

ADES National Transitions Officer

UPDATE #7 (January 2021)

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Supporting Armed Forces Children and Young People in Our Schools

Dear Colleagues,

I hope this finds you well.

Education leaders across the sectors respond to the Covid pandemic by continuing to provide quality learning experiences, while adapting to evolving guidance and regulations. Schools deliver progressive and continuous learning experiences that are responsive to learners and their needs. Staff interact with children and young people learning from home, at the same time engaging with those attending schools (the vulnerable learners, and children of key workers). The National Response depends upon schools maintaining their vital role in society by providing continuity of support for all children and their families. As the response to the pandemic continues to change, so too school engagement requires modification and adaptation.

Teaching and learning in this current environment requires a range of techniques, resources and delivery models be employed, constantly being developed, and enhanced through collaboration, creativity, and ingenuity. These are offered by educators working to significantly increase their own skills and knowledge. Teaching remotely (or using a blended model approach) is not just moving what is normally provided in a school setting to a virtual platform or identifying resources children can use at home. Great strides were made during the last lockdown, and professional and collegial work continues within schools, across local authorities, in partnership and with Education Scotland. Resources are also enhanced by knowledge shared across Scotland, the UK and internationally.

The shared goal is to maintain a provision in continuity of learning throughout various stages of lockdown that can be as close to the daily face-to-face experience, while recognising that it is not possible (nor desirable) to replicate a classroom model at home. It is acknowledged that parents are doing as much as they can to support the learning and experiences of their child, within the home environment and in partnership with teachers, often while juggling their own work responsibilities.

Armed Forces families may experience additional challenges related to mobility, transition, isolation, deployment and separation, and the lack of opportunity to develop relationships with teachers/educators/peers necessary to fully engage in a child's learning journey.

I hope you and your family continue to stay healthy and safe.

The following items are those that I want to bring to your attention in this update.

1. Statement from Tri-Service (Royal Navy, Army & RAF) about general activities of serving personnel and possible impacts on family members.
2. Lt Colonel Hugo Clark – comments
3. Scottish Government – Scottish Armed Forces Education Support Group (SAFESG)
4. MOD – Education Support Fund – Scotland
5. SQA – Scottish Qualifications Authority – update for parents & carers
6. Education Scotland – National Overview of Practice in Remote Learning
7. National Overview of Practice in Remote Learning
8. Forces in Mind Trust (FiMT) – Living in Our Shoes report
9. Armed Forces Covenant Legislation – update
10. Education Scotland Report – January 2021
11. Newsletters - available

This is the information that is available currently (30/01/ 2021).

Best wishes,
Carolyn

Please get in contact if you have any comments or queries.

Carolyn MacLeod MBE

National Transitions Officer

for Children and Young People of Armed Forces families in Scottish Schools, ADES

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1. Information from Tri-Service (Royal Navy, Army & RAF) in Scotland.

The following has been provided by military contacts in response to my request for a statement about the 'general' activity and some challenges faced by families – particularly in relation to Covid-19.

The **Royal Navy** in Scotland

Despite the global Coronavirus Pandemic, the UK Armed Forces have continued to deliver their contribution to the security of the UK. In particular, the Royal Navy has maintained its global footprint supporting various National taskings including Maritime Security, Counter Narcotics and Humanitarian Support Operations (<https://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/news-and-latest-activity/operations>).

From a more local Scottish perspective the Royal Navy continues to support the National Strategic Deterrent as well as protection of UK Waters and Maritime Security operations in the Gulf from HMNB CLYDE. Overlain on this COVID-19 has produced additional demands and requirements for all service personnel to provide assistance as required with the COVID response anywhere within the UK.

Given all of this, what impact has this had on the families and spouses of our Naval personnel?

The RN has introduced enhanced COVID-19 safety measures to ensure that the Ship's companies are protected as best as possible from the virus in order to maintain operations. This has seen some of our service personnel quarantining for periods prior to their units deploying, increasing the period of family separation. Across the Royal Navy other personnel who should be enjoying post deployment periods of stability with their families have been called upon or are on standby to support National and Local responses to COVID-19. All of this has added an extra layer to the normal levels of instability and periods of separation experienced by the families.

