



**FORCES
CHILDREN
SCOTLAND**



IMPACT REPORT 2023 ROUTES

**OUR JOURNEY TO HELPING SCOTLAND BECOME
A PLACE WHERE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
FROM ARMED FORCES AND VETERAN FAMILIES
CAN REACH THEIR POTENTIAL AND THRIVE**

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INTRODUCTION:

CONFIRMING OUR DESTINATION

OUR MISSION IS TO BECOME THE SECTOR-LEADING CHARITY THAT SUPPORTS CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE FROM ARMED FORCES AND VETERAN FAMILIES ACROSS SCOTLAND.

Last year, we shared exciting news about our new three-year strategy.

We worked directly with children and young people from armed forces and veteran families to develop a strategy that set out the exciting and ambitious collective journey we needed to take to reach our goal destination - making Scotland a place for their peers to realise their potential and thrive.

In these pages you will learn more about how we have progressed towards this destination.



FORCES CHILDREN SCOTLAND



LAURA FALCONER

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

LAST year, our strategic plan set out the journey we needed to take to ensure Scotland proves a place for children and young people from armed forces and veteran families to realise their potential and thrive.

We have embarked on this journey, together with children and young people, their parents, as well as those supporting them in schools and community settings and those making important decisions about their future at a local, regional, and national level. I wish to express my thanks to the children and young people in particular who have shared their lived experience, creativity, energy, and passion to co-produce our projects, services, and campaigns. It's proved so rewarding to witness their strong sense of achievement and to provide life-

changing opportunities to develop new skills, build confidence, and forge lasting friendships.

We will arrive at our destination via several routes, depicted through our service-specific lines in this year's report. We continue to operate during unprecedented times and I wish to show my appreciation to the team for their passion, dedication, and commitment. Moreover, I also wish to thank our funders and supporters. All of this ensures that we continue to meet the unique support needs of children and young people from the armed forces community, no matter what route they choose, both now and in the future.

“Last year, our strategic plan set out the journey we needed to take to ensure Scotland proves a place for children and young people from armed forces and veteran families to realise their potential and thrive.”

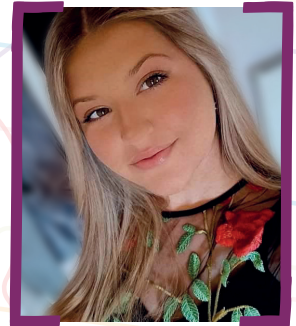
CADENCE

FORCES CHILDREN
SCOTLAND
BENEFICIARY

MY Forces Children Scotland journey started in 2019, when I was offered the chance to go on one of their residential. I didn't live near the base when my dad was serving, so attending the residential allowed me to re-engage with young people from similar backgrounds and even led to getting back in contact with some older friends.

Forces Children Scotland has had such a great impact on my life through so many amazing opportunities. I have been part of interview panels, conferences and visited the Scottish Parliament, plus much more. My confidence continues to grow as I get to experience so many different events and tasks. This year I was involved in helping to co-create the Influencing Strategy, which will target some key topics affecting the lives of young people from forces families and it was such a rewarding experience seeing everything come to life after sharing our ideas.

Being involved in his charity allows for a huge sense of accomplishment and pride because I know the ideas and experiences I have shared will make a huge difference for other young people going through similar experiences to my own.



“Forces Children Scotland has had such a great impact on my life through so many amazing opportunities.”

