



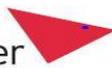
Rallying to the Flag

A Consolidated Picture of Armed Forces
Children's Education in Scotland in
2021: Laying Foundations & Promoting
Development



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Centre for Military
Research, Education
& Public Engagement

**FORCES CHILDREN'S
EDUCATION**

Foreword



As Veteran's Commissioner I am often reminded that veterans are but a part of the wider armed forces family. I have been really taken by the positive contributions that this wider armed forces family makes to our communities Scotland-wide. During my time as Veterans Commissioner, I have tried to focus the attention of those making policy in the Scottish Government to help ensure that the transition journey is as simple and painless as possible. And that is particularly true for the children who are part of it.

This report highlights the challenges that the children of Service, ex-Service and Reservist personnel can face as a result of their parents' work. June 2020 saw the publication of "Living in Our Shoes" (the Selous Report). Andrew Selous and his review team conducted a comprehensive review of the diverse needs of service families, assessing whether the current support offer was meeting these needs. He made 110 recommendations for change, 31 of which related to education and childcare.

Both the Selous Report's findings and recommendations have been widely accepted. This year will see publication of statutory guidance in association with the new Armed Forces Act, under which education, housing and health authorities will need to demonstrate "due regard" to the conditions of the Armed Forces Covenant. How this plays out in Scotland is yet to be seen, however this report is very timely in starting a part of the conversation here in Scotland.

You will read in the report that there are over twelve and half thousand children and young people in Scotland with an armed forces family background. They are present in all 32 local authorities. This is a substantial population with a particular set of needs which are not always as well understood as they should be. The report goes a long way to establishing a better knowledge base from which educationalists and policy makers can consider how they can better support this group of children and young people in future.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the authors on this important and informative piece of work.

CHARLES WALLACE
Scottish Veterans Commissioner

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Executive Summary

Introduction

The Armed Forces Covenant states:

“The covenant’s twin underlying principles are that members of the armed forces community should face no disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public and commercial services; and that special consideration is appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given the most such as the injured or the bereaved.”¹

Serving members of the armed forces, veterans and their families are within the scope of the Covenant. The Scottish Government and all 32 local authorities in Scotland support the Covenant. An annual report is presented, as required by statute, to the UK Parliament. Within that report are specific sections giving updates on progress; one of these sections is devoted to education in Scotland. New legislation, and its associated statutory guidance will emphasise the requirement that identified authorities, including housing, education and health have obligations to have due regard to the terms of the Covenant.

This report provides an overview of the numbers of armed forces children at national and local authority level, together with a review of how some authorities have responded to the needs of this part of the pupil population. It therefore marks a start point in explaining how Scotland as a whole and individual Councils are meeting the expectations of the Covenant and the associated responsibilities envisaged by statute. The rationale for this report is that over the years, much has been learned about the nature of the armed forces children’s population in Scotland. The time is now right to bring that information together to identify where there are gaps in our knowledge, to create questions and to make recommendations to guide the next stages of development.

Against this patchy background the National Transitions Officer (NTO) role established by ADES has provided continuity of support since 2013 and in terms of actual provision it is the sole unifying factor across Scotland. The NTO provides a service for authorities which have not sought, or been successful with, MoD Education support Fund (ESF) applications, and for children, families, and armed forces units in areas where no other specialist is available. The post is the sole source of official support in these areas. The national data collection exercises described in this report and the provision of the award-winning website², are tangible expressions of the impact of the national work of the NTO. Moreover, it is a role that has been discharged by a single officer, albeit supported by ADES. This contrasts, for example, with the situation in Wales which is a smaller jurisdiction than Scotland where a national officer is supported by a team of 4 regional officials. Therefore, whether considered from the perspectives of need, impact, or value for money the decision by the MoD not to support ADES in sustaining the NTO post beyond March 2022 has created a significant gap in provision because of which armed forces families, local authorities and schools will be without any

¹ MoD, Armed Forces Covenant (2016):

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/49469/the_armed_forces_covenant.pdf

² <https://forceschildrenseducation.org.uk>

authoritative advice and wider support. This contrasts starkly with the position in Wales and indeed England where at least schools can turn to resources provided through the service pupil premium (SPP).

Methodology

Due to the data available and the stage of evaluation planning, this report is a combination of process and impact evaluation. Process evaluation tends to examine “what can be learned from how the intervention was delivered” (HM Treasury, 2020)³ while impact evaluation focusses on “what difference has the intervention made”. It uses evidence produced as a result of two work streams:

- a survey of all 32 authorities requesting numerical data on the number of children enrolled in establishments in October 2021;
- an analysis of Scottish applications made under the arrangements of the Ministry of Defence’s Education support Fund (ESF);
- The result is therefore a national picture based on the chosen evaluation approach combining quantitative and qualitative information.

Limits of Exercise

All 32 authorities responded to the request for numerical data. However, returns indicated that the figures provided are an understatement of numbers attributable to the way data is collected at local level, particularly in the early years’ sector. The amount of detail authorities were able to provide also varied. The qualitative aspect of the study was necessarily limited to those schools and authorities who had made bids against the Education Support Fund and was further limited by the constraints imposed by that application process. It was therefore not possible to gain a comprehensive picture of either need or provision across Scotland, and that is an issue in itself. However, from the documentation analysed it was possible to make statements about the nature of needs identified in the applications, and how authorities were seeking to meet those needs.

Observations

Distribution of Young People

There are at least 12,497 children and young people with an armed forces background in local authority educational provision in Scotland who are present in all 32 Council areas.

The distribution of children between authorities is very uneven, with high numbers recorded in Moray (1904), Fife (1301), and Argyll and Bute (1284). In contrast, of the mainland authorities Dundee City (61), Falkirk (85), and Aberdeen City (126) and Stirling (129) record the lowest numbers.

Between 2019 and 2021 the numbers of children with an armed forces background have risen from 11,816 to 12,497, a gain of 681 children. This is a rise of 5.8%. It is unknown whether

³ HM Treasury (2020), Magenta Book:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/879438/HMT_Magenta_Book.pdf

this is a real increase, or is attributable to better recording, or is a combination of both these factors.

Different Experiences of Young People

Of the total of 12497 children and young people 33.4% have a regular forces background, 9.5% are from a reserve forces background and 46.7% are children of veterans. A further 3.4% have parents from more than one of these backgrounds, while 7% of parents did not declare their background. Only 2 authorities record whether children are from naval, army or air force families.

Schools are experiencing different levels of turnover, or “churn” of young people. This aspect of the armed forces dimension has significant implications for the learning and working environments of schools. For example, teacher workload will be increased in areas of high churn through additional assessment and reporting. Children will have tended to have experienced higher levels of interrupted learning. Conversely, in areas where military postings are relatively static the learning environment will, in this sense, be little different to other schools. Level of churn cannot currently be discerned from a global data collection; a specific analysis is needed. This is an important shortcoming in present data collection arrangements.

Inequality Related to Need

All 32 local authorities have armed forces children. Only a minority submit applications for additional resources from the Education Support. Provision for children where bids have not been submitted is unknown. Of those which submit applications, there is no guarantee of funding being awarded. This situation has given rise to a worrying inequality of provision in relation to need. Therefore, while some authorities, such as Argyll and Bute and Highland have been successful in securing additional funding annually, others, where there is a large armed forces presence, such as Fife have not. Notably, Moray, has the largest armed forces children’s presence in Scotland, and is currently successful in securing funding from both ESF and the Covenant, but in the past received no additionality. It is therefore, currently, impossible to discern any clear association between level, nature of need, and how, or if, those needs are being met. This must be seen as a major criticism of current arrangements when measured against the aspirations of the Covenant. This criticism is amplified by the absence of any equivalent in Scotland of the English Service Pupil Premium (SPP) which, however imperfect, does provide some resourcing proportionate to level of need.

Need for Data Collection and Analysis

Other than the ADES exercise there is no national attempt to collect, and still less to analyse data related to the education of armed forces children. This is a heterogeneous group within which there is a range of learning needs. Analysis of ESF submissions reveals that locally schools can feel under pressure because of these needs. There is, however, no national mechanism that systematically matches resources to need, and the degree to which this gap is being, or can be, addressed locally is unknown. Present mechanisms only allow collection and analysis of basic numerical, descriptive data. Factors such as churn, levels of additional support needs, resource implications and outcomes for this population are unknown. Given the aspiration of the Covenant, which is universally supported, this appears anomalous.

There is a clear need for an agreed and universal approach to the collection and analysis of data to address this issue.

In 2017 an independent report was commissioned to review the operation of the Ministry of Defence's Education Support Fund (ESF), this had a limited circulation to key stakeholders. Since then, ESF has had another four years of operation, and much has changed in the educational and armed forces landscapes, for example with the annual cycles of implementation of the National Improvement Framework (NIF) in education and the pattern of operational deployments for the armed forces. Much has been learned, but this new learning has not so far been captured. The time is therefore now right to again take stock so that policy makers and practitioners are better informed to take the next steps in planning improvements in services to the children of armed forces families.

Key Recommendations

The substance of this report is from the Scottish perspective. It recognises children and young people of armed forces families who are found in early year settings and schools within each local authority, nationally. Having completed these data analysis processes the following recommendations have been identified, under key headings.

The overarching recommendation is that this is a substantial area of responsibility which merits the continuation of a specific Scotland-wide leadership role. The ADES NTO has established this foundation. Maintenance and development within this role will provide the necessary strategic leadership, management, and development necessary to meet our commitment to the AF Covenant.

Recommendations

Policy

- The general instability of figures around armed forces children annually for each authority highlights the need for there to be effective data collection for this group. Only in this way will a better understanding be gained of the factors contributing to change. The most effective, but not necessarily the easiest way would be for the Scottish Government to require the collection of the data through its annual data collection exercise. Reported within the ScotXed collection yearly (as part of the pupil census) would enable Additional Support Needs data to be considered in the required annual reporting.
- Systems of data collection and analysis require to be developed to the point where schools and authorities can be reassured that those individuals, and armed forces children for whom they have a responsibility, are achieving their fullest potential.
- Regular working with headteachers and schools is essential, to gather views, perceptions, and data around attainment of mobile children and young people. There is a need to elicit this information so that data points us in the right direction, to identify challenges and difficulty in developing a pattern of attainment/achievement with a population that is ever-changing.

- A standardised report format for data collection around the Armed Forces Family Indicator (AFF) should be agreed by all local authorities to allow for consistency in collection, management, and reporting.
- Specific barriers and their impact in the effective transfer of information should be identified.
- Local authorities must understand the distribution of armed forces children in their schools.
- It should be noted that Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) attainment numbers in any year will be relatively small and therefore a method of reviewing relative attainment for armed forces children must be developed.
- Data is needed at Regional Improvement Collaborative (RIC) level to maximise the opportunities for collaboration and to ensure that armed forces children's needs are appropriately considered at this level including plans for COVID-19 recovery.
- Improved information and data at local, regional, and national levels will be indispensable to making decisions that better match strategic aspirations to local needs.

Practice

- The identification of good practice together with what constitutes an effective, best value outcome, requires to be supported by ongoing data that is consistent and reliable in nature.
- A better understanding of turbulence and its effects will assist schools and authorities in managing workloads.
- Education Scotland should be encouraged to look at raising attainment, health, and wellbeing of armed forces children, during establishment inspections and to aggregate their findings.
- It is essential to maintain and facilitate network groups nationally, and across jurisdictions, to support knowledge exchange.
- The findings from the ADES 2021 data collection exercise should be used to assemble a business case for SEEMiS to extend the utility of the armed forces indicator.
- Local authorities need to agree on a process to be used in enrolling armed forces children in their early years' settings and schools. Data collection and analysis must be considered for Early Learning and Children settings.
- Examples and models of good practice and knowledge exchange must be provided and include consideration of the use of an online process that includes the AFF Indicator.
- There is a need to gather information on effective models of engagement with parents in armed forces families.
- How schools support armed forces children in making and sustaining friendships merits a bespoke fact-finding exercise.

Funding – evaluation of MoD ESF projects across Scotland

- There is a need to gain a better understanding of the association between spending and positive outcomes. This is as true for armed forces children as it is of the rest of the school population.

- The statements of project outcomes are a potentially valuable source of information and could be better used to identify good practices and approaches that are more likely to deliver positive learning experiences.
- The accumulation of a more reliable and comprehensive knowledge base would be an important step to developing a more flexible and strategic approach.
- If funding is to continue, then allowing initiatives that can develop over time may be a better use of funding particularly if this is done in partnership with other schools.
- A robust evaluation process should be in place to examine how the funding is supporting the education and wellbeing of armed forces children. This should include the use of specific data capture tools to ensure evaluation in between and across the schools.
- Consider how information from non-state schools might be gathered through engagement and agreement. This would mean information relating to children and young people from armed forces families who are enrolled in independent (Public) schools in Scotland.
- The statements of project outcomes are a potentially valuable source of information and could be better used to identify good practices and approaches that are more likely to deliver positive learning experiences.
- There is a lack of shared understanding about development work and examples of good practice in specific schools across Scotland. The issues and the solutions have not been shared, nor used for knowledge exchange and this requires further exploration.

Research

- More accurate, uniform and up to date data is required to track the dispersion of children and young people of armed forces families across Scotland.
- Further research and evaluation studies are required to understand the learning journey of these children and young people. Data collection should address:
 - Examples of good practice, opportunities for knowledge exchange and accurate categorisation of children from families of veterans, active personnel, or reservists.
 - Aspects of child wellbeing, family support and specific school-based roles that promote partnership and integration for these children and their families.
- The increasing divergence between jurisdictions will remain a challenge into the future. The effect of movements on children's learner journey requires to be better understood together with effective mitigation measures.
- Parents often assert that moving to Scotland reduces children's attainment relative to their peers. The accuracy, or otherwise, of this view requires investigation based on evidence. Data is also required to illicit the impact on families of posting and movement, this includes understanding transition from armed forces to civilian life.
- The national health and wellbeing survey, or equivalent, should be used to identify any issues that are specific to armed forces children. The adoption of a uniform assessment tool in this area will facilitate the collection and analysis of data as a basis for developing practice.

- Both the incidence and impact on learning of unaccompanied postings and the impact on families of posting and movement requires further investigation and data collection.
- Studies related to raising attainment and health and wellbeing in armed forces children should provide a detailed insight into what works best, with which group of children, and in what circumstances.
- There is a need to bring together data, experience, and knowledge across Scotland into a strategic coordinated approach, that is overseen, developed, and managed by a specific role.



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Glossary of Terms

ADES	Association of Directors of Education in Scotland
AFCYP	Armed Forces Children and Young People
AFF	Armed Forces Families
AFFI	Armed Forces Families Indicator (on the SEEMiS system)
AFFS	Armed Forces Families and Safeguarding (part of MoD), see DCYP
AFWG	Armed Forces Working Group (a meeting of education professionals chaired by the ADES NTO)
ALN	Additional Learning Needs (Wales)
ASL	Additional Support for Learning (Scotland)
ASN	Additional Support Needs (the term used in Scotland, as applied to children who require extra support. NB this is <u>not</u> equivalent to SEN/SEND)
CEA	Continuity of Education Allowance
Click+Go	A facility provided within the SEEMiS system to allow first level analysis of data.
CoSLA	Convention of Scottish Local Authorities
Churn	The turnover in the pupil population caused by children joining or leaving schools
DCYP	Directorate Children and Young People, now AFFS
DfE	Department for Education (the ministry in England responsible for education)
ELC	Early Learning and Childcare (pre-school provision)
ENU	Edinburgh Napier University
EPI	Education Policy Institute
ESF	Education Support Fund. Annual funding supplied by MoD to support the education of armed forces children subject to conditions.
FAM	Future Accommodation Model. The new system for housing armed forces families.
GIRFEC	Getting It Right For Every Child – is the national approach to improving the wellbeing of children and young people. It has a statutory basis through the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.
HT	Headteacher

Insight	The national system in Scotland that allows the attainment of schools to be interpreted and compared without resort to league tables.
LA	Local authority. There are 32 local authorities in Scotland.
MACC	Military Aid to the Civil Community
MoD	Ministry of Defence
NCOs	Non-commissioned officers
NIF	National Improvement Framework
NTO	National Transitions Officer (ADES)
PIP	Pupil information Profile (MoD)
PLN	Professional Leadership Network – UK (ADES)
QVS	Queen Victoria School, Dunblane. A school catering specifically for the children of armed forces families.
RIC	Regional Improvement Collaborative. There are 6 RICs in Scotland each composed of several local authorities co-operating on educational improvement.
RM	Royal Marines
RN	Royal Navy
RAF	Royal Air Force
Reservist	A member of the armed forces who serves part time but who is liable for full-time service and deployment in certain circumstances.
SATs	Variously, and paradoxically defined as Statutory Assessment Tests, Standardised Assessment Tests, or Standardised Attainment Tests, these assessments are used in England to measure children's mastery of parts of the curriculum.
ScotXEd	Scottish Exchange of Data – the system used by the Scottish Government to collect accurate data on school education. NB ScotXEd is not used to collect data on armed forces children.
SCOTS	The Royal Regiment of Scotland
SDS	Skills Development Scotland
SEN/SEND	Special Educational Needs/Special Educational Needs and Disability (England & NI) – the English approach to supporting children's learning. NB: this is not equivalent to the Scottish system of ASN.

SEEMiS	The school management information system used by all Scottish local authorities. SEEMiS is owned by all 32 local authorities and is not administered by the Scottish Government.
SIMD	Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation
SPP	Service Pupil Premium (England only)
SQA	Scottish Qualifications Authority
PEF	Pupil Equity Fund (Scotland)
Veteran	A former member of the armed forces (ex-Service)

Chapter 1 Introduction and Background

Much has been learned about the nature of the armed forces children's population in Scotland. The time is now right to bring that information together to identify where there are gaps in our knowledge, to create questions and to make recommendations to guide the next stages of development. Other than the ADES exercise there is no national attempt to collect, and still less to analyse data related to the education of armed forces children. This is a heterogeneous group within which there is a range of learning needs. Analysis of ESF submissions reveals that locally schools can feel under pressure because of these needs. There is, however, no national mechanism that systematically matches resources to need, and the degree to which this gap is being, or can be, addressed locally is unknown. This contrasts starkly, for example, with attempts to address the educational effects of social disadvantage. Present mechanisms only allow collection and analysis of basic numerical, descriptive data. Factors such as churn, levels of additional support needs, resource implications and outcomes for this population are unknown. Given the aspiration of the Covenant, which is universally supported, this appears anomalous. There is a clear need for an agreed and universal approach to the collection and analysis of data to address this issue.

