

THEY SAY WE'RE HOME NOW.

Some of us feel okay, some of us are still learning.

This new life looks different for each of us, and we're finding our way with the help we need.

And with support from **The Ruby Boots Project**, we don't have to do it alone.

Find more Ruby Boots activities:



Forces Children Scotland (Operating name of the Royal Caledonian Education Trust) is a Scottish Charity, SC038722.

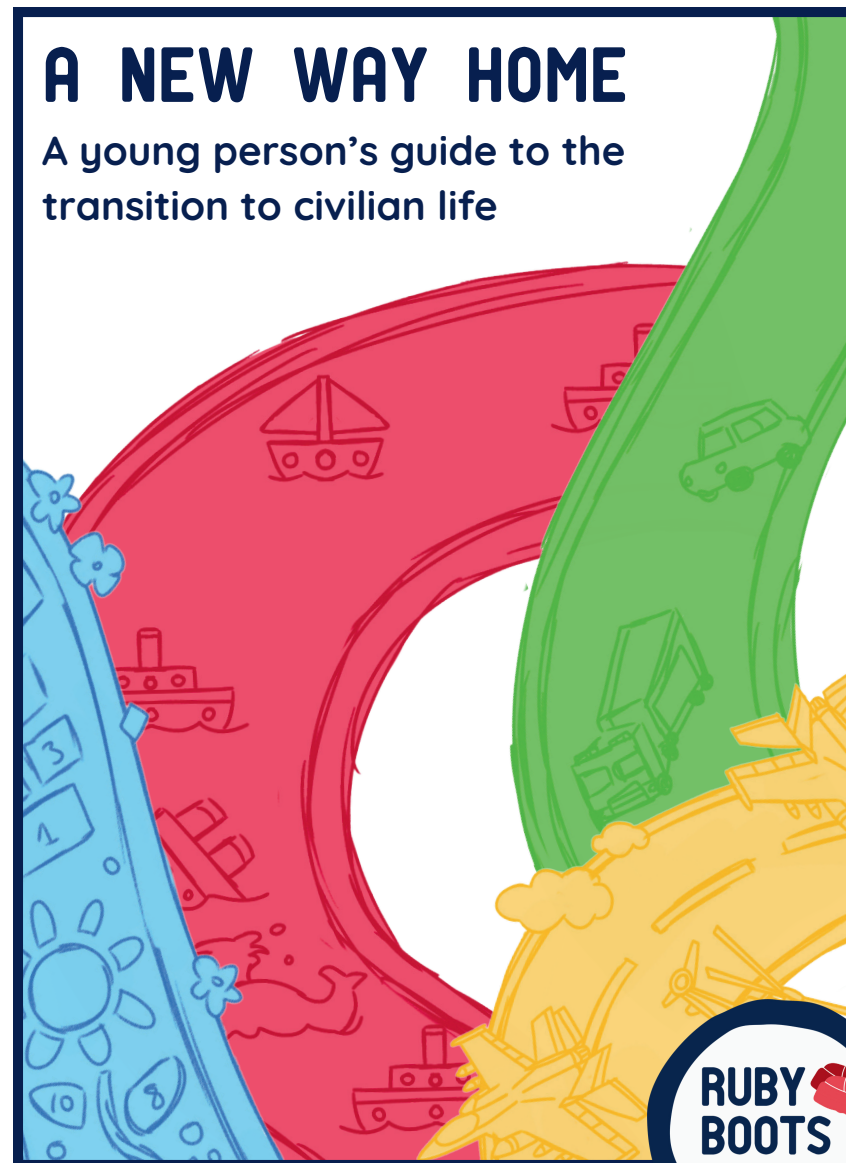
Patron: His Majesty King Charles III

The illustrations in this pack were made by Kemu Kedrayate.

 **THE ARMED FORCES
COVENANT FUND TRUST**
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 Ministry
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WHAT'S IN THE PACK?

