SUPPORTING CHILDREN FROM MILITARY FAMILIES

SERVICE CHILDREN AND PROGRESSION

The Service Children's Progression Alliance, known as the SCiP Alliance, defines service children as "those whose parents or carers serve in the Armed Forces or Reserves during the first 25 years of their life." According to the University of Winchester only 24% of children from military families progress to higher education. This is compared with the national average of 43% despite these children achieving well academically. This is why extra support for children from military families is so important.

POTENTIAL BARRIERS TO PROGRESSION

Disrupted education

Children from military families may move between schools during their education more frequently, which can lead to them missing out on aspects of the curriculum due to differences in curriculum provision. When transitioning, poor communication between schools can particularly affect those with additional learning needs and those in examination years. Students can then be more restricted in their course choices at GCSE, post-16 and higher education. Students may also be less able to participate in extra-curricular activities or other opportunities.

Wellbeing issues

Children from military families' wellbeing may be negatively affected by the deployment and return of family members. These changes within their homes may disrupt routines and family dynamics, causing strain. Moving schools can disrupt their friendships and increase their potential for being bullied. This can have a negative impact on a student's ability to study and can lead to emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Children having caring responsibilities

Students with caring responsibilities from military families are less likely to be identified and therefore, are less likely to receive the support they need as young carers.

USE THE THRIVING LIVES TOOLKIT

SCiP has produced a Thriving Lives toolkit: www.scipalliance.org/thriving-lives-toolkit to advise best practice in supporting children from military families. This free resource presents an evidence-based approach to assess, develop and implement a support structure to best allow service children to thrive.

The toolkit highlights seven principles of effective support and suggests practical examples to integrate each principle into your support plan. The toolkit also provides a framework to reflect, assess and enhance current support for children from military families The Thriving Lives toolkit is an excellent starting point for schools looking to better support their service children. It comes highly recommended from the participant schools and is presented in a clear format that is easy to distribute among your school's practitioners.

The toolkit can be accessed for free along with a two-minute introductory video and successful case studies.

SCiP ALLIANCE EAST ANGLIA

The SCiP Alliance East Anglia Hub was launched in April 2021, with the aim of bringing people together to support practitioners and professionals to champion the progression of children from military families and support them to achieve.

Through connecting professionals, the Alliance aims to ensure the success of the Armed Forces Covenant, a "promise from the nation that those who serve or have served, and their families, are treated fairly".

By bringing together a partnership of stakeholders, including higher education institutions, Uni Connect organisations, Armed Forces Family Federations, local education authorities, and charities, the hub aims to enable new and better collaborations, communications, build capacity, reach out to new stakeholders, and contribute to and draw from the SCiP Alliance Practice Group and Strategy Board.

It also aims to share and respond collectively to effective practice, challenges, ideas, priorities and questions.

FIND OUT MORE

■ SciP Alliance facts

■ SCiP Alliance presentation

■ Office for Students children from military families – guide and short film

■ UCAS information on service children