This report provides an overview of the numbers of armed forces children at national and local authority level, together with a review of how some authorities have responded to the needs in this part of the pupil population. It uses evidence produced as a result of two work streams: a survey of all 32 authorities requesting numerical data on the number of children enrolled in establishments in October 2021; an analysis of Scottish applications made under the arrangements of the Ministry of Defence's Education Support Fund. It therefore marks a starting point in explaining how Scotland as a whole and individual Councils are meeting the expectations of the Covenant and the associated responsibilities envisaged by statute.

Chapter 1 sets out the context of the report, highlighting the Scottish nature of this study. The unfolding narrative of this part of the report attempts to provide a full description of the issues surrounding the education of armed forces children in Scotland, including where there are gaps in knowledge and provision. The next stage of this narrative is set out in Chapter 2 and provides an understanding of the scale and nature of the armed forces in Scotland, together with known significant changes underlining the implications for education. This chapter culminates in an identification of the characteristics of the armed forces population where quantitative description would be of benefit.

The first attempt at quantification, a pilot data collection exercise conducted in 2019, is then described in Chapter 3. Although that pilot exercise, for the first time, provided a comprehensive quantification of armed forces children across Scotland, some important issues surrounding the data were identified. The lessons learned in the 2019 exercise were then applied to a subsequent data collection in 2021 (the exigencies created by the COVID-19 pandemic precluded an exercise in 2020.)

The results of this second exercise in 2021 are set out in chapter 4, together with their implications. However, the 2019 and 2021 data amount to a numerical description of the population. To complete the picture, an insight into the nature of the needs associated with

armed forces children and how these are being met is necessary, and this is provided in Chapter 5 using a survey of the literature and the use of ESF resources. The report then seeks to bring all this learning together in a conclusion with associated recommendations. The outcome of this report is therefore a national Scottish picture based on the chosen evaluation approach combining quantitative and qualitative information to establish a baseline from which future research and development can grow.

Background

For the UK military, there has been a significant change in operational deployments and a new defence review has been published. Nationally, reports such as “Living in Our Shoes” (Walker et al., 2020)⁴ has re-emphasised the need to support armed forces families, and a change in UK law (with implications for Scotland) imposes a new duty of “due regard” for the Covenant on local authorities. The Ministry of Defence (MoD) recognise that education and schools where education is provided, play a critical role in supporting service families (MoD, 2020)⁵. Even with the Labour Governments call for all armed forces children to be provided with the same standard of education as non-military children (House of Commons, 2013)⁶ and their recommendation for greater recognition of the needs of these children there is little in the way of evidence to advise or support such progress. Indeed, there is no update on the large-scale study (DfE, 2010)⁷ which provided an analysis on the educational outcomes for this specific group of children. Moreover, even with the recommendation in 2011 that the MoD should consider developing and maintaining an accurate tracking register of service children and young people across the UK and overseas there remains no single, accurate record of service children living in the UK or indeed overseas (OFSTED, 2011, p7)⁸.

Review of the literature suggests that research addressing the educational needs of armed forces children tends to be American in origin, (except for a few new UK studies identified below) address staff views and knowledge related to the needs of military children (Arnold et al., 2014); the impact of deployment (Pexton et al., 2018)⁹ and the perspectives of school liaison staff (Aronson & Perkins, 2013)¹⁰. More specifically, the educational performance of armed forces children has been identified as lower than non-military children. In terms of educational attainment literature from 2010 (DfE, 2010) suggests that armed forces children

⁴ Walker, J., Selous, A. and Misca, G., 2020. Living in our shoes: Understanding the needs of UK armed forces families.

⁵ MoD, 2020: “Living in Our Shoes: Understanding the Needs of UK Armed Forces Families” Selous A, Walker J, and Misca G.” Ministry of Defence.

⁶ [House of Commons \[HoC\], \(2013\) the Armed Forces Covenant in Action? Educating the children of service personnel](#) stationary Office limited.

⁷ DfE (2010). Department for Education research report DfE-RR011: the educational performance of children of Service personnel, DfE, 2010. According to the report, there are 938 maintained primary schools and 423 maintained secondary schools with Service children on roll.

www.education.gov.uk/publications/RSG/AllPublications/Page1/DFE-RR011

⁸ OFSTED (2011) Children in Service Families: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-in-service-families>

⁹ Pexton, S., Farrants, J., & Yule, W. (2018) the impact of fathers’ military deployment on child adjustment. The support needs of primary school children and their families separated during active military service: A pilot study. IN *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 23(1) pp110-124. doi.org/10.1177/1359104517724494

¹⁰ Aronson, K.R., Perkins, D.F. Challenges Faced by Military Families: Perceptions of United States Marine Corps School Liaisons. *J Child Fam Stud* **22**, 516–525 (2013). doi.org/10.1007/s10826-012-9605-1.

do not perform as well academically as non-mobile service children. Having to adapt to the way in which a curriculum is delivered, missing, or having to repeat classes or subject delivery impacts student accomplishment with a consecutive effect on the likelihood they will attend university in the future (McCullough & Hall, 2016)¹¹. Military relocation occurs on average every three years. Despite some differences in mobility patterns across the Tri-Forces it is not uncommon for military children to attend upwards of five military schools up to the age of 18 (AFF, 2021)¹². These frequent moves have the potential to cause stress and anxiety in young people who are dealing with normal developmental challenges and increased academic demands in tandem with unique challenges of multiple transitions between schools, gaps in learning and ability or time to develop strong social relationships (Russo & Fallon, 2015. Cramm & Tam-Seto, 2018)^{13 14}. Even though many parents are happy to acknowledge their military background there is no current obligation for them to declare their military status to their child's school.

Throughout the UK schools are experiencing different levels of turnover, or “churn” of young people. This aspect of the armed forces dimension also has significant implications for the learning and working environments of schools. For example, teacher workload will be increased in areas of high churn through additional assessment and reporting. Children will have tended to have experienced higher levels of interrupted learning. Conversely, in areas where military postings are relatively static the learning environment will, in this sense, be little different to other schools. Level of churn cannot currently be discerned from a global data collection; a specific analysis is needed. This is an important shortcoming in present data collection arrangements.

Scottish Perspective

Financially, there are also very different funding systems evident across the UK. For example, the schools of armed forces children in England receive a Service Pupil Premium from the Department of Education to support their education. In Scotland, the national position is that any barriers to learning experienced by armed forces children should be met through the general provisions under the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004. This assumes that education authorities will fulfil their statutory responsibilities by appropriately directing the resources they receive from the Scottish Government according to their own needs and priorities. This approach is consistent with the abandonment of “ring fenced” funding that existed before 2007 by which government directed funds to specific issues.

¹¹ McCullough, J & Hall, M 2016, *Further and Higher Progression for Service Children: Research Paper*. http://www.winchester.ac.uk/aboutus/wideningparticipation/Documents/UoW%20research%20paper_Further%20and%20Higher%20Progression%20for%20Service%20Children.pdf>

¹² Army Families Federation, (2021) Primary and Secondary: Overview <https://aff.org.uk/advice/education-childcare/primary-secondary/accessed January 2022>

¹³ Russo, T.J., Fallon, M.A. Coping with Stress: Supporting the Needs of Military Families and Their Children. *Early Childhood Educ J* **43**, 407–416 (2015). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-014-0665-2>

¹⁴ Cramm, H. & Tam Seto, L. (2018) School participation and children in military families: A scoping review. *Journal of Occupational Therapy, Schools, and Early Intervention*, 11(3) pp. 302-317.

doi:[10.1080/19411243.2018.1445060](https://doi.org/10.1080/19411243.2018.1445060)

The above approach was supported by local authorities as being consistent with local decision making. There has, however, been an important change to that general position. The advent of the Pupil Equity Fund (PEF), aimed at tackling the educational effects of social disadvantage, saw the Scottish Government allocating funds directly to schools with headteachers, not authorities, directing spending. In neither the overall block grant arrangements, nor PEF arrangements, is there any specific recognition of the needs of armed forces children. It should here be noted in relation to PEF that many armed forces families will originate from areas of social disadvantage but their presence in the pupil population is invisible to PEF arrangements, or any other support based on free meal entitlement or Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) criteria.

There are at least 12,497 children and young people with an armed forces background in local authority educational provision in Scotland who are present in all 32 Council areas. The distribution of children between authorities is very uneven, with high numbers recorded in Moray (1904), Fife (1301), and Argyll and Bute (1284). In contrast, of the mainland authorities Dundee City (61), Falkirk (85), and Aberdeen City (126) and Stirling (129) record the lowest numbers. Between 2019 and 2021 the numbers of children with an armed forces background have risen from 11,816 to 12,497, a gain of 681 children. This is a rise of 5.8%. It is unknown whether this is a real increase, or is attributable to better recording, or is a combination of both these factors. Of the total of 12,497 children and young people 33.4% have a regular forces background, 9.5% are from a reserve forces background and 46.7% are children of veterans. A further 3.4% have parents from more than one of these backgrounds, while 7% of parents did not declare their background. Only two authorities record whether children are from naval, army or air force families.

All 32 local authorities have armed forces children. Yet only a minority submit applications for additional resources from the Education Support Fund (ESF). Provision for children where bids have not been submitted is unknown. Of those who submit applications, there is no guarantee of funding being awarded. This situation has given rise to a worrying inequality of provision in relation to need. Therefore, while some authorities, such as Argyll and Bute and Highland have been successful in securing additional funding annually, others, where there is a large armed forces presence, such as Fife have not, until this year. Notably, Moray, has the largest armed forces presence in Scotland, and is currently successful in securing funding from both ESF and the Covenant, but in the past received no additionality. It is therefore, currently, impossible to discern any clear association between level, or nature, of need and how, or if, those needs are being met. This must be seen as a major criticism of current arrangements when measured against the aspirations of the Covenant. This criticism is amplified by the absence of any equivalent in Scotland of the English service pupil premium which, however imperfect, does provide some resourcing proportionate to level of need.

In April 2017 (Short, 2017)¹⁵ an unpublished report was produced for the MoD on the impact of the ESF. That report attempted to summarise the key factors that were likely to influence outcomes for armed forces children in Scotland. It contained several observations which were appropriate at that time. Since then, there have been several significant changes in both the

¹⁵ Short GR (2017), "Report on the impact of MoD Education Support Fund projects in support of Forces children identifying where there would be disadvantage when the funding ceases." (unpublished)

educational and military landscapes. In education, the National Improvement Framework has become an established system guiding whole-system improvements, the Angela Morgan Review (2020)¹⁶ of additional support for learning has been published and an action plan agreed, and the Pupil Equity Fund has introduced a new emphasis on tackling social disadvantage. It is also true that ESF has continued to run since 2017, but so far there has been no exercise to gather what has been learned over its recent years of operation. The time is therefore right to again review the educational landscape in Scotland for armed forces children.

Methodology

In setting out to review the landscape we considered the evaluation approaches available, and which might be best to employ for our purposes. There were three main types of evaluation activity: process evaluation, impact evaluation and value-for-money evaluation. Process evaluation tends to examine “what can be learned from how the intervention was delivered” (HM Treasury, 2020). It addresses questions such as: What worked well and less well and why? What could be improved? How has the context influenced the delivery? Impact evaluation focusses on “what difference has the intervention made”. Questions can include: What measurable outcomes, both intended and unintended, occurred? How much of these outcomes can be attributed to the intervention? Have different groups been impacted in different ways, how and why? Has the context influenced the outcomes? Can the intervention be reproduced? Due to the data available and the stage of evaluation planning, this evaluation is a combination of process and impact evaluation.

Overall Aim

The aim of the evaluation is to examine and analyse current available baseline data with the purpose of developing future tools for wider and more accurate data capture.

Objectives

- Quantitatively analyse existing survey documentation to establish current understanding of the population of armed forces children currently in full time education in Schools in Scotland.
- Thematically analyse MoD Education Support Fund applications to establish key areas of development, outcomes, and potential sustainability of the activity.
- Produce a final report which describes key findings, identifies the strengths, risks and challenges of the initiatives, and outlines how evaluation can inform future developments.



¹⁶ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/review-additional-support-learning-implementation/>

Chapter 2 Landscape

The Armed Forces in Scotland

One of the first steps to recognising the issues surrounding effective planning for the education of armed forces' children¹⁷ is to understand the dynamics of the armed forces' presence in Scotland. This is related to the distribution of armed forces bases; the services involved with implications for the nature of the population served; and to likely changes in each main base area.

The present distribution of main military bases in Scotland in 2021

The principal locations for the regular forces in Scotland are:

- Arbroath, Angus, Royal Marines
- Edinburgh, Resident infantry battalion and Headquarters 51 Brigade.
- Faslane, Argyll and Bute, Royal Navy
- Glasgow, Army Personnel Centre
- Inverness, Highland, Fort George, Resident Infantry Battalion
- Kinloss, Moray, Regiment Royal Engineers
- Leuchars, Fife, Resident armoured regiment, plus other Army and RAF units
- Lossiemouth, Moray, RAF
- Penicuik, Midlothian, Resident Infantry battalion
- Rosyth, Fife, Royal Navy

The implications of this distribution are discussed below.

Future changes

The strength and disposition of the Armed Forces is subject to periodic review by the UK Government. Typically, these reviews result in changes to:

- Overall staffing strength (numbers of personnel).
- The bases that will be closed, reduced, enhanced, or experience a change in role.
- The balance between regular and reserve forces.
- The balance between uniformed and civilianised (outsourced) services.
- Technological emphasis, for example the new priority given to cyber warfare.
- Roles and mission, with, for example increased use of military personnel in disaster relief of Military aid to the Civil Community (MACC).

Taken together, these changes mean that the numbers, nature of the work and how the work of armed forces personnel is organised, even in a long-established base area, may change significantly in the future. Each change will carry an implication for armed forces children's education, requiring forward planning for schools and authorities.

¹⁷ Wherever the term "children" is used it should be interpreted as "children and young people".

The most recent review by the UK Government published “Defence in a Competitive Age” on 23 March 2021 suggesting changes much in line with those described in the bullet points above.

In November 2021 Major General Bill Wright, announced how the army in Scotland would change under “Future Soldier Scotland”:

“This includes a major new unit and a higher portion of the British Armed Forces in Scotland, providing the opportunity for more Scottish soldiers to be based nearer home whilst delivering a broad range of exciting roles.”

In summary the changes announced for the Army include:

- 2 SCOTS remaining in Edinburgh Garrison
- 3 SCOTS remaining in Inverness until 2029, then moving to Leuchars
- Scots Dragoon Guards remaining in Leuchars
- An additional sub-unit to be based at Kinloss
- Glencorse Barracks in Penicuik previously earmarked for closure has now been saved.
- The closure of Redford Barracks, Edinburgh is now delayed for 4 years until 2029
- The closure of Fort George will continue as planned.

New roles of importance were announced for the Army Reserve in Scotland including:

- From 2023 6th and 7th Battalions of the Royal Regiment of Scotland and the Scottish and North Irish Yeomanry will form part of a new Brigade, responsible for home-based resilience tasks, especially in times of crisis.
- The Scottish Gunners (19 Regiment, Royal Artillery) will form part of a new Deep Recce Strike Brigade Combat team, based on Salisbury Plain.

For the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force earlier announcements indicate increases in presence at:

- Faslane (RN) and
- Lossiemouth (RAF)

The Royal Navy is planning a significant expansion at Faslane with an earmarked investment of £1.3Bn. This area will also be used to trial the Future Accommodation Model (FAM) in which service families will have improved choice on where they live. This clearly may have an impact on education with a possible spread of personnel away from the traditional base area. The implementation of these changes and their effect on schools merits close monitoring to enable any necessary adjustment in educational services.

The regular cycle of defence reviews always has implications for the disposition of Britain’s Armed Forces. As Major General Wright’s announcement illustrates it does not always follow that any individual review accepts the actions from its predecessor. The armed forces population distribution therefore continually changes as do future plans and projections.

There is therefore a recurring issue about gaining an accurate and comprehensive identification of both the whole armed forces population, its component parts and its distribution. Clearly, the distribution of armed forces children is contingent on these wider changes which in turn poses challenges for educational planning and provision.

Understanding Service Differences

Discussions with schools and serving officers has revealed accounts of differences between the various services with implications for education. One observation is that while the RAF and Navy work from their Scottish bases, the Army sends units away both to train and perform operational duties. There is therefore a continual change at the Leuchars, Kinloss, Penicuik and Edinburgh bases that is not found to the same degree with the RAF at Lossiemouth and the Navy at Faslane. Even within the Army there is a difference between the corps, such as the Royal Engineers where personnel will arrive and leave on a trickle basis, while regiments or battalions will tend to retain their coherence and move together. Differences were also reported within the Royal Navy according to whether the sailor was on a submarine or a surface vessel. It was also observed that perhaps as a consequence of these differences, or as a result of differences in recruiting practice, between various parts of the Armed Forces, there was a different level of parental involvement in their children's education between particularly the RAF and Army but also within the Royal Navy. The inter-service differences had been noticed in those bases where the service had changed so difference was noted at Faslane. Each of these factors has implications for family life, parental engagement, and supporting children's learning.

Understanding the nature of a "Scottish" Unit or base

The staffing complement of a base or unit will not be uniquely Scottish with personnel from the rest of the United Kingdom, or elsewhere, serving in these locations. Even units identifiably Scottish such as the Royal Regiment of Scotland includes personnel from the Commonwealth and the rest of the UK. Equally, there are Scots serving in Scottish units which are outside Scotland, or in the RAF, Navy, Royal Marines, corps of the Army or even regiments which have no obvious Scottish association such as the Parachute Regiment. Any armed forces' base, or unit, will therefore have families with a range of experiences and backgrounds. The children will have had sometimes widely different learner journeys.

Regular, Reserve and Veteran

The fact that a parent is in the armed forces' does not make them universally identifiable for the purposes of family support. For example, some individuals may be reluctant to declare their status if they believe their work is sensitive or carries a security implication. Scotland lacks the incentive of the Service Pupil Premium, found in England, whereby a parental declaration to the school of armed forces status brings a financial benefit to the establishment, and so their children.

