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Association of Directors of Education in Scotland

TRANSITIONS GUIDANCE: CHILDREN OF ARMED FORCES FAMILIES

MARCH 2018

1. PURPOSE

This guidance is one of a set of advice and guidelines from the ADES National Transitions Officer to support children of Armed Forces Families as they transition from different education provisions.

The Scottish Service Children’s Strategic Group [SSCSG], chaired by the Scottish Government, states their core purpose is to work in collaboration with key stakeholders to support the education needs of children from Armed Forces families in Scotland in accordance with the commitment set out in the Scottish Government’s *Renewing Our Commitments*.

Support with transitions is therefore paramount in ensuring that each child and young person maximises their potential in each education setting.

Communication is the key to effective transitions with the three main priorities being:

- Informing parents about the school
- Teachers being informed about children’s development
- Sharing past experiences.

2. BACKGROUND

There are a significant number of children and young people of Armed Forces families in local authorities in Scotland. Schools in these local authorities can experience a high turnover of pupils over a school year. Pupils experience interrupted learning across different education systems both in the United Kingdom and abroad.

As a result, a high number of our pupils have varying previous learning experiences and pupils can have significant gaps in their learning, which affects pupils’ attainment and achievement. Children and young people of Armed Forces families can experience high levels of anxiety for long periods of time during the deployment of their parents in combat zones and experience shows that this has a considerable impact on their learning in particular literacy and numeracy.

The *Reviewing Our Commitments* document [Scottish Government 2016] states: ‘Children and young people from Service families may, at times, face challenges and need extra support to make the most of their learning and to overcome obstacles in accessing the curriculum.’

Support is therefore required for children and their families before, during and after transition.

3. SCOPE

This guidance applies to:

- All staff in establishments with children of Armed Forces families within local authorities and all relevant local authorities’ central staff
- All children of Armed Forces families and their parents in local authorities across Scotland.

4. DEFINITIONS

Throughout the guidance the following terms apply:

Armed Forces Personnel

Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen serving with HM Forces. Regular or Reserve

#	Royal Navy definition	Army definition	Royal Air Force definition
1	Forces Child	A child under 18 dependent upon a member of the Armed Forces (parent, step-parent or guardian)	Same
a)	(Education definition) Forces Child: A child or young person with a parent, step-parent or carer in the Armed Forces		
2	Armed Forces mobility	A requirement of all Armed Forces personnel to serve wherever the operational need requires	Same
3	Transition	Period of time at which move is made from civilian life to military life and vice versa	Transition also takes place between military units upon assignment
b)	(Education definition) Transition: Period between schools (eg Nursery to P1, P7 to S1) or between class stages (P2 to P3) Forces Child: moving from school to school, at any stage. Transition from Infant to Primary School, Primary to Secondary School and Secondary to Post-school		
4	A Welfare Issue	A welfare issue is a serious problem affecting a Service persons ability to perform their duties either UK based or overseas	Same

#	Royal Navy definition	Army definition	Royal Air Force definition
5	Divisional Officer	Unit Welfare Officer	(RAF) Officer Commanding Personnel Management Squadron (OC PMS) & Warrant Officer Commanding Personnel Management Squadron (WO PMS)
c)	(Education definition) Welfare Officer: Supports families and schools with pupils' absences		
6	Royal Navy & Royal Marines Welfare (RNRMW)	Unit Welfare Office – the location/site where the welfare team support the Welfare Officer, a drop-in centre for service personnel and families	The RAF team responsible for all aspects of welfare support and community provision for the RAF community (Serving personnel and their families)
7	X	X	Service Community Support Officer (SCSO) – A dedicated full-time reserve position with a focus on supporting the RAF community (Service personnel and their families) with accommodation and deployment related matters
8	Base/Base Port/Air Station	Garrison – name given to large community, including military buildings and facilities	Station – name given to a Royal Air Force operational base
9	Ship/Submarine/Squadron	Battalion – an Army unit that has more than three companies	Wing/Squadron – the RAF organisational structure within a Station or within a local community setting (eg Reserves Squadron)
10	Deployment/Patrol	Deployment – periods when Service Personnel are sent overseas on operational service	Same
11	Draft/Assignment/Appointment	'Posting' – personnel are sent to another military location to serve with that unit	Assignment
12	Draft/Assignment/Appointment	Trickle Posting – when an individual is posted away to another unit as opposed to the whole battalion moving (an individual transfer)	No equivalent within the RAF – All Service Personnel assigned individually

