

## **RESPONSE TO GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCEMENT RE: HAYWARD REVIEW**

Forces Children Scotland is extremely disappointed by the Scottish Government's decision not to implement the recommendations of the Hayward Review.

We fully support the statement by the Children and Young People's Commissioner for Scotland. This decision fails to deliver children's right to an education that promotes the development of their personality, talents and mental and physical abilities. The recommendations of the Hayward Review were an innovative programme of teaching and assessment that was developed with and for children. Just months after the commencement of the UNCRC Incorporation Act, it is devastating that the guiding principles have not been followed. The changes proposed by the Hayward Review were in the best interests of children and has their voices at the heart.

We are disappointed how much the Ministerial Statement and following debate focused on the voice of teacher rather than the voice of children and young people themselves. This is especially alarming as the UNCRC Incorporation Act was introduced only two months ago.

Children from armed forces and veteran families face many challenges in their educational journey. Frequent school moves and involuntary separation from their serving parent can have a detrimental effect on their learning and attainment. This can result in gaps in learning or repeating subjects which can become repetitive<sup>iii</sup>. Due to the timing of moves, some children and young people are unable to pick the subjects they want to pursue which can be deflating and limits their potential<sup>iii</sup>.

In the response by the Children and Young People's Commissioner for Scotland, Angela Morgan said "the number of children in Scotland identified as needing additional support is over a third of the school population and is increasing year on year. What this tells us is not that a significant number of children are flawed and lacking; it tells us that we need to fundamentally reform a service which is designed as fit for only two thirds of the population it serves."<sup>iv</sup>

Forces Children Scotland (formerly known as Royal Caledonian Education Trust) | Scottish Charity Number: SCO38722 | Registered Address: C/O The Melting Pot, 15 Calton Road, Edinburgh, EH8 8DL



EMPLOYER RECOGNITION SCHEME

BRONZE AWARD

Proudly supporting those who serve.

Children and young people from armed forces families are recognised as needing additional support at times due to the unique challenges of service life<sup>v</sup>.

**We believe that the three elements recommended by the Hayward Review will promote forces children's right to access an education which develops their whole self.**

It will support learning which will fill in the gaps in curriculum that are missed when moving across education systems. It will recognise the significant contribution forces children make in their community, often taking on caring roles or advocating for their peers. It will support them to undertake projects of particular interest, which will showcase their strengths, often developed through significant adversity.

Moving away from a single, high stakes exam will also support better attainment. Children and young people from forces families tell us that it can be difficult to concentrate and perform in high pressure exam situations when their parent is deployed. For those with caring responsibilities, they may present for an exam after a morning of caring for their parent with PTSD. For those who move into Scotland in the senior phase can find the 'two term sprint' even more difficult as they make up gaps in learning and adjust to a new system of assessment. None of these experiences lend themselves to forces young people performing their academic best. Emerging research is showing that forces children whilst attaining similarly to their civilian peers, are not meeting their full potential<sup>vi</sup>.

We call on the Scottish Government to reverse its decision and work with forces children and young people, and in fact all children and young people, to deliver the education system that develops their whole self. The one which they have consistently asked for that puts them at the centre. The one that meets the aspirations of Scotland to be the best place in the world for children to grow up.

---

<sup>i</sup> Children's Commissioner (2018) [Kin and Country: Growing Up as an Armed Forces Child](#), page 7

<sup>ii</sup> Howard, Doherty and Cole (2021) [Focus On Armed Forces Charities' Support for Families](#)

<sup>iii</sup> Selous, Walker and Misca (2020) [Living in Our Shoes: Understanding the Needs of UK Armed Forces Families](#), page 57

<sup>iv</sup> [Young people need much more than Scottish Government's 'tentative steps' to improve education, urges Children's Commissioner - The Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland \(cypcs.org.uk\)](#)

<sup>v</sup> [Supporting documents - Additional support for learning: statutory guidance 2017 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

<sup>vi</sup> Cotton (2024) GCSE attainment in children from military families (conference session), Forces in Mind Trust Research Centre Conference 2024, London