It would also be wrong to view the main base areas as the sole sources of armed forces children. Most obviously, across Scotland there are several reserve units of the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, Army and RAF. These tend to be categorised as "minor", i.e., company or squadron strength or equivalent. To each are attached a small staff of regular officers, warrant officers or NCOs in addition to the complement of reservists. Meanwhile, the reservists

themselves are seen as central to the UK's defence commitment and are integrated into regular forces training and deployments. Since their prime employment is civilian this important group, who are found throughout Scotland, is often overlooked. The needs of their families however will be similar to regulars at times of uniformed service. This is being increasingly recognised by some authorities such as Highland.

Similarly, the Armed Forces Covenant creates expectations for veterans (those who have previous military service). Veterans may settle around the last military base where they served, or they may return to the area where they were brought up. Equally, they may settle in an area of choice unrelated to their previous lives. This is a population that is arguably more footloose than most parts of the population. The distribution of veterans throughout Scotland is therefore a response to several factors. Like reservists they may not be obviously visible in any given community, and like reservists may not wish to declare their status.

Summary

The picture for the armed forces in Scotland is therefore varied and one of continual change into the foreseeable future. From the various comments elicited as part of the review process it is certain that in all base areas the effects of trickle postings will continue to be felt. Depending on the nature of the service and base there will be superimposed upon this the requirements of individual training, unit training and deployments. All of these have an impact on families and children the nature of which depends on the type and duration of the activity. Local, or even individual solutions will require to be developed to each set of circumstances. Beyond this it is very difficult to distil an accurate picture of the future disposition of bases and strengths at bases in Scotland. Rather the picture is of some uncertainty. The view of at least one senior officer was that this required to be accepted not just as part of Armed Forces life but life in general.

Implications

The level of educational need created by the presence of armed forces children will depend on a combination of factors:

- the absolute numbers of children
- the turnover (churn) in the population
- the service or branch of the armed forces involved
- the nature of the parents' employment according to whether it is technical or non-technical
- the intensity of any operational deployment
- the ethnic and racial mix of the armed forces unit(s) involved
- whether the family has a regular, reserve, or veteran background.

How the interplay of these factors will impact on an individual child, or family, will be unique to their own situation. However, when taken in combination each of these factors are likely to operate cumulatively with the prospect of creating localised need. Effective strategic planning therefore requires a knowledge, and an understanding, of the nature and extent of the armed forces population of individual schools and local authorities, and Scotland as a whole. This is an understanding that requires an explanation of extent (the numbers that are

involved) and nature (the characteristics of each part of the armed forces population). This will only be achieved through the collection of a comprehensive and reliable dataset.



Chapter 3 Armed Forces Children in Scotland's Schools & Settings

Data Collection Pilot Exercise 2019: Outcomes of Scoping Exercise 1

Background

The Scottish Government do not collect data on armed forces children. There exists however a high degree of unanimity that there is a need to collect such data to inform debate, ultimately support the development of policy, and to target resources effectively. To address this need for data on armed forces children in Scottish schools, ADES (the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland) has undertaken data collection exercises, gathering information directly from local authorities who hold the information on individual children. The pupil data base is a component of the Management Information System (SEEMiS) used by all local authorities; it is within this system that the Armed Forces Family Indicator is embedded.

SEEMiS is used by all Scotland's local authority-run schools for education administration including pupil and staff record management, Nursery Application Management System, Attendance, Pastoral Notes, Progress, Achievement and Reporting; and interfaces with external agencies such as, ScotXed and the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)¹⁸. The information about armed forces children and young people is not shared with external agencies through other integrated systems, such as, ScotXed, SQA, Insight, 16+ Data Hub.

The ADES data collection exercises were undertaken by the National Transitions Officer (NTO) whose role is funded by the ESF distributed annually by the MoD. In those cases where national data is compiled this has been a result of a specific exercise, relying on individual data requests to local authorities, by the NTO working through ADES. Such exercises are additional to other national data collections and meet with variable responses.

ADES were able to undertake data collection for this distinct group of learners because of the Armed Forces Family Indicator (AFF Indicator) that has been added to the SEEMiS management system. It is optional for families to use the AFF Indicator to identify themselves as part of the armed forces, either serving (Regular or Reserve) or previously served (ex-Service/Veteran). Information input must be added by schools to the Information Management System; this data is only as reliable as the information provided and that recorded in the system. Figure 1 provides a timeline of work and development with local authorities and SEEMiS to embed the AFF Indicator and acknowledge armed forces children and young people within their schools.

¹⁸ www.mygovscot.



Figure 1: Timeline of Development

Context

First, it requires to be understood that SEEMiS is jointly owned by all 32 local authorities. Any substantive change to SEEMiS arrangements requires the agreement of these local authority owners and must be set amongst the various comparing priorities for data collection, synthesis and analysis that are consistent with national and local systems of improvement planning. There are complex governance arrangements to safeguard this aspect of the overall SEEMiS system. The data held by SEEMiS remains the “property” of each individual local authority where it cannot be processed without the individual agreement of the authority that owns it; the data is not owned by SEEMiS itself. In relation to armed forces children’s data it remains the position of the Scottish Government that it is sufficient to collect and analyse data on an individual authority basis. There is an unsatisfactory explanation for this position, that notwithstanding remains for the moment at least, the position because proper analysis requires benchmarking for which consistent data across schools and authorities is an essential pre-requisite.

The simplest and most effective, but not necessarily the easiest, way to change this position is for the Scottish Government to require the collection of the data through its annual data collection exercise. Data on children of armed forces families, reported within the ScotXed collection yearly (as part of the pupil census), would enable the information to be considered in the annual reporting of required Additional Support Needs data.

The following is what is currently available within the SEEMiS system:

- the ‘armed forces family indicator’ exists within the SEEMiS data management system used in all local authority (state) schools;
- parents must voluntarily offer and agree to this information being recorded in their child’s school data;
- each school (administrator) can enter the information into the system, within the pupil data section;
- each local authority can easily gather data on attendance, exclusions, and SQA attainment, using the AFF Indicator.

The existence of the ‘armed forces family indicator’, provided the schools apply it correctly, and parents agree to provide the information, allows individual authorities to easily gather data on attendance, exclusions and SQA attainment. Each Scottish local authority enters into their own business agreement with SEEMiS, that is regularly renewed. There are aspects of the data management system that will be of interest and priority to individual authorities, therefore while there is the potential for some data gathering to be activated in all local authorities, not all will use the same information, nor collect it in the same manner.

A standardised report format for data collection around the AFF Indicator should be agreed by all local authorities to allow for consistency in collection, management, and reporting.

The AFF Indicator is included in registration forms for enrolment at schools and early years settings, and on the annual data check forms. The AFF Indicator question is presented as below:

AFF Indicator

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Armed forces family (Yes/No) 2. Regular (Yes/No) Reserve (Yes/No) Veteran/ex-service (Yes/No) Do not wish to say [] 	<p>Question 1: If answer is No then user will not be required to enter anything in the other lists.</p> <p>If answer is Yes user will be required to enter a value in the other lists.</p>
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The present overall position of other SEEMiS indicators that can be linked, and therefore considered with the AFF Indicator, can be summarised as follows (2021-22):

- **Attendance:** The AFF Indicator has been added as a filter to Authority Attendance reports. An additional report has been created within Attendance for Armed Forces
- **Exclusions:** The AFF Indicator added as a filter to the Authority Exclusion report.
- **SQA:** AFF Indicator added as a filter to SQA Pupil Results report.
- Armed Forces status will display ‘YES’ if any of the 4 options are selected on the Armed Forces tab in Click+Go, Records, Edit.

The SEEMiS system enables gathering of data on the number of students with Parents/Carers in Armed Forces either for all indicators or split by indicator. This can be collated by the local authority on a school by school or local authority-wide basis. Each local authority must collect its own data around this AFF Indicator.

Initial data collection exercise 2017

The ADES National Transitions Officer made a request to each local authority Director to provide data using the SEEMiS AFF Indicator. A template was provided to gather the following:

- total number of children and young people of Armed Forces families: Regular, Reserve and Veteran/ex-Service;

- total number of children and young people in Forces Families by sector: Primary Schools, Secondary Schools and Special Schools;
- of 32 local authorities only 17 made a return.

The number of responses submitted, just over half of the total local authorities in Scotland, did not allow for any rigorous analysis, nor identification of locations. The submissions enabled a simple bar graph (see Fig. 2) to be created that represented the overall data, the total numbers, and the variety of identified groups (Regular, Reserve and Veteran/ex-Service).

The information collected by ADES for the 2017 national ‘snapshot’ was gathered from the local authority-wide data, not by individual schools.

Forces Children in Scottish Schools – 2017 ADES Data Collection Exercise Results

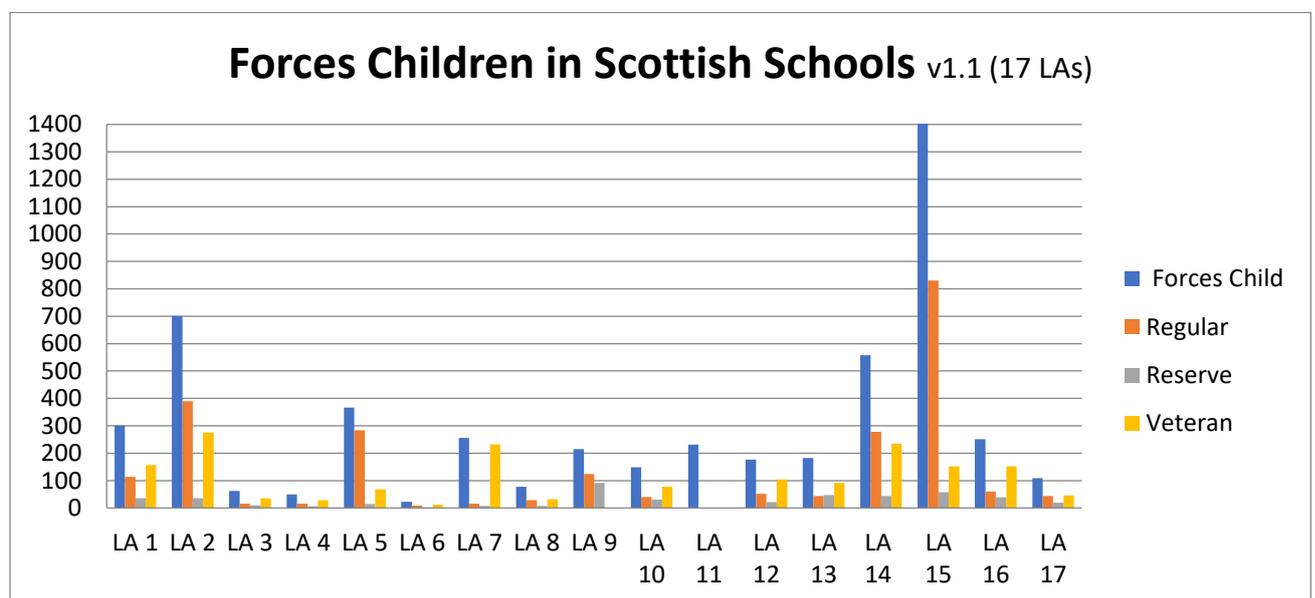


Figure 2: Total Number of Forces Children: more than 5000 (represented in 17 Local Authorities)

This total indicates a significant underestimate of the number of armed forces children in Scottish schools and early years settings (January 2017).

The data presented in this chart:

- reflects the number of Forces children recorded in schools by local authorities (LA);
- reflects a level of school engagement with Armed Forces parents;
- does not consider Armed Forces families that indicated more than one parent/carer connected with the Forces (e.g., Regular, and Veteran/ex-Service);
- does not reflect the number of responses ‘undisclosed’;
- does not reflect children in Scottish schools with siblings serving in the Forces;
- the AFF Indicator is tied to the parent/carer.

Pilot Data Collection Exercise 2019

The exercise was conducted using a simple 2-page Proforma with supporting notes. The aim was to provide colleagues with a simple, focused exercise that was not excessively bureaucratic. The Proforma sought information on:

- numbers of armed forces families;
- number of armed forces children in each sector of education;
- number of armed forces children where parents had a regular, reserve, or ex-service/veteran background in any combination;
- number of children analysed by branch of the armed forces (RN, RM, Army, RAF);
- basic information on the attainment of armed forces children;
- 'churn' or turbulence in the pupil population caused by being associated with the armed forces.

Data were collected in October 2019, seeking information as at the datum point of 01 October 2019. A copy of the Data Collection Template (2019) is provided in Appendix 1.

All authorities responded to the request for data, although a small number submitted returns after the desired deadline. There was a minimum of approximately 11,816 armed forces children and young people recorded across the sectors in local authority early years settings, primary and secondary schools.

The information requested included:

- Armed Forces families identified (Regular, Reserve, ex-Service/Veteran);
- Children & Young People identified (Regular, Reserve, ex-Service/Veteran);
- Children & Young People by sector (early years, primary, secondary, special);
- Schools providing information;
- Attainment – Secondary 4th Year (S4) pupils;
- Attendance.

Across Scotland, by the end of 2019, there was potential for measures of attainment in literacy & numeracy (Primary 1 – Secondary 3). This did not include use of the armed forces family indicator. Information is available for the general school population (which includes armed forces children/young people) but not for armed forces children/young people as a distinct group.

Work is required at both the school-level and the Local Authority level to explore the following:

- distribution of armed forces children and young people in a LA – if all else is equal (total number significant);
- SQA attainment numbers in any year are relatively small and therefore it is difficult to view relative attainment of these learners;

- interview and work with Headteachers/schools, to gather comments, perceptions, and view of teachers around attainment of mobile children and young people. There is a need to elicit this information so that data points us in the right direction;
- work with schools to identify challenges and difficulty in developing a pattern of attainment/achievement with a population that is change.

The Nature of the Returns

The nature of the returns from authorities was very variable with some significant inconsistencies both within and between individual returns. These areas of inconsistency were:

- a significant under-representation of children reported as being in the early years' sector;
- varying approaches to reporting small numbers of children. Some authorities gave the numbers, some provided asterisks where there were less than 4 children in any category, some provided asterisks where there was less than 5, and one provided asterisk in categories where the numbers were larger to guard against these figures being used to calculate the smaller figures using the marginal totals;
- some authorities did not provide information in all the areas where data were requested – notably for the number of armed forces families;
- only one authority could provide information on the branch of the armed forces (RN, RM, Army, RAF) with which the child was linked;
- for a number of authorities, the number of armed forces children was equal to the number of forces families, even when these numbers were substantial (>100) implying that the armed forces families were single child, which is highly unlikely;
- some authorities, notably the big cities, appear to be significantly underreporting the number of veteran's children.

Collating the Data

Small numbers

The differing conventions used between authorities on small numbers made collating data extremely challenging where the actual figures had been substituted by asterisks. The convention was adopted that for the purposes of overall collation an asterisk, or equivalent, would be interpreted as being "1". This represents a conservative position. While this allows figures to be compared it does mean that the picture for individual authorities, and nationally, is underrepresented.

Families

The gap in data and the problems of some data where returns have been made does not make it possible to perform any meaningful collation on this aspect of life for armed forces children.

Early Years

There is significant under-representation of children in the early years sector. This may be for a variety of reasons such as the prevalence of partner providers who are not on the SEEMiS

system, the level of use of SEEMiS within the early years sector overall, or the nature of enrolment in early years establishments. The sparsity of data means that this aspect of the collection is of limited use.

Special ASN provision

The figures relating to children in special ASN provision is similarly problematic due to small numbers. An overall picture of provision is made more difficult by differing provision within authorities of special schools or bases.

Attainment

The returns across authorities were variable making it impossible to achieve a whole-Scotland position or to allow comparison across all authorities based on the actual figures themselves. In some cases, the numbers of children involved are relatively small making interpretation unreliable.

Mobility

Five local authorities showed no mobility. In the case of one authority, given the heavy regular armed forces presence there, this seems unlikely. So, again, the mobility figures need to be treated with some considerable care.

Conclusion

For the reasons given above, considerable care is required in interpreting and using the data resulting from this pilot exercise. The figures given almost certainly represent a conservative position in terms of number as the tendency is to under-report. This factor is amplified by the way many authorities made returns with numbers of less than 4/5 not being identified and the clear lack of data from the early years sector. The experience gained from this pilot was used to inform later exercises.

Several tables and charts were created using the data submitted by the local authorities:

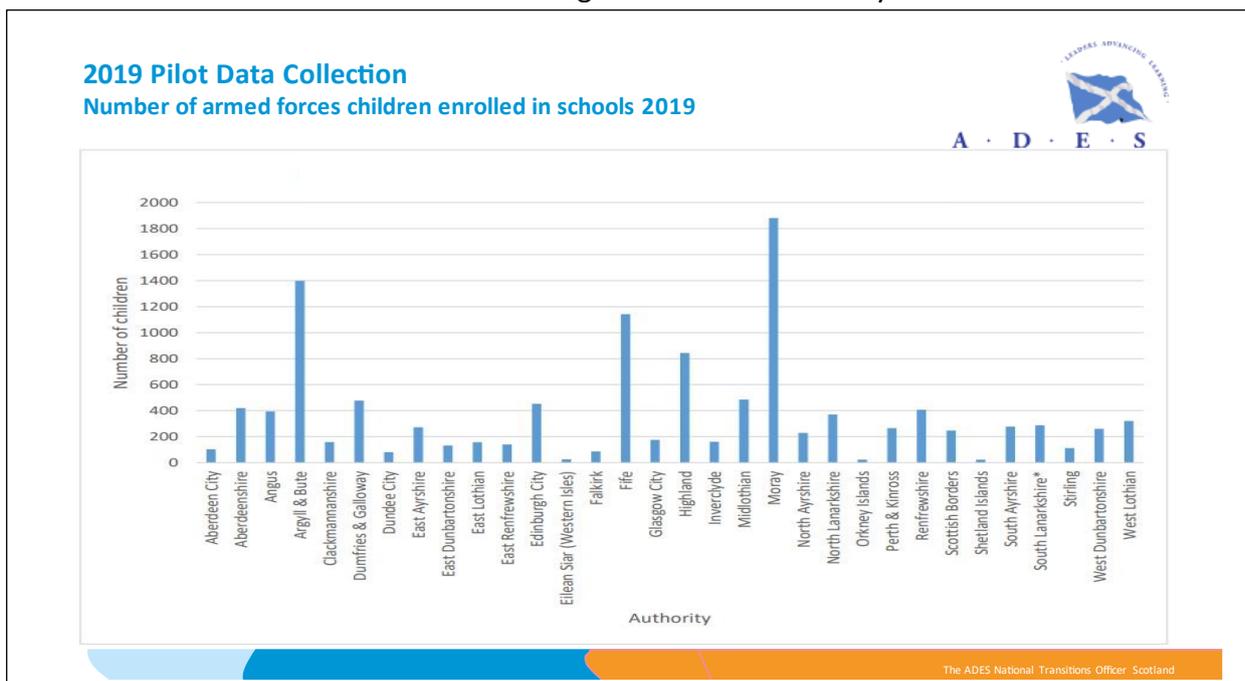


Figure 3: Number of Armed Forces Children enrolled in schools 2019

A series of maps and graphs were created to provide a visual picture of the armed forces children in schools across the geographic landscape.