#	Royal Navy definition	Army definition	Royal Air Force definition
13	Same	Accompanied Posting – Personnel assigned to another unit and take their spouse and family with them to that new location	Same
14	Same	Un-Accompanied Posting – personnel chooses to go to another unit location alone, while leaving spouse and family settled in home location	Same
15	Deployment	Tour – a 'tour' relates to the period of duty wherever a Service person is sent	This may be a 'tour' at a defined military establishment (eg a posting), an operational tour overseas or an extended period of training at an alternative location
16	Support Crew	Rear Ops (operation) – the small body of personnel left on duty at home military establishment (home base) while the main body of personnel are sent away on operational tour	Rear Party
17	Post-Operational Leave (POL) JCCC Joint Casualty & Compassionate Centre	Post-Operational Tour Leave (POTL)	Leave is given to personnel on their return from an operational tour to allow for rest & recuperation
18	JCCC Joint Casualty & Compassionate Centre	The MoD organisational structure that provides a focal point for casualty administration and notification and request for compassionate travel (for those personnel serving overseas) in respect of member of the British Armed Forces	Same
19	Royal Navy & Royal Marines Welfare (RNRMW)	Army Welfare Services (AWS) – the principle, professionally-trained Welfare staff and Social Workers for Army personnel	SSAFA are the independent contractors responsible for delivery of personal, family and social work services for the RAF
20	SSAFA – Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Families Association	Emotional, financial and practical help is provided and available for any currently serving, or any who have served, and their family. Community volunteers provide trained 'befriending' support	X

#	Royal Navy definition	Army definition	Royal Air Force definition
21	Royal Navy Families	Family Federations. Army Families Federation – organisations that provide an independent voice for families world-wide on any aspect of Military life, Housing, Education	Royal Air Force Families (RAF-FF)
22	Potentially Vulnerable (Education)	Term used by Department of Education (DoE, England) in relation to Service Children	
23	DIO – Defence Infrastructure Organisation	MOD department responsible for the provision of all infrastructures on military bases and for the provision of accommodation for service families (see SFA)	Same
24	Married Patch/ Married Quarters	Service Family Accommodations (SFA) sometimes referred to as the 'Patch' – MOD providing housing for Service personnel and their families which may be located within a military unit (also known as 'behind the wire') or embedded in the local community	Maintained under contract by Carillion-Amey and allocated to entitled personnel upon assignment order
25	HIVE	A Civil Service provided information and signposting service for the Armed Forces community	Used by the Service community as a first point of contact for all enquiries regards accommodation, schools, local provision and information regarding 'next' posting location

EDUCATION TERMS/DEFINITIONS:

d)	Parent/Carer	Any person who has parental responsibilities or who has care of the child – e.g. a relative with whom the child or young person lives for the majority of the time
e)	LAAC	Looked After and Accommodated Children
f)	Additional Support Needs	Term applies to children and young people who, for whatever reason, require additional support in order to help them make the most of their learning

EDUCATION TERMS/DEFINITIONS:		
g)	Potentially Vulnerable	Term used by Department of Education (England) in relation to Service Children
h)	CfE Curriculum for Excellence	Curriculum in Scotland for all children and young people 3-18
i)	Code of Practice	Written guidelines to comply with legislation
j)	Interrupted Learning	Children can experience Interrupted Learning for a number of reasons: Mobility, deployment, holidays in term time due to their parent's role in the Armed Forces
k)	Lead Professional (where agencies outwith the school are involved)	Person known to the child or young person and their family who has a responsibility to: monitor the effectiveness of the transition process ensure that the plan for transition is reviewed as required
l)	SEEMiS	Local Authority Data Management System – Armed Forces Family Indicator
m)	Staged Intervention	Intervention and targeting of resources where most needed, Planning monitoring and reviewing progress and achievements at school level

5. GUIDANCE STATEMENT

Our vision is that all children of Armed Forces families will be supported in their transitions to other education establishments and also within education establishments.

The fundamental principles underpinning this vision are reflected in our commitment to:

- Providing support for children of Armed Forces families who experience interrupted learning
- Mitigating the effects of mobility and deployment and ensuring continuity and progression in learning
- Reducing barriers to learning and ensuring children and young people become successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens and that all of our children and young people are safe, nurtured, healthy, achieving, active, included, respected and responsible
- Ensuring a partnership between The Armed Forces (Tri-Service), local authorities and parents.

All of the above require the flexibility of systems and structures in schools to meet the needs of all pupils including those whose parents are in the Armed Forces.

All align with the United Nations Rights of the Child.

The key priority for all schools is that of meeting needs of children and young people at the earliest opportunity with the least intrusive level of intervention. As needs increase support will become more targeted as in a staged intervention process.

The above all link to The National Improvement Framework and Action Plan which ‘states clearly that it is designed to assist schools deliver the twin aims of excellence and equity with the key priority areas being:

- Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy
- Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children
- Improvement in children and young people’s health and wellbeing
- Improvement in employability skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people’.

6. IMPLEMENTATION

All children and young people go through a number of natural transition stages in their school education when they move from one setting to another. It is especially important that the following are also fundamental to the transitions of Armed Forces children.

- Planning must begin early enough to facilitate a positive transition
- It will at all times promote ownership of the process by the child young person, by planning with the person – not for the person
- It must be for the person’s whole future, not just for the next year.