Lt Cdr Garth Atkinson, Royal Navy Faslane

The **Army** in Scotland

Currently there are units from Scotland on operational tour in Afghanistan, providing protection to the NATO instructors and students who are training to be officers in the Afghan National Army, as part of NATO's training and mentoring mission. They have had to quarantine for an extra 4 days before deploying, in an RAF base in England to ensure they were COVID free and will have to do the same on their return to the UK, before they are allowed home. This has added a bit of time to their 6-month tour. They deployed in October and will be back in April. Another of our units has spent the last year training for and taking over the role of NATO's Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF). This has seen them be on the highest readiness to deploy anywhere in the world that NATO might require them. This was a six-month commitment, which meant that they had to undergo high level training, to ensure that their infantry and deployability skills were of the absolute highest order. They undertook a major confirmatory exercise before taking the role and, after COVID, continued to train locally to their base location, in COVID safe bubbles.

All units Regular and Reserve were part of the British military COVID support force in Scotland and were part of the staffing of the COVID Mobile Testing units, providing testing to those with symptoms, all over Scotland from April until September.

Possible impact on the families and spouses of our Army personnel?

Family members of armed forces personnel can feel vulnerable at this time. Much of the great work described above mean service personnel are away from home for extended periods of time, which can cause this vulnerability to be particularly acute. This can be exacerbated for family where the service person is deployed which is causing feelings of isolation. In these cases, it is important to provide reassurance to the families and especially the children of serving personnel. Our Welfare Officers are remaining engaged with families virtually. Some families are missing the social interaction and we are looking to re-open the community centres when restrictions allow.

Major Roddy Laing, Army Headquarters Scotland

The Royal Air Force (RAF) in Scotland

RAF Lossiemouth remains a busy air base providing 24/7 operational activity securing the seas and skies around the UK together with deploying aircraft and personnel across the world to support the fight against insurgents in the Middle East to providing Air Defence for NATO allies in the Balkan region. RAF Lossiemouth never sleeps and there are always duty personnel ready to respond to threats as they occur. In addition, RAF Lossiemouth personnel have deployed across the UK supporting the fight against COVID providing whole town and community testing as well as assisting with logistics and medical support.

Possible impact on the families and spouses of our RAF personnel?

The pace and scale of operational taskings and readiness has an inevitable impact upon RAF Lossiemouth based families and there is a comprehensive support package made available to all whom have a family member deployed. From Zoom coffee mornings for parents, vouchers for family activity days out, 24/7 SSAFA helpline, access to family and child friendly counselling and befriending services and a raft of resources and activities to help children understand why their parents has deployed and to help pass the time, there is no shortage of support. Any school worried that a RAF deployed family is not receiving the support they need should signpost to the RAF Lossiemouth HIVE in the first instance (01343 817050).

Sarah Riley-Evans, CDO RAF Lossiemouth

RAF LOSSIEMOUTH COMMUNITY – KEY PERSONALITIES

OFFICER COMMANDING PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT SQUADRON (OC PMS) - 01343 817328

OC PMS's role is to provide timely and accurate HR, discipline and welfare support, enabling personnel to fulfil the stations mission and objectives. OC PMS is also the lead for delivery of all Community Support activities.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OFFICER (CDO) - 01343 817364

The CDO plays a strategic role in supporting the needs of the RAF community and is the lead for the Community Action Group which coordinates all community related activities including external engagement, youth activities, charities and access to the Unit. The CDO is the formal station link to the wider external community, actively networking with local authorities and other organisations to represent the views of the RAF community whilst ensuring there is access to appropriate external community and welfare support. In addition, the CDO is the Unit Armed Forces Covenant Champion and lead for all Education related enquiries.

SERVICE COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICER (SCSO) - 01343 816768

The SCSO's role is to pursue enhancements in Community Support, bolster the welfare support and listen to and represent the views and the aspirations' of Service personnel and their families. The SCSO is the station Point of Contact regarding matters concerning service families' accommodation and works closely with the contracted MOD housing provider.

'HIVE' INFORMATION OFFICERS (HIOs) - RAF LOSSIEMOUTH 01343 817050/7075 ELGIN HIVE 01343 551811

The HIVE is a focal point for the community, and holds information on housing, health, education, employment, local information and information on other stations. They are the first point of contact for any newly arrived families. They are an integral part of the Community Support team with specific emphasis on Deployment Support. The HIVE offer an outreach service at the Circle located in Myreside Circle, Bishopmill Elgin.

STATION CHAPLAINCY TEAM - 01343 817193

The Chaplaincy team provides for the religious, spiritual, moral and welfare needs of the whole community at RAF Lossiemouth, irrespective of race, creed, colour or gender.

