



The Impact of Service Life on the Military Child:

Summary Report

May 2021

Lauren Godier-McBard, Abigail Wood & Matt Fossey

About the Authors

The Veterans and Families Institute for Military Social Research (VFI) was established in 2014 to provide research, consultancy and impact within the military and veteran's community. To date, the VFI has produced over 70 peer reviewed papers and reports and has contributed to a range of national and international panels, boards and commissions. Staff within the VFI are drawn from a wide range of research and policy backgrounds.

Lauren Godier-McBard is a Senior Research Fellow and the VFI research lead for Women and Equalities Research.

Abigail Wood is a Research Assistant in the VFI with a background in public policy, philosophy and ethics.

Matt Fossey is an Associate Professor and the Director of the VFI with a background in social work practice, service improvement and health policy.

How to cite

Please cite this summary report in the Harvard style as shown:

Godier-McBard, L., Wood, A, and Fossey., (2021). *The Impact of Service Life on the Military Child: Summary report*. [online] Available at:

<https://www.navalchildrenscharity.org.uk/research-2/>

The full report is available at:

<https://www.navalchildrenscharity.org.uk/research-2/>

Acknowledgments

The authors wish to thank all of the subject matter experts (SMEs) who participated in the interviews for this research, from the following organisations; Cheriton Primary School, Directorate Children and Young People Service, Naval Families Federation, Royal Caledonian Education Trust, Royal Navy Family and People Support, Service Children's Progression Alliance and the National Transitions Officer, Scotland (ADES).

We would also like to thank Clare Scherer and the Chair and the Board of the NCC for their guidance and insights during the development of this work. Finally, we would also like to thank other members of the VFI who have helped in the scoping and execution of this work – particular thanks to Kris Fleuty of the FiMT Research Centre for her tenacity and diligence in ensuring that all of the research papers discussed in this report are available or signposted for anyone who wishes to investigate further.

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Introduction

In 2009 the Royal Navy Royal Marines Children’s Fund (now known as the Naval Children’s Charity [NCC]) published **the Overlooked Casualties of Conflict Report**. This ground-breaking document brought together research and expert opinion to highlight the **experiences and challenges faced by military children in 10 key areas** and was instrumental in shaping policy and provision, **including the introduction of the Service Pupil Premium in England** and the shaping of the **Armed Forces Covenant** on the military family.

However, the Overlooked Casualties of Conflict Report was researched and written at the height of Op Herrick (20 June 2002 – 12 December 2014), the UK military’s 12-year mission in Afghanistan. It is inevitable that this **emotive and controversial conflict had an impact on the Service children** whose parents were involved in the war and on the respondents, who were involved in the original research. It has now been over 6 years since the drawdown from Afghanistan and although UK Service Personnel are still engaged in operations overseas, these are not fought out so much in the public eye. Arguably the challenges faced by the current Covid-19 pandemic have shifted the public attention from the military to other public servants working domestically in health, social care and education. However, **military life will continue to have an impact on military families and children**, and it continues to remain important that we provide the best that we can for children who are raised in military families.

Consequently, **a new report was commissioned by the NCC¹** with the aim of considering the changes in the research landscape and to assess the opinions of a range of key stakeholders, subsequent to the original publication in 2009. This **summary report** sets out the context of the new report, summarises how the project was undertaken and gives a brief overview of our key findings and recommendations.



¹<https://www.navalchildrenscharity.org.uk/research-2/>



Current Policy Context

At the time of writing the Ministry of Defence (MOD) are **remodelling their families' strategy**, and this will be an important barometer for how the MOD aims to shape the agenda for military families and their children over the coming years. In addition to this, proposed changes to military family accommodation are currently being trialled under the new **Future Accommodation Model (FAM)**. Alongside subsidised Service Family Accommodation (SFA), families will have the option of **subsidised private renting, and financial support for home ownership**. Further to this, several subject matter experts interviewed for this report made references to the proposed **Naval transformation**, including crew restructuring to reduce the amount of time Naval personnel are deployed. The potential impacts of both the FAM model and Naval transformation are discussed in the [full report](#)².