Armed Forces Children in Scotland's Schools:

ADES Pilot Data Collection Exercise 2019

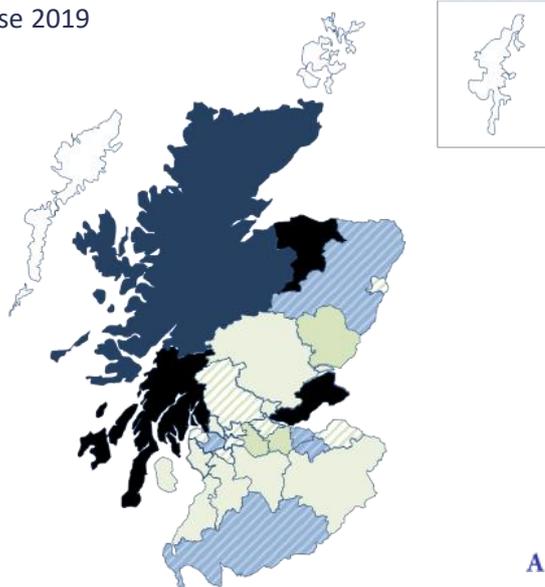
SEEMIS indicator Armed Forces families
(Regular, Reserve, Veteran/ex-Service)

KEY
Children and Young People identified in
Primary, Secondary and Special schools

Range of national data

1000 +
900-999
800-899
700-799
600-699
500-599
400-499
300-399
200-299
100-199
0-99

Note: Pilot Exercise: SEEMIS data figures are indicative
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A · D · E · S

The ADES National Transitions Officer - Scotland

Figure 4: Children and Young People of armed forces families identified in Primary, Secondary and Special schools (Regular, Reserve and Veteran/ex-Service families)

A national picture has been created of the geographical locations, and local authorities where children and young people have been identified as part of an armed forces family using the information recorded by the school at which they are enrolled; stored in the SEEMIS data information management system. This data reflects the total number of children and young people from families connected to Regular service, Reserve service, and Veteran/ex-Service, and provides a compilation of the armed forces families, Tri-Service presence in Scotland - the Royal Navy, the British Army and the Royal Air Force.

The variation in colour indicates a gradation with areas of concentration: the darker the colour, the greater the number of identified armed forces families and children; the lighter, the fewer the number of identified armed forces families and children. It is important to remember that identification as an armed forces family with a child or children in local authority (state) schools is dependent upon families choosing to self-declare.

The incentive for such identification is the awareness by both the parents and the school that there is value in understanding the life and family experience of children from armed forces

families¹⁹. The schools express a clear need to have this information that will allow them to respond with appropriate, informed support, if and when, a child needs it. Such attention could be in relation to additional support for learning needs (addressing interrupted learning and gaps), during periods of separation and loss (due to deployment and training), settling into or preparing to leave a school community (responding to mobility), building relationships and a sense of belonging (included in activities, interests, sports/arts/music) that are established through continuity and involvement.

The approach used to 'Let their child's school or early years setting know they are an Armed Forces Family' (Regular, Reserve or Veteran/ex-Service) is unique in Scotland. Mobile families may have experienced other methods of identification and recognition in the devolved nations, for example in England (Service Pupil Premium)²⁰.

It is important to note that there are also several 'weak links' in the process of data collection around this unique group of families, that will have an impact on the accuracy of the information including:

- parent choice to self-identity as an armed forces family to child's school or setting;
- addition of information on the school enrolment form or annual data check form;
- engagement with school staff, clarification around the AFF Indicator can be sought when form is reviewed. This provides an opportunity for the school management or administration staff to begin a conversation with the family, upon their arrival at the new school. This provides an opportunity to begin to develop a relationship;
- accurate completion of the information on a form, by parent;
- school/Setting administration staff recognise the importance of the information and input the data accurately into the SEEMiS system;
- Armed Forces Family Indicator information, recorded in the Pupil Information section of SEEMiS is updated, as needed;
- data is accessed and analysed regularly, by the school Senior Leadership Team, to monitor the progress and learning journey of the child;
- data is accessed and analysed regularly by the local authority to gain a picture of the attainment and progress of the learner, and children of armed forces families as a group.

The local authorities that have been identified by the darker shading (greater density of children of armed forces families in schools) are those that host large, active military bases, garrisons, and/or stations. These local authority areas have the most visible military infrastructure, with Regular Service personnel appearing in uniform, for example: Lossiemouth, Faslane, Leuchars Station and Edinburgh Garrison.

¹⁹ Resources: Let Your School Know you are an Armed Forces Family (1) Primary School - https://forceschildreducation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/ADES-Let-your-school-know_JUNIOR.pdf and (2) Secondary School - https://forceschildreducation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/ADES-Let-your-school-know_SENIOR-1.pdf

²⁰ The Service Pupil Premium (SPP) that results in funding for a school/per child/per year, when a child is identified as a Service Pupil, is only available in England; provided by the Department of Education.

The local authorities with the greatest number of identified children of armed forces families are, Argyll & Bute Council, Moray Council, and Fife Council. Figure 5 presents a broad-brush picture of armed forces families, with a member who is in Regular Service, who have a child in a Scottish school or early years setting.

Armed Forces Children in Scotland's Schools:

ADES Pilot Data Collection Exercise 2019

Regular Forces Families

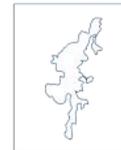
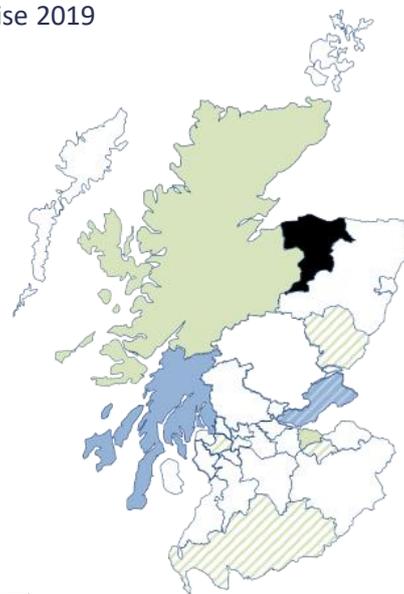
KEY
Children and Young People identified in
Primary, Secondary and Special schools

Range of national data

1000+
900-999
800-899
700-799
600-699
500-599
400-499
300-399
200-299
100-199
0-99

Note: Pilot Exercise: SEEMIS data figures are indicative

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Figure 5: Children and Young People of Regular Service Armed Forces families

The data indicates that the greatest concentration of armed forces families (Regular Service) with children in early years setting, primary, secondary, and special schools, is found in Moray Council. The local authority areas of Argyll & Bute Council and Fife Council have slightly less children identified as from armed forces families (Regular Service), with Highland Council and the City of Edinburgh Council following. Midlothian Council, Angus Council, Dumfries and Galloway Council, West Dumbarton Council and Stirling Council have identified significant numbers of children from armed forces families too.

It is worthy of note that local authority areas are comprised of differing sizes, populations, both urban and rural settings, and stretch across a nation of varying geography that influences settlement and military installations. Therefore, although all the information regarding 'Regular Service' families is compiled and pictured in this map, there may be several factors that impact this national picture. It is also worth noting regular service families do not always reside in close proximity to their work.

Armed Forces Children in Scotland's Schools:

ADES Pilot Data Collection Exercise 2019

Reserve Forces Families

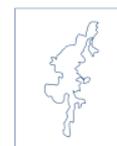
KEY
Children and Young People identified in
Primary, Secondary and Special schools

Range of national data

1000+
900-999
800-899
700-799
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400-499
300-399
200-299
100-199
0-99

Note: Pilot Exercise: SEEMIS data figures are indicative

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Figure 6: Children and Young People of Reserve Service Armed Forces families

Figure 6 would suggest that the only armed forces families with a member serving in the Reserves, live in Midlothian Council. This is not accurate, nor does it offer a true reflection of the number of families involved with the Reserve Services in Scotland.

The picture presented does raise several questions and concerns around data collection of these families, and their children in our schools.

- Do families with members in the Reserves see a need to identify themselves as an armed forces family?
- Is information about 'Letting your school know that you are an armed forces family' reaching the Reserve families?
- What information is made available for Reserve Service armed forces families? How is this communication shared?
- Do the Reserve families recognise the value in self-identifying themselves to their child's school? Do they sense this information will make any difference to the support that their child might receive? Do they sense that their child might benefit from informed engagement with their school?
- How are schools engaging with Reserve Service families? Is the information around these families being recorded accurately and consistently?
- Do Reserve Service families have an opportunity to voice their views on identifying themselves as an armed forces family?
- How does the military encourage support for the families of Reserve Service personnel?

It appears that there is much more work and engagement needed with the families of Reserve Service Personnel. It is also likely that more development work needs to be undertaken to inform and raise awareness of educators and schools around families of Reserve Service personnel.

Armed Forces Children in Scotland's Schools:

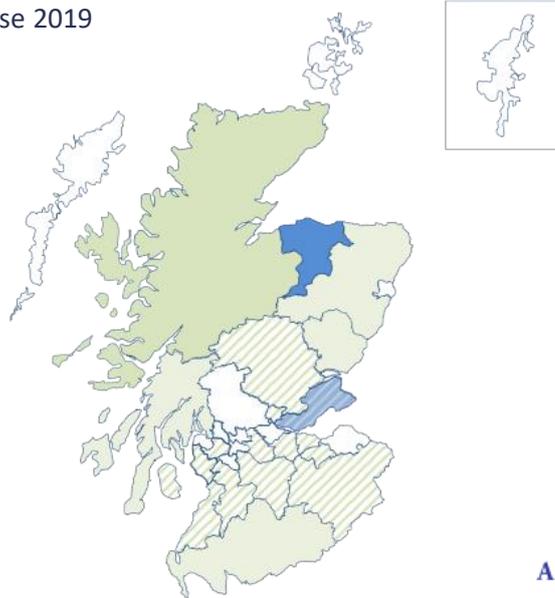
ADES Pilot Data Collection Exercise 2019

Veteran/ex-Service Families

KEY
Children and Young People identified in
Primary, Secondary and Special schools

Range of national data

1000+
900-999
800-899
700-799
600-699
500-599
400-499
300-399
200-299
100-199



Note: Pilot Exercise: SEEMIS data figures are indicative

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Figure 7: Children and Young People of ex-Service/Veteran Families

Figure 7 suggests that the greatest number of Veteran/ex-Service families reside in Moray Council. The second greatest number of identified families with children in early years settings, primary, secondary, and special schools are in Fife Council. It is of note that both local authorities have large, active, Regular Service Bases, as does Highland Council that recorded the next largest number of Veteran/ex-Service families.

Questions could be asked around the reasons why so many Veteran/ex-Service families have settled in these areas, and why there appear to be so many fewer in other areas? Are these families identifying themselves to their child's school? If not, why not? If not, what else could be done to improve this engagement? It would be interesting to consider this data in relation to the information gathered in the 2022 Veterans census, in Scotland.

Armed Forces Children in Scotland's Schools:

ADES Pilot Data Collection Exercise 2019

Overview number of armed forces children enrolled in Regional Improvement Collaborative (RIC)

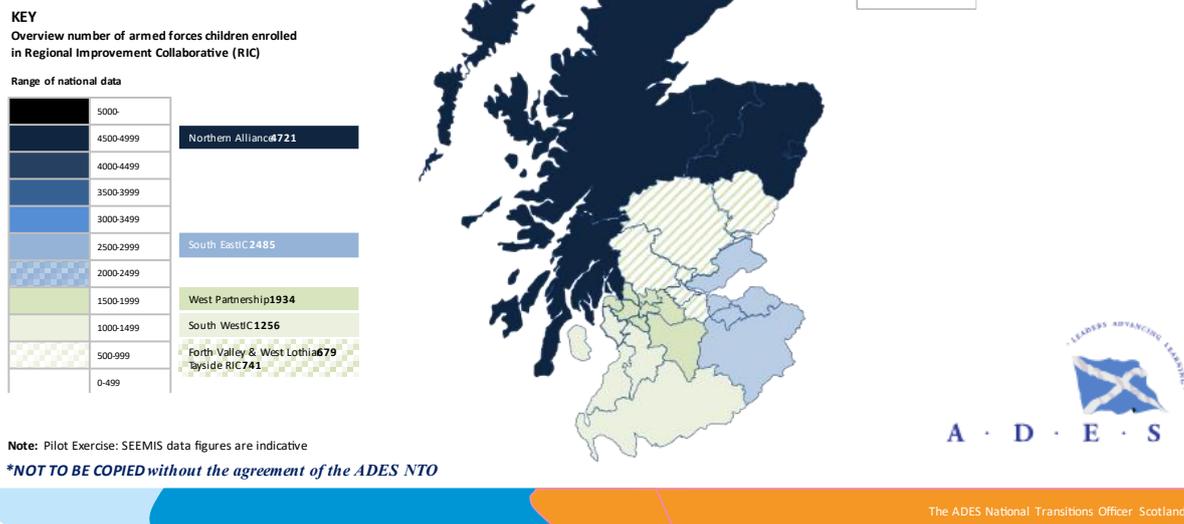


Figure 8: Overview number of children and young people of armed forces families enrolled in Regional Improvement Collaborative (RIC) areas

Across Scotland, there are six administrative areas identified as Regional Improvement Collaboratives (RICs), comprised of several local authorities. Each of these RICs work as unified areas for knowledge exchange, career-long professional development, sharing good practice, and together addressing key issues in their communities.

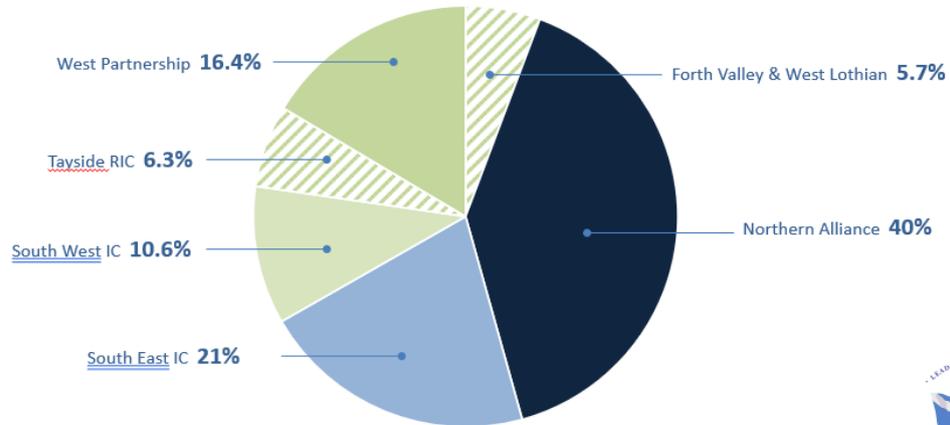
Figure 8 indicates that the greatest number of armed forces families (Regular, Reserve and Veteran/ex-Service) reside across the area of the Northern Alliance Collaborative. The area that comprises this RIC includes, Argyll & Bute Council, Highland Council and Moray Council. Each of these local authorities has a Regular Service armed forces Camp, Station, and/or Base: Faslane (Royal Navy), Fort George (Army), and Lossiemouth (RAF). In addition to these areas of significant numbers of armed forces families with their children in schools, the Northern Alliance RIC includes Aberdeenshire Council, Aberdeen City, The Outer Isles, Orkney Islands, and The Shetland Islands.

The Regional Improvement Collaborative that indicates the second largest number of armed forces families with children in their schools is the South-East Improvement Collaborative. The local authorities that comprise the SEIC are Fife Council, City of Edinburgh, East Lothian, West Lothian, and the Scottish Borders.

Armed Forces Children in Scotland's Schools:

ADES Pilot Data Collection Exercise 2019

Percentage of National total of children enrolled
by in Regional Improvement Collaborative (RIC)



Note: Pilot Exercise: SEEMIS data figures are indicative

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Figure 9: Percentage of National total of children (armed forces families) enrolled in Regional Improvement Collaborative (RIC) areas

Figure 9 depicts the percentage of all children of armed forces families that attend early years settings and schools in the local authorities that comprise each of the Regional Improvement Collaboratives. This visual supports the information contained in Figure 5, providing a simple picture with information that can be utilised to support service delivery and engagement.

SEEMiS is currently improving and enhancing the data information system through a 'Regeneration Process'. The anticipated timeline of development has been adversely affected by the impact of COVID-19, with the over-riding need to prioritise recovery work and focus on learners, their families and school communities. The revised timetable for changes to be embedded and available for use has been significantly delayed.

Included in the SEEMiS Regeneration Process, additional information categories have been agreed and will be added to the AFF Indicator. It was anticipated that these changes would be active by 2021 – but this work has been significantly delayed. The additional information categories relate to the military 'Service/Branch' of the parent/carer, will appear within the Learner's Record system, as follows:

AFF Indicator – additional question (SEEMiS)

- Royal Navy []
- British Army []
- Royal Air Force []
- Royal Marines []
- Do not wish to say []

User can only pick one option from this list

*A positive outcome of the **COVID-19** pandemic and restrictions has been the adoption of on-line application forms that many local authorities have adopted, these have replaced the paperwork that was primarily used in the past. Local authorities suggest that this new approach, which requires a response to each question on the form, before one can progress is useful. The armed forces family indicator is included in the on-line application forms, and therefore all families are required to read and respond to the Armed Forces Family Indicator question. Hopefully this will increase the data collection.*

The AFF Indicator information is not included in the SEEMiS data transfer process, unfortunately this is not shared through the Data 16+ Hub used by Skills Development Scotland (SDS) to address service delivery.²¹ There is no approval through SEEMiS governance arrangements for information to be provided directly to an external user, not even the ADES National Transitions Officer. Such an arrangement would also require agreement from each Local Authority. Therefore, the data is requested through ADES, to each local authority, for use by the ADES NTO to gain a national picture of armed forces children and young people. All Local Authorities agreed to this request in 2019.

