sessions will take place over Microsoft Teams.

To book a place or for further information, please email [emma.thompson@eastriding.gov.uk](mailto:emma.thompson@eastriding.gov.uk)



Est. 1841







# Feedback

It was one of the best CPD sessions I have attended over the past few years.

Really enjoyable. Great pace and interesting!

Time to reflect on the perspective of the children and their families

Delivery very clear and concise

Child-centred approaches and practice are key in my role and so it is valuable hearing children's views so that these can help form a key part of any work I undertake with this cohort of children

Was packed full of information

I have asked all team members to sign up to further sessions so that these barriers are at the forefront of our practice

Thought provoking

Enthusiastic and knowledgeable presenters



# Post-pilot

- SCiP Alliance article
- Interest from other local authorities
- MODLAP
- Armed Forces Needs Assessment
- Festival of Friends project
- SEND Focus Group
- Planning delivery of further sessions

## QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION

- Do you have any questions for today's presenters?
- What challenges do you face working to enhance Principle 7: Staff are well-informed?
- What has worked well in your work to enhance Principle 7: Staff are well-informed?
- Links to helpful resources and opportunities in the chat
- Share your contact details, if you wish

## 7 Staff are well-informed

**Supportive training and networks ensure all staff understand and support each Service child.**

Thank you for attending our online webinar. We appreciate your participation and hope you found it valuable.

To help us improve future sessions, please take a moment to complete the [evaluation form](#).

Your feedback is greatly appreciated.

Please  
share your  
**FEEDBACK**



# GET INVOLVED

- Join a [SCiP Alliance Hub](#)
- Catch up on previous [webinar sessions](#)
- Register for our [newsletter](#)
- [SCiP Alliance 2025 Conference](#)
- Have your say: [Community Consultation](#)
- Utilise the [Thriving Lives Toolkit](#) and resources
- Follow us on [LinkedIn](#) and [X](#)

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 **ALLIANCE**

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## COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

### Have Your Say

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