It is important to note that although the **MOD has responsibility for policy relating to military families in general**, policies associated with and affecting *inter alia* the education of children of military families, their **health and social care are often the responsibility of the devolved administrations**. As such, there are significant differences across the United Kingdom. An up-to-date synthesis of the current policy and research evidence landscape relating to military families, housing, health and employment can be found on the **Veterans and Families Research Hub**³.

How many Service children are there?

Since the Overlooked Casualties of Conflict report was published in 2009, the number of Service personnel with children reported by MOD surveys has increased from 48% to 79% (statistics correct as of April 2020). Based on the current strength of the UK Regular Forces, this reflects **an increase from approximately 91,000 to 115,000 Service personnel with children since the previous report**.

The proportion of Service personnel with children is **broadly similar across the service branches** (Royal Navy and Royal Marines [RN/RM]: 78%; Army: 80%; Royal Air Force [RAF]: 78%). In relation to the general population, Service families are proportionately more likely to report having children than civilian married couples (79% vs 52%).

Based on MOD statistics (FAMCAS 2020, MOD Quarterly Service Personnel Statistics April 2020) a conservative estimate of the number of Service children of UK Regular Personnel in the UK is just under 180,000 (See Table 1 in the full Report for a breakdown by service). Despite a decrease of approximately 44,000 full-time regular Service Personnel since 2009, this represents a small increase in the number of Service children estimated in the previous report (175,000).

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²<https://www.navalchildrenscharity.org.uk/research-2/>

How we undertook the review

The authors searched for academic and policy papers both from the UK, published from 2000 onwards. Findings from 62 UK papers are presented alongside relevant literature from culturally aligned countries. The authors also conducted **12 interviews with subject matter experts** who work with UK military families. The key points that emerged from these interviews are presented alongside the literature. More technical details of how we undertook the review can be found at [Appendix 2](#) of the **full report**³.

The findings of the literature review and SME interviews are outlined under each of the headings below. These are grouped in relation to the 10 challenges experienced by Service children identified in the 2009 Overlooked Casualties of Conflict report, with three new additional themes (11-13). Recommendations for further research and the development of policy/support for Service children are provided throughout.

1. The impact of deployment-related separation on Service children.
2. The impact of lone parenting
3. The influence of the media
4. Family adjustment following deployment
5. The impact of mobility
6. Dealing with stigma and bullying
7. The impact of parental illness or injury
8. The impact of parental bereavement
9. Family relationships and breakdown
10. Children with additional needs and disabilities
11. Lack of awareness of Service children's needs
12. What do children gain from their parent's service?
13. Support and interventions for Service children

We have also taken the decision to share the details of all the papers and reports that we identified in the process of undertaking this work. The details of all of the papers have been uploaded onto the **Veterans and Families Research Hub**⁴, a portal for research and discussion funded by the Forces in Mind Trust. A guide to using the VFR Hub and how to access the papers can be found at [Appendix 1](#) of **full report**⁵.



³<https://www.navalchildrenscharity.org.uk/research-2/>

⁴www.vfrhub.com

⁵<https://www.navalchildrenscharity.org.uk/research-2/>

1. The impact of deployment-related separation on Service children

Deployment and separation are integral parts of military life. There are significantly less Service Personnel deployed now than were deployed at the time of the previous report; However, UK Armed Forces have continued to be engaged in a number of overseas peacekeeping, training exercises and humanitarian operations.

Royal Navy (RN) families experience particularly high levels of separation, with longer deployments and families more likely to live geographically separate from the Serving person. As such, children of Naval personnel are likely to experience greater separation compared with children of Service personnel in other Service branches.

Separation or parental absence is highlighted by recent UK studies as one of the most significant challenges associated with having a serving parent, due to the unpredictable and disruptive nature of deployment.