This will ensure that Armed Forces children and young people who have patterns of interrupted learning with frequent school moves from different education systems will become: confident individuals, effective contributors, successful learners and responsible citizens.

7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

‘The Scottish Government, local authorities, schools and the Armed Forces in Scotland work closely to make sure that children and young people in Service families benefit from the same standard of, and access to, education as any other children or young person in their area’ [Reviewing Our Commitments – Scottish Government 2016]

7.1 The National Transitions Officer ADES will ensure:

- The transition guidance is disseminated widely
- There is evaluation of transition processes
- The sharing of good transitions practice between local authorities is facilitated.

7.2 Local authorities should ensure:

- Resources and practices are in place to ensure guidance implementation
- There is an appropriate framework for school organisation and curriculum to ensure inclusive and accessible provision including, as appropriate the progressive transition of pupils between establishments
- Appropriate advice, support and continual professional development are in place to support staff
- Guidance is developed in liaison with other agencies, staff and parents
- Liaison with identified contacts from the Armed Forces takes place
- Parents are provided with information
- There is a flexible response which minimises barriers to appropriate educational provision for children of Armed Forces Families with additional support needs
- There is monitoring of:
 - Placement of children from Armed Forces families
 - Progress in learning
 - SEEMiS Indicator.

7.3 School management should ensure:

- Effective information sharing with previous and next schools, school staff, partner services and agencies and Armed Forces
- Knowledge of particular circumstances of Armed Forces families is shared as appropriate
- The provision of induction to school policies and procedures
- School ethos includes appreciation of Armed Forces families
- School policy reflects a coherent and comprehensive approach to promote equalities a discrimination and provides a learning environment that takes into account the needs of pupils and makes effective provision for additional support needs and health and wellbeing
- School organisation and curriculum optimise inclusive and accessible provision taking into account the need to accommodate progressive transition of pupils between establishments
- All staff are aware of their role in helping to keep pupils, happy, safe, well and included
- Pupils are involved in decisions that significantly affect them, and their views are given due regard, as far as practicable
- An awareness that pupil movement takes place at different times of the school year
- There is good communication between the child or young person, parents and all supporting agencies
- Information is shared promptly and effectively, in a format accessible to all
- Schools make arrangements which are clear so that the child or young person and all those involved know what is happening, when it is happening and who is responsible.

7.4 School staff should ensure:

- Effective information sharing between the headteacher, school staff and parents
- An awareness of the knowledge of particular circumstances of Armed Forces families
- That each child or young person is involved in the transition process
- An awareness of support for children when parents are deployed
- Engagement with induction policies and procedures for Children from Armed Forces Families
- Engagement in relevant CPD.

7.5 Armed Forces should ensure:

- The sharing of relevant information with local authorities and headteachers
- The facilitation and dissemination of information on schools to service personnel, on request
- An active partnership role with the local authorities
- Armed Forces parents are encouraged to make early contact with schools, especially if the child has complex additional support needs
- Armed Forces parents are encouraged to keep copies of all documents about their child.

7.6 Parents and pupils also have responsibilities

Parents should:

- Keep copies of all documents about their child (education, health, etc.)
- Share relevant information
- Be proactive in reading HIVE and school websites
- Deliver all documents on time
- Engage as active partners and never be afraid to ask questions
- Safeguard and promote their child's health, development and welfare
- Cooperate with the rules, regulations or disciplinary requirements of the school
- Have regard to their child's views, taking into account their age and maturity.

Pupils should:

- Be encouraged to share their views on their education journey with the school
- Be fully aware of the school's health and wellbeing curriculum
- Be able to ask for support when they need to.

8. EQUALITIES

Full consideration is given to promoting equality and preventing discrimination with regard to children's needs arising from their gender, ethnicity, religion, culture, age, sexual orientation, health, abilities and disabilities.

“Children of members of the Armed Forces should have the same standard of and access to, education [including early years services] as any other UK citizen in the area in which they live.

[Armed Forces Covenant 2011]

9. SUSTAINABILITY

This guidance will ensure better outcomes for children, young people of Armed Forces families and potentially improve community safety and cohesion in the long term.

It is suggested that this guidance could be used as a template for the development of policy that addresses the needs of Forces children with their education transitions.

10. RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act (2000)
- Additional Support for Learning Act (2004) – amended 2009
- Parental Involvement Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Children and Young People Act 2014
- Armed Forces Covenant 2014
- Renewing Our Commitments 2016
- Guidance for Local Education Authorities on the Admission of Children and Young People of Armed Forces Families to Scottish Schools 2016
- 2017 National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan for Scottish Education – Achieving Excellent and Equity 2016 Scottish Government
- United Nations Rights of the Child 1990 .Updates 2000, 2012, 2014

Resource: Forces Children's Education website (ADES)
www.forceschildrenseducation.scot



11. REVIEW

The National Transitions Officer will review this guidance in conjunction with the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland [ADES] in 2019.

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