It is important to remember that the Local Authorities can collate ALL data on a school-by-school basis or on a local authority-wide basis. The local authority-wide data is the only information provided in response to the ADES NTO request. A great deal of work has been undertaken by the National Transitions Officer to promote to families the value of the AFF Indicator in schools and for the local authorities. ADES supports this engagement. In addition, flyers and resources have been made available on the Forces Children's Education website²².

Some schools and local authorities include a link from their site to the ADES Forces Children's Education site that provides resources explaining the importance of families identifying their Armed Forces Service status to the school to support their child's learning, mental health, and wellbeing. Information has also been promoted through MoD Scotland on all levels (Tri-Service), with direct engagement with families.



²¹ Skills Development Scotland (SDS) <https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/>

²² www.forceschildrenseducation.org.uk

Chapter 4 Armed Forces Children in Scotland's Schools & Settings

Data Collection Exercise 2021: Outcomes of Scoping Exercise 2

Purpose

The purpose of this section of the report is to describe the 2021 data collection exercise on armed forces children in Scotland and to summarise the main results.

Background

In 2019 the ADES NTO completed the first comprehensive data collection on the numbers and distribution of armed forces children in Scotland. That first, pilot, exercise identified several issues surrounding how data was being recorded with variations in practice between authorities. This second, 2021, exercise used the learning from the pilot to produce a more reliable set of data. The decision was taken not to collect any data in 2020 due to the work burden on local authorities attributable to COVID-19. It was also felt that the general situation prevailing in education in 2020 would have meant that any data collected would have had limited valid meaning. This chapter includes "observations" based on the analysis of the data obtained. These observations are intended to highlight key issues as a precursor to being able to make recommendations.

Process

During September 2021 a simple two-page Proforma (Appendix 2) was distributed to all local authorities in Scotland. This Proforma included guidance on completion and sought information on pupil numbers as of 01 October 2021.

No attempt was made to collect data on the outcomes such as attainment for pupils. To have done so would have imposed an additional burden on authorities which would have been challenging in the current post-COVID-19 conditions. It is accepted however that the real power of such an exercise will only be realised when clear statements can be made about outcomes for this group of young people coupled to a better understanding of other factors such as their additional support needs profile.

Independent schools were not included in the exercise. Since it is known that armed forces children do exist in the independent sector, this source would add to the figures from local authorities. The results obtained from Queen Victoria School (QVS) Dunblane, which is specific provision for children of armed forces families, are given within this report.

Notes on the 2021 Exercise

All 32 local authorities made a return. The resulting data picture is therefore as complete as possible. The Proforma required to be returned to 6 authorities to clarify, or complete, the data they had supplied. Only two authorities (Western Isles and Highland) were able to complete the second part of the Proforma which sought a breakdown of which branch of the

armed forces (Royal Navy, Army, Royal Air Force and Royal Marines) applied to the child. QVS was also able to complete this part of the survey.

As in 2019, authorities had difficulty reporting the numbers of children enrolled in early years centres. This is attributable to present state of roll out of SEEMiS to this sector, and in particular to partner providers. Consequently, the numbers given for the early years sector are thought to be understated, and so, therefore, are the overall numbers of armed forces children.

In the 2019 exercise authorities had adopted different conventions for how they recorded small numbers of children. All authorities used the same convention in 2021, so this source of inconsistency was eliminated. The data tables and charts associated with this report have used the convention that “1” represents any number between 1 and 5. While this does allow for the collation and comparison of figures it also, inevitably means that numbers are understated. This effect is particularly true in the “Special”, additional support needs, sector, in small authorities, and for the early years sector.

Some authorities have recorded low numbers of veterans in relation to the size of their overall population and in comparison, to other areas with much smaller base populations. Intuitively, therefore, this appears to be a source of under reporting. At least four authorities were unable to separately identify the numbers who had not declared their regular, reserve, or veteran status. It is therefore likely that this figure is therefore also understated.

Observation

As in 2019, the overall numbers of armed forces children are understated nationally, and this is attributable to a number of causes. The local effect of this understatement between authorities, paradoxically means that it is most evident in those authorities recording low numbers of armed forces children.

Results for 2021

Table 1: Headline Figures for Numbers of Armed Forces Children by Educational Sector

Educational Sector	Numbers	Percentage
Early Years	432	3.5
Primary	7564	60.5
Secondary	4427	35.5
Special	74	0.5
Total	12497	100

The overall sector breakdown of armed forces children is summarised in Table 1, showing that there is a minimum of approximately 12,497 of this group enrolled in Scottish local authority schools. According to information published by the Scottish Government in March 2020 this makes armed forces children comparable in numbers to those with a Learning disability (12,518), and larger than those affected by: looked after status (9,183); bereavement (4019); visual impairment (4,930); hearing Impairment (3,758); physical or Motor Impairment (8,517); mental health problems (7,524); Interrupted Learning (6,825). For the overall pupil population (based on 2020 figures) the secondary school population is 76.4% of the primary population, the equivalent figure for armed forces children is only 58.5%.

Observation

Even allowing for the limitations in this exercise the cohort of armed forces children is comparable to, or significantly larger than other groups of children for whom the Scottish Government collect and publish data.

There appears to be significantly fewer armed forces children of secondary age than might be expected. The reasons for this merit further investigation.

Table 2: Headline Figures for Numbers of Armed Forces Children by Armed Forces

Background	Numbers	Percentage
Regular Forces	4162	33.4
Reserve Forces	1178	09.5
Veterans	5827	46.7
Regular + Reserve	112	00.9
Regular + Veteran	178	01.4
Reserve + Veteran	138	01.1
Not declared	872	07.0
Total	12497	100

The armed forces background for children is shown in Table 2, above. The largest proportion, nearly half, are attributed to veterans' families (46.7%). There is no information at present on either the nature of veteran's service, that is the branch of the armed forces involved; how long-ago service ended; or whether it involved active deployment. A third of children identified have a regular forces background (33.4%). Only two authorities are able to identify whether children have parents in the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, Army or Royal Air Force. A

substantial proportion (7.0%) of children have armed forces status but the nature of the service is “not declared”.

Observation

A greater understand of the numbers making up the “veterans” figure is required to determine the educational implications.

It is known that the differing conditions of employment between the branches of the armed forces have varying implication for family life, so a greater understanding is required of this aspect of the data. The “not declared” figure is substantial and the reasons for this merit further study.

Observation

it is impossible for the military to gather the information that is collated within the SEEMiS system in Scotland. Within the MoD owned and operated system, it is possible to ask if Serving personnel have a child, but the system does not drill down enough to understand the level of education at which the child is learning, nor where they are educated. The MoD has limited information about dependent children; generally related to housing requirements. Any information that is gathered by the military is included on the MoD form - JPA 100 and stored within their data management system.

The figures presented in Table1 and 2 provide a static picture of this population, one of the features of which is an element of mobility higher than that in the overall pupil population. It is known that mobility, and in particular changing school will have an implication for interrupted learning. Moreover, it is likely that the additional teacher workload involved and the impact on classes and schools of a changing population will strongly impact continuity of learning and aspects of pupil well-being.

Observation

More information is required about pupil turnover, “churn”, in order to start to gain a better insight into its impact on teaching and learning.

Armed Forces Children in Scotland's Schools:

ADES Data Collection Exercise 2021

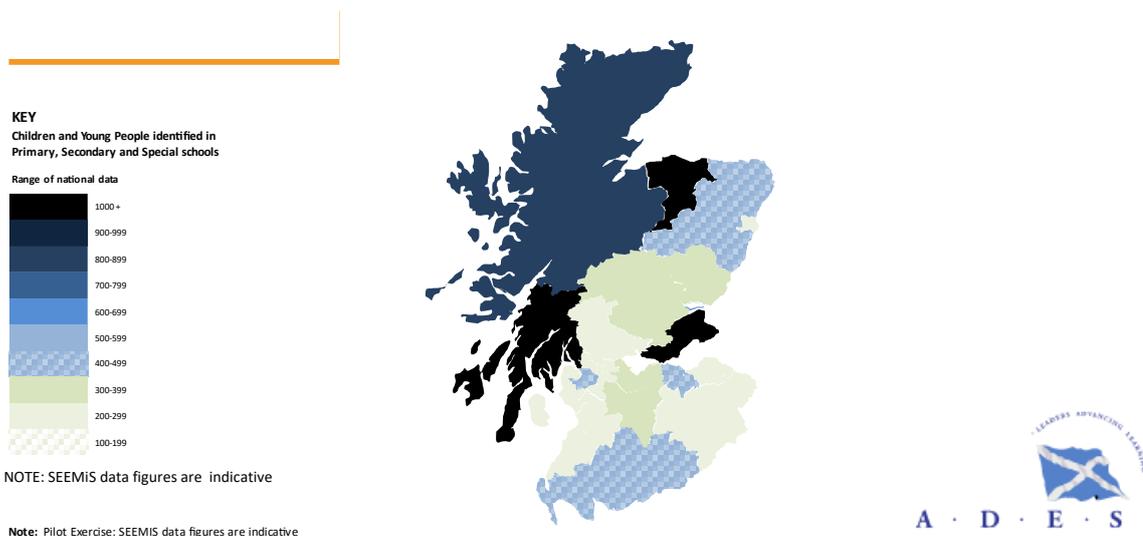


Figure 10: Children and Young People of armed forces families identified in Primary, Secondary and Special schools (Regular, Reserve and Veteran/ex-Service families)

The distribution of children between authorities (as shown in Figure 10 above) is very uneven, with high numbers recorded in Moray (1904), Fife (1301), and Argyll and Bute (1284). In contrast, of the mainland authorities Dundee City (61), Falkirk (85), and Aberdeen City (126) and Stirling (129) record the lowest numbers. Notably, Clackmannanshire, which is Scotland's smallest authority, and which is not home to any major base, records 147 children which is more than any of these four and there therefore appears to be an anomaly in the figures.

It is easy to attribute a significant effect of the armed forces in the local areas where high numbers are recorded and where therefore there is a higher visibility of the issues. However, in areas of low numbers there may be an impact at very local level attributable to the needs of individual children in particular schools who may be less visible.

Observation

A better understanding is required of how different authorities are responding, if at all to the varied distribution of children with an armed forces background.

In March 2022 the Scottish Government released detailed information on overall pupil numbers in state schools. This information, combined with the ADES data shows that overall, 1.7% of the Scottish primary and secondary school population is attributable to children with an armed forces background. The exact proportion of such children varies significantly between authorities with, apparently, the lowest percentage of 0.2% being in Glasgow City Council while in Moray and Argyll and Bute this figure rises to a highly significant 15.6% and 11.7% respectively. It is noteworthy that the proportion of armed forces children in secondary schools, at 1.4% is lower than in primary schools at 1.9%.

Observations

There are marked variations in the proportion of the pupil population attributable to armed forces children. While in some areas is very small, in others it exceed 10% with implications for planning and support.

The reasons for the difference between the proportion of armed forces children in primary and secondary education require to be better understood.

Queen Victoria School, Dunblane

Queen Victoria School (QVS) Dunblane exists exclusively for the children of armed forces personnel. It is not a local authority school but is part of the overall picture of education in Scotland. QVS was invited to make a data return on the same basis as local authorities. As Table 3 below:

Table 3: Results for Queen Victoria School, Dunblane

Sector	Royal Navy	Army	RAF	Royal Marines	Veteran	Total
Primary	11	13	7	1	2	34
Secondary	36	141	24	8	14	223
Totals	47	154	31	9	16	257

The QVS pupils therefore take the overall figure for armed forces children in Scotland to a minimum of 12,754.

Observations

The 2019 figures do not include those children who are attending independent schools (boarding, including Queen Victoria School)²³ and those families who receive MoD CEA (continuity of education allowance)²⁴.

Information from non-state schools might be gathered through engagement and agreement. This would mean information around children and young people from armed forces families who are enrolled in independent (Public) schools in Scotland would be included.

Educational Profile Changes from 2019

Change in Overall Numbers

Table 4 below demonstrates that between 2019 and 2021 the numbers of children with an armed forces background have risen from 11,816 to 12,497, a gain of 681 children. This is a rise of 5.8%. It is unknown whether this is a real increase, or is attributable to better recording, or is a combination of both these factors. It is known that in both the 2019 study, and in this exercise, there is under-recording due to the factors identified in Notes on the 2021 Exercise.

²³ www.qvs.school

²⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/the-childrens-education-advisory-service-ceas#continuity-of-education-allowance-cea>

Authorities where significant changes are evident

Table 4: Changes in numbers of Armed Forces Children 2019 to 2021

Local Authority	2019	2021	Change
Aberdeen City	103	126	23
Aberdeenshire	420	486	66
Angus	394	413	19
Argyll & Bute	1399	1284	-115
Clackmannanshire	159	147	-12
Dumfries & Galloway	478	492	14
Dundee City	81	61	-20
East Ayrshire	272	272	0
East Dunbartonshire	132	220	88
East Lothian	157	215	58
East Renfrewshire	140	138	-2
Edinburgh City	453	513	60
Eilean Siar (Western Isles)	26	35	9
Falkirk	86	85	-1
Fife	1142	1301	159
Glasgow City	175	165	-10
Highland	844	919	75
Inverclyde	161	177	16
Midlothian	485	486	1
Moray	1881	1904	23
North Ayrshire	229	234	5
North Lanarkshire	370	370	0
Orkney Islands	24	29	5
Perth & Kinross	266	354	88
Renfrewshire	407	485	78
Scottish Borders	248	244	-4
Shetland Islands	24	21	-3
South Ayrshire	277	284	7
South Lanarkshire*	288	310	22
Stirling	113	129	16
West Dunbartonshire	261	249	-12
West Lothian	321	349	28
SCOTLAND	11816	12497	681

The changes between 2019 and 2021 in numbers of children with an armed forces background are illustrated in Figure 11 below.

Armed Forces Children in Scotland's Schools:

ADES Data Collection Exercise 2021

Change in numbers of Armed Forces children, 2019 to 2021

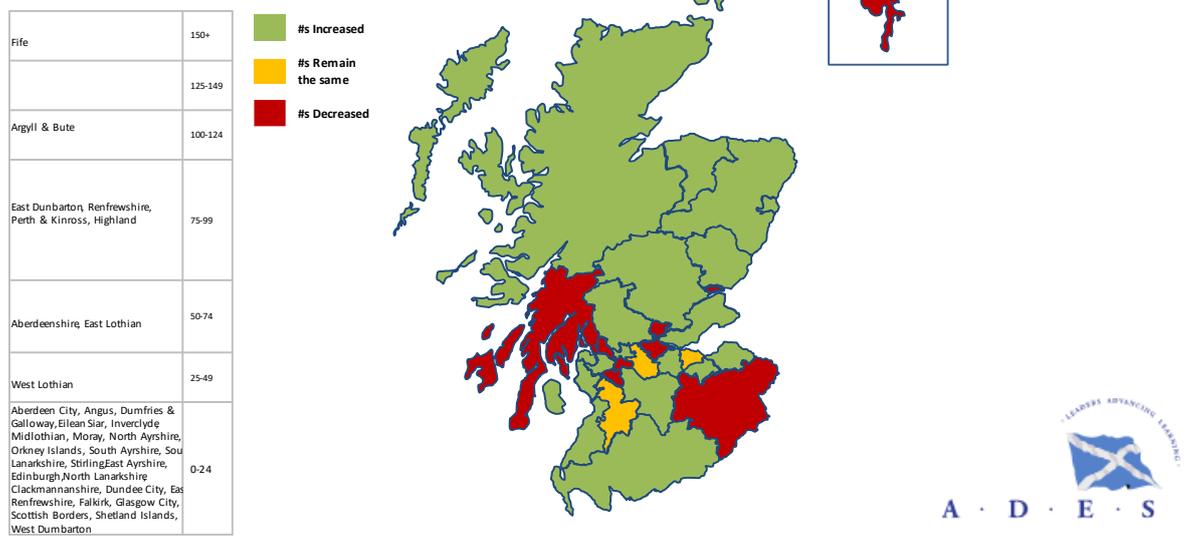


Figure 11: Change in numbers of Armed Forces children, 2019 to 2021

Eight authorities recorded an increase of 50 or more children. These were:

- Aberdeenshire
- East Dunbartonshire
- East Lothian
- Edinburgh City
- Fife
- Highland
- Perth and Kinross
- Renfrewshire

As noted earlier, these local increases may be due to real increases, particularly where there are main bases such as in Edinburgh, Fife and Highland. Equally the figure could be attributable to improved recording.

Only one authority recorded a decrease of 50 or more children:

- Argyll and Bute

This does appear anomalous, given that it is known that Faslane, which is in Argyll and Bute, is known to be expanding.

Changes in Early Years' Numbers

Table 5: Changes in numbers of Armed Forces Children enrolled in early learning and childcare 2019 to 2021

Local Authority	2019	2021	Change
Aberdeen City	8	7	-1
Aberdeenshire	23	26	3
Angus	19	25	6
Argyll & Bute	68	98	30
Clackmannanshire	1	3	2
Dumfries & Galloway	20	28	8
Dundee City	0	0	0
East Ayrshire	26	26	0
East Dunbartonshire	4	9	5
East Lothian	8	5	-3
East Renfrewshire	6	5	-1
Edinburgh City	29	14	-15
Eilean Siar (Western Isles)	0	3	3
Falkirk	1	0	-1
Fife	32	4	-28
Glasgow City	1	8	7
Highland	33	38	5
Inverclyde	5	10	5
Midlothian	8	34	26
Moray	11	0	-11
North Ayrshire	8	9	1
North Lanarkshire	11	3	-8
Orkney Islands	0	0	0
Perth & Kinross	11	13	2
Renfrewshire	1	12	11
Scottish Borders	12	11	-1
Shetland Islands	1	0	-1
South Ayrshire	21	12	-9
South Lanarkshire*	10	4	-6
Stirling	1	2	1
West Dunbartonshire	1	3	2
West Lothian	12	20	8
SCOTLAND	401	432	31

Table 5 above shows that the numbers rose from 401 to 432 between 2019 and 2021. This is a rise of 31, equivalent to 7.8%. The biggest increases being reported in Argyll and Bute (30) and Midlothian (26). Conversely, Fife (-28) and Edinburgh City (-15) reported a decline. It is difficult to interpret these figures given the general instability of numbers in the early years' sector at local level. As noted earlier, data collection for this sector is also impaired by the SEEMiS system, through which the status of children is recorded, has not yet been extended to early years' centres across Scotland.