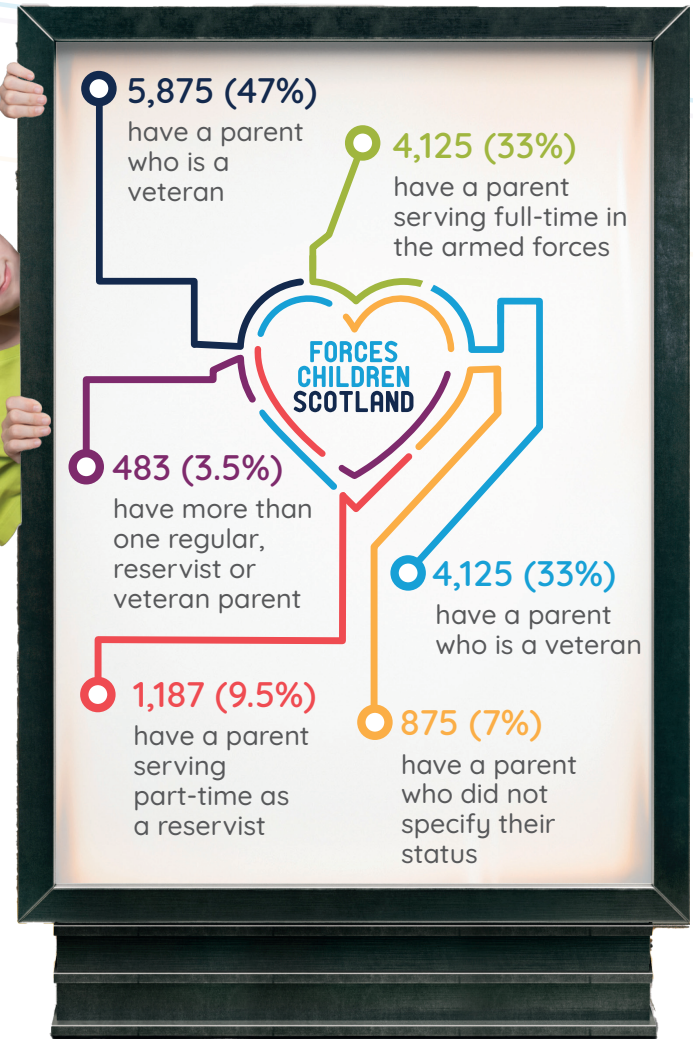
WE DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY SUPPORT MORE THAN 12,500 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE FROM ARMED FORCES AND VETERAN FAMILIES ACROSS SCOTLAND.

EACH child's journey will be different – variable in length, a different number of stops required and no consistent time of arrival. Somewhere down the line changes may be required, too. However, it's a journey that they will never take alone.

These children and young people grow and develop within communities that are built upon a strong sense of belonging, lived experience and solidarity. Compared with civilian peers, they may have embraced greater opportunities to travel, absorb different cultures and meet diverse groups of people from around the world. Some may assume greater responsibilities at home when a parent is deployed and thrive in that role, while others grasp opportunities to participate in a variety of memorable activities that simply are not available to civilian peers. Much of this can go a long way to develop a unique sense of identity, purpose and confidence which sets the wheels in motion to realise further potential and thrive in later life.

Children and young people from armed forces families have told us they can face challenges that are simply not on the radar of civilian peers, educators and professionals. These include deployment and uncertainty concerning loved ones, bereavement, living with a family member with life-changing physical or psychological wounds, regular relocations and disrupted friendships, activities, and routines, which can have detrimental effects on education and learning, mental health and wellbeing, and much more.

Moreover, moving from military to civilian life can lead to further challenges. Some children and young people have told us they have felt a growing pressure to adapt and maintain day-to-day routines amid either rapid or gradual transformational change, leading to an acute sense of loss with regard to belonging, community, relationships and identity.



FORCES CHILDREN SCOTLAND

THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE FROM ARMED FORCES AND VETERAN FAMILIES IS AT THE HEART OF EVERYTHING WE DO.

WE do this through our Combined | Force Co-production Methodology to ensure that lived experience serves as our most valuable asset in developing projects, services and campaigns.

The process enables children and young people to develop skills, build confidence and work effectively with peers, as well as the Forces Children Scotland team, and external creative partners. We are a trauma-informed organisation committed to championing the five core principles of safety, choice, collaboration, trustworthiness and empowerment in working directly with children and young people from the armed forces community.

MOST IMPORTANTLY, WE MAKE THE PROCESS FUN, ENGAGING AND MEMORABLE.

INSPIRATION

We listen to children and young people from armed forces and veteran families, who work with us to explore creative ways to help more than 12,500 peers across Scotland. Lived experience and passion for making things better inspire us to do what we do!

ASSEMBLE

Having found our inspiration, we bring children and young people from the armed forces community together to join working groups with our team and external partners, to co-develop projects, services and campaigns.

EVALUATE

Once mobilised and given time to run, we get back together to review what has been achieved against our predefined outcomes. We discuss what worked and what can be improved to ensure learning is embedded in future decision-making.