SSAFA - 01343 817076

SSAFA are the recognised contracted welfare support service for the RAF. SSAFA, is a unique civilian organization that provides a professional, confidential, and impartial range of welfare support services to serving personnel and their families.

**IF YOU ARE UNSURE WHO TO CONTACT REGARDING YOUR ENQUIRY,
USE THE HIVE IN THE FIRST INSTANCE AS A SIGNPOSTING AGENCY.**



2. Comments from Lt Colonel Hugo Clarke – Edinburgh Garrison Commander

I am married to a teacher and, at the time of writing, I am very aware how challenging it is for teaching staff, both in terms of virtual delivery and the concerns many teachers have for the wellbeing of more vulnerable pupils. This must have been an exquisitely testing period for staff and parents, and I am very aware that, in the current crisis, the Forces Community cannot claim the monopoly on demanding family circumstances. The Armed Forces have remained active throughout the crisis, with all Regular Army Units in Scotland either deploying overseas on operations or on very high readiness commitments in 2021 all of which come with a training and preparation bill that has to be met against significant COVID friction. On top of all this, we are very proud to be supporting the Scottish Government and NHS Scotland; many hundreds of Armed Forces personnel in Scotland have joined a very different sort of battle to control and overcome the virus. Most Armed Forces personnel, whatever military activity they are engaged in, will be Category 2 Key Workers. We recognise that home schooling is an emotionally charged issue for *all* families with school age children in Scotland and that many families are struggling to educate their children at home; we know that we cannot demand places for Armed Forces children in schools as an automatic right. When we engage with a request for in school support for a military key worker, you should be assured that we have already given such cases significant scrutiny. We will only bring such cases to you if we believe there is a very clear and urgent justification. So far, where Local Authorities *have* become involved in decisions affecting Armed Forces children in Scottish Schools, their response has been pragmatic and sensitive. I am enormously grateful for your continuing support with this issue, which ensures that our people can continue to be available whenever the Nation needs us, whatever the circumstances and no matter how bad things get.

That said, I think we're all hoping that soon things will start to get better!



Exciting News

3. Scottish Government – Scottish Armed Forces Education Support Group (SAFESG)

This group now has a page on the Scottish Government website:

<https://www.gov.scot/groups/scottish-armed-forces-education-support-group/>

Overview: **Scottish Armed Forces Education Support Group** (extract downloaded from the site)

“The Scottish Government recognises that children from UK Armed Forces families may at certain points of their education require additional support to benefit from school education in Scotland due to the nature of their parents’ and carers’ employment within the Armed Forces.

The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 places a duty on local authorities to identify, assess and provide for the additional support needs of all children for whose education they are responsible. Additional support needs are broadly defined, including those which might impact on children from Armed Forces families, such as transitions, interrupted learning and dealing with separation and loss.

These support needs can occur at any time during a child’s education and may be temporary or longer term. The nature of the support will vary based on the individual child’s needs and could include pastoral support as part of the universal support offered by teachers or other professionals. Our commitment is to ensure that any barriers to learning are minimised in order that all children and young people get the support they need to reach their full potential.

The core purpose of the Scottish Armed Forces Education Support Group (SAFESG) is to work in collaboration with key stakeholders to support the education needs of children from Armed Forces families in Scotland. This work will build on the achievements outlined in Support for the Veterans and Armed Forces Community, November 2020 as well as the actions identified in the Additional Support for Learning review, October 2020.”

4. MOD – Education Support Fund – Scotland

MOD Education Support Fund results – Scotland (2021-22)

The Scotland regional panel reviewed the 11 MOD Education Support Fund bids received by DCYP. All funding recommended by the Scotland regional funding panel was supported by the DCYP funding panel (either partial or full). In addition, two applications submitted to DCYP for in-year funding were successful.

The total funding awarded in Scotland is £526,970.00

Result letters were circulated to all applicants at the end of November 2020; all grants will be paid before the end of the current financial year.

ADES National Transitions Officer

Angus Council

Argyll & Bute Council

Highland Council

City of Edinburgh – Colinton / Firrhill Cluster

Midlothian Council – Mauricewood / Beeslack Cluster

Moray Council – Kinloss / Forres ASG

5. Scottish Qualifications Authority SQA

This information was published following the announcement by the Deputy First Minister that there will be “no Higher or Advanced Higher exams in 2021”.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/ministerial-statement-deputy-first-minister-john-swinney-scottish-parliament-education-sector-tuesday-8-december-2020/>

A message for parents and carers - Update on National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses 2020-21

Wednesday 13 January 2021 (downloaded) <https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/96380.html>

On Monday 4 January, the First Minister announced that, as part of a national lockdown, schools across Scotland will operate on a remote learning basis until at least the beginning of February. Following this announcement, the National Qualifications 2021 Group has met to consider the impact this will have on schools delivering National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses under the alternative certification model.

