

Further and Higher Progression for Service Children: Research Paper



FOREWORD

The personnel of the United Kingdom's armed forces make a critical contribution to peace and security around the world. The impacts of the efforts they make are also felt by their families who support them and share in their sacrifices.

We know that children from military service families can demonstrate great qualities of personality – resilience in the face of adversity, maturity in the face of change. We also know that, academically, they generally perform at least as well as their peers from non-military families.

Yet statistics suggest that children from military service families are under-represented in the higher education population. It is in the realm of up to 4 out of 10 children who, if in the general population would go to university, do not go if they are from a military family.

Young people from military service families tell us that their unique experiences help them to develop positive character traits. Yet they also identify the difficulties associated with moving schools, and they tell us of the pressures they experience when their parents are deployed on active service. They tell us that the support they receive regarding their education can be variable, but this does not seem to diminish their hopes and ambitions.

Therefore, we must ask ourselves why children from military service families do not progress to higher education at the rates we might otherwise expect.

Our research findings suggest that, while attention has been paid to the emotional wellbeing and academic achievement of children from military service families, relatively little has been said about their progression through education.

What is missing is a coherent, systematic approach to monitoring and supporting the educational progression of children from military service families. Too often, record-keeping and communication between educational institutions is less robust than it might be, particularly where children move schools. There is a need for schools, parents, local authorities and the military to work together to ensure efficient and effective transition between educational institutions.

The further and higher education sectors must play their roles, too. Collectively we could do more to recognise the responsibilities of, and pressures experienced by, students from military service families. This would include ensuring that they have the right support and opportunities to make the most of their strengths in moving to and through higher education.

We also call on the Government to ensure that students and their families can access support for the continuity of education. This is particularly crucial at post-16, where young people face critical decisions regarding their future education and career trajectories.

Our findings also point to the need for more detailed research into the educational progression of children from military service families, with particular regard to progression and attainment post-16.

The Armed Forces Covenant embodies the principle that members of the armed forces community should face no disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public services. Thus, the findings we present here represent a call to action. We must work together to ensure that children from military service families are able to access the opportunities they need and want in order to thrive and progress through education. In this regard, we hope that these research findings help to build understanding regarding the situations of children from military service families.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This research sought to improve understanding of the factors that help or hinder service children's educational progression, so that future work is well targeted and achieves better outcomes by:

- Exploring the views and experiences of service children and undergraduates from service families to identify and evaluate the relative significance of factors impacting (both positively and negatively) on their educational progression and attainment;
- Reviewing existing research and evidence to build a more detailed picture of the progression of service children into and through further and higher education in order to highlight priorities for action.

The research

Evidence for this research was collected from three main sources: literature (from, for example, government departments, organisations associated with the armed services and their families, education organisations, other related studies); secondary data (such as statistical data relating to education achievement and higher education progression, surveys of parental views); primary data drawn from surveys of primary and secondary school-aged children from service families, and surveys and group interviews with undergraduates from service families.

Key findings from the literature

- Little attention has been paid to service children's progression through education - typically this has been in terms of the opinions of parents and children.
- Service children are not held to underachieve up to GCSE - progression and attainment post-16 is not known.
 - Incomplete achievement data suggests this is determined more on absence of deprivation factors than on examination results.
- Mobility and deployment are the two overarching issues for service children.
- Moving between schools has an inverse impact academically and pastorally such as:
 - Discontinuity of provision through delays, poor communication and transition arrangements, (SEN and those sitting examinations), curriculum changes;
 - Emotional wellbeing, disrupted friendships, increased potential for bullying.
- Deployment has an inverse impact academically and pastorally creating:
 - Increased incidence of emotional and behavioural problems;
 - A higher incidence of mental health issues in children and parents;
 - Increased incidence of the child as carer.
- Service branch differences indicate there are concerns specific to particular branches of the armed forces.

Key findings from the secondary data

- Undergraduates:
 - Fewer (proportionately) service children go to university than from the general population.
 - About a third of service children undergraduates in the data attended schools with boarding facilities.
- There are no accurate records of the number of service children at any stage of their education, their attainment or their progression to Further and Higher Education (FE and HE).
- Attainment:
 - Service children achieve very much the same as their non-service peers in mathematics and English in Key Stages 1 and 2, and also at GCSE level.
 - Mobile service children appear to attain less highly than their non-mobile service peers although mobile

service children do seem to out-perform their mobile non-service peers.

- Support:
 - Service Pupil Premium is mostly used for pastoral support.
 - There has been a notable increase in education enquires to service families support organisations, with a high level of admission and appeals questions.
 - Secondary service children are less likely than their non-service peers to feel safe at school or enjoy their lessons.
- Service parents:
 - are dissatisfied with their child's school's responses to their concerns and experience difficulty discussing their children's needs on transition;
 - feel schools do not prepare their children for post-16 life.

Key findings from the primary data

- Over half the service children in the study intended to go to university.
- Some intended to join the military whilst others definitely did not intend to join the military.
- Parents' rank impacts on their children's intent to attend university or join the military:
 - Those of SNCOs indicated the greatest intent to go to university and to join the military;
 - Those of NCOs indicated the lowest intent to go to university and no particular intent to join the military.
- Parents' attendance at university did not impact on their children's intent to go to university.
- The number of schools attended:
 - Had no impact on pupils' intent to go to university;
 - The more schools they had attended, the less likely they were to intend to join the military.
- Schools with a history of engagement with high numbers of service children are more skilled at providing the right level of support.
- Few had expectations of their school's help to make decisions about their future.
- Many experiences unique to being a service child support the development of positive character traits and people skills.
- A parent's absence on deployment is by far the greatest disadvantage.
- Moving schools and finding the motivation to start anew in each place is a challenge.
- Children in military families experience greater pressures during post-16 education due to their increased maturity and understanding of their family's situation.

Recommendations

What the government could do

- Monitor the educational progression of children from military families.
- Extend funding for the education of children from military families.
- Ensure continuity of education provision during transition between schools.

What schools could do

- Work with parents, local authorities and the military to support efficient and effective transition between schools.

- Undertake staff development to know how to, and provide specific academic and pastoral support for children from military families for their time at the school and for post-16 education.
- Recognise and understand the particular nature, characteristics and needs of the service child and the world they inhabit.
- Educate across the school to create knowledge and understanding of children from military families.

What sixth forms and further education colleges could do

- All of the above with respect to schools.
- Recognise the responsibilities and needs of the young adult service child.
- Support children from military families to make the best of their unique experiences in application to university.

What higher education institutions could do

- Recognise the uniqueness of service children and include the service child in Access Agreements.
- Understand and provide support for the stresses on service children.
- Actively provide opportunities and support for school children from military families and their teachers for progression to HE.

What local authorities and academy chains could do

- Work with parents, local authorities and the military to support efficient and effective transition between schools.
- Take a pro-active role in making the move from school to post-16 education desirable and accessible to children from military families.
- Recognise and understand the particular nature, characteristics and needs of the service child and the world they inhabit.

What parents could do

- Work with the military, the school and the child to create a culture of understanding and an awareness of the factors that impact on progress.

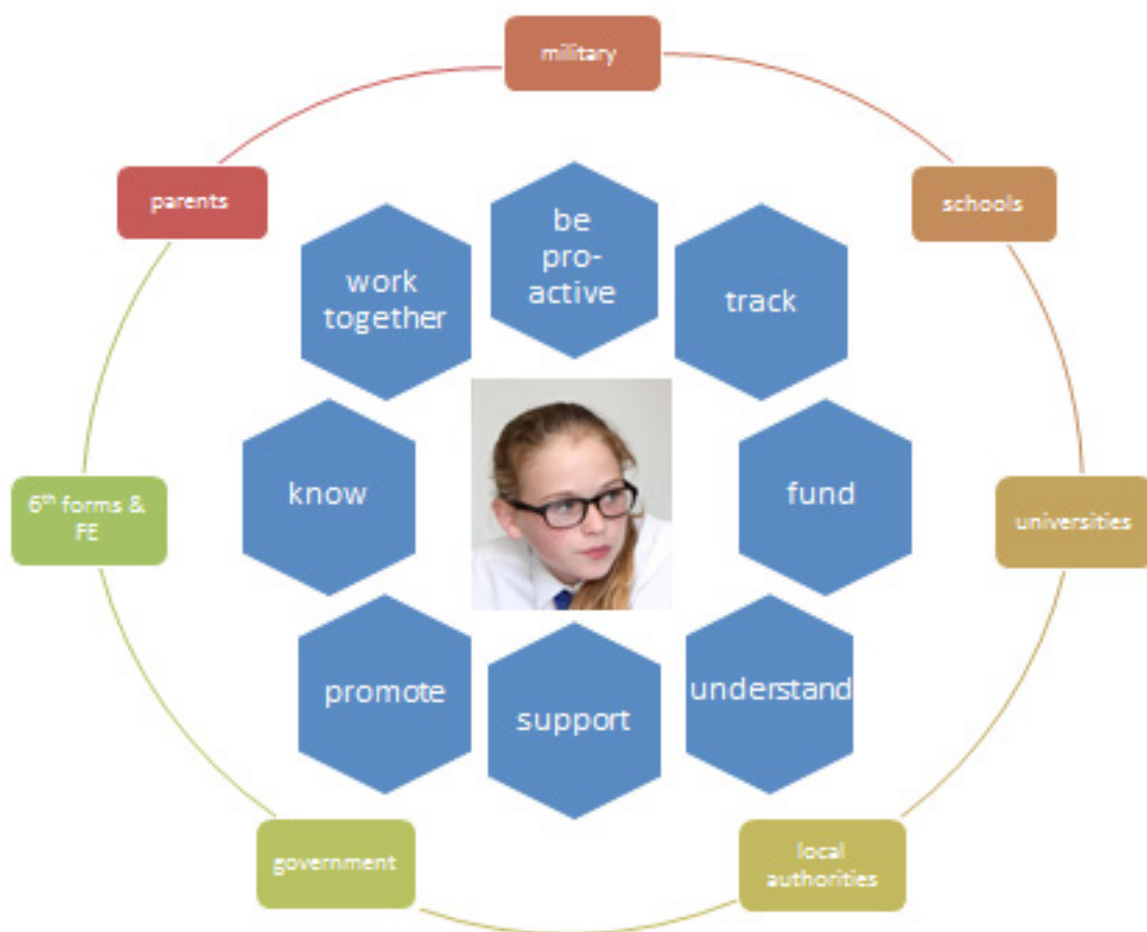
What the military could do

- Draw on service parents' positive influence on the ambitions of their children.
- Work with parents, local authorities and the military to support efficient and effective transition between schools.
- Recognise and understand the particular nature, characteristics and needs of the service child.