DISCOVER

We creatively explore specific challenges faced by children and young people from this community and collaborate to share lived experience, knowledge and expertise to find solutions to make things better in lots of different ways.

COMBINED FORCE

DELIVER

When we are all happy with what we have achieved, we mobilise our services, projects and campaigns and launch communications to target audiences - from children and young people to educators, professionals and decision-makers.

DEFINE

Building on what we have discovered, we focus on what we feel is the best solution that will make things better and start to think about how we will be able to measure whether our project, service or campaign is successful.

PROMOTE

We work together to identify and understand our audiences, and what makes them tick, to co-develop communications which have the best chance of raising awareness effectively and achieving the outcomes we have agreed upon.

DEVELOP

We work together to co-develop the important details, bells and whistles behind our projects, services and campaigns and start to bring our inspiration to life through creative concepts, resources and calls to action. We do this by revisiting our 'inspiration' and 'define' stages as often as needed.

SECTION TWO:

PREPARING FOR THE JOURNEY

WE KNOW THERE WILL BE CHALLENGES ON THE WAY TO OUR DESTINATION. SOME WE CAN PREPARE FOR, WHILE OTHERS WILL PRESENT THEMSELVES ON THE WAY.

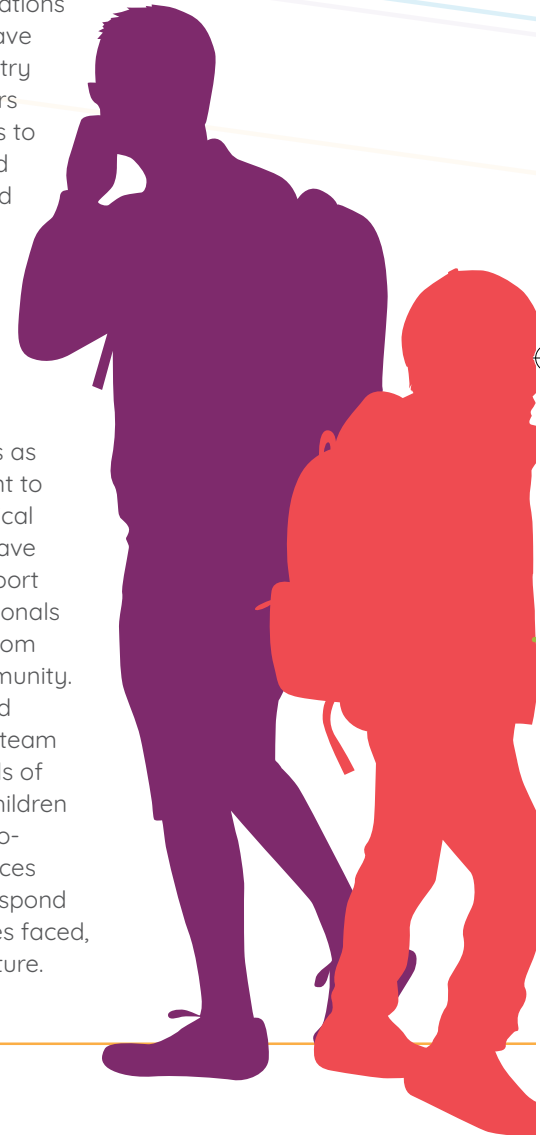
WE have already covered the main challenges faced by children and young people from the armed forces community, but we also need to be aware of emerging factors that could affect their ability to realise their potential and thrive. Rising tensions on the global stage have cast a shadow of unease that reaches beyond international politics. For children and young people, the increasing uncertainties can translate into a unique set of emotional and psychological challenges. The potential deployment of a parent to regions of conflict or heightened security risks can stir

up feelings of apprehension and vulnerability. Moreover, the extended periods of separation due to deployments can disrupt the familiar rhythms of home life, leading to feelings of loneliness and isolation. The strain on these children is not only emotional but practical, as they may face changes in schools, living situations and support networks. As tensions escalate, it becomes imperative to recognise and address their specific needs during these trying times.