The literature presents an inconsistent picture of the impact of deployment-related separation on Service children's emotions and behaviour. Some research and SMEs suggested that the negative impact of deployment for service children consisted mainly of emotional and behavioural difficulties, particularly increased anxiety, for all stages of deployment. However, some UK research studies found no elevation in emotional and behaviour problems during separation.

The impact of deployment appears to **differ depending on the age** of the child. Younger children's (i.e. primary school age) experiences were characterised by sadness, **missing their serving parent's physical presence** and, at the extreme, impacts on toileting and **externalising behaviours**. Older children were more impacted by **concerns for parental safety** and also appear to have a better understanding of their parent's service.

Communication during separation has changed significantly since the original report was published in 2009. Where children would previously have been limited to telephone and email contact with their deployed parents, **the rise of social media**, instant messaging and video calls in the past few decades have increased the possibility of regular communication. This may be a **positive change, aiding families and buffering the adverse effects of separation**. However, some evidence suggests that **problems may arise if these new expectations for communication** cannot be met due to connectivity issues or operational demands.

Whilst international research suggests that the well-being and ability of the non-deployed spouse to cope with separation has an impact on children's adjustment, research in this area in the UK is limited.

Our Recommendations

1. The Emotional Cycle of Deployment Model is now over 20 years old. We recommend that further research is carried out to reconfirm or update how the deployment is experienced by families, taking into consideration changes to modern life and communication during the past two decades.
2. In order to achieve Recommendation 1, we recommend that further research is carried out to increase our understanding of the impact of increased communication via social media during deployment on the parent-child relationship.
3. The Naval transformation programme will impact on the amount of time that Naval personnel spend separated from their families due to deployment. It will be imperative for the MOD to monitor and evaluate the impact of this transformation on Service children and families.
4. In light of suggestions from subject matter experts, the impact of gender (of both the Service child and Serving parent) on reactions to deployment is an area that requires further investigation.
5. There is a significant gap in our understanding of how parental coping and well-being during deployment impacts on Service children in the UK. We recommend that research is commissioned to investigate this further, and how support for the remaining parent may also benefit Service children.



2. The impact of lone parenting

Both deployment and non-deployment-related separation can result in a **temporary lone parent or no parent household**. Separation from the serving parent for significant amounts of time during childhood may result in **difficulties within the parent-child relationship**, and the **lack of an appropriate role model**. Our findings highlight **additional difficulties faced by dual serving and single parent families** associated with juggling deployments, maintaining family relationships long-distance and childcare. Children may face additional disruption if they are required to move to be cared for during dual parent deployments.


Since the 2009 Overlooked Casualties of Conflict report, there has been **an increase of families living away from their partner during the week**, otherwise known as dispersal or **weekending**. This has brought with it **both benefits from stability and home ownership for some families** and **unique challenges** for others due to the changed family dynamics and frequent separation, which can have a **negative impact of children's mental health and well-being**. Evidence suggests that dispersed living may lead to challenges accessing support and families missing out on some of the benefits of a strong military community. Naval families have historically been more dispersed and more likely to live away from their serving person. As a result, UK Naval spouses report **limited family time, last minute changes to duties and unpredictability** that was sometimes viewed as more difficult to manage than longer operational deployments.

Some children may be required to take on **additional caring responsibilities during deployment of their serving parent**. These children may be **particularly vulnerable to poor outcomes**, due to a 'double whammy' of challenges associated with being a Service child and a young carer.

Separation can also increase the need for childcare, which presents a particular challenge for mobile families, due to **variation in availability** and **cost across different regions**.

Our Recommendations

1. There is a significant lack of UK research looking at the impact of lone parenting on Service children. We recommend that research be conducted to investigate the challenges faced by children of dual-serving and single-parent families, and how these families might be better supported. Additionally, research is needed to better understand the impact of temporary lone parenting during weekending, on the parent-child relationship.
2. Very little is known about the prevalence of young carers, particularly those who take on temporary caring responsibilities during separation. We recommend that research is carried out to identify this hidden population and their unique support needs.