For further research

- UK-centric data pertaining to the education experience and education progression from 5-18 of children from military families, for example:
 - Coherent data pertaining to the number and location of service pupils in the UK.
 - Accurate data on the qualifications achieved by service children.
 - Post-16 progression and attainment of service children (education, qualification, careers).
- Differences in educational progression to HE by service children:
 - Parent's rank;

- Parent’s branch of the armed forces;
- Types of school attended;
- Attendance at schools with large numbers of service pupils compared with those schools with few.
- Other proportional data comparing children from military families with the general population.



INTRODUCTION

The Ministry of Defence (MoD) Education of Service Children Change Programme (ESCCP) includes five projects. Project 1 is focused on:

- Improving access to high quality education for service children in the UK

Within this goal lies the ambition to ensure that children and young people from service families develop appropriately high ambitions for, awareness of and skills to access and succeed in further and higher education through the most appropriate progression route for them.

Over the last decade much attention has been given to the progression of under-represented groups in higher education and, as a result, a considerable amount is known about the progression and higher education participation of these groups. Far less is known about the progression and participation of service children. The University of Winchester has a strong commitment to supporting the successful higher education progression of service children.

This research sought to improve understanding of the factors that help or hinder service children's progression, so that future work is well targeted and achieves better outcomes by:

- Exploring the views and experiences of service children and undergraduates from service families to identify and evaluate the relative significance of factors impacting (both positively and negatively) on their education, progression and attainment;
- Reviewing existing research and evidence to build a more detailed picture of the progression of service children into and through further and higher education in order to highlight priorities for action.

RESEARCH APPROACH AND METHODS

The focus of this enquiry was to collect quantitative statistical data and qualitative data about children from military families' experiences of education and to analyse this data to determine the factors that impact on their progression to university. This included both secondary data (quantitative and qualitative) from a range of sources and primary, empirical data drawn from three groups of participants – service children from primary schools, those at secondary school and undergraduates from military families. These children were, at the time of the data collection, being educated in the UK in maintained schools and one UK university. They had in the past attended a range of schools including maintained, private, boarding and military schools abroad.

Method for primary data collection

Questionnaires were chosen as they enable large amounts of data to be collected quickly and offer a pre-defined set of questions, asked in the same order, to all participants (Gorard, 2001). By asking both open and closed questions the questionnaires used had the potential to provide statistical/quantitative information on the population group of interest and qualitative responses from the participants. The school pupils' questionnaires were researcher administered, giving the benefit of control over the data collection and a high response rate. The undergraduate questionnaires were self-completed, giving little control and low response rates, a limitation in the method as noted by May (1993). An example questionnaire is at appendix 1. The first part of the questionnaires for the primary and secondary service children was completed by their parents and gave factual information about the child. The second part was administered to the children as the first action of the Creative Forces days they attended at the University of Winchester, to endeavour to gain the service child's view before they had any input about university. The undergraduates completed both parts themselves and were invited to interview.

Interviews with undergraduates from military families gave the opportunity to gain greater awareness of what the participants thought and believed (Seidman, 2006). Used flexibly, as recommended by Newby (2010), these semi-structured interviews enabled the participants and researcher to work together to gain in-depth understanding of their conceptions of being a child from a military family in education and how this manifests itself in their particular situations. Supplementary data were also drawn from the filmed interviews with primary and secondary school pupils, and undergraduates at two creative forces days held at the University of Winchester.

Sample for primary data

In accordance with Newby (2010), this is a specialist group population, based on the criterion of all possessing to the specific characteristic under investigation. The participants who represented this population were selected

on the basis of knowledge of their typicality, so they would meet the particular requirements of the study. The school pupils were identified by their school; schools were identified by the University of Winchester widening participation team in conjunction with Hampshire County Council. The undergraduate students were identified through the university's student database and by invitation through the university website, a more passive sampling process which resulted in a smaller sample than the school children. Therefore, the participants were drawn through a purposive, specialist sampling method process, using recommendations, professional knowledge, volunteering and ease of access (Cohen et al, 2011; Yin, 2009; Newby, 2010). The resultant sample was: primary (38); secondary (39); undergraduate (13). In terms of representativeness of the target population of the three military services (18% officers), the sample had proportionately more children of officers, and comprised more from the RN and fewer from the RAF.

Ethics for primary data

The ethics for this research were in accordance with the guidance given by British Educational Research Association (BERA) (2011) and the requirements of the University of Winchester ethics committee. Approval and ethics release was sought through the relevant channels and granted.

The pupils were asked to take part in the research through the established University permission letters, to be signed by the parents, used by University of Winchester for widening participation outreach events. All participants were given an information sheet which noted that taking part in the study was entirely voluntary and each participant was free to withdraw at any time without giving reason and without penalty and any existing data disposed of according to their wishes. It also stated that any information gathered during the study would be made confidential such that nobody may be identified and that in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998), it would be stored in a secure place and disposed of appropriately. Each participant signed an agreement and had a copy. Undergraduates were additionally invited to be interviewed from which they were able to withdraw or remain silent at any time and had anyone been uncomfortable in a group interview they would have been offered the opportunity of an individual interview (none of these occurred). Whether parent, child or undergraduate, no-one was required be filmed, have their photograph taken or to answer any question they did not wish to as part of the research, even if they had agreed to take part.

Method for secondary data collection

Statistical data were obtained through searches and recommendations from sources in the public domain and by request for that data not in the public domain, for example from Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), Office of National Statistics (ONS), MoD. Qualitative data were obtained through searches and recommendations for example from Forces In Mind Trust (FiMT) and the Army Families Federation (AFF).

Analysis of primary and secondary data

Analysis is informed by the literature, secondary and primary data. Bryman (2012) emphasised that the kind of data collected and the size of the sample, will have limitations on the type of analysis that can be done, noting the importance of acknowledging and dealing with these numbers appropriately. In this research, the statistical secondary data sometimes gave different numbers from different sources and hence could be used to give comparative outcomes rather than finite ones. The qualitative secondary data had a high level of subjectivity, expressing the views of the sample, rather than confirmable facts.

Small samples and multiple variables in the primary data precluded statistical analysis and limited capacity to confirm significant differences between measures as they affect margins of error, confidence levels, power and effect size that can be derived from statistical tests. Data reduction was used as an organisational device that enabled determination of specific points of focus and to isolate salient information and emerging themes in the questionnaires and interviews. Extraneous, distracting or superfluous data were discarded or ignored, creating clarity for subsequent analysis (Miles et al, 2013). This gave indications of trends and comparisons which enabled explication of areas of deficit and therefore for attention.

This research set out to gain an authentic understanding of the experiences and views of the participants (Schwandt, 2007). Credibility was secured by taking care to ensure that the interpretations placed on the data reflected the participants' views. As the context of the research was one that would be familiar to others who might use the findings, transferability was made possible. Dependability was achieved by "ensuring that the process was logical, traceable, and documented" and, by showing through the data that the findings were not "fragments of the inquirer's imagination", confirmability was established (Schwandt, 2007:299).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The literature search was wide-ranging, drawing on relevant, available historic and contemporary texts, papers from research as well as policy documents and political pronouncements. This has included literature from, for example, government departments, organisations associated with the armed services and their families, education organisations, other related studies.

Educational attainment

The Department for Education (DfE) (2014a) indicated that service children, as a group, do not underachieve; however, the data to support this are inconclusive and incomplete. Two contributory factors to expected achievement – examination results and features of deprivation – need to be scrutinised. First, each local authority (LA) has its own ways of tracking and recording the academic and examination attainment of service pupils within its own staffing capacity and priorities (Wright, 2015). Hampshire, for example, has comprehensive structures for tracking whilst some other LAs have little or none, resulting nationally in inconsistent data and no certainty through which to compare service children with the general population. Second, service children seldom fall into the normal factors from which deprivation is determined. For instance, a known contributory factor to poor progression in education is poverty (DfE 2015a, 2015c; Morgan, 2015). One widely used indicator of potential disadvantage is eligibility for free school meals. Gorard's (2012) analysis determined that pupils eligible for free school meals tend to obtain lower grades at GCSE than their peers, are more likely to be non-white, less likely to speak English as their first language, are more likely to have moved schools, are more likely to be in care, and much more likely to have an indicator of special need. Military families are unlikely to be eligible for free school meals (although not impossible) so would not be identified as deprived through this means, despite addressing at least the mobility factor. The National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NC-SEC) (ONS, 2016) places military service personnel in classes 1-3, another indicator that they are not considered deprived. Problems with definitions of deprivation and under-representation are compounded by the requirement for universities to monitor and increase their enrolments by students from state maintained schools and those from NS-SEC 4-7. When looking at the population as a whole, Croll and Attwood (2013), in their analysis of 8,480 responses to the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England, note a strong relationship between pupils' educational attainment and their planning to apply to university; this dynamic was visible across socio-economic groups. It would be reasonable to expect, therefore, that children from military families would participate in higher education in proportions similar to the general population.

Progression

Little attention has been paid to the question of service children's progression from one phase of education to another. Where progression has been addressed, it has typically been in terms of the opinions of parents and children. Among service children in Service Children's Education (SCE) schools in Germany and Cyprus, post-16 retention rates were adjudged to be too low (Ofsted, 2011); a limited range of subject options and qualifications available constrained service children's post-16 choices and contributed to non-progression to further education. Most routes of study led to GCSEs and A levels, with relatively few diplomas or vocational options available. Provision could be constrained by lack of student numbers and lack of access to specialist teaching. There was also a dearth of monitoring of destinations and of record-keeping of those not in education, employment or training (NEET); no such data were available from Cyprus, for example, while data from Germany were "scant and lacked verification" (Ofsted, 2011: 35). Accountability for the educational outcomes of service children was found to be weak.