The transition to civilian life looks different for everyone, so some pages will be useful for you, and others may not be.

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GET SUPPORT NOW

If you need to talk to someone about how you feel, or if you're worried about someone else, these free services are here for you, 24/7.

Phone **111 (NHS 24)** and select the mental health option

Call **Samaritans** at **116 123**
They're here to listen



If you would rather text, reach out to **Shout** by texting 'THEMIX' to **85258**

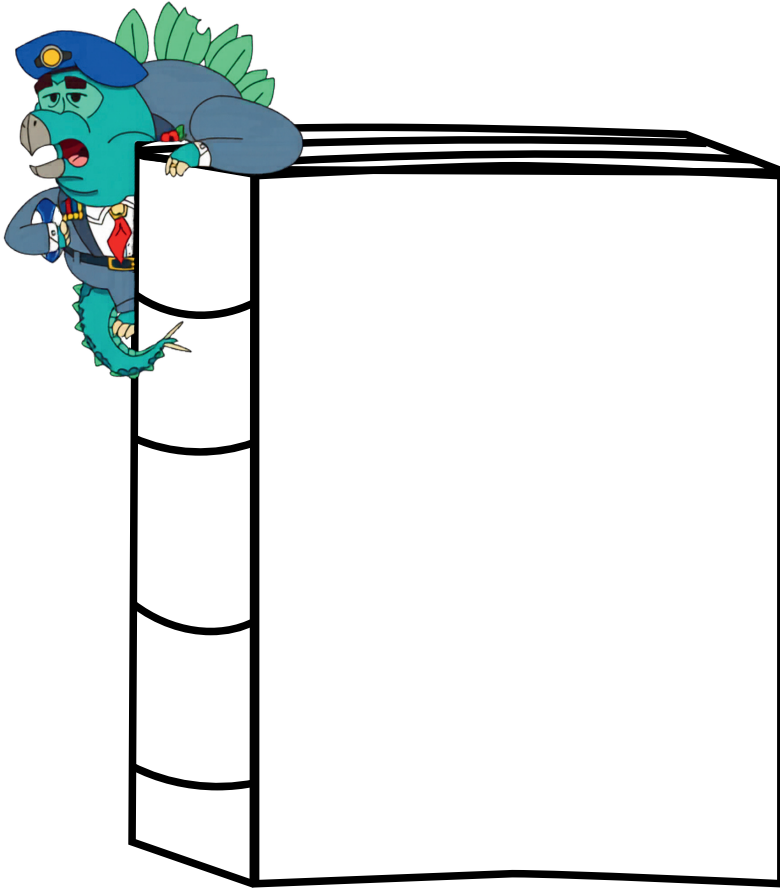
If you're 18 and under, call **Childline** at **0800 111** or visit [childline.org.uk](https://www.childline.org.uk)



If you're in danger or it's an emergency, please **call 999 for immediate help.**

A NEW CHAPTER

Decorate the front cover of your new story.
What could it be titled?



We'd love to see your designs! You can send them to:
rubyboots@forceschildrenscotland.org.uk

YOUR OWN STORY

This booklet is here to be a guide on this journey.

It's your place to draw, write, colour, and think about how you're feeling as your family leaves the Armed Forces and starts a new adventure. You'll also read about how others have felt in this situation.

If you want, you can share it with your parents, or a trusted friend or teacher. And if you want to keep it to yourself, that is okay too.



WHY IS THIS PACK NEEDED?

'The swap to veteran life was overwhelming and hard to understand. I would've benefitted from a booklet like this as it lets you know you're not alone.'

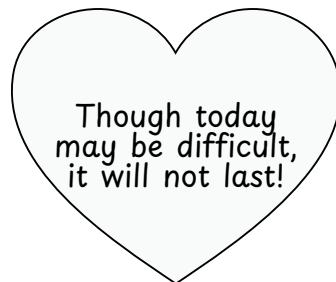
This pack is has been carefully created with input from many young people of different ages and experiences.