Observation

The availability of consistent data for early years establishments will depend on the roll out of the SEEMiS system across Scotland.

Changes in Primary School Numbers

Table 6: Changes in number of Armed Forces Children in primary schools 2019 to 2021

Local Authority	2019	2021	Change
Aberdeen City	50	61	11
Aberdeenshire	260	288	28
Angus	262	252	-10
Argyll & Bute	921	809	-112
Clackmannanshire	97	95	-2
Dumfries & Galloway	301	294	-7
Dundee City	56	39	-17
East Ayrshire	161	161	0
East Dunbartonshire	119	138	19
East Lothian	98	142	44
East Renfrewshire	104	99	-5
Edinburgh City	305	327	22
Eilean Siar (Western Isles)	23	21	-2
Falkirk	23	32	9
Fife	649	770	121
Glasgow City	121	97	-24
Highland	407	455	48
Inverclyde	99	112	13
Midlothian	276	271	-5
Moray	1168	1134	-34
North Ayrshire	154	161	7
North Lanarkshire	220	218	-2
Orkney Islands	21	23	2
Perth & Kinross	165	222	57
Renfrewshire	308	349	41
Scottish Borders	127	144	17
Shetland Islands	13	13	0
South Ayrshire	165	191	26
South Lanarkshire*	209	212	3
Stirling	65	75	10
West Dunbartonshire	140	147	7
West Lothian	193	212	19
SCOTLAND	7280	7564	284

Table 6 above demonstrates that between 2019 and 2021 the number of primary school children with an armed forces background rose from 7280 to 7564. This is an increase of 3.9%. The most significant increases were in Fife (121), Perth and Kinross (57), Highland (44), East Lothian (44) and Renfrewshire (41). Conversely the most significant decreases were in Argyll and Bute (-112) and Moray (-34). The increase in Fife is mainly attributable to the identification of an additional 100 pupils from veterans' families. The decreases in Argyll and Bute and Moray are surprising given that these are both main base areas which would have otherwise been thought of as having increasing numbers due to recent expansions.

Changes in Secondary School Numbers

Table 7: Changes in number of Armed Forces Pupils in secondary schools 2019 to 2021

Local Authority	2019	2021	Change
Aberdeen City	45	56	11
Aberdeenshire	132	164	32
Angus	113	136	23
Argyll & Bute	402	368	-34
Clackmannanshire	59	49	-10
Dumfries & Galloway	150	170	20
Dundee City	23	19	-4
East Ayrshire	82	82	0
East Dunbartonshire	7	70	63
East Lothian	51	68	17
East Renfrewshire	30	34	4
Edinburgh City	119	168	49
Eilean Siar (Western Isles)	1	11	10
Falkirk	62	52	-10
Fife	461	527	66
Glasgow City	52	60	8
Highland	402	424	22
Inverclyde	55	52	-3
Midlothian	197	177	-20
Moray	702	770	68
North Ayrshire	56	62	6
North Lanarkshire	133	141	8
Orkney Islands	1	6	5
Perth & Kinross	85	115	30
Renfrewshire	98	121	23
Scottish Borders	109	89	-20
Shetland Islands	9	8	-1
South Ayrshire	91	78	-13
South Lanarkshire*	67	91	24
Stirling	45	52	7
West Dunbartonshire	108	97	-11
West Lothian	110	110	0
SCOTLAND	4061	4427	366

Table 7 above shows that between 2019 and 2021 the number of secondary school children with an armed forces background rose from 4061 to 4427. This is an increase of 9.0%.

The most significant increases were seen in Moray (68), Fife (66), and East Dunbarton (63). There were significant decreases in Argyll and Bute (-34), Midlothian (-20) and Scottish Borders (-20). There is an apparent contrast in these figures with the primary education insofar as Moray is showing an increase rather than a decrease in numbers, but again there is a significant increase in Fife. As with the primary sector, Argyll and Bute is reporting a significant decrease in numbers, the reasons for which are obscure given the expansion of Faslane.

Comments on Implications of Educational Profile Changes

Given the small numbers and the variability of reporting, it is not possible to make any clear statements about changes to the armed forces children in the special sector.

To some degree the slower rise of primary pupil numbers compared to secondary age pupils may be reflecting the wider demography where there has been a general decline in primary aged children over the last few years, while secondary aged children have risen in numbers. That given, there is a need to be confident about, and to understand, the reported changes in numbers at local authority level since the pattern of trends varies across Scotland.

Observations

Although authorities are reporting a general increase in numbers of armed forces children across Scotland this trend varies in strength between education sectors, with more marked contrasts at local level.

Authorities should consider the children's service planning implications of changes to the armed forces population both with regard to numbers and characteristics, and this should be done at local level.

Family Background Changes from 2019

Changes in Numbers of Children with a Regular Forces Background

Table 8: Changes in numbers of Armed Forces Children with a regular forces family background 2019 to 2021

Local Authority	2019	2021	Change
Aberdeen City	18	26	8
Aberdeenshire	73	74	1
Angus	121	115	-6
Argyll & Bute	510	480	-30
Clackmannanshire	36	24	-12
Dumfries & Galloway	102	98	-4
Dundee City	19	13	-6
East Ayrshire	67	67	0
East Dunbartonshire	32	58	26
East Lothian	39	44	5
East Renfrewshire	44	34	-10
Edinburgh City	257	256	-1
Eilean Siar (Western Isles)	1	1	0
Falkirk	31	34	3
Fife	412	436	24
Glasgow City	54	44	-10
Highland	366	358	-8
Inverclyde	58	55	-3
Midlothian	132	193	61
Moray	1002	1038	36
North Ayrshire	64	48	-16
North Lanarkshire	86	91	5
Orkney Islands	1	5	4
Perth & Kinross	44	57	13
Renfrewshire	115	104	-11
Scottish Borders	41	42	1
Shetland Islands	1	1	0
South Ayrshire	52	61	9
South Lanarkshire*	71	86	15
Stirling	36	44	8
West Dunbartonshire	80	89	9
West Lothian	94	86	-8
SCOTLAND	4067	4162	95

Table 8 above shows the number of children with a regular forces background increased from 4067 in 2019 to 4162 in 2021. This is a rise of 2.3%. The most significant rises were in Midlothian (61), Moray (36), and East Dunbartonshire (26) while Argyll and Bute experienced a decline of 30 children. The rises in Moray and Midlothian are explicable in terms of the size

of the main bases located there, however as noted elsewhere the reasons for the decline in Argyll and Bute are obscure. Neither is it clear why the numbers in East Dunbartonshire have increased.

Changes in Numbers of Children with a Reserve Forces Background

Table 9: Changes in numbers of children with a reserve forces family background 2019 to 2021

Local Authority	2019	2021	Change
Aberdeen City	26	28	2
Aberdeenshire	60	57	-3
Angus	36	49	13
Argyll & Bute	44	35	-9
Clackmannanshire	23	13	-10
Dumfries & Galloway	73	60	-13
Dundee City	14	6	-8
East Ayrshire	19	19	0
East Dunbartonshire	23	29	6
East Lothian	33	40	7
East Renfrewshire	14	15	1
Edinburgh City	34	36	2
Eilean Siar (Western Isles)	1	3	2
Falkirk	13	10	-3
Fife	69	102	33
Glasgow City	39	37	-2
Highland	84	64	-20
Inverclyde	16	20	4
Midlothian	213	111	-102
Moray	85	82	-3
North Ayrshire	23	20	-3
North Lanarkshire	70	52	-18
Orkney Islands	1	2	1
Perth & Kinross	48	60	12
Renfrewshire	61	71	10
Scottish Borders	39	27	-12
Shetland Islands	1	0	-1
South Ayrshire	27	26	-1
South Lanarkshire*	43	37	-6
Stirling	10	9	-1
West Dunbartonshire	30	19	-11
West Lothian	39	39	0
SCOTLAND	1312	1178	-134

Table 9 depicts the number of children with a reserve forces background decreased from 1312 in 2019 to 1178 in 2021. This is a fall of 1.0%. The authority reporting the most significant

changes was Fife with a gain of 33 while children Midlothian reported a fall of -102. There is no obvious cause of either figure.

Changes in Numbers of Children with a Veteran Background

Table 10: Changes in numbers of children with a veteran family background 2019 to 2021

Local Authority	2019	2021	Change
Aberdeen City	56	67	11
Aberdeenshire	278	348	70
Angus	215	230	15
Argyll & Bute	273	250	-23
Clackmannanshire	100	96	-4
Dumfries & Galloway	264	304	40
Dundee City	37	38	1
East Ayrshire	169	169	0
East Dunbartonshire	68	123	55
East Lothian	78	123	45
East Renfrewshire	77	82	5
Edinburgh City	136	212	76
Eilean Siar (Western Isles)	20	21	1
Falkirk	39	35	-4
Fife	479	579	100
Glasgow City	76	78	2
Highland	355	426	71
Inverclyde	76	94	18
Midlothian	107	162	55
Moray	664	665	1
North Ayrshire	128	161	33
North Lanarkshire	187	226	39
Orkney Islands	14	22	8
Perth & Kinross	158	210	52
Renfrewshire	163	214	51
Scottish Borders	149	152	3
Shetland Islands	18	20	2
South Ayrshire	185	174	-11
South Lanarkshire*	163	171	8
Stirling	58	70	12
West Dunbartonshire	111	127	16
West Lothian	166	208	42
SCOTLAND	5067	5857	790

Table 10 above shows the number of children with a veteran background increased from 5067 in 2019 to 5857 in 2021. This is a rise of 15.6%. Several authorities reported significant rises in children from the families of veterans. These included Fife (100), Edinburgh (76), Midlothian (55), Perth and Kinross (52), Renfrewshire (51). It appears unlikely that these

larger figures are attributable to either population movement or increasing family size, and the increases may therefore be a consequence of improved recording at school level. Only Argyll and Bute (-23) and South Ayrshire (-11) reported in a significant decline in the number of children in this category.

Changes in Numbers of Children with a Combined Background

Table 11: Changes in numbers of Armed Forces Children with a mixed regular, reserve, or veteran family background 2019 to 2021

Local Authority	2019	2021	Change
Aberdeen City	1	0	-1
Aberdeenshire	9	7	-2
Angus	16	12	-4
Argyll & Bute	27	15	-12
Clackmannanshire		14	14
Dumfries & Galloway	32	23	-9
Dundee City	11	3	-8
East Ayrshire	17	16	-1
East Dunbartonshire	7	8	1
East Lothian	5	5	0
East Renfrewshire	1	5	4
Edinburgh City	8	5	-3
Eilean Siar (Western Isles)	1	10	9
Falkirk	1	2	1
Fife	54	42	-12
Glasgow City	6	6	0
Highland	0	27	27
Inverclyde	8	6	-2
Midlothian	29	18	-11
Moray	71	79	8
North Ayrshire	11	5	-6
North Lanarkshire	26	0	-26
Orkney Islands	1	0	-1
Perth & Kinross	6	17	11
Renfrewshire	0	33	33
Scottish Borders	14	17	3
Shetland Islands	0	0	0
South Ayrshire	13	16	3
South Lanarkshire*	10	14	4
Stirling	9	6	-3
West Dunbartonshire	16	5	-11
West Lothian	14	12	-2
SCOTLAND	427	428	1

Table 11 above shows the number of children with a combined background of regular and reserve or veteran increased from 427 in 2019 to 428 in 2021. There was therefore no

significant change nationally. At local level, however, there were some significant changes with significant increases for example in Highland (27) and Renfrewshire (33), while North Lanarkshire (-26) reported a decline. The possible reasons for these changes, where they are significant, is unknown, particularly when most authorities recorded little change.

Changes in Numbers of Children Identified as Armed Forces Background but “Not Declared”.

Table 12: Changes in numbers of Armed Forces Children with family background not identified 2019 to 2021

Local Authority	2019	2021	Change
Aberdeen City	1	5	4
Aberdeenshire	0	0	0
Angus	6	7	1
Argyll & Bute	545	504	-41
Clackmannanshire		0	0
Dumfries & Galloway	7	7	0
Dundee City	0	1	1
East Ayrshire	0	1	1
East Dunbartonshire	1	2	1
East Lothian	1	3	2
East Renfrewshire	1	2	1
Edinburgh City	18	4	-14
Eilean Siar (Western Isles)	1	0	-1
Falkirk	1	4	3
Fife	128	142	14
Glasgow City	0	0	0
Highland	39	44	5
Inverclyde	1	2	1
Midlothian	1	2	1
Moray	59	40	-19
North Ayrshire	1	0	-1
North Lanarkshire	1	1	0
Orkney Islands	1	0	-1
Perth & Kinross	10	10	0
Renfrewshire	68	63	-5
Scottish Borders	1	6	5
Shetland Islands	0	0	0
South Ayrshire	0	7	7
South Lanarkshire*	1	2	1
Stirling	0	0	0
West Dunbartonshire	24	9	-15
West Lothian	8	4	-4
SCOTLAND	943	872	-71

Table 12 above depicts the number of children recorded as “not declared” in terms of background decreased from 943 in 2019 to 872 in 2021. This is a fall of 7.5%. The fall in non-

declarations is almost certainly attributable to the significant drops in individual authorities, most particularly Argyll and Bute (-41), Moray (-19), West Dunbartonshire (-15) and Edinburgh City (-14). It should be noted however that the overall level of no- declarations in Argyll and Bute remains very high at 504. Only Fife recorded a significant increase (14).

Comments on Implications of Changes in Family Backgrounds of Armed Forces Children

The above sections illustrate beyond doubt the heterogeneous nature of the armed forces children population. Not only does each category of background carry implications for provision, but the differing changes in each segment of the population have implications for planning at authority level and school levels. The high number of “not declared” children is an issue, particularly for one authority. The reasons for this situation may lie in several different areas which have been identified by practitioners and include:

- schools are not collecting this information from families;
- families are reluctant to declare for personal reasons; or
- serving personnel believe that declaring their service would compromise military security.

It is not within the purpose of this paper to discuss the background to any of these reasons. However, in order to gain a fuller understanding of the nature of the pupil population it is important that, so far as possible, the numbers of “not declared” should be reduced.

Observations

The pattern of changes to family backgrounds is variable reinforcing the view of the heterogeneity of this part of the pupil population, with an associated need to gain a fuller understanding of its implications to improve service planning.

Efforts should be made to reduce the level of “non-declared” families wherever this is possible.

Resource Implication with Equivalence to Service Pupil Premium

Across the UK there are notable differences in the way in which the management of armed forces children is addressed. Up to recently Scotland had one National Transitions Officer. In comparison, the Welsh Government has established a team of 5 officers (one at national level and four regional appointments) to support armed forces children and help fulfil its Covenant obligations. England has introduced the service pupil premium (SPP) which is a payment direct to schools of £310 per child of people who are either serving in the armed forces or who had service within the last 6 years.²⁵ This is a very visible means of support to schools and children, and whatever the merits of the system it represents additionality and a recognition that

²⁵ The actual eligibility criteria for the service pupil premium are more complex than stated here, but this definition gives an accurate summary of the nature of this provision.

schools serving this part of the pupil population face additional pressures. There is therefore a question as to whether the data collected in 2021 is of any assistance in gauging the possible resource implication of armed forces children in state schools. Not all the pupils identified in this survey would qualify for the SPP, particularly if their parents are reservists or veterans. A factor therefore must be applied to reduce the overall amount that would have been claimable. These factors were: selected based on knowledge of equivalence to regular service and were regular (x 1.0), reserve (x 0.25), veteran (x 0.25), and combination of backgrounds (0.25). The results are shown in Table 13 below:

Table 13: National Resource Allocation

Authority	Service Pupil Premium Equivalent
Aberdeen City	£21,003
Aberdeenshire	£81,840
Angus	£76,570
Argyll & Bute	£230,485
Clackmannanshire	£24,412
Dumfries & Galloway	£84,475
Dundee City	£10,695
East Ayrshire	£49,755
East Dunbartonshire	£40,067
East Lothian	£36,425
East Renfrewshire	£24,955
Edinburgh City	£115,707
Eilean Siar (Western Isles)	£4,572
Falkirk	£17,205
Fife	£247,070
Glasgow City	£29,062
Highland	£187,472
Inverclyde	£33,790
Midlothian	£95,092
Moray	£440,432
North Ayrshire	£41,772
North Lanarkshire	£67,347
Orkney Islands	£5,115
Perth & Kinross	£56,962
Renfrewshire	£78,352
Scottish Borders	£40,455
Shetland Islands	£3,410
South Ayrshire	£49,677
South Lanarkshire	£57,272
Stirling	£25,652
West Dunbartonshire	£49,832
West Lothian	£63,162
SCOTLAND	£2,390,100

The introduction of this concept into this analysis should not be interpreted as seeking the introduction of the SPP. However, it does identify the potential level of resource that requires to be allocated nationally, or by local authorities, if children in Scotland are administered on a similar basis to the rest of the UK. For some authorities any such directed resource allocation would be significant, and would, for example, justify the employment of additional staffing to support this group of children. At present the main additionality in Scotland is provided by the MoD's Education Support Fund (ESF) which is ephemeral in nature and relies on an application process with uncertain outcomes. An approach to mainline budgetary planning which directly relates funding to pupil numbers would remove the difficulties of the present bid system and would much better enable authorities to fulfil their obligations under the Armed Forces Covenant, the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act, 2014 and the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004.

Observation

If an approach to resource allocation was adopted in Scotland to that used elsewhere in the UK there would potentially be significant additionality for armed forces children nationally and at local authority level

Resource Implication: Pupil Equity Fund

In response to the points being made above, the argument could be made that there is already sufficient flexibility within the guidance issued in association with the Scottish Government's pupil equity fund (PEF). However, PEF is allocated to schools, not authorities, so the resulting fragmentation of resource, particularly where the sums awarded are relatively small, inhibits the development of any strategic, area based, approach. Secondly, PEF is allocated specifically to alleviate the educational effects of social disadvantage the problems associated with which are proving to be challenging. In contrast, the issues faced by armed forces children are associated with the unique features of military life. These may overlap with social disadvantage, but are certainly different in nature, scope and intensity.

Further, any resource allocation based on PEF prioritises different authorities to those with a significant armed forces children's population. When authorities are ranked using their PEF allocations and then compared to the notional SPP allocation detailed in Table 13 is used, this yields a Spearman's Coefficient of Rank Correlation value of +0.33. In other words, there is some similarity between the rank orders, but this relationship is weak. Perhaps explained more simply Moray is ranked as having the highest resource demand under the notional SPP measure but is only 27th in rank under PEF; it would be clearly unfair if Moray sought to refocus its relatively sparse PEF resource on armed forces children to the detriment of the wider support to socially disadvantaged children. Equally, within Moray it may be that particular enclaves of armed forces children merit specific support, an idea supported by ESF funding applications from that area, but these are not necessarily the same schools to which PEF has been allocated.