Communication between schools and parents regarding children's academic performance and wellbeing may be of relevance in supporting a service child's transition through education. Parents are felt to need more and better information regarding their children's educational entitlements, in order to know their rights and be aware of the options open to them (FiMT, 2015). The Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC), (2015) in the USA has succeeded in introducing a military student identifier into their Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) which will mean that educators and policy makers will be able to know how these students are progressing. The tracking data generated will mean that resources and provision can be directed as necessary. The initiative has not had time to embed into practice and action hence it is not possible to demonstrate practical application or impact.

Mobility, continuity and transition

The Service Children in State Schools Handbook (DfE, 2013) identifies mobility and deployment as the two overarching key issues relating to providing for service children. Mobility is a characteristic of life in the armed forces, more so for Army personnel than for other branches (NAO, 2013), although the policy direction is generally towards more stable environments with longer term postings (MoD, 2015a). Mobility of children between schools has been identified as a particular matter of concern, both for service children and for their non-service peers. A lack of stability and continuity has been identified by service parents as a particular concern (NAO, 2013). Potential benefits of mobility have also been identified. These include the possibility for children to strengthen their resilience, develop the skills to socialise and make new friends quickly, and the opportunity to gain a wider range of experiences than their non-mobile peers (DfE, 2013). However, a range of particular detrimental issues connected with mobility can be identified through the literature.

Attainment

Mobility is thought to have a profound effect on the educational attainment of children (House of Commons Defence Committee (HoCDC), 2006), and mobile service children are thought to perform less well than non-mobile service children (HoCDC, 2013). Gibbons and Telhaj (2007) argue that mobility is not a major cause of low achievement among pupils generally, but that mobility may be a useful indicator of pupils who are at risk for low achievement. However, the more that service parents move, the more likely they are to report that moving has had a detrimental effect on their children's school performance (National Audit Office (NAO), 2013).

Managing pupil mobility in terms of maximising pupils' learning requires systemic educational leadership, and this can be difficult to achieve if the school is not functioning well (National College for School Leadership (NCSL), 2011). Such pressures can, arguably, impact on the wider school population and not just those pupils who are mobile. However, the link between mobility and attainment may not be conclusively demonstrated. The DfE (2010) found that service children perform better than their non-service peers, after controlling for prior attainment, demographic factors and mobility. The same report found that mobile service children performed less well than their non-mobile service peers, but that mobile service children performed better than mobile non-service children.

Curriculum, provision, school quality and ethos

Mobility has been associated with challenges in curricular continuity, the identification of special educational needs, and complications with examinations among other factors (DfE, 2013). Schools that experience high levels of mobility can experience significant pressures on school ethos. For schools with a high proportion of military pupils, the regular cycle of redeployments can lead to a school being effectively re-created (NCSL, 2011). Schools in high-mobility settings need to be safe, secure and stable, respond to the individual and affective learning needs of pupils, and establish a culture of high expectations (NCSL, 2011).

Impact of mobility on schools and local authorities

Movement during the school year may create specific challenges for schools and local authorities. Schools are allocated their funding once per year, based on the number enrolled at the census point in the autumn term; no account is taken of additional pupils after the census point. This can result in schools effectively running with no additional funding, perhaps impacting on the ability of schools to respond to specific learning needs (HoCDC, 2013). Large-scale movements of personnel and their families can lead to significant additional and localised demand for school places, potentially placing pressure on local authority budgets (HoCDC, 2013).

Transition

Two key issues for communication between schools relate to: communication when children move between schools; sharing of knowledge and effective practice. In the first instance, information transfer between schools has been described as patchy, with the onus resting on service families to ensure that information about their children is passed on (FiMT, 2015). Data protection regulations may act as a hindrance to the sharing of such information (FiMT, 2015).

Movement between schools has been identified as a risk factor in systematically monitoring the educational progression of service children. Ofsted (2011) found that systems of transfer of children's records between schools

were uncoordinated, and that there was no continuous record of learning and development that could accompany a service child through their educational career. Ofsted (2011) also found a general lack of continuity support for service children moving between schools. Furthermore, parents of service children have reported incidences where receiving schools have not properly assessed service children on arrival (NAO, 2013). The NCSL (2011) noted that both the schools and local authorities from which mobile pupils depart have a significant responsibility for managing that transition, both in terms of transfer of information and in preparing pupils for the experience of moving schools.

Arrangements for post-transition school placement have been described as a 'postcode lottery', as local authorities appear to have differing understandings of their obligations (FiMT, 2015). However, a step in the right direction has been taken by an amendment to the DfE Schools Admissions Code which means that service families can secure school places before they move into the area (DfE, 2015d; MoD, 2015c).

Housing has been identified as a barrier to applying for school places during transition, with some local authorities unwilling to take action until contracts are exchanged or rental agreements signed (FiMT, 2015); it is possible that similar issues could affect admissions in the post-16 sector. Where service children are required to move while studying at post-16 level, this can result in difficulties in completing the post-16 qualifications necessary for entry to higher education (HoCDC, 2013). Lack of continuity can thus act as an obstacle to progression to higher education.

Choice of, and access to, educational provision

Opportunities for improved information include: providing more localised information on schools; more details about differences between different schools and systems; information about the pros and cons of boarding and sources of financial support; and advance notice of the location and timings of parents' next posting (NAO, 2013).

Financial support, such as the Continuity of Education Allowance (CEA) (more commonly known as the boarding school allowance) or the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Allowance, may prove important to service parents in securing a stable educational experience for their children (NAO, 2013). However, the CEA may only cover the cost of boarding provision (i.e. accommodation) and not the cost of the education itself; there is also a minimum of 10% parental contribution towards the fees (not applicable in cases of SEN) (CEAS, 2015). This need to pay out of income puts alternative education routes out of the financial reach of some families (Ofsted, 2011). It is also not possible to start the process for CEA after a certain (undefined) age as the allowance is for continuity purposes. Although the upper age limit for CEA is 18 years as a general rule, concerns have been expressed regarding eligibility for the CEA, including reports of particularly high rejection rates where applications were made post-16 (HoCDC, 2013). Failure to obtain CEA may result in students having to change schools to continue their studies post-16, potentially jeopardising their likelihood of securing the qualifications needed for entry to higher education. Additionally, the 'continuity' only means location and not the continuity of provision such as for SEN. As a result, it is necessary for this type of provision to be re-established at each change of schools, often resulting in months of delays (FiMT, 2015).

Service Pupil Premium

The Pupil Premium was introduced in England in 2011 in order to direct additional funding to schools to help raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and to close the gap with their peers. The Service Pupil Premium (SPP) is available to maintained sector schools in England (MoD, 2015a). Children eligible for SPP are identified by individual schools; schools rely on parents identifying themselves as serving members of the armed forces, or that they are in receipt of a War Pension Scheme or Armed Forces and Reserve Forces Compensation Scheme pension. SPP allocations are determined on the basis of numbers of pupils identified by the January school census each year. In the context of the Pupil Premium, disadvantaged pupils are those who have been registered for free school meals at any point in the past six years and children looked after for six months or more (DfE, 2014b). Given the pay scales currently in force in the UK armed forces, service children are less likely to be eligible for free school meals than their civilian counterparts. Nevertheless, service children are recognised as having specific, mainly pastoral, needs (DfE, 2014a), which the SPP has been introduced to address.

While the focus of the premium is on pastoral needs, as opposed to educational attainment, the existence of a specific stream of premium funding for service children nevertheless marks them out as a distinct group with distinct needs (Jarrett et al, 2015). It is the perceived impact on pastoral wellbeing – rather than their academic attainment or socioeconomic circumstances – that represents the most significant aspect of the public policy discourse of disadvantage as relating to service children.

Mobility and deployment: emotional development and pastoral care

Mobility

Mobility can present a particular challenge for the pastoral care of children. The NCSL (2011:4) noted the importance of addressing the “affective learning needs” and the emotional wellbeing of pupils in managing mobility. Mobility can be used as an opportunity for both cognitive and affective learning; mobility can be a context in which children can reflect on their feeling, emotions and moods and those of others.

Nevertheless, there remains a lack of evidence regarding the overall impact of mobility on pastoral wellbeing. Eodanable and Lauchlan (2012) note that little information is available regarding the social and emotional development of mobile children in the UK; on the existing evidence, the link between mobility and social and emotional development appears to be less concrete than that between mobility and academic attainment (Eodanable & Lauchlan, 2012). Schools were felt to need more support in understanding ‘psycho-educational issues’ experienced by service children, and would benefit from greater sharing of expertise, particularly with schools located on military bases (FiMT, 2015).

Deployment

Given that the policy discourse in the UK does not regard service children as educationally disadvantaged (DfE, 2014a), though noting concerns specific to mobile service children (HoCDC, 2013), specific support for service children has tended to focus on pastoral care. Indeed, this is the emphasis of the Service Pupil Premium (SPP) (DfE, 2014a). White et al (2011) found that children of parents deployed to combat operations were at higher risk of psychosocial problems than their civilian peers. Children with a parent on combat deployment seemed to cope less well than those with a non-deployed parent; this was associated with a higher risk of emotional and behavioural problems. The particular context of operations may be significant; studies of military families in the United States suggest that mental health issues have become more prevalent within the context of the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts (De Pedro et al, 2011). Additionally, The Department of Health (DoH) (2015) noted that service children have a higher rate of caring responsibilities than the general population. Young carers in military families may be caring for parents who have injuries or post-traumatic stress disorder or they may be caring for a parent with health problems while their partner is away. Close monitoring of the affective development of children can help to inform and adapt approaches to teaching and learning (NCSL, 2011). The need for some consideration was recognised in July 2015, when the Directorate Children and Young People (DCYP), with DfE, issued advice to Head Teachers in England on the need to exercise sensitivity to term time absence for service children due to parents’ deployment (MoD, 2015c).

