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**Interactive Thriving Lives Toolkitset to help schools support children and young people in Armed Forces families**

[A new interactive platform offering schools an online framework](file:///C:\Users\Rachel.Lad\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\INetCache\Content.Outlook\Y27UV7MQ\link%20to%20toolkit) to support children from Armed Forces families to thrive has been launched today (Monday 25 April 2022).

The online Thriving Lives Toolkit has been developed by the Service Children’s Progression Alliance (SCiP Alliance), which is hosted by the University of Winchester, in partnership with the Office for Students Uni Connect Programme and The Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust.

Underpinned by rigorous research and thoroughly tested in schools, the free Thriving Lives Toolkit - originally launched in 2020 - provides schools with a framework of seven principles through which to reflect on their practice in supporting Service children and a three-tier set of CPD resources.

Resources have been developed in collaboration with a range of partners across the UK and consist of an introductory animation; a detailed resource introducing the evidence base, what schools can do to support their Service children and who can help; and school case studies.

Schools can reflect on their practice, update their progress in supporting their Service children, and gain insight into evidence-based guidance for helping children of armed forces personnel and veterans to improve their educational progression.

The seven key principles are:

1. **Our approach is clear**: Leaders’ understanding and approach ensure resources and policies improve Service children’s outcomes;
2. **Wellbeing is supported**: Tailored pastoral provision supports Service children‘s mental health and wellbeing;
3. **Achievement is maximized**: Teaching, assessment and support ensure the continuity of Service children’s learning and progression;
4. **Transition is effective**: Systems and support ensure seamless transitions for Service children arriving at and leaving school;
5. **Children are heard**: Service children’s diverse voices are heard and inform the support they receive;
6. **Parents are engaged**: Strong home-school partnerships help Service families feel valued as part of the school community;
7. **Staff are well-informed:** Supportive training and networks ensure all staff understand and support each Service child.

A Service child is defined by the SCiP Alliance as ‘a person whose parent or carer serves in the Regular Armed Forces, or as a Reservist, or has done at any point during the first 25 years of that person’s life’.

Service children can experience disrupted schooling and challenges with access to extra-curricular activities and with the curriculum when transitioning between schools. Service families may move frequently, with little agency and at short notice and many experience frequent separation, anxiety during deployment and the stress of transition out of the military, all which may have complex impacts on children and young people.

“Children can and do benefit from life in a military family, but they are under-represented in higher education, may not always achieve as highly as their peers and can experience hidden mental health and well-being challenges,” said Phil Dent, Director of the SCiP Alliance.

“The University, through its access and outreach activities and its leadership of the SCiP Alliance’s national work, is seeking to change that and to ensure that Service children’s voices are at the heart of our work.”

The Thriving Lives Toolkit online interactive platform is available at: https://thrivinglives.scipalliance.org/

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**About SCiP Alliance**

The Service Children’s Progression (SCiP) Alliance is a partnership of organisations focused on improving outcomes for children from military families. It is hosted by the University of Winchester and supported by the Ministry of Defence (MoD). Their mission is to bring together practitioners, researchers, policymakers and funders to build a stronger evidence-base, better policy, and enhanced support for Service children’s education and progression. The SCiP Alliance pursues this mission by leading collaborative work to develop a robust evidence base, connect and support practitioners and influence the policy environment.