To safeguard the intentions of the Armed Forces Covenant and secure social justice for the wider school population, a more strategic approach to resource allocation should reflect that appropriate priority is given to the needs of armed forces children.

Conclusions

The 2021 data collection has:

- identified the minimum number of armed forces children in Scotland and in local authority areas and those declared figures are probably understated;
- given an indication of the distribution of children across Scotland;
- provided a basic segmentation of the data in terms of educational sector and family background for armed forces children;
- confirmed the importance of veterans' families as part of this population;
- identified some of the main changes that are thought to have taken place over the past two years since the last data collection exercise.

The existence of this information has allowed:

- clear identification that the secondary aged population of armed forces children is lower than expected and the actual reasons for this need to be understood;
- statements to be made about how the quality of the data available might be improved;
- it to be observed that this group of children is larger and therefore more significant than a number of other groups for whom national data is collected by government;
- the heterogeneous nature of this part of the pupil population to be highlighted;
- identification that this static data picture insufficiently identifies the level of "churn" and its implications;
- demonstration that it is possible to use the data as a basis of a more strategic approach to resource allocation and service planning; and
- identification that the present system of data collection, analysis and resource allocation is unfair both to armed forces children and the local pupil population.

It is emphasised that the above conclusions have been reached in the absence of being able to link educational or wellbeing outcomes for the armed forces children's population or to any identified additional support needs. This leads to the important recommendations that:

Recommendations

- Systems of data collection and analysis require to be developed to the point where schools and authorities can be reassured that those individuals, and armed forces children for whom they have a responsibility, are achieving their fullest potential.
- The conclusions of this exercise should be used to enable improved collection and analysis of data. Specific resources will be required to be identified for this purpose and for it to be given appropriate priority.



Chapter 5 Review and Update

“Report on the impact of MoD Education Support Fund projects in support of Forces children identifying where there would be disadvantage when the funding ceases.”
(April 2017)

Background

To gain a fuller understanding of the support to armed forces children in Scotland, it is necessary to consider how funding and resources are allocated to support armed forces children’s education. Against that background the scarce/limited sources of additionality in resourcing for armed forces children are the Education Support Fund administered by Armed Forces Families and Safeguarding (AFFS), the former Directorate Children and Young People (DCYP). Both sources of support require schools or authorities to embark on an application process based on a project proposal. Submission of an application does not guarantee the award of any funding. It is also the case that the level of support in Scotland under, for example, PEF in 2021/22 was £127M in addition to £43M distributed to 9 Challenge Authorities. This compares to “up to £3M “being available under ESF and this to be distributed across the entire UK. So, however welcome, the additionality from ESF is very small in relation to other resources.

The position elsewhere in the UK is different. In Wales, a central team of a national officer and four regional officers supports armed forces children, this initiative follows previous years’ announcements of £250K support for armed forces children. The position in England is that the children of armed forces families, including veterans each bring an additional £310 to their school under Service Pupil Premium (SPP) arrangements. Since ESF and Covenant funding is available throughout the UK, the existence of SPP amounts to a substantial additional resource for English schools which does not involve having to making funding applications with uncertain reports.

Work undertaken by the Education Policy Institute (EPI) has shown that the general levels of education funding appear to be between £1000 and £1500 higher in Scotland than elsewhere in the UK. This is significantly more than would be brought to schools by any equivalent of the service pupil premium. However, to gain a complete understanding of these figures and their likely impact on children’s experience, would require a detailed analysis of how costs have been compiled and particularly how central charges have been allocated. As part of any such analysis the impact of teachers’ salaries on these figures would require to be known, since basic salary levels are higher in Scotland than elsewhere in the UK. Such an analysis is beyond the scope of this study. Here, it is sufficient to note that elsewhere in the UK significant resources have been earmarked to support armed forces children’s education, whereas this is not the case in Scotland.

How the Education of Armed Forces Children is Resourced in Scotland

Beyond the support provided through the core budgets of education authorities, the principal source of additionality for the education of armed forces children in Scotland is through the

Ministry of Defence’s Education Support Fund (ESF)²⁶. An understanding of the operation of ESF in Scotland is essential to an appreciation of how the challenges to learning for this group of children are being met and whether this is adequate.

The amount of money available through ESF is allocated annually, and varies from year to year, but is of the order of a few million pounds. The sum available in 2021 for the entire UK was £3M; there is no Scotland-specific allocation. So, although superficially, substantial, in practice this is a very limited resource. It compares unfavourably to other areas of education budgets – for example, in 2021/22 the Scottish Government is distributing £43M, over 14 times the ESF amount, to just 9 “Challenge Authorities” to tackle disadvantage. Against the background of being a limited resource, the application process is very tightly prescribed by MoD, and requires completion of a detailed, word-limited, application form. Applications are initially assessed by a regional panel in Scotland before final decisions on allocations are made at UK level.

This process is onerous for a relatively small amount of funding that, even if successful, is guaranteed for no more than a year, and where success in the application is uncertain. Despite the existence of extensive guidance and support materials, it is therefore perhaps unsurprising that of the 32 authorities which have armed forces children only a minority submit applications – in 2021 only 8 forms from councils, schools and groups of schools were scored by the Scottish regional panel.

What an Analysis of ESF Applications Tells Us

Applications and Data Examined

Overall, 27 Scottish applications from between 2019-2020 were examined. Some applications were detailed and supported by evidence. For example, some schools demonstrated good practice in providing numbers which identified pupils as children of veterans, regulars or reservists. Others, however, provided little background or data to support their case. This variation in content in the applications prevented detailed quantitative analysis. However, it did allow qualitative thematic analysis to be conducted with potential to create further questions and identification of good practice. This is the first step to developing an evaluation data collection tool which would require those applying for funding to provide a better account of how previous funding was employed and how the current funding might enhance that process.

Findings

Format of the Application forms

As a key to the evaluation, the structure of the application form itself was reviewed to establish the information sought and then how this requirement was fulfilled by applicants was examined.

²⁶ There is some other additional funding provided through the Covenant Trust, but this is a project-based resource with a very local impact.

The application forms were divided into four sections: “*details of applicant*”, “*details of the bid*”, “*sustainability*”, and “*payment details*”. Each section is restricted in the number of words allowed. Essentially, each year’s application is a self-contained exercise. For, while instructions suggested it was possible to apply for money for development this could not be such that sustainability would require repeat funding. Although there is a section which requests information on previous funding, there is no real opportunity to demonstrate how the current application is linked to previous work or predicted activity in the future. The lack of clarity in funding for 8 months affecting projects in 2019/20 created significant uncertainty on the ground.

For the 2020 applications an additional condition was added suggesting that it was potentially the final year of funding so applications should: “*be targeted towards creative and realistic projects with the greatest possible collective impact across the community. It is important that the funded development work be sustained beyond this year, providing a legacy of good practice.*”

Therefore, applicants are not encouraged to apply for funding of roles that extend from one application to the next. The system therefore discourages any long-term or genuinely strategic approach. This given, as will be detailed in the findings, several applicants requested funds to maintain initiatives - specifically new partnership staff roles.

Where funding was awarded geographically

Applications were made from councils, individual schools and from a group of schools. Occasionally, the same school appeared in both individual and group bids, for example in Moray. However, some councils and individual schools did not submit applications for additional funding, despite otherwise apparently qualifying for funding. Given the general, current, scarcity of resourcing throughout the system, this is of concern. Equally, it was clear that only certain schools or councils repeatedly applied for funding - for example, City of Edinburgh, Highland, Renfrewshire, and Argyll & Bute.

In terms of funding decisions there was a clear trend to support bids from schools near military bases. On occasion funding was provided where there was a planned increase in military families being deployed to a specific area. Yet even here there are examples of key schools in apparently similar circumstances not getting funding. Thus, in 2019/2020 Moray and its schools, where there is the biggest military presence in Scotland and where expansion is planned, received no ESF funding. Similarly, Fife, where Leuchars and Rosyth have a substantial military presence, has not received consistent funding.

There was also no distinguishing pattern in the funding or in the amounts requested. The larger amounts requested did not always come from areas where there were higher numbers of armed forces children. For example, a bid from one council reported an overall population of 116 eligible children and requested funding of £214,000 (£1,845 per child) while another authority with a population of 899 armed forces children sought £40,000 (£44.50 per child).

Some applications were considerably strengthened by the quality of input from the military sponsor. In others this was less evident. Worryingly, in some cases applicants have reported

difficulties in establishing a positive relationship with their military sponsor with detriment to the application process.

Observation:

The quality and extent of support to children's education should not depend on the personalities or viewpoints of an individual, and this aspect of the process requires to be reviewed.

How was the funding used?

A high percentage of the applications demonstrate a commitment to partnership working and sharing of resources. This was particularly evident in the local authority level applications although there were other instances of schools co-operating to share training and expertise. There was a diversity of focus in the applications. Some were aimed at learning and teaching, resources; others emphasised training for staff while others promoted specific additional learning support packages.

The funding offered strong opportunities for teacher development. Many of the schools applying for funding to support new teacher development tended to also include a training budget to share the new skills with other staff in the building. An emerging trend was to support specific partnership roles. These included several new and continuing 'support or family liaison' posts. These were considered as being important to welcome and work with the parents and to enhance liaison between the school the family and encourage them to become part of the community. High success rates were claimed for such roles in areas where there were high levels of deployment, movement of families to new settings, with associated emotional or learning difficulties. Other requests were concerned with improving the school physical environment. These included nurture rooms, garden quiet areas, library facilities and although not funded bus shelters.

Data capture

Most schools did provide some detail of how they would evaluate their interventions, for example through feedback, or interviews, with the students and their families. However, there was no clear indication of how this data were being maintained or indeed if this was actually happening. Few showed a clear systematic process of data capture. There were, however, models of best practice for example at Kinloss Primary and Forres Academy where there was a recognition of children from regular, reservist and veteran families. These schools also provided accurate numbers of the children from each group across the applications. Such a model was not evident in any of the other applications. Yet, data such as this has the potential to provide highly valuable information for planners. It is clearly essential to develop data capture techniques that accurately identify both the numbers and needs of this group of

children. Being able to identify accurate numbers and the differences in numbers between children from regular, reserve and veterans' family settings would be a good starting point in order to identify if there are differing needs between and across this group of children.

What worked well?

Several valuable interventions were made possible by ESF funding. Schools had enhanced some of the learning materials available, provided suitable environments to support counselling and parent teacher meetings, and had developed key liaison roles to support school parent interaction and development. These initiatives were evaluated, although not independently, and assessed as having made a difference to the armed forces children in the schools. Greater integration into the local community had been encouraged which was of benefit to both child and parents. In terms of child wellbeing these roles contributed considerably, and other additional teaching roles supported interrupted learning related to curriculum and subject delivery. These successes do, however, create the question as to why other schools and authorities had not applied for funding to secure similar benefits.

What were the challenges?

In the two years reviewed only 5²⁷ of the potential 32 councils applied for ESF funding. Yet, the 2019 and 2021 data collection exercises prove there are armed forces children in all authorities across Scotland. This suggests several issues need to be examined. The application process was difficult and only allowed for funding on an annual basis. However, several of the applications demonstrated that in the case of liaison roles this funding was made available on a continual basis. This implies inconsistency in the funding process with a mismatch between the nature of the need and how this was being met. Some of the applications demonstrated a strong understanding on how to complete the form, which added to their success, while others appeared to struggle to articulate their needs. Often, several sections of the forms were very badly addressed. For example, detail of how the previous funding had supported armed forces children was not always clear.

An area of concern was the lack of a recognised data evaluation process across authorities and schools. Some suggestions of focus groups or interviews to evaluate the intervention, while useful, would not yield comparable information across schools. The reviews of previous funding gave no indication of the number of children who had been supported nor indeed how the intervention had worked beyond imprecise qualitative comment. Importantly, such rigour was not required by the forms, and so in terms of outcome measurement, value for money and how equity across schools is being maintained this process is inadequate.

²⁷ There were multiple applications from some council areas where schools, or groups of schools had submitted individual applications.

Recommendations

- The ESF application process lacks transparency. Any replacement process should be transparent and maximise efficiency by minimising bureaucracy. The process could be further simplified with better funding decisions taken if more authoritative information (data) existed. To be truly effective the funding process needs to take much more account of the educational needs.
- Any development of ESF should consider the incorporation of mechanisms for project evaluation and sharing of best practice.
- The statements of project outcomes are a potentially valuable source of information and could be better used to identify good practices and approaches that are more likely to deliver positive learning experiences.
- Any replacement programme for ESF requires to be sufficiently flexible to respond to change, local circumstances and the present levels of uncertainty and should not be a simple repetition of the previous year's exercise.
- The statements of project outcomes are a potentially valuable source of information and could be better used to identify good practices and approaches that are more likely to deliver positive learning experiences.
- Although attempts have been made to introduce more flexibility, particularly through the panel scoring process and through attempts to consider sustainability, more flexibility is still required. It is still an annual process using similar criteria and application structures year-on-year. Each annual application is self-contained although carrying an opportunity to reflect on the use of previous funding.
- There is no opportunity for 3 or 5-year planning. The lack of clarity in funding for 8 months affecting projects in 2019/20 created significant uncertainty on the ground. The accumulation of a more reliable and comprehensive knowledge base would be an important step to developing a more flexible and strategic approach.

Data and analysis

Figures of Armed Forces Children in Scotland

Reliable figures are required on the numbers of armed forces children across Scotland to facilitate strategic planning, the equitable allocation of resources and the monitoring of outcomes.

Table 14: Estimated numbers of Armed Forces Children in Scotland 2013 to 2019/20

Area	2013; Number of Armed Forces Children: at least (Regular only)	2015/16; Number of Armed Forces Children: at least (Regular only)	2019/20; Number of Armed Forces Children: at least (Regular only)	2019/20; Number of Armed Forces Children: at least (all)
Angus	74	269	121	394
Argyll and Bute	986	477	510	1399
Edinburgh City	380	374	257	453
Falkirk	100	Unknown	31	86
East Renfrewshire	Unknown	9	44	140
Fife	450	448	412	1142
Highlands	113	581	366	844
Inverclyde	Unknown	4	58	161
Midlothian	180	170	132	485
Moray	726	665	1002	1881
Renfrewshire	36	231	115	407

Source: 2013 and 2016 ESF Applications, ADES 2019 Pilot Data Collection Exercise

Table 14 above summarises the numbers of armed forces children known to education authorities at three sampling points. The figures for 2019/20, which resulted from a single exercise, and so are the nearest to a consistently collected dataset, show that the children of reservists and veterans add substantially to the totals for each education authority area.

The general instability of figures from year to year for each authority clearly underlines the need for there to be effective data collection for this part of the pupil population. Only in this way will a better understanding be gained of the factors contributing to change.

Observation

Schools experience additional workload and turbulence from trickle postings. This imposes additional work burdens on staff and poses a challenge to the planning of learning.

This observation still stands. It may be added that the COVID-19 experience in schools between 2020 and 2021 has illustrated universally the work burdens associated with turbulence, or churn, in the pupil population.

A better understanding of turbulence and its effects will assist schools and authorities in managing workloads.

Observation

Change is not restricted to the Armed Forces in Scotland. Fundamental changes are probable to the organisation of education authority and school responsibilities in the near future.

At the time this observation was written the Scottish Government had announced an intention to legislate to alter the balance of responsibility between schools and education authorities. This has not happened and the balance existing in 2017 largely prevails in 2021. The exception is that the Regional Improvement Collaboratives (RICs) have been introduced and are in operation. This has introduced an additional layer of organisation focused on educational improvement. Each collaborative is supported by Education Scotland and has its own improvement plan. Some of the RICs have a substantial armed forces presence – notably the Northern Alliance and the South-East Collaborative. There is therefore considerable scope to pool expertise and exchange good practice on armed forces children within these collaboratives which is an opportunity which did not exist in the same way before.

It should also be noted that schools and education authorities have been through unprecedented changes because of COVID-19. This has forced a reprioritisation of activity simply to maintain the education of children and to ensure the safety of staff and pupils alike. It is probable that the restoration of a normal system with continuity of learning for all will take a considerable time and perhaps will not be fully secured until 2023.

Data are needed at RIC level to maximise the opportunities for collaboration and to ensure that armed forces children's needs are appropriately considered at this level including plans for COVID-19 recovery.

Observation

Any reduction of funding to support the education of armed forces children in Scotland is unlikely to be offset by a diversion of core education resources which are already under increasing pressure.

When the 2017 report was written there was much adverse comment in the armed forces community about no equivalent of the Service Pupil Premium in Scotland. Since 2017 some

reassurance on the level of education funding is Scotland relative to the rest of the United Kingdom has been provided by the Education Policy Institute (EPI) report²⁸.



Notes and sources: [IFS 2020 Annual Report on Education Spending in England](#)

Figure 12: Extract from Sibieta and Jerrim (2021)

As Figure 12 shows the EPI believe Scottish education funding is significantly higher, at £7,300 per pupil, than elsewhere in the UK. The funding gap is more than sufficient to offset any advantage that might come from the Service Pupil Premium at £310 per pupil. This margin also gives some reason to believe that any financial impact resulting from austerity measure consequent from COVID-19, or other causes, may be more readily offset in Scotland than elsewhere. However, it should also be noted that funding differences may be attributable to teaching salary differences in the core staffing of schools; restrictions in any areas of additionality, such as support to armed forces children, may therefore have a disproportionate impact. This latter point will be of particular importance to schools and authorities where there is reliance on ESF for additional staffing, and where no alternative sustainable resource has been identified.

It remains to be seen whether any redirection of resources, either to the general population or to specific groups (such as armed forces children) will result from the national health and wellbeing survey which will be issued in the near future.

²⁸“A comparison of school institutions and policies across the UK”, Sibieta L and Jerrim J, April 2021, Education Policy Institute.

There is a need to gain a much better understanding of the association between spending and positive outcomes. This is as true for armed forces children as it is of the rest of the school population.

Observation

The divergence and diversity indicate that the challenges will require continued attention and are unlikely to be completely resolved.