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3. The Ministry of Defence (MOD) is currently trialling new policies around accommodation (the FAM) and childcare (wraparound services in two RAF bases). We recommend that the MOD facilitates independent evaluations of these policies to explore their impact on the well-being of military families. In particular, it will be important to determine the impact of the FAM on dispersed living and access to welfare support for military families.



3. The influence of the media

The 2009 Overlooked Casualties of Conflict report identified the **media as a source of stress** for Service families and children when their serving person is deployed. This was mainly due to children seeing images and headlines regarding the conflict that their serving parent was involved in. However, social media use amongst children has become more prevalent over the decade.

Service children face the same risks as other children around social media, such as the potential of cyber-bullying and the association of high usage with social and emotional difficulties, and lower happiness. However, our findings suggests that they may also face **unique challenges**, such as **negative impact of accessing upsetting information around conflict**, and **potential benefits**, such as **staying connected with friends after moving**.

Our Recommendations

1. Considering the high use of social media by children, we recommend that further research is required to investigate the potential benefits and negative consequences of social media for Service children.
2. Associated with this and discussion in Section 1 (The impact of deployment-related separation on Service children), we also recommend that research is required to explore the positives and negatives of increased communication with deployed parent(s) via internet-based communication and social media, and its potential implications for operational readiness.

4. Family adjustment following deployment

The impact of separation on Service children **does not end with the return of the serving parent**. Whilst there is **little research on reintegration following deployment in the UK** context, incorporating international literature highlights two main challenges. Firstly, families may face find it challenging **renegotiating roles and responsibilities** within the family when the serving person returns. This is related to significant anxiety for both the serving person and their children, with some research suggesting children may not accept the authority of the returning parent.

Secondly, difficulties may be experienced when **re-establishing relationships** with children, particularly young children. Service children may find **it difficult to bond** with their returning parent following separation, particularly if they were very young when their serving parent was deployed. These experiences have been associated with distress for the returning parent and poor psychological well-being in children in the international literature.

Our Recommendation

1. Very little research exists on the experiences of family reintegration in the UK, and the impact of this on Service Children. Therefore, we recommend research is conducted to identify the main challenges faced during reintegration, in order to determine how best to support military families.



5. The impact of mobility

Frequent relocation can have a significant impact on Service children who may be required to move schools and leave friends and family behind.

This is associated with a range of **practical difficulties**; difficulties obtaining places due to the school admission code (particularly mid-year/term), difficulties with educational record transfer (particularly between the devolved nations), different curricula between the devolved nations, and repetition of curricula when moving between regions.

Beyond these practicalities, **Service children can find leaving friends upsetting and difficult** but there is some evidence in the UK that **frequent moves can improve social skills and resilience**. The international literature suggests that increased mobility is associated with increased externalising problems and decreased prosocial behaviours in Service children, especially in the first-year post-move.

There is mixed evidence from the UK and international literature on the impact of being a Service child on educational attainment. However, there is indication that **mobile Service children do not perform as well as non-mobile Service children**. The limited evidence base suggests that a **lower proportion of Service children in England progress to University**, and that Service children are **more likely to enter employment** at 18 than civilian children.

Mobile Service children may find their experience differs by location, as evidence suggests that **awareness and understanding of Service children's needs varies across schools and regions**. However, **schools with higher proportions of Service children appear to more successfully meet their needs**. The **Service Pupil Premium is used inconsistently** across schools and there is not currently an accurate way of reporting data on Service children.