Differences between service branches

Ofsted (2011:11) noted “considerable complexity in the structure of the armed forces” and the extent of the impact of mobility on service children’s education may depend on the branch of the armed forces with which parents serve (Ofsted, 2011). The scale and frequency of mobility can vary between branches; Army infantry mobility tends to involve the relocation of entire units, whereas Royal Air Force and Royal Navy personnel tend to move individually (DfE, 2013; Ofsted, 2011). Patterns of mobility may impact the continuity of support and provision for service children and the effects of a lack of continuity may particularly impact those children who move singly or in small numbers within the UK, or those who move during term time (Ofsted, 2011). Such differences in perspective may indicate the value of investigating concerns specific to particular branches of the armed forces, or at the very least being wary of inferring conclusions relating to service children as a homogeneous group.

Under-representation in higher education

A significant barrier to determining whether service children are objectively under-represented in higher education is that there is no clear definition of what “under-representation” means in the context of higher education. A common-sense approach may be to compare the proportion of a group in the general population with the proportion in the higher education population. This is essentially an inverse of the idea that students from the most advantaged backgrounds are proportionately more likely to attend the most prestigious universities (Cabinet Office, 2012). On this logic, a group under-represented in higher education would be one where the proportion of the student population that the group represents is lower than that of the general population.

The term “under-representation” is not a neutral one; it is tied to political ambitions and objectives, and arguably to the values and aspirations of society. The Prime Minister has set a goal to double the proportion of students from disadvantaged backgrounds progressing to higher education by 2020, and this goal is reflected in the Office for Fair Access’s (OFFA) strategic plan (OFFA, 2015). Participation in higher education is associated in the present political discourse with social mobility, particularly through access to prestigious employers and “a professional career” (Cabinet Office 2012, p.21). There is also a connection in the discourse between representation in an institution’s population and social inclusion (Cabinet Office, 2012). A drive to address such barriers may move the definition of under-representation beyond merely reflecting the demographic make-up of the general population. In the OFFA 2015 fair access to higher education review, BME students and students with disabilities were regarded as under-represented groups. For example, people with disabilities represent in the region of two percent of the 16-19 population in England (English Federation of Disability Sport, 2015), yet in 2013/14 approximately ten percent of full-time and part-time students enrolled in higher education were known to have declared a disability (HESA, 2015). Similarly, people identifying themselves as black or from a minority ethnic group (BME) represented almost 14 per cent of usual residents of England in the 2011 Census (Office for National Statistics, 2015); approximately twenty percent of UK-domiciled students identified as BME in academic year 2012/13 (Equality Challenge Unit, 2014).

A significant challenge in determining whether a particular group is under-represented relates to the availability of coherent, complete, comparable data. There is an apparent discontinuity in responsibility for monitoring service children’s transition and progression (Ofsted, 2011); this is compounded by such factors as different processes for reporting official data in the devolved administrations as compared to Whitehall. Children of serving military personnel can, over the course of their educational careers, come under the jurisdictions of several national, local and departmental authorities both in the UK and overseas. Each of these authorities may maintain their own data according to their own policies and procedures; these data sets are not necessarily aligned and comparable, and not necessarily available. As a result, it is difficult to build a coherent picture of the educational progression of military service children on the basis of fully comparable data sources. However, one positive outcome already from this project is that the OFFA 2016 guidance for developing 2017-18 agreement, when considering possible target groups, notes ‘An example could include children from military families where they face specific issues that might affect their access to higher education’ (OFFA, 2016: 13:74).

Estimating the numbers of service children

In order to determine whether service children constitute an under-represented group in higher education it is necessary to estimate the proportion of service children that actually progress to higher education. However, it is difficult to arrive at a definitive total of the number of service children in the UK. Ofsted (2011), meanwhile, found no accurate record of the numbers of service children in the UK, that local authorities could not identify with certainty the number of service children in their schools, and that no single organisation had been tasked with monitoring the numbers of service children. MoD (2015a) recognised that service families are not always aware that it is their responsibility to register their child as a service child. The lack of a unified, reliable data set regarding the population of service children is a significant obstacle to evaluating the relative progression of service children. The following are two further attempts to estimate the size of the service children population in full-time education.

Service Pupil Premium

There are several limitations to the SPP’s usefulness as an estimate of the service pupil population. First, the SPP is available only to schools in England. It is not available in Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland, though the devolved administrations implement their own mechanisms for financial support for the education of service children. The Northern Ireland Department of Education, for example, makes specific allowances for schools in its common funding formula for pupils in primary or post-primary schools whose father or mother is a member of the UK armed forces, is not normally resident in Northern Ireland and who has been posted here for a period scheduled to last no less than 2 years (Department of Education Northern Ireland, 2014). Second, only schools in the maintained sector are eligible for the SPP; this includes academies and free schools. The population estimates do not cover those in independent schools and other schools outside of the maintained sector. Third, schools rely on parents self-identifying that their children are eligible for SPP (DfE, 2015b). This in turn relies to an extent on schools reaching out to parents effectively and proactively. It is therefore almost inevitable that the SPP allocation figures underestimate the number of service children even in the maintained sector.

Census data

The limitations of this measure of the service children population include: inability to split pre-school children or those aged 16-18 out of the data; an inability to determine whether all of the young people identified were children of armed forces personnel (it may, for example, be that the registered service person is a sibling, using their parent's home as their permanent address); and that the data include only those who were usual residents of the UK (those who, on census day, were in the UK and had stayed or intended to stay in the UK for 12 months or more, or who had a permanent UK address and were outside the UK and intended to be outside the UK for less than 12 months (Office for National Statistics (ONS), 2014a), potentially missing children living overseas with personnel on deployment. Furthermore, the data above apply to England and Wales only; comparable data are not readily available for Scotland and Northern Ireland.

SECONDARY DATA FINDINGS

The secondary data collected was quantitative (such as statistical data relating to education achievement and higher education progression) and qualitative (such as surveys of parental views). For the qualitative data it must be borne in mind that each person who selects and interprets the data will arrive at their own conclusion, which may differ, be contradictory or even conflict with others.

The data are presented to show both the quantitative, statistical data and the qualitative views drawn from relevant studies. The five tables comprise: progression and attainment (*table 1*); meeting needs other than academic (*table 2*); quality of schooling (*table 3*); moving schools (*table 4*) and other (*table 5*). Following from this, key aspects of what is not known, are highlighted. ‘SC’ denotes service children/child.

Progression and attainment

Subject		Source	Nature of data
Progression to university	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0.34% of young first degree 1st year undergraduates students were from military service families (13/14 entry). General participation rate in higher education was 43% (13/14 entry). Hence the estimated participation rate for service pupils is $43 \times (0.34/0.6^*) = 24\%$. *based on DfE (2012) 	HESA	Statistics
Progression -support to make post-16 choices (Service Children’s Education (SCE) schools)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 33% felt that their children had not received sufficient information to assist their choices at the end of Year 11. 47% agreed or strongly agreed that school was preparing their children well for adult and working life. 51% agreed or strongly agreed that school was preparing their children well for further education or training. 71% agreed or strongly agreed that school was encouraging their children to take some responsibility for their own learning. 	O’Donnell and Rudd (2007)	SCE Military parents’ views
Attainment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service children year 10 and 11 pupils progress in English, mathematics and science - a significant difference only in English attainment scores (army pupils lower than non-army pupils). Army pupils tended to perform lower than other service pupils. Year 10 and 11 felt they were reaching their potential. 	Noret et al (2015)	Statistics Service children’s views
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SC achieved slightly higher than their non-service peers in mathematics and English in Key Stages 1 and 2, and also at GCSE level. 	DfE (2010, 2012)	Statistics
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In SCE schools, 94% of primary and 86% of secondary parents “very” or “fairly” satisfied with their children’s progress at school. 	O’Donnell and Rudd (2007)	Military parents’ views
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 47.4% SC entered university with 360+ points score. Of these, 28.1% attained 420+ (13/14 entry). None of the Russell Group institutions reported an average points score of less than 360 (13/14 entry) 	HESA	Statistics

Attainment and mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service children were not reaching their full potential due to movement – factors such as repetition of topics and activities, children’s struggles to catch up, deficiencies in basic skills. 	National audit office (NAO) (2013)	Military parents’ views
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mobile service children appeared to attain less highly than their non-mobile service peers. Mobile service children do seem to out-perform their mobile non-service peers. 	DfE (2010, 2012)	Statistics
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High levels of mobility in a school population can impact on school staff time, unsettle cohorts of pupils, and increase the risk of instability in staffing and leadership. High levels of mobility increase pressure on local authority support services, and can make monitoring and evaluating school performance difficult. No conclusive evidence that movement in itself meant that children achieved less well than their non-mobile peers. Some schools where mobility was linked to the armed forces had relatively high levels of pupil attainment. Disrupted schooling and curriculum discontinuity could compound other factors of educational disadvantage. 	Dobson et al (2000)	Survey & case study in England
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High levels of pupil mobility impacts the quality of the educational experience. 	NAO (2013)	Military parents’ views

Table 1

Meeting non-academic needs

Subject		Source	Nature of data
Deprivation, disadvantage and additional needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SPP mostly used for pastoral (emotional support, nurture rooms, pastoral support officers, raising self-esteem, counselling services, and playground support). SPP occasionally used for academic purposes (assessment and induction, reading recovery, English as Additional Language (EAL)). 	Army Families Federation (AFF) (2014)	Case study
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not all service parents are aware of how the SPP is spent by their children’s schools. 	NAO (2013)	Military parents’ views
Personal, Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Education (PSMSC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In SCE schools (primary & secondary) - held positive views about their children’s pastoral care and development. All secondary and primary schools - the school helped; schools were caring and supportive, safe and secure. 	O’Donnell and Rudd (2007)	Military parents’ views

Table 2

Quality of schooling

Subject		Source	Nature of data
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally satisfied with the information received when their children started at school; • Significant minority at all levels were dissatisfied with their children’s schools’ responses to their concerns as parents; • SCE schools - living at a distance from school a challenge for achieving effective school-parent communication. 	O’Donnell and Rudd (2007)	Military parents’ views
School quality and ethos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In SCE schools parents tended to hold very positive views, particularly in terms of school ethos, a focus on personal development, and the quality of the curriculum. • In particular, primary parents noted that their schools had a good ethos, while secondary parents noted that their schools provide good support for pupils. 	O’Donnell and Rudd (2007)	Military parents’ views
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondary SC were less likely than their non-service peers to rate safety at school as good or very good; were less likely to report enjoying most of their lessons, and were less likely to think that their schools take bullying seriously. 	North Yorkshire County Council, (2015)	Service children’s views
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Army children felt lonely more often, and were slightly more likely to have fewer friends (than non-SC peers); • Parents of army children generally had positive experiences; fewer than 10% not positive; • Parents of army children at state schools more positive than those in independent or ‘other’ schools. 	Noret et al (2015)	Military parents’ and service children’s views

