

## Students from armed forces families: Information for HE admissions teams

Service children (those whose parent or carer serves in the armed forces or reserves, or has done at any point during the young person's childhood) may have unique experiences, challenges and strengths; various unique factors may have influenced a Service child's motivations, choices and outcomes, such as:

- School moves that disrupted learning for a particular course of study;
- Frequent separation or a parent deployed on combat operations during examinations;
- Short stays at schools may limit opportunities to engage in extra-curricular activities;
- Being a young carer or having a serving parent affected by a life-changing injury or condition;
- Lack of school/subject choice after short notice moves.

Research by the University of Winchester (McCullough and Hall, 2016) found that Service children accrue considerable strengths from their experiences, including independence, maturity, adaptability and relationship building. However the research also tells us that Service children appear to be one-third less likely to access higher education, may have to work harder than their peers for the same outcomes and may need guidance to make the most of their unique

### The student's UCAS application

Students should be encouraged to use the personal statement to refer to strengths or challenges their lifestyle has brought, and to fill in application fields in full, such as identifying the armed forces as their parental occupation. Schools should flag obstacles in context in the reference, stressing any motivation to reach higher grades. For a Service child, mitigating factors may include mobility, separation, parental deployment or a full time or occasional caring role.

- The Ministry of Defence's [UCAS blog article](#) about students from military families details the impact of a Service background and how students can make the most of it:

[www.ucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources/adviser-news/news/do-you-have-students-military-families](http://www.ucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources/adviser-news/news/do-you-have-students-military-families)

The SCiP Alliance is led by the University of Winchester,  
supported by the Ministry of Defence

[www.scipalliance.org](http://www.scipalliance.org)

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### Clearing and transition

- Take into account potential additional stress such as a deployed parent or impending move. Those with a deployed parent and/or caring responsibilities may be anxious about leaving home.
- Prompt students to look into academic support to fill any curriculum gaps, either when they arrive at the institution or via online MOOCs in preparation.
- Check support available for young carers in the area and put the student in touch with student services if appropriate

### Fees and finance

A BFPO address usually means a family are abroad due to a UK military or Foreign Office posting. If on checking nationality the applicant would otherwise be eligible they should be advised that they may be eligible for UK fees. The situation is complex for Serving families; if in doubt advise students to contact funding bodies directly.

- The Scottish Government has a helpful guide explaining how to determine which funding body to approach: [https://www.saas.gov.uk/forms/armed\\_forces.pdf](https://www.saas.gov.uk/forms/armed_forces.pdf)
- England's Student Loans Company provides guidance (Page 12 section 2.8): <https://www.practitioners.slco.uk/media/1511/sfe-17-18-assessing-eligibility-guidance-chapterpdf.pdf>

### Armed forces families and distance learning

Armed forces personnel and family members posted abroad can apply for distance learning support. Regulation 13(7)(b) clarifies the situation for armed forces family members: [http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/114/pdfs/uksi\\_20170114\\_en.pdf?text=student%20support](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/114/pdfs/uksi_20170114_en.pdf?text=student%20support). Regulations 10, 16, 17, 19, 20 and regulation 22 make similar amendments in respect of full-time and part-time disabled students' allowance, part-time fee loans and grants.

THRIVING LIVES FOR SERVICE CHILDREN

Get involved and make a difference to the children  
of our military families: [www.scipalliance.org](http://www.scipalliance.org)