The cost of living crisis continues to impact armed forces and veteran families across Scotland. The number of applications for support we receive continues to grow, as does the diversity and complexity of the need. A heavy burden has been cast on families from various socioeconomic backgrounds, forcing them to make some very difficult choices. This cost of living crisis strains not only financial resources but also the emotional wellbeing of parents, children and young people.

We continue to think ahead to ensure we are ready for future challenges.

We have expanded our reach in important strategic locations across Scotland and have engaged with the Ministry of Defence and partners within the armed forces to ensure we are informed about deployments and future plans. Work has begun with groups of younger children and we have improved our methods of engaging with parents, carers and wider support agencies as part of our commitment to work across an ecological model. Moreover, we have enhanced how we support educators and professionals who work with pupils from the armed forces community. We have also enhanced our learning within the team to improve our methods of working directly with children and young people to co-produce projects, services and campaigns that respond effectively to challenges faced, both now and in the future.



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SOME OF THE TOPICS THAT WE HAVE ENHANCED OUR LEARNING ON:



CHILD PROTECTION



CO-PRODUCTION



TRAUMA-INFORMED PRACTICE



DATA PROTECTION



LGBTQ+



CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

WE CONTINUE TO WORK WITH OUR FUNDERS ON OUR JOURNEY.

We wish to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to all our funders who have supported us on our journey to making Scotland a place for all children and young people to realise their potential and thrive.

- ✦ **ABF: THE SOLDIERS CHARITY**
- ✦ **THE PAUL HAMLYN FOUNDATION**
- ✦ **THE ARMED FORCES COVENANT FUND TRUST**
- ✦ **BRITISH FOREIGN SCHOOL SOCIETY**
- ✦ **THE VETERANS FOUNDATION**
- ✦ **THE SCOTTISH VETERANS FUND**
- ✦ **THE D'OYLY CARTE CHARITABLE TRUST**

SECTION THREE:

OUR SERVICE LINES

WE REMAIN COMMITTED TO PROVIDING FINANCIAL SUPPORT DURING WHAT CONTINUES TO BE A CHALLENGING PERIOD FOR MANY ARMED FORCES AND VETERAN FAMILIES ACROSS SCOTLAND.



FAMILY SUPPORT LINE

WE experienced a 70 per cent increase in applications for financial support and we know the cost of living crisis has proved a significant factor. Enhancing our data-gathering processes and partnership work with Poppy Scotland and SSAFA: the Armed Forces Charity has allowed us to listen to the voices of beneficiaries to make sure we provide support that will make a meaningful, relevant contribution to overcoming a wide range of challenges.

★ 216 > FAMILIES SUPPORTED

★ £117,500 > DISTRIBUTED THROUGH OUR GRANT-GIVING FUNDS

★ 353 > CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SUPPORTED

FINANCIAL CRISIS QUICK REACTION FUND: JILL'S STORY

WE have provided swift financial support to armed forces and veteran families across Scotland to provide a little help to cover

energy, clothing and food costs, plus many more of life's essentials, to alleviate stress and anxiety during these unprecedented times.



It [the financial support] has meant so much to us as so much pressure was able to be taken off. It has been one thing after another mentally the past year and financial strain added to the stress and pressure of everything. When I felt lost and helpless, you have been there to support us and we will forever be grateful to Forces Children Scotland for all of this."

**We have changed the name and some smaller details to protect identity.*

COMMON CHALLENGES FACED BY FAMILIES THAT WE HAVE SUPPORTED THROUGH OUR FINANCIAL CRISIS QUICK REACTION FUND:

DEBT > 84%

UNEMPLOYMENT > 67%

HOMELESSNESS > 26%

BEREAVEMENT > 8%

MENTAL HEALTH > 78%

PHYSICAL HEALTH > 56%

FAMILY BREAKDOWN > 58%



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EDUCATION AND ASPIRATION FUND: SOPHIE'S STORY

WE have supported children and young people from armed forces and veteran families to cover purchases such as school uniforms, learning resources, school trips, after-school activities, sports coaching and equipment, music tuition and much more.

We worked in partnership with SSAFA to provide financial support that helped Sophie continue to pursue a very promising junior swimming career. Sophie, 13, has been swimming since she was three and has competed at the district level for East Kilbride Swimming Club for the past five years. The club realised Sophie's abilities and potential at an early stage, and her commitment and dedication have seen her rise through the youth development ranks. Having shown so much potential, we were delighted to hear the fantastic news that Sophie was selected for the National Junior Academy, run by Scottish Swimming.