Table 3

Moving schools

Subject		Source	Nature of data
Mobility, continuity and transition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education and childcare enquiries, an increase of 29% compared with 2013. Admissions and appeals and questions specific to the UK education system represented two thirds of enquiries from army families. 	Simpson, (2014)	Statistics from enquiries to AFF
Curriculum and mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Almost half of parents of army children reported their child had repeated parts of the curriculum. Repetition more prevalent among children at independent schools than those with children at state schools. Parents of children at independent schools more likely than their state school peers to feel that their children were reaching their full potential. Gaps in subject knowledge and repetition were raised by pupils as reasons for difficulties in settling in to new schools. 	Noret et al (2015)	Service parents' and children's views
Transition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 43% of parents of army children agreed it was difficult to discuss their children's prior achievement with their new schools. 41% disagreed that it was difficult to discuss their children's needs with their new school. Parents of army children tended to be positive about their children's ability to integrate into a new school; over half disagreed that their children had difficulty making friends in school. Year 6 army pupils liked moving school; Year 10 and 11 army pupils took a few days or a few weeks to feel settled in to a new school. Pupils reported that factors such as returning to the UK from an overseas posting, moving alongside friends, and having prior experience of moving school had aided pupils in settling in. 	Noret et al (2015)	Parents' and children's views
Choice and access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficulties in obtaining places at a "good" or "preferred" school identified. Some choose boarding school. They thought they had access to sufficient information to make sensible decisions about their child's education. 	National Audit Office, (2013)	Military parents' views
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1st year undergraduates from military families had 198 independent schools with boarding facilities; 23 state schools with boarding facilities were identified (13/14 entry). This equates to about third of undergraduates from military families who are known to have attended schools with boarding facilities. More officer's children attend independent schools with boarding than those of NCOs/other ranks. 32% of children of NCOs/other ranks attended schools with boarding facilities; 43% for children of officers. A third who attended schools with boarding facilities were in four counties in southern England. 	HESA	Statistics
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The independent sector educates around 6.5% of UK children. 	Independent Schools Council (2015)	Statistics

Table 4

Other

Subject		Source	Nature of data
Differences between services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 32% of Army moved more than six times with school-aged children; 13% for RN respondents. • RN parents most likely to be satisfied with their child’s education. 	NAO (2013)	Military parent’s views
Number of service children	• 36,640 SC Years R-11	DfE (2010)	Census
	• 0.6% of the general secondary school population	DfE (2012)	Census
	• Over 82,000	MoD (2010)	Records
	• 64,390 (0.9% maintained school population)	Education Funding Agency (2015)	SPP data
	• 68,771 (1.0% maintained school population)	Education Funding Agency (2016)	SPP data
	• 264,397 (0-15 years old)	ONS (2014)	Census
	• 98,000 (0 – 18) (approx – unpublished)	DCYP (2016)	Survey

Table 5

Information we are unable to determine or acquire

Whilst the tables above (and the literature reviewed) present what was available for this project, a question answered often gave rise to one that could not be answered. This had two effects: it was not possible to get a full picture of the situation of the educational progression of children from service children families or the contributory causes; it was not possible to provide secure statistical data from which to draw conclusions based on proof through quantitative data. A comparative table summarising the availability of secondary data is in appendix 2. The key points outstanding are:

- Research pertaining to progression as opposed to attainment or wellbeing. While there has been research into individual factors – most notably the educational impact of mobility - there has been no systematic attempt to understand the educational journey of service children holistically. This is reflected in, and in turn compounded by, a lack of coherent, comparable data in this area.
- UK-centric data regarding the education of service pupils. A more robust pool of research data has been generated outside of the UK, particularly in the USA.
- Coherent data pertaining to the number of military service pupils in the UK. This poses a challenge in determining, objectively, whether there is a problem with the rate at which children from a military service background progress into HE. Such a lack of quantitative data poses difficulties in accurately comparing groups of service children with their non-service peers, and may mask the scale and extent of the challenges faced by service children, their families, schools, local authorities and higher education institutions. The lack of data is compounded by the dispersal of responsibility for the education of service children between national, devolved and local authorities, and the distribution of service children between state, independent and SCE schools.
- Accurate data on the KS1, 2 and GCSE achievement of service children.
- Post 16 education outcomes for military pupils. There is no accurate record of post 16 qualifications or numbers going into the military. It might be that service children tend more towards joining the military than the general population, as an alternative to further education and higher education. MoD (2015b) stated that the proportion of those serving in the military who are former service children is not known so this measure cannot be tested. Without this data it is not possible to assess fully what happens at 16-18 and thereafter.
- Differences in educational progression to HE by service children: parent's rank; parent's branch of the armed forces; types of school attended (maintained, military, boarding, private); attendance at schools with large numbers of service pupils compared with those schools with few.
- Service children's progression through university: retention; support required; graduation rates; degree classification.

Other proportional data comparing children from military families with the general population such as: tariff points or those that go to Russell Group universities; those who graduate and their classification; members of the military (by rank) who are not first generation military - which may indicate whether this is a route chosen as an alternative to university; those in receipt of benefits; data disaggregated by socio-economic status or rank to see if there is a particular group of disadvantaged children from military families.

PRIMARY DATA FINDINGS

As is evident in the literature and secondary data, there are many factors that impact on a child from a military family’s experiences in school. For example, a non-mobile, civilian child would attend one or two schools for primary education, one school for secondary education and either remain at their secondary school or move to FE College for tertiary education. For the service child, there are three modes of education, one or more of which they may experience: the family stays in one place while the serving member moves around; the whole family moves around and the service child changes school each time; the service child attends boarding school while the family moves around. This and other factors inevitably contribute to the child’s progression to university. The questionnaires and interviews gave insights into the participants’ views of being a child from a military family in education and of university. The data are presented to show both quantitative proportions and the views of the participants. The four tables comprise: intentions to attend university or the military (table 6) related to parents (service and rank, deployment, own education) and schools (type, moves, proportion of children from military families); advice and support (table 7) (pastoral, academic, decision making); advantages (table 8) and challenges (table 9) of being a child from a military family. Following from this, key aspects relevant to progression to university will be highlighted, including what is not known, and questions asked.

Intent to attend university or enter the military

Intent	<p>Just over half of pupils (primary slightly less than secondary) intended to go to university with almost all of the remainder in each group considering they might go to university. When indicating intentions for after 18, over half of secondary pupils indicated career routes that would take them through university.</p> <p>Few secondary pupils indicated they had never thought about university. Over half of secondary pupils started to think about it at secondary school and some indicated they started thinking about it in primary school. The stage at which the undergraduates started to think about university, as best they could remember, was distributed evenly from primary to 6th form and one after leaving education.</p> <p>A few primary pupils thought that going to university meant having to move and/or not seeing their parents, although one saw this as a positive, that this would make him/her more like the parent.</p> <p>Some secondary pupils thought being a service child would not affect their decision whether or not to go to university.</p> <p>An undergraduate noted a friend whose parents moved again as he finished school, prompting him to give up his plan to go to university & join military as the easy option. Others noted opposing experiences: for some, those they were at school with who went into the military were not military pupils; for others, that children from military families aimed for the military, as it was familiar. Some had friends from military families who went to university.</p> <p>The undergraduates’ intent, whilst at school, to join the military ranged from no interest, through having considered and discounted, to may still join with a degree.</p>
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Parents' education and deployment	<p>From officers to SNCOs, NCOs and other ranks (OR), a decreasing number of parents (serving and non-serving) attended university.</p> <p>Children of officers who had been to university were more likely to intend to go to university than children of SNCOs, NCOs and ORs who had been to university.</p> <p>Primary pupils were more likely to intend to go to university if they had parent(s) who had attended.</p> <p>Unexpectedly, across all ranks, the secondary pupils were less likely to intend to go to university if they had parent(s) who had attended.</p> <p>Primary and secondary service children were as likely to intend to join the military whether their parent(s) had or had not attended university regardless of parental rank.</p> <p>On average, the SNCOs had undertaken more unaccompanied deployments (with school aged children) than the other ranks. The number of unaccompanied deployments undertaken had no impact on the primary pupil's intent to go to university or to join the military. There were greater numbers of secondary pupils intending to go to university when there had been few deployments but no particular pattern for joining the military.</p>
Parents' rank and service	<p>There was minimal difference between the responses from the different services for either intent to go to university or to join the military.</p> <p>For both primary and secondary, children of SNCOs indicated the greatest intent to attend university.</p> <p>For both primary and secondary children with NCO parent(s) (across the services) the number who intended to go to university was very low. The proportion of ORs' children who intended to go to university was similar to that of SNCOs, more than twice that of the NCOs' children, overall.</p> <p>The undergraduates were all children of officers or SNCOs (half and half). (However, by the time the pupils were of university age, the parents, if still serving, would naturally have achieved that level of promotion.)</p> <p>For both primary and secondary, children of SNCOs indicated the greatest intent to join the military.</p>
Schools attended	<p>The primary pupils surveyed had averaged just over two schools attended and the secondary pupils had averaged three; there were those who had attended more than four. The undergraduates surveyed had attended no more than four.</p> <p>Primary and secondary pupils surveyed were all currently in maintained schools. A few secondary pupils (children of Royal Navy (RN) SNCOs) had previously attended boarding school.</p> <p>Up to a quarter of participating children (more in secondary than primary) had been to SCE schools with a few having attended more than three. SCE schools comprised half of the school attended by the secondary pupils. The majority of children who attended SCE schools were from the army. A few attended non-SCE schools with many children from military families.</p> <p>Half of the undergraduates had been to boarding school with half of those being maintained and a quarter had been to SCE schools. Some of the undergraduates' schools had many service children, some had few.</p> <p>The number of schools attended had no impact on the primary or secondary pupils' intent to go to university.</p> <p>The more schools they had attended, the less likely they were to intend to join the military (primary and secondary).</p> <p>Almost all the pupils who had at any time attended a SCE school intended to attend university and only one intended to join the military.</p>