Transitions in Armed Forces families are common, but still challenging. It's perfectly okay to feel worried, excited, sad, angry. You are valid in how you feel.

This is us



The Ruby Boots Project from Forces Children Scotland helps children and young people with parents leaving the Armed Forces make new friends, share feelings and help each other.



WORRY TOOLKIT

Try this if something makes you feel worried.

What is my worry?

What am I afraid might happen?

What would I tell a friend who had this worry?

What can I do to make me feel good?

Scan this code for more ways to handle your worries.



WHAT HELPS US

Here are some things that make us feel better.

I like to write down my thoughts in a diary.

I write a letter to someone but never send it.

I go out and explore new places!

It is easier if you take a friend with you.

I like to re-arrange my bedroom. It helps me as I am used to moving house.

It helps to build good routines, like going to football club every Tuesday.

I talk to an empty chair! It gets things off my chest.

I do creative things like painting and dancing.

I go on a colour walk: choosing a colour and spotting all the coloured things.

Being in nature is great!

I have an app that sends me hourly motivational quotes and words of affirmations.

I write down everything I enjoy doing or that makes me feel good on lollipop sticks in a jar. Everytime I am sad, I pick one and do the thing!



Colour
us in

WHAT IS A FORCES CHILD?

A Forces child is someone who grew up or experienced a part of their life in the Armed Forces community.

Every child and young person has a unique experience in the Forces. This makes every single story and experience important.

Children and young people are defined by who they are, what they enjoy, and so much more than just their parents job.

WHAT IS 'CIVILIAN LIFE'?

Civilian life is when your family is no longer part of the Armed Forces. Some things might change, but your family is still your family.

Sometimes we call this 'civvy street', just for fun!

Next, you'll find some stories about the journey to civvy street. Scan this code to find drawings to go with them. 🐶



HOW THE JOURNEY CAN FEEL

Every transition to civilian life looks different. Here are some of ours.