I would like to say thanks because without the help of Forces Children Scotland and SSAFA, things might have been different. I can't thank you enough." - Sophie's Mum, Riham

YOUNG CARERS FUND: ELLIE'S STORY

WE know being a young carer in an armed forces or veteran family can be challenging for many different reasons. We provide financial support to help them enhance independence, gain qualifications or take a well-deserved break from caring responsibilities.

Ellie, aged 9 years, helps a lot around the house to support her father, an Army veteran diagnosed with PTSD, and his partner, who has several medical complications. Having heard about Forces Children Scotland's Young Carers Grants through peer support received from another charity, an application was submitted to enable Ellie to continue her dancing lessons, which provide welcome respite from her caring responsibilities. Ellie, who loves hip hop dancing, has competed in regional and national competitions and has progressed to competing internationally, finishing seventh out of hundreds of girls from dance schools across the world at one event.



I didn't know anything about it (Forces Children Scotland's Young Carers Grants) until my peer support worker informed me. The financial support has really helped us out which meant we could put the money towards other stuff Ellie needs for dancing which can cost a lot. The process was really simple and we are really grateful to Forces Children Scotland." - Ellie's dad

**We have changed the name and some smaller details to protect identity.*

COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY FUND: ABIGAIL'S STORY

WE put students from armed forces and veteran families across Scotland first. We help young people realise their potential and thrive by helping to cover transport and living costs, learning resources and much more.



I recently completed my second year of a three-year degree in History with the Open University. The grant I have received from Forces Children Scotland means that I don't have to work while I am doing my degree. The money helps me buy books and stationery as well as personal items. I am able to dedicate my time to working towards my future. I would encourage others to ask for help if they are struggling, and to continue working towards their goals."

YOUTH PARTICIPATION LINE

WE SUPPORT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE, FROM ARMED FORCES AND VETERAN FAMILIES, TO DEVELOP NEW SKILLS, BUILD CONFIDENCE, FORGE NEW CONNECTIONS, AND MUCH MORE.

WE'VE been sharing their lived experience, co-producing projects, services and campaigns, participating in youth forums and residential activities, and helping civilian peers, educators and professionals to better understand their lives. It's been a busy and productive year.

Youth Forum residential

Young people gathered at Dalguise, Perthshire, to co-develop resources that will help educators and professionals to better understand life in armed forces families and encourage them to adopt a children's rights approach when it comes to meeting the unique support needs of this group.

Our workshops explored what a good resource should look like and identified important things that their target audience should know. The young people had lots of fantastic ideas, including a jigsaw. They also had the opportunity to enjoy a range of team-building tasks and fun-based creative activities.

Meeting the Children's Commissioner

Members from our Youth Forum worked with the team to co-develop and deliver what they called their 'key issue' statements to Scotland's Children and Young People's Commissioner to improve understanding of the potential impact of being part of an armed forces and veteran family. The statements that the young people prepared covered a range of topics, including mental health and wellbeing, deployment, education and learning, posting assumptions and misconceptions.

"Sometimes friends talk about spending time with their dad and it can be hard when your dad is deployed. It's painful. Other young people need to be aware of what it is like for young people whose parents are away on deployment."

"A big assumption is that military kids will simply cope with the changes that are part of military life because they are used to it and are resilient. Every situation is different and just because you've been through an experience before doesn't mean you can cope."

Tornado of Change campaign

We received funding from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation to co-develop an exciting multimedia campaign, Tornado of Change, to help civilian audiences understand what it is like when a parent leaves the armed forces.

A working group of young people from veteran families joined members of our team in Edinburgh for a seven-day creative residential, with lots of fun workshops and activities helping us to find the all-important creative spark for the campaign concept.

The group generated an incredible amount of creative material and later considered the campaign's audience and specific messaging. To round off the week, they presented their ideas to our project panel, which included our Chief Executive Officer and Trustees. Our residentials are all about having fun, too, and the young people enjoyed ten-pin bowling and crazy golf, an Edinburgh ghost tour, and much more throughout the week.