Table 6

Advice and support

<p>Pastoral</p>	<p>The undergraduates agreed that where there were greater numbers of children from military families in a school (boarding or by base) the history and understanding developed over time led to staff being more tuned in to the needs of children from military families and able to offer subtle, non-disruptive support without being lenient.</p> <p>Boarding schools were more attentive after events relating to military deployment (the common room culture meant that the television news was highlighted). Also, in this setting, the schools were aware they were a service child but it was not mentioned unless there was particular reason or the child instigated an exchange.</p> <p>In the maintained sector acknowledgement ranged from nothing to overt activities such as tally charts (for example on return from deployment). Friends who were also from military families understood and supported. They also were kinder to other service children over deployment. Non service children did not understand but that had no emotional impact.</p>
<p>Academic</p>	<p>The undergraduates agreed that schools did not make provision for academic support for service children and those who changed schools noticed curriculum gaps. They thought that being a service child had no effect on their education and the decisions they had made. They felt they always planned to go to university, primarily due to family expectations.</p> <p>The undergraduates were aware of the family finance decisions that had to be made about boarding as an option as the CEA contribution did not cover the full cost. This had an impact on choices for post-16 education and many boarders changed to local FE colleges. Lack of choice meant less than best 6th form, which may have impacted on post-16 achievement.</p> <p>Undergraduates felt their parents had been supportive during separations while encouraging independent educational decisions.</p>
<p>Decision-making about future</p>	<p>For the primary pupils, a quarter indicated that their school had told them about university. This was predominantly from one school.</p> <p>For the secondary pupils, less than half indicated that their school had talked about university (there were no positive responses from pupils from one school).</p> <p>For both school groups, parents and other family members were the people who had talked about higher education, with secondary school parents being mentioned in a high majority of responses.</p> <p>Few had expectations of their schools when asked who would help them make decisions about their future. This was particularly true of the secondary pupils surveyed.</p> <p>For undergraduates, family, friends and schools were mentioned equally when asked who talked to them about university, other than universities. Schools and experts helped them make decisions about their future, rather than parents.</p>

Table 7

The advantages of being a service child

Opportunities	The service children surveyed agreed that they benefited by going to interesting places, doing things not available to the civilian population or getting unusual presents. They also found advantages in moving such as new houses, places to live and friends.
Development of character traits	All groups noted courage, bravery, confidence and resilience. The primary pupils also noted, to a lesser extent – independence, responsibility and adaptability. The secondary pupils put less emphasis on the courage traits but more on the independence traits. The benefits of being from a military family include being independent, responsible, adaptable and organised.
People skills	The children felt they developed cultural understanding, acceptance and an unbiased viewpoint.
Gains	All groups noted that they felt special and had pride in being part of the military community.
None	A good number of the secondary pupils felt there was no advantage to being a military child with one saying, 'Everyone counts you as a person who hasn't got much problems and are just normal like everyone else when actually it's a bit hard with moving and parents in military, with them getting posted further away and in danger. Not literally not normal – we're different from the crowd.'

Table 8

The challenges of being a service child

Absent parent	For all groups, an absent parent was cited as the biggest challenge. Within this theme were: missing them, anxiety for their safety, missing for birthdays etc., childcare, limited activities with single parent, mum ill, jealousy, day of departure, returning upset routine, dealing with situations made tougher by coping with absence and lack of an adult to help.
Moving	Secondary pupils more often identified moving as a challenge than primary, noting that it was unsettling and citing housing problems, out-of-school clubs and making new friends. Primary pupils commented more on saying goodbye to old friends.
Education	All groups mentioned issues for education, including catching up, differences in curriculum, school teaching and learning approaches, SEN provision, and syllabus changes. About a quarter of secondary pupils had no sense of direction for post-16 education or work with no pattern for the number or types of schools attended. Most undergraduates commented that they had learned to be focussed and driven whilst a few felt the opposite – that they tended to drift, with no sense of direction.
Social and pastoral	Secondary pupils and undergraduates noted assumptions made by those who did not understand, sometimes resulting in bullying. The limitations for non-boarders and moving schools were on out of school activities. For example, the child may establish himself on a sports team, only to move and have to re-establish his credentials and break into a settled team. Out of school activities were also difficult for single parents to manage during deployment.
Maturing	The undergraduates noted that at secondary school they did not really understand what was different, that it was just how it was. Several had poorer A levels than GCSEs and/or not as good as they had hoped; it may have been attributable to being a service child, with factors such as deployment combined with caring roles and studying stress. Also noted was growing awareness of the lost/delayed career of their parent at home. They were also concerned about parents' financial commitments to their education but being a military child did not affect the decision to go to university.
None	Some secondary pupils and undergraduates felt there were no challenges.

Table 9

ANALYSIS OF THE PRIMARY DATA, SECONDARY DATA AND LITERATURE

Intention to attend university

In the sample, over half of children from military families in compulsory education intended to go to university. There was little difference between the primary and secondary aged pupils but there were likely to have been different levels of understanding. Even those who did not state this intent directly indicated future career intentions that would require attending university such as teaching and medicine. The secondary data indicate that just under a quarter of children from military families become undergraduates, showing a more than 50% loss between intent and achievement. However it is not possible to attach significance to this as it is not known how this compares with the general population. One contributory factor for children from military families might be that the complexities they experience such as mobility and the notably reduced access to CEA and cessation of SPP post-16 mean there are easier options than going to university. There was no particular indication that joining the military was more prevalent an intent for children from military families: the difference when compared to their civilian counterparts being that service children had raised awareness of the military as a possible career (perhaps an easy option) and their knowledge of the military life enabled them to make informed decisions. The proportion of those serving in the military that come from military families is not collected by the MoD so it is not possible to make judgments on whether the military is a preferred destination for children from military families.

For the most part, the parents' education correlated with the child's intent to go to university: the parents with higher rank had greater tendency to have attended university; this was compounded by children of the higher ranked parents who had attended university being more inclined to intend to attend university than children of lower ranked parents who had attended university. A notable anomaly (which may, therefore, be particular to the service children surveyed) was that only a quarter of the secondary-aged children of NCO parents intended to attend university, whereas the intent of the children of ORs is higher and similar to that of children of SNCOs. It is not known if this reflects the parallel socioeconomic group for civilians or indeed for overall comparison of civilian and military first generation undergraduates. These children of NCO parents were no more or less inclined to join the military the children of the other ranks. It is also possible that, as the cultural norm in the military is of activity and action, this will present (consciously or unconsciously) to the service children the enticement of future careers that reflect this culture in which their family is embedded. This may mean that, if university is perceived as three years of sedentary, inactive study, it might not be as attractive as other opportunities. Another possible contributory factor to the secondary service children intent to attend university was that overall, the more unaccompanied deployments they had experienced the less inclined they were to go to university. The only group contrary to this were the children of SNCOs who seemed to have the greatest clarity of intent: despite having experienced the greatest number of unaccompanied deployments they showed the greatest intent to attend university and the greatest intent to join the military.

The average number of schools attended (for the stage of education they had reached at the time of the survey), for all three groups, was only just above the norm for the general population. It is not known if this (or the types of schools attended) is representative of the service children population although the secondary data does note that nearly half of army children had moved secondary school at least once by the time they reached 16, with a third moving more than six times. Consequently it is not possible to attach statistical significance to the impact of moving and types of schools. However, it must be argued that every child's view is valid when considering experiences of education. The data from the school-aged children did not reflect experiences other than in maintained (and occasionally service) schools. Some children had experienced several changes of school (this is where the SCE schools most showed) but this had no impact on intent to attend university. Those who had attended more schools were less inclined to join the military and those who had attended one or more SCE schools were not at all inclined to join the military. However, these children very much intended to attend university, more than the average for all participants noted above. The academic success rate at GCSE for children in SCE schools is not known however the literature notes limits (and concerns) in the availability of post-16 education in or after SCE schools.

School support for service children

The necessary and appropriate pastoral support is more easily managed in the inclusive environs of the boarding school with many children from military families. Those children who had experienced it appreciated and understood the quiet, unobtrusive watch kept. One illustrative example was when an incident overseas was on

the news in the common room and several children needed to make phone calls for reassurance; the members of staff watched but did not intervene – the children knew they could indicate a need for support. Additionally, those schools that have close association with military bases and have a good number of children from military families manage the social and emotional needs of these children. The growth of twenty-four hour, easy access, digital media coverage will mean that increasingly the children of military families will be bombarded with images and information that may be distressing. In schools where there is not this culture, the children from military families tended to keep their status quiet as this meant greater control of behaviour (adult and child) towards them (well-intentioned and otherwise) and some were not sure the schools knew. In their friendship groups, the children from military families either kept together with a shared understanding or accepted that their non-service friends would not understand. This concurs with the secondary data which note that bullying and the knock-on impact on enjoyment of school and lessons was a notable concern of secondary children. Whether or not schools were aware of the status of children from military families, the secondary data also show that parents were generally content with the pastoral support for their children. This may indicate a mismatch between the children from military families' experiences and the perceptions of the parents, particularly as the literature also notes an additional, generally unseen burden the service children may be carrying - that of carer. This would be compounded by the acknowledgement that deployment brings a higher risk of psychosocial problems for the parent and for children themselves. An additional factor that may contribute to the pastoral needs of children from military families in the literature is the delay in receipt of benefits such as free school meals created by the requirement to reapply each time the child moves.

Whilst children from military families benefited from pastoral support, the general feeling was that this was not the same for academic support. The primary data here agree with the literature and secondary data findings on both the intent and the use of SPP, showing only a little emphasis on academic support. The literature and secondary data show many ways in which moving schools causes multiple difficulties and delays and this is echoed in the responses of the children, particularly for those who do not move as a group (more prevalent in the RAF and RN) or at the start of the school year. All groups mentioned that moving school involves delays in their education each time. This may be to do with adjustment to a different teaching culture or catching up with parts of the syllabus not yet covered and repeating other parts they had already covered. This might be further exacerbated by syllabus changes or delays in SEN provision catching up. This reflects some of the issues noted in the secondary data that indicated that each time a child moves, they may lose several weeks of education, worsened by school places not being available, difficulties parents experience in getting into the schools to talk about their children, differences in commitments and systems by local authorities and funding not available until the new academic year. However, there did not seem to be an expectation that the school would help and the children understood that they just needed to get on with it. The literature noted that parents felt schools encouraged independence and responsibility, rather than guided support.