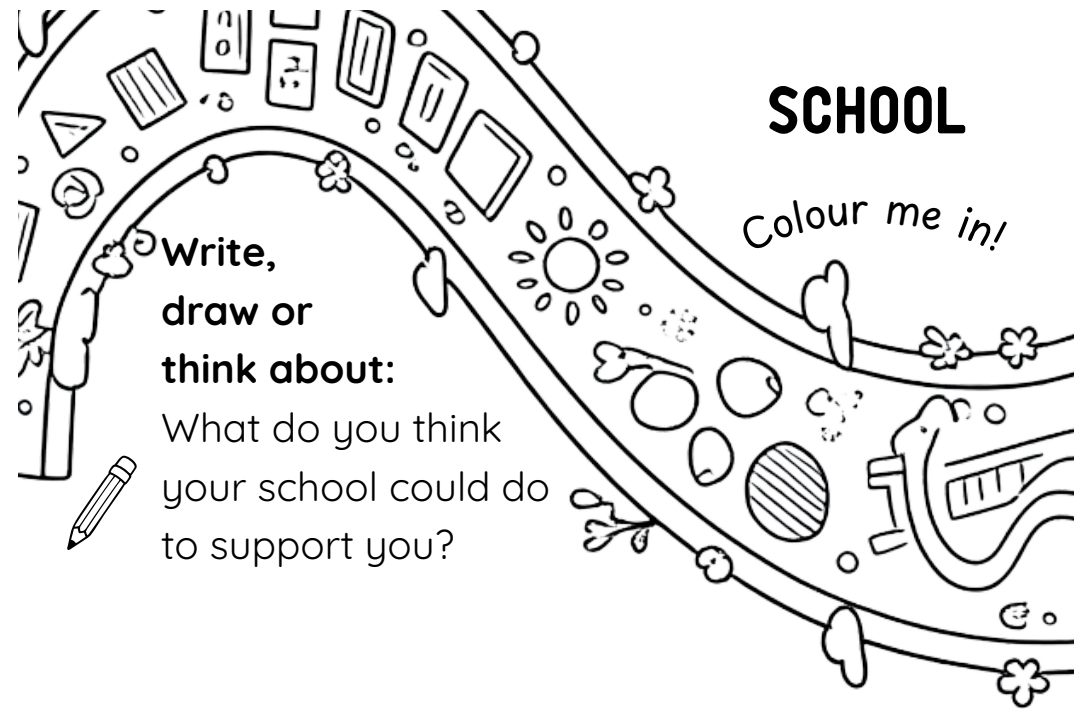
A PARENT RETURNS TO WORK

‘When Dad was deployed for months at a time, Mum gave up her job to keep us going through the moves and separations. She was always there — every school run, every sports day. After Dad left the Army, things changed. Mum went back to work, and I’m proud she’s doing what she loves again. But sometimes she’s not at the school gates, and I have to share her time with her job. Life feels different, but I know it’s her turn now.’



NO LONGER MOVING HOUSES

‘By 12, I’d lived in six houses — and loved it. Moving meant new schools, friends, and adventures. When Dad left the Army, we moved just down the road instead of across the country. At first, I thought it would be great, but I missed the patch, where you could knock on any door and someone would welcome you with cake. I missed the opportunity to have fresh starts and experience new things. I felt trapped and overwhelmed, like I had itchy feet.’



If you’re feeling worried, the Worry Toolkit on page 17 may help. And if you want to speak to someone right away, turn to the back cover of this pack.

SCHOOL

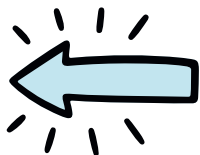
When your family leaves the Armed Forces, you might stay at the same school or move to a new one. You might even learn some new things because different schools can do things in different ways.



It's okay if you don't know everything straight away.

If you're feeling worried, confused, or lonely, tell a grown-up you trust, like your teacher or another adult at school. Asking for help is a brave thing to do, and you don't have to figure everything out on your own.

Getting help can look different for everyone. Your school could:



- Give you extra time to settle in.
- Explain things in a different way.
- Check in with you to see how you're feeling.
- Help you make new friends.
- Give you a quiet space if you need a break.

Scan this code for tips on moving school, different curriculums, or asking for help.