The National Qualifications Group is working through a range of scenarios and is considering any potential flexibilities, should they be needed, for the alternative certification model that will be used to award your child's courses this year. This may include extending the date for when schools and colleges send provisional results to SQA.

Learning and teaching

The priority for schools and colleges during January should be to maximise your child's learning and teaching time. Given the move to remote learning, assessment of your child's evidence cannot be undertaken unless they have been taught the foundations of their course. This will impact on the timing of assessment, which can take place later in the session.

Keeping you updated

Schools and colleges will receive regular updates on any newly published guidance and assessment resources which will support your child's teacher or lecturer to gather evidence, consistently apply the national standard and make accurate assessment judgements.

The National Qualifications 2021 Group is continuing to work through the details of the 2021 alternative certification model, including appropriate contingencies, and will provide further information as soon as possible.

Stay up to date on [2021 National Qualifications](#).

6. National Overview of Practice in Remote Learning

Education Scotland: Practitioner Newsletter – Scotland Learns, January 27th 2021 (Issue 18)

“Thank you to all the practitioners who have engaged so positively in discussions with HM Inspectors as part of the national overview. We will continue to engage with you during this period of remote learning. We are currently working with the second group of schools, selected in consultation with our local authority colleagues. The discussions will centre around the same three aspects below with a focus on meeting learning needs, including those with additional support needs.

- talking about what is working in their own context;
- listening to concerns and any challenges; and
- learning what further support is needed.

We would also like to thank all of the parents and carers who have given their views in focus groups this week and last week and to those who completed our surveys. The surveys are now closed, with 12,105 parents and carers and 2,667 children and young people taking the time to give us their views on remote learning.” (extract from [link](#) below)



https://education.gov.scot/improvement/covid-19-education-recovery/national-overviews/national-overview-of-practice-reports/?dm_i=LQE,77Q8G,1MZ9RK,T8ITI,1

7. MOD DCYP – Children’s Education Advisory Services (CEAS)

The following extracts are from a CEAS letter written to headteachers to outline the support that they provide for armed forces parents of school-aged children. NTO will circulate the ‘letter’ through the ADES AFWG and Headteachers’ Forum to inform and raise awareness in schools with both significant numbers, and those with just a few armed forces children.

“Service-related lifestyle can be challenging for families with children of school-age, especially when their mobility is particularly high and/or when their child has Special Educational Needs or Disability/Additional Needs...

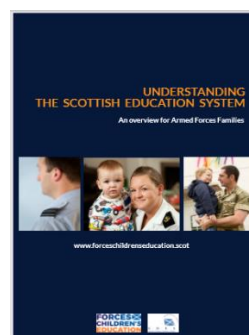
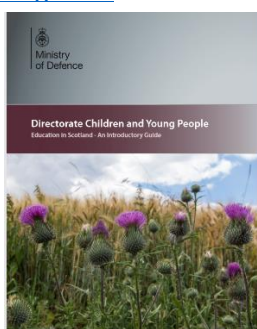
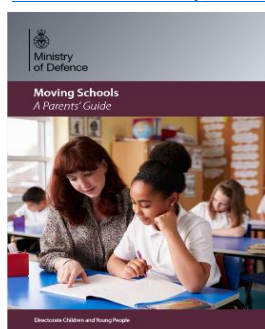
“You may or may not be aware of the educational support and advice which we can offer to Service families, and we can make a real difference when there are complications with a child’s educational provision, either at their current school or when they move on...

“Movements between systems can sometimes be confusing for parents, and this is something we can help them to navigate, whether they are moving into Scotland (and are unfamiliar with the Scottish education system), or moving elsewhere...”