Attainment and progression

The secondary data show that mobile military children attain less well compared to non-mobile children from military families but do better than mobile non-service children, perhaps indicating the contribution by their parents noted by the children from military families which enhances their discipline and determination to succeed. The undergraduates, who had succeeded in reaching university, acknowledged the various factors that might put them at a disadvantage but felt that as children from military families they had the necessary focus and determination to overcome them and succeed. It may be, despite the secondary data indicating that children from military families achieve at least as well at GCSE, that the emotional and intellectual effort of coping takes its toll. It is not possible to determine how the extent of the lack of sense of direction expressed by the children from military families compares with the general population; it is interesting to note that the number or type of schools attended by the service children surveyed did not appear to be a contributory factor in the intent for their future that they expressed. The secondary data indicate the high proportion of undergraduate from military families who have attended schools with boarding facilities which was reflected in the sample of undergraduates in the primary data sample.

Another contributory factor to progression in education beyond 16 might be the need to change from one system to another, be that from boarding school to maintained (through loss of access to CEA as a result of change of circumstances) or just from school to a separate sixth form college. In both situations, the additional financial burden may mean that there is a resultant drop in quality or appropriateness of the post-16 provision. The secondary data show that the majority of children from military service backgrounds may not be achieving highly enough at post-16 level to gain entry to the most selective universities. However, until the equivalent data for the general population are acquired, disadvantage on this measure cannot be determined.

For both pastoral support and decisions about education, parents featured much more than schools. This bears

out the secondary data which showed that parents feel that children from military families do not have enough support from their schools to make decisions for post-16 education. Not only did few children expect their schools to help them make decisions about any future but many children did not remember their schools talking about university. This does not mean it did not happen – the retrospective views of the undergraduates suggest that perhaps it does more than is recalled by the school-aged children or perhaps this occurs later in their schooling - however, whether it did or not, it is of no use if it does not impact on the pupil. The literature notes that children from military families can come under the agency of different national, local and departmental authorities, each of which has their own way of operating and maintaining records, and with little communication between each, necessitating the essential role of parents. With such emphasis on the role of parents (and other family members) supporting their children’s choices, the limited HE ambitions of the children of NCOs and the positive ambitions of the children of SNCOs have increased relevance.

Advantages and challenges of being a service child

The literature shows that the DfE believes that mobility brings benefits but it might be questioned whether the means to achieving these benefits is desirable. It is not possible to know how much of what was expressed in the responses to the advantages and challenges of being a child from a military family is the child’s original thought and how much has been implanted by parents, teachers or friends as a management device. The views on the advantages and challenges expressed by the undergraduates reflected those noted by the school-aged children from military families but tempered by hindsight and maturity suggesting the perceived person gains have become embedded and actualised. However at what cost is not known. The character traits and people skills noted by the children (whether real or generated) show positive mind-sets but also recognition of the need to develop such traits as the means to survive their situation, particularly the emotional demands. Their awareness of what they have to cope with is shown in the responses to the challenges, predominantly the multifarious effects of a parent away on deployment, which is heartrending to read. Another aspect arose that might impact on progression to university: the reduced opportunities to be involved with out-of-school activities, which would limit the breadth of experiences that the children from military families could use on the UCAS personal statement. It is interesting to note that whilst the children felt pride in being part of the military community and in what their serving parent(s) were doing, they often preferred not to have their status known to avoid unpleasant consequences from those who did not understand; hence they were denied an outlet and acknowledgement for their pride.

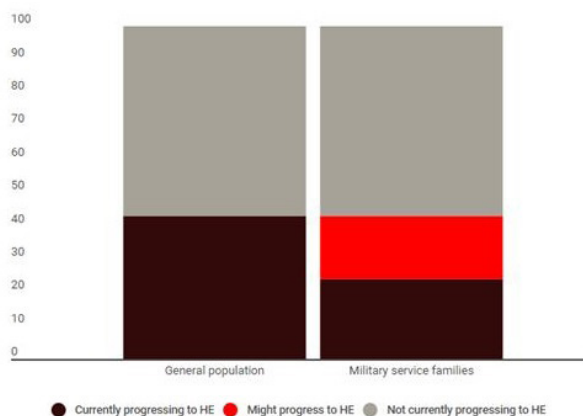
What we can indicate

0.6% of the general secondary school population are from service families* (DfE , 2012, Support for Service Pupils)

Service pupils perform slightly better than the general population at GCSE (DfE 2010, 2012). If all things were equal, they would therefore also be about 0.6% of the 1st year undergraduate population. However, 0.34% of young first degree 1st year undergraduates students are from military service families (HESA**). Thus, if the general participation rate in HE is 43%, then the estimated participation rate for service pupils is $43 \times (0.34/0.6) = 24\%$.

However, the vagaries surrounding the real numbers must mean that this is just an indication (possibly conservative*) so it is better to say:

- It is in the realm of up to 4 out of 10 who, if in the general population would go to university, do not go if they are a service child.



*It is difficult to arrive at a definitive total of the number of service pupils in the UK. Sources such as School Census, MoD numbers, Ofsted, SPP, Census (DfE, 2010, 2012, 2015b; MoD, 2010, 2015a; Ofsted, 2011; ONS, 2014a) all have different quantities and different age parameters such as 11-16, 5-16, including 16-18. They show possible representation between 0.5%– 3.5%. The lower proportions are derived, in general, from parent declaration and hence it is reasonable that not all are included (SPP @ maintained 5-16, returned 0.9% (MoD, 2015)). The higher proportions may include pupils where the military member is not the parent.

** Parental occupation is recorded at the time of application to UCAS, so there is no record of those who were brought up in military families but whose parent(s) left the service before UCAS application. This may reduce the level of underrepresentation.

Summation

A good number of secondary children and undergraduates who were surveyed were clear that being a child from a military family did not impact on their intent to attend university. Yet the secondary data show that this intent does not translate into attaining that target; the proportion of service children attending university is notably lower than that of children from the general population. Whilst the primary and secondary children from military families knew they were different and gave ways in which this was a disadvantage, this had an egocentric tone and the insidious effects would not emerge into their consciousness until later; although, of course, we only know what the children tell us and do not know what they are not telling us. However, the increased maturity of the undergraduates highlighted their awareness of impact on factors outside themselves: financial, ill health (including mental) and caring responsibilities, single parenting, career sacrifices of non-serving parent. Combined with the additional demands of sixth form study, these factors may be contributory to poorer performance post-16; disturbed study resulting in poor A' levels, loss of focus and/or momentum; university being less attainable to the service child through limited breadth of conventional experiences. The undergraduates who took part in this research were the service children who had succeeded. But for many more service children, the range of factors contributing to the complexities and demands of their lives, means they do not succeed.

POTENTIAL LINES OF INQUIRY

Establishing a framework for service children’s educational progression

The adoption of the military student identifier in the USA suggests a need for a similar system in the UK. The initiative has not had time to demonstrate practical application or impact.

The concept of progression, based on the whole educational journey of service children, could act as a unifying concept that may help to clarify what is at present a fragmented and partial picture of service children’s progression. The factors that may influence a service child’s successful progression into and through higher education are many and various, with the potential to be in tension with one another. The Armed Forces Covenant states that those who serve in the Armed Forces and their families “should face no disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public and commercial services” (Ministry of Defence 2008:1). Although the existing evidence does indicate the potential for service children to be placed at an educational disadvantage compared to their civilian peers, we need further evidence in order to make an objective argument.

Rethinking the notions of “disadvantage” and “under-representation”

The OFFA 2016 guidance for Access Agreements 2017-18 is a good step forward to recognising that children of military families may be considered as disadvantaged. Children of serving armed forces members are unlikely to fit with a more traditional, socio-economic definition of the disadvantaged child. Their educational attainment tends to be as good as, if not better than, their non-military peers. Nevertheless, children of serving armed forces members may experience educational disadvantage in other ways. In particular, the impact of mobility on service children’s academic performance, personal wellbeing and practical opportunities, along with the psychological risks associated with having a parent deployed on operations, suggests that there is scope for a re-conceptualisation of the notion of disadvantage. Likewise, the lack of reliable, cohesive data regarding the number of children of military service children makes it very difficult to determine whether service children are, objectively, under-represented in higher education. The Armed Forces Covenant (Ministry of Defence, 2008) notes that the armed forces community should not face 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. The existence of the Service Pupil Premium to address the pastoral support needs of service children, along with the potential for practical barriers to accessing education associated with mobility, suggests that there is scope for widening the notion of educational disadvantage beyond conventional interpretations based on socio-economic and attainment measures. Likewise, the notion of under-representation could be viewed in terms of wider social values such as equality and inclusion in addition to proportional representation in higher education. Such an approach may better support the principles and core values of the Armed Forces Covenant, as well as offering a more nuanced understanding of disadvantage and under-representation that could benefit all children.

Rethinking accountability and responsibility

In 2006 the House of Commons Defence Committee stated that:

“We are very concerned that Service children may be falling between the responsibilities of the DfES and the devolved administrations. They must act in a joined-up way to ensure continuity of education for children moving between the different parts of the UK. This is an area which the DfES needs to address urgently. We also recommend greater contact between the MoD and those in the devolved administrations responsible for education.” (House of Commons Defence Committee 2006, p.10)

Ofsted (2011) also noted weak accountability for the educational attainment of children in SCE schools in Germany and Cyprus, and that no system existed for accurately recording and monitoring the number of service children in UK schools. Discontinuities in accountability and monitoring may impede attempts to evaluate the progression of service children through education and into higher education, particularly when such children move between schools under the auspices of different agencies as a result of parental deployment. A valuable contribution could therefore be to bring into focus the need for consistent and clear accountability regarding the educational progression of service children.