Our Recommendations

1. SMEs interviewed for this report felt that mobility led to Service children lacking 'geographical roots', which is supported by the international literature. As such, we recommend that future research should explore the impact of mobility on Service children's identity and sense of belonging.
2. The data in the UK around the educational attainment of Service children is mixed, with indication that mobility may be a key factor. We recommend that research is needed to investigate this further, to better our understanding of the impact that mobility and other aspects of military life have on educational attainment.
3. The findings of this report suggest that schools are often unsure of how best to use the SPP to support Service Children. We recommend that best practice for utilising the SPP is collected and developed into guidance for schools.
4. Researchers should continue their efforts to understand Service children's progression into further and higher education, traineeships, employment or other destinations and the reasons for these choices.

6. Dealing with stigma and bullying

Parents and school staff interviewed during the 2009 Overlooked casualties of Conflict report noted that during the Iraq War era, Service children were often “**prime targets**” for bullies whilst their parents were deployed. We found some evidence of Service children experiencing bullying as a result of prior assumptions regarding military life. However,

it appears that **schools with greater knowledge and awareness of Service children may be better placed to prevent or deal with military specific bullying.**

We did not identify any research that focused specifically on the impact of military stigma on Service children and families, therefore this area is ripe for further research. **Wider public opinion** of the UK Armed Forces suggests this is **generally favourable** and SMEs highlighted that the stigma associated with being a ‘military brat’ appears to be lessening.

Our Recommendation

1. In light of the lack of evidence related to the impact of public perception of the Armed Forces on Service children, we recommend that research should be undertaken to explore further whether Service children experience military-specific bullying and to examine whether Service children are impacted by stigma associated with military life.



7. The impact of parental illness or injury

The number of Service Personnel experiencing injury during service has significantly reduced since the 2009 Overlooked Casualties of Conflict report. **No UK literature was found on the impact of parental physical injury** on Service children. However, international research suggests that parental physical injury can cause **significant family disruption and child distress** and may negatively impact children's own physical and mental health.

International evidence of the impact of parental mental health on Service children is inconsistent. However, some studies indicate a link between Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in the serving parent and poor psychological well-being in Service children. There is some UK evidence of **a link between both PTSD and increased neglect and abuse and hyperactivity in boys**. However, this research is limited by its focus on PTSD and paternal mental health only. As mentioned above, Service children who take on caring responsibilities for their parent face additional challenges.

Our Recommendations

1. Considering the mixed findings in relation to the impact of parental mental health on Service children in the UK, further research is needed in this area. In particular, research looking at non-PTSD parental mental health disorders, and the children of servicewomen is required.
2. Research is needed to explore the impact of physical injury of Service children. Whilst we are not currently at war, it is necessary to prepare for future conflicts by reflecting now on the challenges faced by children in military families in the context of physical injury, in line with work already undertaken by Blesma on adult carers. Evidence-based service models and interventions that may mitigate the effects observed in some of the international research may provide further avenues for research.



8. The impact of parental bereavement

All three branches of the UK Armed Forces have seen **significant decreases in the number of in-service deaths over the last 10 years**, with just 66 deaths recorded in 2019. However, whilst the rates of suicide in male Service Personnel is lower than that seen in the civilian male population, there has been an increase since the publication of the 2009 Overlooked Casualties of Conflict report. **No UK literature was found exploring the impact of parental death or parental suicide on Service children.** However, international research suggests a link between pre-existing mental health problems in the surviving parent and poorer adjustment to bereavement in children. However, **family cohesion and consistency were associated positively with children's adjustment** following bereavement.

Support from the military community was highlighted as having the potential to help children better cope with bereavement. In addition, international research highlights an association between **parental suicide in the military context with stigma and shame for military families.** There was indication that this stigma may impact on family coping and willingness to access social support.

Our Recommendation

1. There is a significant lack of research in the UK looking at the impact of paternal death and suicide on Service children. Considering indications of a significant impact on family functioning and adjustment from the international literature, research is required to provide a better understanding of how best to support bereaved Service children and families.