If you feel that a family would benefit from our support, please do give them a copy of the leaflets and if appropriate suggest that they contact us at DCYP-CEAS-enquiries@mod.gov.uk



Ministry of Defence
Children’s Education Advisory Service - CEAS
Directorate Children & Young People
DCYP-CEAS-enquiries@mod.gov.uk



NOTE: These resources are all available on the ADES Forces Children’s Education website
<https://forceschildrenseducation.org.uk/resources/>

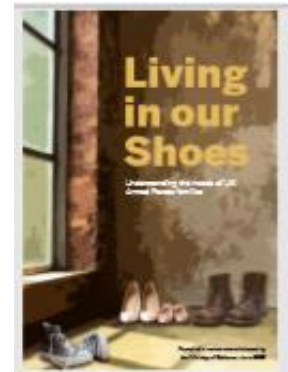
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8. **Forces in Mind Trust (FiMT)** – A webinar to launch **‘Living in Our Shoes’** the independent review of the needs of UK Armed Forces families, is now available to watch online.

<https://www.fim-trust.org/news-policy-item/living-in-our-shoes-webinar-now-available-online/>

On 12th January 2021, Forces in Mind Trust hosted an online launch event for **‘Living In Our Shoes’**, the independent review of the needs of UK Armed Forces families. This is a full recording of the webinar.

Speakers include:

- The Secretary of State for Defence, The Rt Hon Ben Wallace MP
- Lieutenant General James Swift OBE, Chief of Defence People
- Andrew Selous MP, Lead Reviewer
- Professor Janet Walker OBE, Lead Adviser to the Review
- Ray Lock CBE, Chief Executive of Forces in Mind Trust
- Maria Lyle, Chief Executive of the RAF Families Federation
- Anna Wright, Chief Executive of the Naval Families Federation
- Collette Musgrave, Chief Executive of the Army Families Federation
- Kate Davies, Director of Armed Forces, NHS England



The report, **‘Living in our Shoes: understanding the needs of UK Armed Forces families’**, which was published in June 2020, was commissioned by the Ministry of Defence. It challenges some long-held military traditions and makes specific recommendations to improve support for UK Armed Forces families. The launch event focused on the findings and recommendations of the report and included a response from the Ministry of Defence and a panel discussion.

9. **Armed Forces Covenant Legislation** – update (20200126)

The Armed Forces Bill 2019-21 was presented to Parliament by the Government by The Rt Hon Ben Wallace MP

The Bill was introduced to the House of Commons and given its First Reading on Tuesday 26th January 2021. This stage is formal and takes place without any debate. MPs will consider The Bill at Second Reading; date has not yet been announced. An update on the Armed Forces Legislation, as well as a weblink to the draft proposals are now on the Westminster Parliamentary website, are available:

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2019-21/armedforces.html>

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2019-21/armedforces.html>

10. Education Scotland Report – January 2021

<https://education.gov.scot/media/nwibvl2q/what-scotland-learned-building-back-better.pdf>

This document has been developed to follow the book of stories published by Education Scotland (during Covid lockdown March – August 2020) entitled, *What Scotland Learned (WSL)*. It provides a collection of ten interviews with education leaders and academics in addressing six themes: relationships, leadership, health & wellbeing, learning and teaching, community and successes and achievements.



What Scotland Learned – How to build back better

“This paper takes these inspiring stories and synthesises them with Education research. Designed to support education leaders and practitioners, it takes the six themes that came through the stories and explores the existing evidence-based findings to add depth and understanding to lived experience.” (extract from Foreword passage)

11. Newsletters / Websites - Resources available for you to consider:

There are several newsletters & resources being produced that may contain material of interest to you, here is some contact information and links:

- **Argyll & Bute Council – Armed Forces Children & Young People:**
Facebook: Service Pupil Advisor Helensburgh & Lomond
<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/armed-forces>
- **Highland Council – Military Liaison Group (Education) – MLG**
https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/886/schools_-_additional_support_needs/833/armed_forces_-_support_for_families_and_schools
- **The Royal Caledonian Education Trust – Education Programme**
<https://www.rcet.org.uk/help/we-help-teaching/>
- **SSCE Wales – Supporting Service Children in Education**
www.sscecymru.co.uk
- **Forces Children’s Education (ADES) Scotland**
<https://www.forceschildrenseducation.scot>



Note: this newsletter is compiled for distribution across the ADES National Transitions Officer networks, these include ADES, Directors of Education, Lead Education Officers of armed forces families in local authorities, Headteachers, Scottish Government, COSLA, Education Scotland, partnership groups in education and related professions, MOD Directorate Children and Young People (DCYP), MOD in Scotland (Tri-Service), Family Federations, RCET and other charity partnerships, colleagues across jurisdictions. . .

Hopefully, this information will be of interest and helpful to you in your support for children and young people of Armed Forces families in Scottish schools (Regular, Reserve & Veterans/ex-Service)