This observation was made in 2017 in the context of devolved government and still stands as illustrated in the following quote “Since devolution in 1999, schools and education policy in the UK has become a devolved matter. This has been accompanied by a gradual divergence across all four nations of the UK on schools’ policy, partly reflecting different policy motivations and priorities. Some are well known, such as the abolition of league tables and SATs in Wales and Scotland. Some are less well known, such as differences in the curriculum, the differing roles of local authorities and the re-emergence of external testing in Scotland and Wales. Such divergences have been growing over time. In this report, we seek to provide an overview of how schools policy has changed since 1999 and how this has translated into school policies and perceptions.”²⁹

For Sibieta and Jerrim (2021), the existing differences between systems are likely to grow under devolution, posing challenges for those supporting children who move between jurisdictions. Armed forces children are an important group of such children. The increasing divergence between jurisdictions will remain a challenge into the future. The effect of movements on children’s learner journey requires to be better understood together with effective mitigation measures.

Observation

The Scottish education system is different in several key respects to those found elsewhere in the United Kingdom which will collectively amplify the disruptive effects of any school move. This effect merits further research in order to develop appropriate mitigation strategies.

The general absence of authoritative research on the effects of this and related matters means that this observation still stands. Although there is an awareness throughout the UK of the differences between education systems surprisingly little is still known about the effects of moves between jurisdictions on children’s learning and their wider well-being. Some strategies have been developed to assist the learner journey, such as plans for a “Pupil Information Profile” (PIP) which would act as a passport moving with the child. This

²⁹ Page 5, Sibieta L and Jerrim J (2021)

apparently simple idea has encountered real difficulties in implementation mainly because differences between the systems make a universally applicable document very challenging to produce. This is troubling since there is no alternative way of ensuring a failsafe way of transmitting individual pupil information across national boundaries.

Parents often assert that moving to Scotland reduces children's attainment relative to their peers. The accuracy, or otherwise, of this view requires investigation based on evidence. It should be a shared aim of the Armed Forces and the education service to minimise the disruption to family life by reducing the occasions where families opt for unaccompanied postings within the UK.

These observations still stand. Present arrangements for the placement of children in schools are inflexible, requiring a firm address before admission which may not be available. Military posting procedures often provide insufficient warning to families to plan their move adequately including, placing their children at school. The result of the operation of these two factors can be hasty and insufficient planning, and the unsatisfactory induction of children to their new school with consequent interruption of a smooth learner journey. This can contribute to unaccompanied postings. There needs to be greater consideration of the situation of mobile families and specifically where authorities will only allocate a school place after they have become resident in an area. The differences between residence in a school's delineated (catchment) area and a placing request requires to be considered in this context, taking full account of the legal complexities of this aspect of provision.

Observation

There requires to be further clarity and transparency of the funding available to support the education of children of Armed Forces families in Scotland. Clarity on this issue may assist in the development of a programme of support in Scotland after ESF has finished and to ensure equity of treatment and to take account of the specific issues and implied additionality associated with a move into or out of Scotland.

The renewed emphasis on the Armed Forces Covenant and the new associated statutory guidance currently being drafted will bring increased expectations. Local authorities will be expected to have "due regard" to the Covenant. Families will expect to see evidence of this emphasis. Those authorities which apply for and gain additional funding for armed forces children will be better placed than those which do not to demonstrate "due regard". If specific funding linked to the armed forces ceases, or authorities are unsuccessful in winning resources it will be important that they can demonstrate they are making the best use of the finances available to them and that they can describe this clearly and transparently. This observation is therefore more important than it was in 2017.

Observations

Information should be gathered on the additional resources directed towards armed forces children at school and authority levels, together with the funding sources.

The issue of child well-being was universally seen as important requiring a mixture of maintaining particular resources or levels of staffing. Continued development of practice in this area will be essential.

The impact of COVID-19 has meant that concerns about wellbeing and child and adolescent mental health are more to the fore in 2021 than they were in 2017. The issuing of the national health and wellbeing survey will also give this aspect of provision more prominence and should mean that comprehensive data on this area becomes available. There is also a new emphasis on safeguarding. The movement of children between authorities and jurisdictions is seen as an area of risk requiring continued attention and the further development of practice.

The national health and wellbeing survey, or equivalent, should be used to identify any issues that are specific to armed forces children. The adoption of a uniform assessment tool in this area will facilitate the collection and analysis of data as a basis for developing practice. In the absence of any viable alternative the observation below is still appropriate.

Observation

The prevailing view was that resourcing into the future was necessary to continue the progress made.

The availability of adequate, and reliable data will be essential to enabling sound decision making on the continuity of funding or its redirection.

Observation

Uncertainty of base, posting and movement therefore creates a continuing set of needs.

There is still uncertainty about postings. These can occur with relatively little notice. Issues about the availability of information to families remain. Where a posting takes a family away

from a main centre of population, such as Central Scotland, it may create a lack of confidence as to access to services or wider social connections.

More work requires to be undertaken to understand the implications of the movement of families both in-service and upon leaving. The particular issue is the degree to which armed forces families from areas of deprivation either retain family links with those areas or return to them, carrying an implication for continuity of provision and resourcing. Any differences between branches of the armed forces in this respect requires to be understood.

Information requires to be gathered, and analysed, on the impact on families of posting and movement, this includes understanding transition from armed forces to civilian life.

Observation

Consideration should be given to the view that there may be a rise in unaccompanied postings with consequences for family life and so continued parental involvement in children's education.

A better understanding is needed of the incidence of unaccompanied postings and their implications for families and children's education. This picture may become more complex with the Future Accommodation Model (FAM). Given the emphasis on parental involvement in the National Improvement Framework this matter requires continued attention. Of particular concern is the ability of parents to fully participate in the life of the school and their children's education, particularly at times of transition, if they are living remotely.

Summary

The literature provides important background to the field work part of this review, particularly in clarifying the educational needs of Armed Forces children. Many of the issues already raised in the literature are current for families and schools today. Without the corroboration provided by literature sources, this evidence would otherwise be little more than anecdotal. The key points to emerge from the literature are:

- the role of parents in supporting children's education is important;
- parental separation from children is damaging to children's educational welfare;
- mobility adversely affects attainment; in-year moves are particularly damaging;
- the attainment of Army children merits special consideration;
- schools and the Armed Forces need to develop a better mutual understanding;
- a balanced approach is required to support both attainment and health and well-being;
- little is known about the particular effects of moving between jurisdictions and particularly moves into and out of Scotland. There is a need for further research in this area;

- the issues around special educational needs/additional support needs are an important area where continued work is necessary and important between the UK government and the devolved governments;
- the needs of Reserve Forces on deployment merit consideration.

Overall, some factors, are an inextricable feature of life in the Armed Forces, and these can pose challenges to children’s learning and health and well-being. These factors therefore create needs which are permanent in the education system and require to be minimised or mitigated as a joint responsibility between the Armed Forces, schools, and education authorities.

Implications

The 2017 report was based on an analysis of the literature available at that time together with the views of children and young people and practitioners. Since that time there has been little change to either to the fundamental position of armed forces children within Scottish education, the nature of the work of the armed forces, or the development of policy on the education of armed forces children. There have, however, been some significant wider developments and issues:

- the higher profile of the importance of the Armed Forces Covenant and the forthcoming legal requirement to have “due regard”;
- the recommendations of the “Living in Our Shoes” (Selous) Report;
- a general recognition that insufficient is understood about the learning of armed forces children and that this requires to be addressed;
- arising from this point, a need to identify and share good practice;
- an emphasis on attainment of all children through the NIF;
- recognition that the nature of parenting can be different for many armed forces families, and that therefore different models of parental engagement need to be identified;
- recognition of the increasing divergence in educational provision between the main jurisdictions of the UK;
- recognition of the issues facing children assessed as having additional support needs/special educational needs when they move between jurisdictions;
- a generally increased emphasis on children’s health and well-being and that armed forces children have particular needs in this area;
- the recognition of armed forces children as a specific area of risk to safeguarding;
- pressure on resources forcing a need for improved targeting to secure better outcomes and improved transparency to explain allocations to parents and practitioners;
- the need for proactivity by schools and authorities;
- the importance of securing best value and ensuring whether expenditure on staffing represents value for money;
- the requirement for interventions to be evaluated using a strong evidence base of the need, the impact and future planning.

Through the ADES data collection exercises, it has been established that there are at least 12,500 armed forces children in Scotland. In some authority areas, and schools, this group

form a considerable proportion of the school role. This is therefore a significant and important group of children and young people. It is surprising therefore that there is so little data available about armed forces children in Scotland, their learning, what challenges they face, what constitutes best practice in the face of those challenges and ultimately whether the UK Government's aspiration for them through the Armed Forces Covenant, or the Scottish Government's stated purpose of "excellence and equity" for all children actually has any meaning for this group. All of this has a new prominence due to the challenges imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic and educational recovery.

It follows that an important, indeed indispensable, first step to addressing these issues is to gather uniform quantitative and qualitative data on armed forces children as a prelude to an analysis of need capable of establishing an evidence-based programme of action.



Conclusion

The Scottish education system is rich in data. The ScotXed system enables the collection of a comprehensive range of quantitative information allowing comparisons, benchmarking and analysis of trends across the system. Practitioners are highly experienced in the interpretation of educational statistics. It is therefore surprising, given the national commitment to the Covenant, that data on armed forces children is not routinely collected and published along with other national statistics. The work described in this report goes some way to address this gap. However, more requires to be done, and the information will only become fully useful when there is a uniform approach across Scotland allowing educational outcomes and other characteristics, notably additional support needs status, to be included in the analysis. Critical to that step will be the ability to objectively compare data for armed forces children with the rest of the pupil population. Without that analysis, many of the statements made about armed forces children's education, including those widely reported in the academic literature cannot rise above the level of anecdote. Most importantly the quest to remove the barriers to learning for this group will at best be instinctive rather than systematic and at worst will be ephemeral.

Nowhere is this clearer than in the area of health and wellbeing. This study has shown that schools, and authorities, have emphasised health and wellbeing in their applications for additional funding. Yet, in the most recent iteration of the NIF, the Scottish Government has prominently identified the health and wellbeing of learners as being a recurrent theme in the various national reports published recently.³⁰ The second listed priority of the current NIF is “Improvement in children and young people’s health and wellbeing”³¹. Schools have always been interested in the health and wellbeing of their children. The approach to securing children’s wider welfare known as Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) is central provision and improvement planning by schools and local authorities. So, it is unclear why the needs of armed forces children are not being met either within schools’ own routine arrangements or under the various national initiatives stimulated by the NIF. Or to be more precise, why some schools and authorities are turning to the additional resourcing represented by ESF, while others are not. On the face of it, this represents neither “Equity”, nor “Excellence”. It is understood that in the future the resourcing presently administered under ESF will pass to the Armed Forces Covenant Trust; it is to be hoped that any resulting changes to the way these moneys are allocated will allow resources to be accessed in a way that is more transparently related to needs. It will also be important, for the future, that allocation of any additional resourcing will explicitly include mechanisms to evaluate changes so that specific educational barriers can be identified and that examples of effective practice are clearly located, described, and disseminated.

These overarching conclusions lead to the series of practical recommendations which are set out below under the headings of policy, practice, funding, and research.

Recommendations

Policy

- The general instability of figures around armed forces children annually for each authority highlights the need for there to be effective data collection for this group. Only in this way will a better understanding be gained of the factors contributing to change. The most effective, but not necessarily the easiest way would be for the Scottish Government to require the collection of the data through its annual data collection exercise. Reported within the ScotXed collection yearly (as part of the pupil census) would enable Additional Support Needs data to be considered in the required annual reporting.
- Systems of data collection and analysis require to be developed to the point where schools and authorities can be reassured that those individuals, and armed forces children for whom they have a responsibility, are achieving their fullest potential.
- Regular working with headteachers and schools is essential, to gather views, perceptions, and data around attainment of mobile children and young people. There is a need to elicit this information so that data points us in the right direction, to identify challenges and difficulty in developing a pattern of attainment/achievement with a population that is ever-changing.

³⁰ Page 5, Achieving Excellence and Equity -2022 National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan, Scottish Government, December 2021

³¹ Page 8, op cit

- A standardised report format for data collection around the AFF indicator should be agreed by all local authorities to allow for consistency in collection, management, and reporting.
- Specific barriers and their impact in the effective transfer of information should be identified.
- Local authorities must understand the distribution of armed forces children in their schools.
- It should be noted that SQA attainment numbers in any year will be relatively small and therefore a method of reviewing relative attainment for armed forces children must be developed.
- Data is needed at RIC level to maximise the opportunities for collaboration and to ensure that armed forces children's needs are appropriately considered at this level including plans for COVID-19 recovery.
- Improved information and data at local, regional, and national levels will be indispensable to making decisions that better match strategic aspirations to local needs.

Practice

- The identification of good practice together with what constitutes an effective, best value outcome, it requires to be supported by ongoing data that is consistent and reliable in nature.
- A better understanding of turbulence and its effects will assist schools and authorities in managing workloads.
- Education Scotland should be encouraged to look at raising attainment, health, and wellbeing of armed forces children, during establishment inspections and to aggregate their findings.
- It is essential to maintain and facilitate network groups nationally, and across jurisdictions, to support knowledge exchange.
- The findings from the ADES 2021 data collection exercise should be used to assemble a business case for SEEMiS to extend the utility of the armed forces indicator.
- Local authorities need to agree on a process to be used in enrolling armed forces children in their early years' settings and schools. Data collection and analysis must be considered for Early Learning and Children settings.
- Examples and models of good practice and knowledge exchange must be provided and include consideration of the use of an online process that includes the Armed Forces Family Indicator.
- There is a need to gather information on effective models of engagement with parents in armed forces families.
- How schools support armed forces children in making and sustaining friendships merits a bespoke fact-finding exercise.

Funding – evaluation of MoD ESF projects across Scotland

- There is a need to gain a better understanding of the association between spending and positive outcomes. This is as true for armed forces children as it is of the rest of the school population.

- The statements of project outcomes are a potentially valuable source of information and could be better used to identify good practices and approaches that are more likely to deliver positive learning experiences.
- The accumulation of a more reliable and comprehensive knowledge base would be an important step to developing a more flexible and strategic approach.
- If funding is to continue then allowing initiatives that can develop over time may be a better use of funding particularly if this is done in partnership with other schools.
- A robust evaluation process should be in place to examine how the funding is supporting the educational and wellbeing of armed forces children. This should include the use of specific data capture tools to ensure evaluation in between and across the schools.
- Consider how information from non-state schools might be gathered through engagement and agreement. This would mean information relating to children and young people from armed forces families who are enrolled in independent (Public) schools in Scotland.
- The statements of project outcomes are a potentially valuable source of information and could be better used to identify good practices and approaches that are more likely to deliver positive learning experiences.
- There is a lack of shared understanding about development work and examples of good practice in specific schools across Scotland. The issues and the solutions have not been shared, nor used for knowledge exchange and this requires further exploration.

Research

- More accurate, uniform and up to date data is required to track the dispersion of children and young people of armed forces families across Scotland.
- Further research and evaluation studies are required to understand the learning journey of these children and young people. Data collection should address:
 - Examples of good practice, opportunities for knowledge exchange and accurate categorisation of children from families of veterans, active personnel, or reservists.
 - Aspects of child wellbeing, family support and specific school-based roles that promote partnership and integration for these children and their families.
- The increasing divergence between jurisdictions will remain a challenge into the future. The effect of movements on children's learner journey requires to be better understood together with effective mitigation measures.
- Parents often assert that moving to Scotland reduces children's attainment relative to their peers. The accuracy, or otherwise, of this view requires investigation based on evidence. Data are also required to illicit the impact on families of posting and movement, this includes understanding transition from armed forces to civilian life.
- The national health and wellbeing survey, or equivalent, should be used to identify any issues that are specific to armed forces children. The adoption of a uniform assessment tool in this area will facilitate the collection and analysis of data as a basis for developing practice.

- Both the incidence and impact on learning of unaccompanied postings and the impact on families of posting and movement requires further investigation and data collection.
- Studies related to raising attainment and health and wellbeing in armed forces children should provide a detailed insight into what works best, with which group of children, and in what circumstances.
- There is a need to bring together data, experience, and knowledge across Scotland into a strategic coordinated approach, that is overseen, developed, and managed by a specific role.

Appendix 1



SEEMiS – Armed Forces Family Indicator tab (as at October 2019)

Local Authority:														
Sector	Armed Forces Family	Regular	Regular and Reserve	Regular and Veteran	Reserve	Reserve and Veteran	Veteran	Do not Identify	Royal Navy	British Army	Royal Air Force	Royal Marines	Do not Identify	Grand Total
Early Years														
Primary														
Secondary														
Special														
Total														

- Include:** a) Total number of schools that provided data? _____
 b) Attainment
 c) Positive Destinations
 d) Attendance



ADES DATA Collection Exercise 2021

SEEMiS – Armed Forces Indicator tab (as of 1st October 2021)

Local Authority: <i>Information gathered from within the SEEMiS system, or alternate (if applicable)</i>									OPTIONAL: <i>Please provide if available within your system</i>					TOTALS:	
Sector	Armed Forces Family	Regular	Regular and Reserve	Regular and Veteran	Reserve	Reserve and Veteran	Veteran	Do not identify	Royal Navy	British Army	Royal Air Force	Royal Marines	Do not identify	Grand Total: Armed Forces	Total Number: All Pupils in each sector
Early Years															
Primary															
Secondary															
Special															
Total															

a) **Include:** Total number of schools that provided data: _____

b) **Clarification of request:**

How data should be recorded in the sectors - **Early Years and Special**

1. Forces children in **ASN bases in schools** to be included in the overall secondary or primary total (mainstream).
2. Children in an external placement should be included in the '**special**' total.
3. For ELCC (Early Years) – children enrolled even for a half-day session in the week nominated for the data collection. Please include any additional notes that will assist interpretation of the figures you supply. For example, an indication of how data was collected from partner providers in the early years sector.
4. Numbers involving five children or less should be indicated with an asterisk: "*"

Education (School and Placing Information) (Scotland) Amendment, etc. Regulations 1993 (No. 1604 (S.201)):

Exception for information based on small numbers. Nothing in any provision of the principal Regulations so far as amended or substituted by these Regulations, shall require any person to publish, or otherwise make publicly available, any figure, or percentage, relating to pupils in attendance at a school which falls to be calculated by reference to one or more but less than five such pupils.

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1993/1604/regulation/8/made>

*Please submit the completed Return Form template to **ADES, Catherine Thomson** adescotland@googlemail.com by 1st November 2021*

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