BECOMING A YOUNG CARER

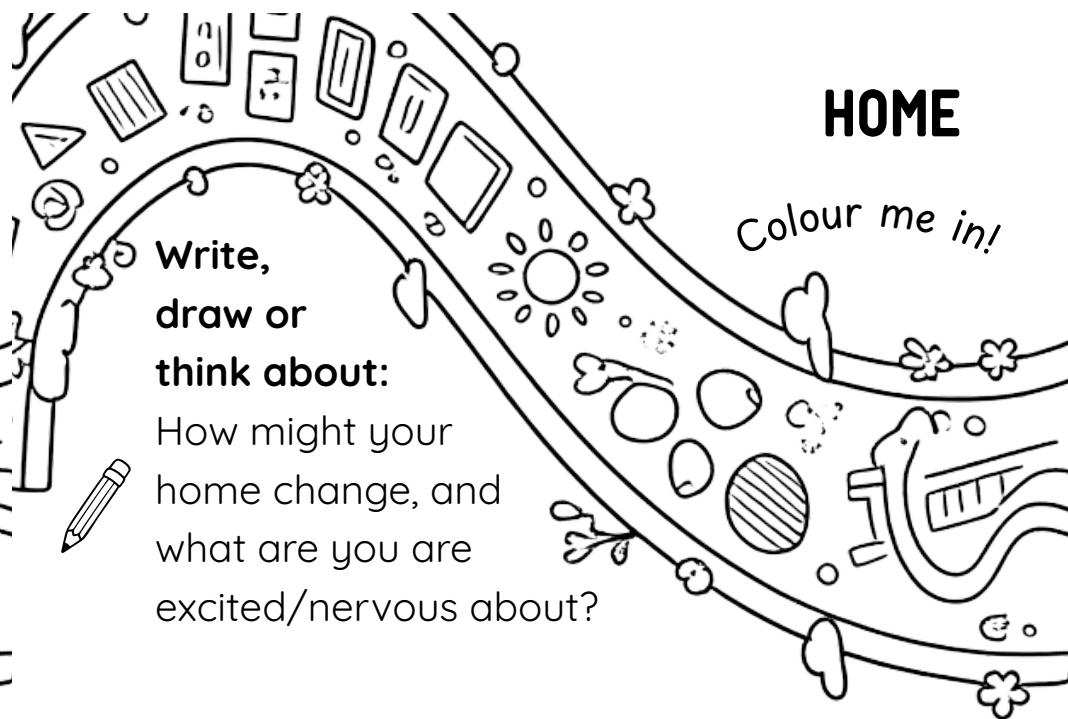
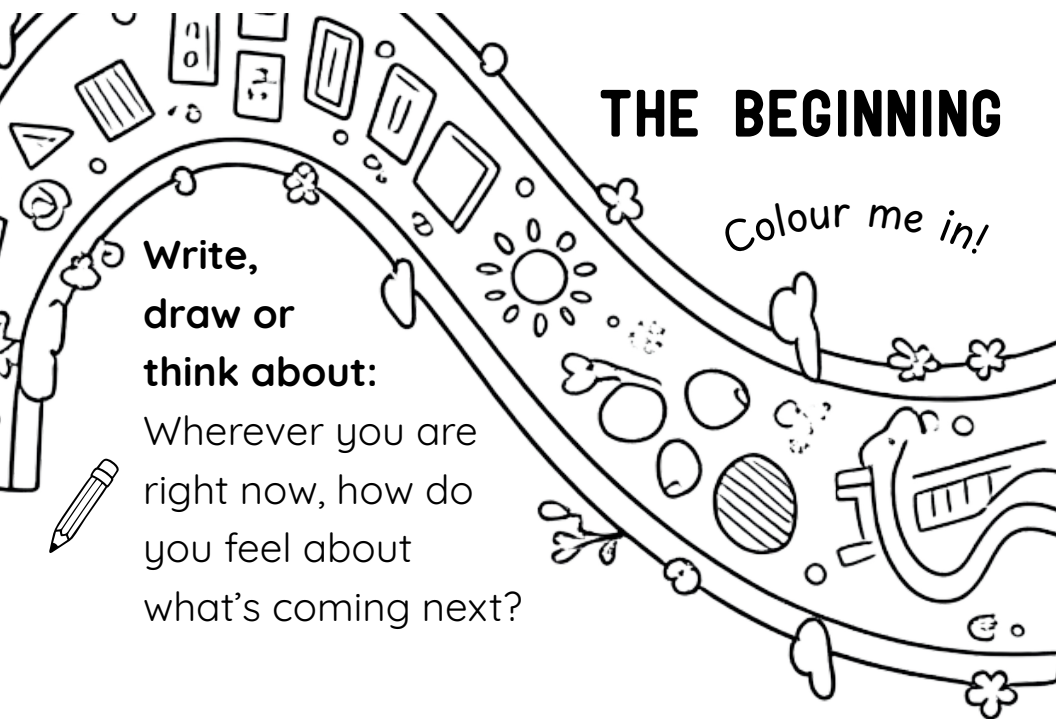
'When Dad left the Navy, I was happy — no more deployments, no more goodbyes. We moved into our own house, and he started work as a mechanic. But a year later, he got into an accident. Suddenly, I was helping him in ways I never expected, as his carer. People say I'm "mature for my age", but for me, it's just life. It felt strange at first... but now I know what it's like to have dinner together every night.'