9. Family relationships and breakdown

The adverse impact of military service on couple relationships is clear from the results of the 2020 Family Continuous Attitudes survey. Marital difficulties in UK Armed Forces are associated with **deployment, financial difficulties, lack of support and childhood adversity**. Despite this, there is evidence to suggest that UK Service Personnel are less likely to be divorced than the general population.

Service families undergoing divorce may experience **housing difficulties** if required to leave Service Family Accommodation (SFA) and Service Personnel may find that Single Living Accommodation (SLA) is not appropriate for children. However, there is **a lack of UK research** looking at the impact of family breakdown on Service children's well-being.

There is limited research on the prevalence of domestic violence and child maltreatment in UK Armed Forces and how this compares to the civilian population. However, there is an indication that **family violence** (including the maltreatment of children) **is increased following deployment**, and that families may not report this due to a **fear of the repercussions on the serving person's career**. International literature suggests that there may be a **decreased risk of domestic violence in the military** compared to civilian population. Reintegration following deployment appears to be a period during which there is increased risk of domestic abuse and child maltreatment.

Our Recommendations

1. Considering the lack of UK research focused on family breakdown in the military, research is required to establish whether there are any unique impacts of family breakdown on Service children.
2. The limited research available on family violence in the UK does not differentiate between violence against adult and child family members. As such, further research is required to determine the risk of violence towards Service children. In addition, further investigation is required to determine the potential for increased risk of family violence following deployment.



10. Children with additional needs and disabilities

The number of Service children in the UK with special educational needs and disability (SEND) is unknown. However, the additional challenges experienced by this group was a key theme in the literature and SME interviews.

Mobility can compound and create additional difficulties for Service children with SEND. Problems exist in coordinating the transfer of records and statements of need, with no standard accepted document or approach across the whole UK. This can leave schools unprepared and create a lack of continuity of support for Service children with SEND. It is clear from the evidence that SEND Service children face difficulties in getting their support needs assessed, **with some having moved again before reassessment** is possible. Furthermore, mobility presents challenges for finding appropriately supported school places **in new locations**, leaving some out of school for long periods of time.

Additionally, research in the UK suggests that Service children with **SEND have increased difficulties at school**, with deployment and mobility related to decreased school performance in this group.

Our Recommendations

1. Research should be undertaken to provide a better understanding of teachers' awareness of and attitudes towards SEND Service pupil, to inform the development of better information and training programmes.
2. Further to the recommendations in the Living in our Shoes report urgent consideration should be given to enabling Education and Health Care Plans (EHCP), for military children who move due to service requirements to be transferable and accepted across authorities and devolved administrations.



11. Lack of awareness of Service children's needs

Whilst the additional research published since the 2009 Overlooked Casualties of Conflict report has deepened our understanding of the challenges facing Service children, our findings suggest **a general lack of awareness and understanding among education and healthcare professionals, politicians and policy makers remains. A lack of culturally competent support for children** means that professionals and practitioners are not always able to support their needs. Furthermore, Naval families report feeling as though more could be done by the military charity sector to raise awareness amongst schools of the needs of Service children.

Our Recommendations

1. More research and reliable data on UK Service children is still needed. In light of the number of UK studies identified that did not include the voices of Service children directly, it is imperative that any future research include Service children's perspectives.
2. We recommend that future research is used to develop awareness training for education and healthcare professionals to educate them on the challenges and issues faced by Service children in the UK.



12. What do children gain from their parent's service?

Our findings highlight **numerous positives of parental service for Service children** including: pride, financial security, novel experiences, being part of the military community, increased resilience and discipline, and having positive role models. However, SME interviews suggest that there is **a lack of consensus regarding the resilience** of Service children, and concerns were raised that this narrative was sometimes used to excuse the challenges they face as a result of military life.

Our Recommendation

1. We recommend that research is carried out to investigate if and why Service children are more resilient. Increasing our understanding of resilience could be beneficial in developing support and interventions for promoting well-being in Service children who are struggling with military life.