The group has held a number of sessions since then,

118

DIGITAL AND FACE-TO-FACE
SESSIONS DELIVERED

180

NEW CHILDREN AND YOUNG
PEOPLE ENGAGED

20

LOCATIONS ENGAGED PRIMARY/SECONDARY
SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY SPACES



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via Zoom, to refine their creative concepts and co-develop storyboarding, sequencing and character development that will all support the filming of three short campaign films. We look forward to sharing those with you!

Children in Scotland Conference

Young people who co-developed our Forces Life Comic Book and Board Game showcased their work at the Children in Scotland Conference. The young people delivered a workshop session for delegates, discussing the creative spark behind the resources, the co-production process and much more, before inviting them to play the game and provide their feedback. The session proved a huge hit, with many delegates mentioning it as their favourite part of the day – the young people even received a special mention and round of applause during the closing plenary session. It was a truly memorable day for all involved!

Ruby Boots service development

We really liked an idea generated by young people during our Tornado of Change residential – providing young people whose parents are leaving the armed forces with a peer buddy who has already made this change with their family. The buddy would listen, provide advice and help them to make new friends and settle into their new community. Having generated this fantastic idea, we worked with the young people to develop a service delivery model, training for peer buddies, and eye-catching sub-branding. Better still, we worked together to secure funding from the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust to turn this exciting idea into reality in Fife over the next two years.

“It’s great that we have something like Ruby Boots happening in Fife. I wish this was around when my dad left the armed forces a couple of years ago. I would encourage anyone who could benefit from the project to find out more.”

INFLUENCING AND POLICY LINE

WE ARE COMMITTED TO ENSURING THE VOICES OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE FROM ARMED FORCES AND VETERAN FAMILIES ARE HEARD IN FUTURE POLICY MAKING.

WE work directly with children and young people from the armed forces community to co-produce campaigns and resources to effectively engage decision-makers, transform attitudes and advocate together for meaningful change, to ensure Scotland is a place where this group can realise their potential and thrive.

Scottish Parliament exhibition

We delivered a successful three-day exhibition at the Scottish Parliament, kindly sponsored by Alexander Stewart MBE MSP, which showcased our Forces Life Board Game and Comic Book resources. The event encouraged MSPs to try to better understand the lived experiences of children and young people from the armed forces community and ensure their voices are heard in future policy making. The campaign drew more than 35 pledges from MSPs.

Young Carers meet Annabelle Ewing MSP

A group of young carers from armed forces and veteran families met Deputy Presiding Officer, Annabelle Ewing MSP, at the Scottish Parliament. They had the opportunity to talk about their roles as carers for family members and discuss a campaign they had co-created with Forces Children Scotland and Fife Young Carers, called Ignite. The social media and poster-led campaign aimed to raise awareness of the role of a young carer and encourage peers to find out more about the support available.

Co-developing our new Influencing Strategy

We formed a working group with children and young people to develop a new influencing and policy strategy for Forces Children Scotland.

We launched the process via Zoom, with the young people and members of our team taking part in creative workshops

to explore important topics that policy makers need to know about so they can help them and their peers to realise their potential and thrive.

The working group then got together for a residential in Aviemore to take the process forward. Over a weekend, the group took part in a digital treasure hunt as part of our 'detectives and scientists' theme, exploring the challenges faced by peers and finding potential solutions. The group also

considered the wider range of stakeholders involved in the process and participated in a media training session. Once the hard work was done, the group had a great time playing pool, table tennis and air hockey. In what has become a residential tradition, we also had a film night with lots of treats, including hot chocolate and marshmallows.

Our Influencing Strategy will launch in the autumn of 2023.



DATA



CHILDREN'S RIGHTS



EDUCATION AND LEARNING



MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING



LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT LINE

WE SUPPORT EDUCATORS AND PROFESSIONALS TO HELP THEM BETTER UNDERSTAND LIFE IN AN ARMED FORCES FAMILY AND THE POTENTIAL IMPACT ON LEARNING AND ASPIRATION.

OUR Learning and Development Team has made fantastic progress in enhancing our learning offering to educators and professionals, co-producing exciting resources and widening our reach to engage growing numbers of pupils from armed forces and veteran families across Scotland.