LOSING A PART OF YOUR IDENTITY

'I was excited that Mum was leaving the RAF, but it took a long time. After one long deployment, she came home — but soon started "weekending" between Lossiemouth and England for work. Every Sunday night, I dreaded her leaving again, afraid she wouldn't come back. When she finally left the forces, we were all under one roof again. However, I started to struggle in school. I realised that my identity was built in my military life and now I don't feel like I belong anymore. There is a lot of talk about teenagers finding themselves and their identity, but mine has been taken away.'





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HOME

Like Hame-ish, and some of us, you might need to move house.

Home is more than a house.

Home is where you feel safe, loved, and cared for.



This is Hame-ish



Sometimes your daily routines might change too. You might have to wait a little longer for the bathroom in the morning!

You could make a new family tradition together, like a Friday games night or Saturday pancakes!

However you feel about these changes is okay. It can take time to get used to new routines.

Scan this code for tips on moving home and how to adapt to different routines... and to learn about Hame-ish's story!



OUR TOP TIPS FOR CHANGE

Don't compare your journey to someone else's.

If you don't understand something, it's okay to ask questions.

Talk to someone about it, and don't be afraid to ask questions. People want to help.

Not everyone understands, but they should be willing to learn.



Colour us in

WHO CAN I TALK TO?

The top three people I can chat with are...



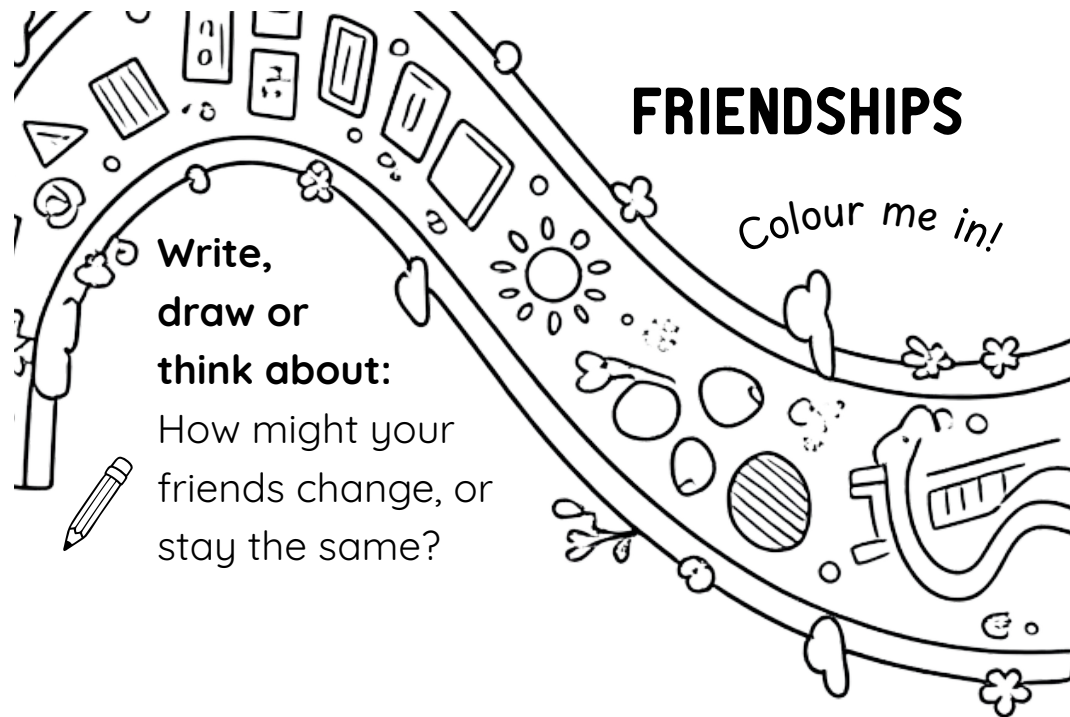
FRIENDSHIPS

Friends are important!

Friends can make us laugh, help us feel brave, and make new places feel happier. You might keep old friends, make new friends, or both. Every friendship is special.



Scan this code for tips on moving away, making new friends, and how to keep friendships going when it feels tricky.



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