RECOMMENDATIONS

What the government could do

- Keep accurate records of numbers of children from military families (following the lead of the USA).
- Keep accurate records of the KS2 SATs, GCSE attainment and post 16 qualifications, of children from military families, disaggregated to type of school, service and rank of parent.
- Keep accurate records of children from military families entering university (including those for whom part of their education was as a service child), their progress through university, completion and degree classification/ GPA, disaggregated to type of school, service and rank of parent.
- Extend SPP to post-16.
- Enable Continuity of Education Allowance (CEA) access for post-16 students.
- Extend the CEA to include continuity of provision such as SEN.
- Provide a structure through which service children are identified and educational continuity is provided.
- Ensure provisions such as funding and SEN assessments, travel with the child.

What schools could do

- Work with local authorities and the military to know when children from military families are posted in and enact the amendment of the Schools Admissions Code.
- Provide specific academic support for children from military families as they transfer in to minimise educational drop on transition.
- Provide specific academic and pastoral support to children from military families for progression to post-16.
- Recognise the specific contribution of service parents and work with them to help their child.
- Recognise and understand that the differences between the services mean that the experiences of children from military families will differ.
- Recognise and make provision for children from military families as carers (and as vulnerable to mental health issues themselves).
- Recognise and understand that a service child's apparent independence, and resilience is a coping mechanism which requires respect and appropriate support.
- Recognise and respect the scale and range of the impact of deployment: prior to, on the day, during and on return.
- Access local authority database of expertise and use for CPD.
- Undertake CPD to know how to make provision for children from military families both pastorally and academically.
- Develop overt Personal, Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Education (PSMSC) across the school (staff and students) to create knowledge and understanding of children from military families.
- Encourage children from military families and other pupils to acknowledge, accept and respect service children's pride.

What sixth forms and further education colleges could do

- All of the above with respect to schools.
- Recognise that the many issues evident in school-aged children from military families is exacerbated in the maturity of post-16 children from military families. They have increased awareness and knowledge of the reality of their parents' issues around mental health and finances for example adding to the service child's

responsibilities and emotional burden along with the demands of sixth-form study.

- Support children from military families to add breadth to their post-16 experiences to enhance their UCAS application and help them to show that their life as a service child makes them an ideal candidate for university.
- Reflect on the limitations in the breadth of the service child's application to UCAS when writing the reference, showing how the children from military families' lives make them ideal candidates.

What higher education institutions could do

- Recognise disrupted patterns of education and extra-curricular activities and the impact this could have on how students write their personal statements.
- Better understand the stresses on some military families and the increased likelihood of a caring role for students and be prepared to offer pastoral support. This could include offering a support network for students from military families within the university, or at least a designated member of welfare staff who has good understanding of the issues.
- Offer mentoring of service pupils by undergraduates from military backgrounds.
- Hold outreach days for service pupils.
- Arrange CPD support for teachers. The aim of this would be to encourage greater progression to HE, through understanding routes available and support services in place once at university.
- Include the service child in access agreements (Offa, 2016).

What local authorities and academy chains could do

- Enact the amendment of the Schools Admissions Code (DfE, 2015d).
- Take a pro-active role in making the move from school to post-16 education desirable and accessible to children from military families.
- Recognise and understand that the differences between the services mean that the experiences of children from military families will differ.
- Work with the military to stay aware of upcoming posting dates and make provision at the catchment school for children from military families at whatever time of the school year they transfer.
- Make provision for funding to be available for each service child as they transfer at any time of the year.
- Maintain and share a database of schools with good provision for children from military families to enable them to provide CPD to teaching staff with less experience.

What parents could do

- Inform the school of their child's status with an indication of the child's preferred way of managing.
- Work with the school and the child to create a culture of understanding and an awareness of the factors that impact on progress.

What the military could do

- Draw on the SNCO's positive influence on the ambitions of their children.
- Target NCOs to support educational ambitions in their children.
- Draw on the positive effect of SCE schools on the ambitions of children from military families.
- Target the impact of multiple deployments on the educational ambitions of children from military families.
- Inform the Local Authority (LA) when a posting is known.
- Recognise children from military families who are carers and provide support.

For further research

- UK-centric data pertaining to the education experience and education progression from 5-18 of children from military families, for example:
 - Coherent data pertaining to the number and location of service pupils in the UK.
 - Accurate data on the qualifications achieved by service children (KS1, 2, GCSE).
 - Post-16 progression and attainment of service children (education, qualification, careers, NEET, not known).
- Differences in educational progression to HE by service children:
 - Parent's rank;
 - Parent's branch of the armed forces;
 - Types of school attended;
 - Attendance at schools with large numbers of service pupils compared with those schools with few.
- Service children's progression through university.
- UK-centric data regarding the education of service pupils.
- Other proportional data comparing children from military families with the general population such as:
 - Tariff points or those that go to Russell Group universities (those who graduate and their classification);
 - Members of the military (by rank) who are not first generation military which may indicate whether this is a route chosen as an alternative to university;
 - Those in receipt of benefits;
 - Disaggregated by socio-economic status or rank to see if there is a particular disadvantaged children from military families group.

GLOSSARY

AFF	Army Families Federation
BME	Black and Minority Ethnic
CEA	Continuity of Education Allowance
CEAS	Children’s Education Advisory Service
CPD	Continuing professional development
DCYP	Directorate Children and Young People
DfE	Department for Education
DfES	Department for Education and Science
DoH	Department for Health
EAL	English as an Additional Language
ESSA	Every Student Succeeds Act (US)
ESCCP	Education of Service Children Change Programme
FE	Further Education
FiMT	Forces in Mind Trust
GPA	Grade point average
HE	Higher Education
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
HoCDC	House of Commons Defence Committee
LA	Local Authority
MoD	Ministry of Defence
MCEC	Military Child Education Coalition (US)
NAO	National Audit Office
NCO	Non-commissioned Officer
NCSL	National College for School Leadership
NEET	Not in employment, education or training
NC-SEC	National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification
OFFA	Office for Fair Access
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education
ONS	Office for National Statistics
OR	Other ranks
PSMSC	Personal, Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Education
SCE	Service Children’s Education
SNCO	Senior Non-commissioned Officer
SPP	Service Pupil Premium
UCAS	Universities and Colleges Admissions Service

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APPENDIX 1: SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE

The Educational Progression of Children from Military Service Families

The Ministry of Defence has asked the University of Winchester to research the factors that help or hinder service children’s progression through education, so that support is well targeted and achieves better outcomes. This questionnaire seeks to gather the facts about and the views of the service children who are coming to our university experience day.

Part 1 asks factual information about your life as a military child, relevant to your education. Please fill in as much as you can – don’t worry if you have to leave any gaps.

Part 2 asks your views on how being a military child has influenced your education and thoughts for your future.

All responses are anonymous.

* * * * *

Part 1

Gender of student

Male / Female

Date of Birth of student

DD	MM	YYYY
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Parents’ service and rank

(please enter rank in relevant box)

	RN	Army	RM	RAF
father				
mother				

Parents attended university

(please circle if yes)

Father / Mother

Any parents’ unaccompanied deployment

How many since you started school?	
------------------------------------	--

How long did they last (approx.)?	
-----------------------------------	--

Family accommodation

(add dates & tick relevant box below, up to 4)

Dates (most recent first)				
Own				
Married Quarters				
Hiring				
Other				

Student’s pre-university education

(add dates & tick each relevant box below, up to 4. *The last box is to indicate the number of military children in the school – were there quite a lot or just a few/no others? Please circle)

Dates (most recent first)				
State				
Private				
Military				
Home school				
Boarding				
*How many military children in the school?	many / few	many / few	many / few	many / few

Part 2

What education did you do after leaving school (yr 11), before coming to university?

What else did you do after leaving school (yr 11), before coming to university?

When did you first start thinking about university? (circle the phrase that fits)

as long as I can remember	primary school	
in the sixth form	in last year or so	at secondary school

Who talked to you about university? (circle any that apply)

parents	brother/sister	other family	
friends	teachers	no-one	university people

What would have helped you at school to make decisions about your future education?

How do you think being a military child has helped you?

Have you faced any challenges by being a military child?

When thinking about university, is there anything else you would like to say about being a child in a military family?

Thank you very much for taking part in this important project.

APPENDIX 2: AVAILABILITY OF SECONDARY DATA

Key:

Not available – confirmed as not collected

Not known – have been unable to find within the confines of this project

	General population	Service children
Number of school-age children	Available	No definitive number available. Lack of coherent, complete data. SPP numbers seem most reliable but still rely on parent declaration.
Statistical information about progression from one phase of education to another	Available	Not available
Post-16 destinations (work, 6th form in school, further education college, NEET, unknown)	Available	Not known. Number following parent(s) into military not available.
Boarding vs day provision at post-16	Not available	Not available – can only estimate numbers attending schools with boarding facilities
Types of school attended by undergraduates from military families (maintained, military, boarding, private); attendance at schools with large numbers of service pupils compared with those schools with few.	Limited availability	Available – HESA indicates 45% undergraduate SC attended schools with boarding facilities
Statistical information about entry the HE	Available	Grades/points score on entry available in the HESA data (does not include those whose parent(s) are no longer serving at point of application).
Statistical information about retention, completion, degree classification	Available	Retention etc not known.
KS2 SATs and GCSEs (achievement and grades)	Published annually. Available Disaggregated by school, LA different schools types.	DfE suggests that service children achieve slightly higher than their non-service peers in mathematics and English in Key Stages 1 and 2, and also at GCSE level.
A levels and other post-16 qualifications (achievement and grades)	A levels published annually. Available Disaggregated by school, LA etc. Not known if other qualifications available.	Not known.
Parent's rank & parent's branch of the armed forces of undergraduates from military families	Not available	
Markers of deprivation	Associated with poverty through a socio-economic discourse. Free school meals (FSM) as a main marker.	Tend not to claim FSM so not marked as deprived. Not known those in receipt of benefits.
Funding for deprivation	PP & FSM if eligible	PP, FSM if eligible & SPP (for pastoral support - all eligible) to age 16.
Disadvantaged groups	Grouped in census by socio-economic status. Not known if educational progression is correlated.	Not known if identified by rank (although rank is equated to socio-economic status by ONS)
Tariff points on entry to HE	Available via HESA	Available – but difficult to compare either to the national cohort or to relate to university admissions, since offers can vary between courses within the same institution.

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Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this resource, but the University can accept no responsibility for errors or omissions.

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