Enhancing our learning offer to educators and professionals

We have worked in partnership with military and civilian organisations to review and enhance the training opportunities that we provide to help educators and professionals better understand the lived experiences of the children and young people that we support, and to better meet the unique support needs of this group. We delivered a series of stakeholder sessions with educators and professionals to understand the existing knowledge base and needs and held creative sessions for young people to share their lived experiences and speak out about what they felt should be covered in our learning offer training programmes.

Our Learning Offer will launch in the autumn of 2023.



Redesigning our Advisory Service

We redesigned our advisory service after listening to children, young people and parents from armed forces and veteran families, and getting input from educators and professionals. We considered how to better respond to the rising number of queries, from a broader range of stakeholders, about understanding forces life, providing up-to-date advice and information and responding to unique support needs.

Our Advisory Service will launch in the autumn of 2023.



Professional Learning Activity

We continued to work with children, young people and external partners to enhance our professional learning activity (PLA) thanks to funding from the British Foreign School Society (BFSS). Our PLA is a free educational resource for educators and professionals and includes seven modules, covering topics such as life in a forces family, the Armed Forces Covenant and the challenges faced by children and young people when it comes to education and learning.



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MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING LINE

WE HAVE SUPPORTED GROWING NUMBERS OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE FROM ARMED FORCES AND VETERAN FAMILIES TO BETTER UNDERSTAND AND ENHANCE THEIR MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING.

WE have listened to the voice of children and young people to co-develop face-to-face and digital mental health and wellbeing support services.

Your Mind Matters Digital Hub

Our Your Mind Matters Digital Hub launched thanks to funding from the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust. The Hub offers information, advice, downloadable resources and podcasts about a number of topics. The team co-produced this resource with children and young people from the armed forces community to help more than 12,500 of their peers across Scotland to better understand and look after their mental health and wellbeing.

Face-to-face support services Your Mind Matters

Funding from the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust allowed us to deliver one-to-one and peer group support at Hermitage Academy, Helensburgh.

Two-thirds of the young people supported reported improvements in areas such as overall mood and sleep, with fewer anxious thoughts. Further qualitative feedback from parents indicated a positive difference in their child's mental health and wellbeing. Observational data showed an improvement in school attendance, with a previous 'school refuser' now being able to attend school on a more permanent basis.

"The best thing about meeting with the wellbeing worker has been being able to talk to them and I appreciate the advice I have been given about my mental health and wellbeing"

Lighthouse Project

We received funding from ABF: The Soldier's Charity to launch the Lighthouse Project in partnership with Queen Victoria School, a boarding school in Dunblane for pupils from armed forces and veteran families. Pupils and staff expressed a need for specific mental health and wellbeing support services in

the school. We recruited a Wellbeing Worker and converted an unused space into a bright and breezy 'Lighthouse' room to deliver one-to-one, drop-in and peer support sessions.

Using the YP Core-10 method of evaluation, 91 per cent of pupils who engaged in direct one-to-one work had an improvement in their clinical score by the end of week six. Moreover, 100 per cent of pupils reported an increase in mood following a drop-in session, with 85 per cent reporting that the session had been helpful.

"I really enjoyed the sessions and looked forward to them all week. It helped me understand how to deal with problems the correct way. I learned how to control my emotions and stay out of trouble and drama, which has made life more chill. I like just being able to talk about anything I want to. This has been very helpful and I look forward to coming back in drop-ins."

Lighthouse Project: Lilly-Grace's story

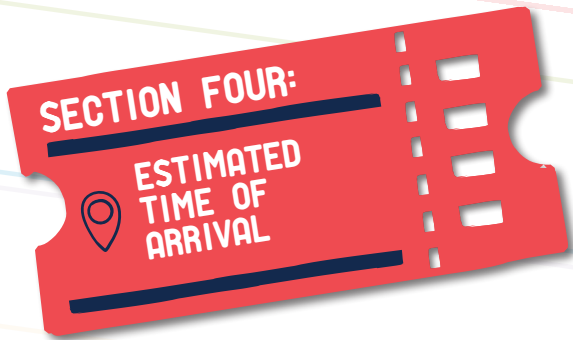
Lilly-Grace worked with our communications team to co-develop a video highlighting the positive impact of one-to-one support sessions provided through the Lighthouse project.