13. Support and Interventions for Service children

There is a **lack of evidence-based interventions** to support Service children's health and well-being in the UK. The evidence that does exist **supports the use of a strengths-based framework** to promote the development of protective factors for family well-being. This approach involves the development of pro-social coping strategies and peer-relationships in Service children, and providing opportunities for learning and support for parents.

Research conducted across NATO countries highlights the UK and Romania as reporting the least evidence-based support interventions for Service Children. This research also suggests that the UK currently focuses on providing universal support rather than military-specific interventions to Service children. Some SMEs, however, were **sceptical about the extent to which a universal service can understand the needs of Service children**. Indeed, international research highlights the importance of providing opportunities for Service children to connect and socialise with other military children. This is supported by UK research with RAF children, who reported the desire for a 'safe space' in which to talk to trusted individuals about their anxieties and concerns.

Additionally, an **increasing reliance on the UK military charity sector** for supporting Service families, rather than the military itself, was also highlighted in our findings.

Our Recommendation

1. In order to strengthen our understanding of what effective support looks like for UK Service children, peer-reviewed evaluations of support and interventions should be undertaken, using comparative groups and mixed method evaluation tools where appropriate.

Conclusions

Since the publication of the original Overlooked Casualties of Conflict report in 2009, there has been **a steady increase in the research** to explore many aspects of Service children's life in the UK. However, the majority of the research publications still come from the United States.

A number of the challenges reported in the original report are still relevant today. There remain **significant and considerable gaps in the provision of educational and healthcare** support for Service children who have to move due to military mobility. Whilst many children readily assimilate, such moves often pose **considerable challenges for young people with physical, developmental or psychological/mental health problems**. The disparities are more acutely felt when children move **between the devolved nations**, where there are differing levels of provision and very little harmony in documentation. If a Service child is assessed as requiring SEND provision by one Local Authority, this assessment should be accepted wherever and act as a passport for appropriate service provision. Similarly, for children with healthcare needs, the provision of equitable services between different NHS providers continues to be a lottery.

This report also identified **new issues and challenges**. Since the original report was published in 2009 there have been **significant leaps in technology for social media networking and communication**. Whilst this provides the potential for increased communication with their Serving parent, it also leaves them at the mercy of **misinformation and disinformation**. Furthermore, although the SPP has been introduced in England to provide schools with some resource to improve the experiences of Service children, there remains **no way of knowing how many Service pupils there are** and importantly whether Service pupils' needs are being met. Finally, what remains of great concern is that **new innovations and programmes for Service children, wherever they are delivered across the UK, are rarely, if at all, evaluated**.

What this report has illustrated is that the **research that exists tends to focus on perceived problems or challenges**. Very little research focuses on the positive aspects of service life. The SMEs interviewed for this research were at great pains to emphasise the positives of Service life and where this has been examined by researchers, **pride in their parents' achievements and pride in belonging to the UK military family** are the outstanding findings.





About ARU

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ARU's research institutes and four faculties bridge scientific, technical and creative fields. We deliver impactful research which tackles pressing issues and makes a real difference to our communities. Our academic excellence has been recognised by the UK's Higher Education funding bodies, with 12 of our research areas assessed as world-leading.

We are the largest provider of Nursing, Midwifery, Health and Social Care students in England, and we are among the UK's leading universities for degree apprenticeship provision, working with employers including Barclays, Vinci and GlaxoSmithKline.

About Naval Childrens Charity

The Naval Children's Charity has been helping Naval Children since 1825, for nearly 200 years. We help children, up to the age of 25, whose parents have served in the Naval Service (Royal Navy, Royal Marines, QARNNS, WRNS, Reserves or Royal Fleet Auxiliary).

We help around 2000 children directly each year and many thousands more through our resources and work with communities and other organisations.

We believe that to be the child of someone who is, or has been, in the Naval Service should be a positive and enhancing experience – something to be borne with pride. For those children where life is more difficult, we are there to help.