Co-produced podcasts sessions

We used funds from the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust to work with S5 pupils from Queen Victoria School to co-produce a series of podcasts. They wanted something to help younger pupils feel less anxious about making the change from state to boarding school in primary seven. A working group was formed with our youth participation and communications teams to co-develop three episodes that focused on their first day experiences, day-to-day routines and extra-curricular activities.





WE HAVE MADE SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS ON OUR JOURNEY TO MAKING SCOTLAND A PLACE WHERE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE FROM ARMED FORCES AND VETERAN FAMILIES CAN REALISE THEIR POTENTIAL AND THRIVE.

IT has been a memorable journey so far, with many highlights, and we hope you have enjoyed reading about them. Most importantly, children and young people have been, and will continue to be, at the heart of everything we do in terms of enhancing and expanding our service lines.

Future expansion of our service lines

On that note, we have lots of exciting things planned for the year ahead across all our service lines as we continue to approach our destination.

Month of the Military Child Resource Pack

We will launch our co-developed resource pack to help civilian peers, educators, professionals and decision-makers to better understand what it's like to be a forces child, as part of Month of the Military Child, which takes place every April.

Tornado of Change campaign

Having spent the past year developing creative concepts, storyboards and scripts, we are looking forward to launching three short videos to help civilian audiences better understand what it is like to make big changes when a parent decides to leave the armed forces.

Influencing Strategy

Co-producing our Influencing Strategy has been a fantastic experience for all involved so far and we look forward to delivering a follow-up residential for our working group to develop specific calls to action, campaign iconography, and the final look of the finished publication.



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OUR NEXT STOP

Tracking progress towards our destination

All of our respective service lines are heading towards the same destination. They may approach from different angles but will visit an inner circle of key stops – our six strategic aims – before arriving at a place where all children and young people from armed forces and veteran families can realise their potential and thrive.

We have drafted an estimated time of arrival to reflect what we still have to achieve.

Young people's voices – 1hr ETA

We continue to grow our youth participation work to represent the voices of more children and young people from armed forces families, including those who are seldom heard.

We will develop our youth participation activities across Scotland to ensure we reach younger children – those between the ages of five and eleven. We will provide a platform for armed forces children and young people to engage directly with decision-makers at all levels to positively shape policy, practice and service delivery.

Enhancing our reach – 1hrs 30 mins ETA

We will continue to increase our visibility in armed forces communities so that families know who we are and what support we provide. We will extend our reach to support organisations working with regular, reservist and veteran adults to better understand the needs of children and young people, including raising awareness of mental health, trauma and adversity. We will continue to develop our advisory service to offer advice, support and signposting across the sector.

Partnerships – 2hrs ETA

We will build upon existing partnerships and extend our networks further to achieve improved collective impact across the sector. We will build partnerships to deliver in key areas, such as upstream prevention activities.

Evidence-based – 2hrs 30mins ETA

We will build our capacity to measure outcomes and impact across all our work, contributing to the evidence base to influence change, with due regard to the Armed Forces Covenant and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). We will maintain oversight of good practice across the sector and will ensure the voice of lived experience underpins the development of learning opportunities, resources and service delivery models.

Influence – 3hrs ETA

We will help shape the future policy landscape in relation to children and young people from regular, reservist and veteran families, improving their visibility and influence. We will create and deliver learning and development opportunities to support understanding across the sector of the needs of those from this community. We will work to ensure this activity results in tangible improvements in the lived experiences of armed forces families.

Lead the sector – 4hrs ETA

We will establish a lead role in the sector, connecting policy and practice, encouraging third-sector partnerships and facilitating sector improvements. We will work in collaboration with policymakers and partners to ensure armed forces children and young people are considered, included and identified as a distinct group in policies that support improved outcomes. We will work with partners across organisational boundaries to facilitate change across the system, including between adult and children's sectors.



SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE FROM ARMED FORCES AND VETERAN FAMILIES



Thank you for reading our impact report

To explore partnership opportunities with us, please contact our Chief Executive Officer Laura Falconer at laura.falconer@forceschildrenscotland.org.uk

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Scottish Charity Number SC038722