

Service Children's Progression



INSPIRING IMPACT:

THE SERVICE CHILDREN'S PROGRESSION
ALLIANCE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

13 NOVEMBER 2024

 @scipalliance #scipconf2024

www.scipalliance.org

DIRECTOR'S WELCOME

Welcome to the 2024 Service Children's Progression Alliance Annual Conference: Inspiring Impact.

I am delighted that we have brought our conference and, with it, the UK-wide SCiP Alliance community to Cardiff. It gives us an opportunity to shine a spotlight on the unique context in Wales and explore how partners respond collaboratively to the distinct, diverse and dynamic needs of Service children here.

Inspiring impact is a call to action in a virtuous cycle connecting the change we realise for Service children to the open invitation to others to join our community and achieve even more together. First, it is a challenge to us all to be resolutely focused on impact. We want to inspire action. We want to inspire collaboration. But these are not ends in themselves. They are steps (in our theory of change) towards helping children and young people want to, know how to and be able to move confidently into ambitious futures for themselves. They are foundations for creating more coherent learning journeys and development opportunities.

Inspiring impact also highlights the challenge to add new levels of rigour to the evaluation of our work. We need to capture, understand and communicate our impact at every level through compelling national-scale analyses, evidence of the added-value of local collaboration, and individual stories of change. In this way we will inspire more partners to join our community and to add their expertise and energies to our shared vision of thriving lives for Service children. It will also help us to demonstrate that large-scale, sustained investment in our collective work is worthwhile and to provide robust accounts of what works, how and why, so that national policy and infrastructure provide the conditions for even greater impact.

The cooperation of local action, regional collaboration and national policy is evident here in Wales, so a huge thank you to Millie Taylor and the SSCE Cymru team for leading the work of the SCiP Alliance Hub Cymru and for supporting the conference, not least by enabling Service children themselves to share their experiences first-hand. And thank you to our partners in the Welsh Government and the WLGA, who make the work of SSCE Cymru possible. Thank you, finally, to you - the SCiP Alliance community - who amake the difference in Service children's lives each day.

Impact is why the community exists, and the community makes that impact possible.

At the centre of our 2022-2026 strategy is the co-reinforcing relationship between our growing community and our ever-increasing impact on the lives of children and young people in Armed Forces families: the Community-Impact cycle. As the strategy explains:

"Impact is why the community exists, and the community makes that impact possible."

So, this year, our annual conference will explore the theme of Inspiring Impact. A central purpose of the Alliance community is to inspire each other to make a difference in Service children's lives through innovation and new collaborations, but we also want the impact we have together to inspire others to join our community and engage in evidence-led action.

One thing that makes the Alliance community so powerful is the exchange of ideas and practice between diverse stakeholder groups: between practitioners, researchers, policymakers and funders. We want this year's conference to build on our existing strong foundations to tackle big questions like:

- What counts as impact at individual, project, organisation and system levels?
- How can we know our impact is meaningful in the daily lives of Service children?
- What does it mean to be truly impact-orientated?
- How can we communicate impact, so it inspires sustained action or investment?

Putting the voices of Service children at the heart of all we do is core to our mission, so we are particularly keen to hear about work with a direct demonstrable impact on, for, with and by Service children. As always, our conference will hear from Service children themselves and support and encourage them to share their highs and lows, and to keep us to account for providing support that – in line with our Service child voice principles – is ethical, meaningful and impactful.

Philip Dent, SCiP Alliance Director

AGENDA

09.00	Conference registration, refreshments, networking and exhibition
09.30	Welcome to the Conference Millie Taylor, SSCE Cymru / WO1 Rob Govier, Royal Navy / Riley Barnes, Service Young Person
09.50	Inspiring Impact Philip Dent, Director, Service Children's Progression Alliance
10.10	Alistair Carns MP, Minister for Veterans and People (video address)
10.40	Break – refreshments, networking and exhibition (20 mins)
11.00	Choice of workshops – Session 1 (45 mins) How can researchers communicate impactful and child orientated research? <i>Lucy Robinson, Department of Education, University of Oxford</i> How can we use UCAS data to improve the journey for students from UK Armed Forces families? <i>Nicola Turner, UCAS</i> Rethinking 'voice': Laying foundations for impactful engagement with Service children <i>Dr Claire Lee, Oxford Brookes University</i>
11.45	Movement time (10 mins)
11.55	Choice of workshops - Session 2 (45 mins) It's not just their job, it's our whole lives <i>Meg Thomas & Robyn Pattison, Forces Children Scotland</i> <i>Sophia Dunn & Jaiden Kane, young people from Armed Forces families</i> Poetry, Art & Song: Listening to our Service children <i>Katie Salari, Never Such Innocence</i> Developing the Thriving Lives toolkit for the Higher Education (HE) sector <i>Dr Amanda Carr & Dr Liz Spruin, ACCESS Learning</i> Lincolnshire's Festival of Friends: A schools' project to support Service children <i>Shaun O'Neill, LincHigher & Matt Blyton, Project Lead</i>
12.40	Lunch – networking and exhibition
13.30	In conversation with Armed Forces children and young people
14.00	Movement time (10 mins)
14.10	Choice of workshops - Session 3 (45 mins) Supporting school transitions: A new sustained collaborative approach to Creative Forces Days <i>Sarah Harder-Collins & Vicky Fisher, University of Winchester / Steve Baker & Clair Martin, Seekers Create</i> Sharing stories to inspire impact <i>Millie Taylor & Joanna Wolfe, SSCE Cymru</i> Improving provision for mobile Service children with additional needs / SEND <i>Matt Blyton, Catterick Garrison ASSIST Project (GAP) Lead</i> Measuring impact: The NERUPI approach to evaluation <i>Annette Hayton & Dr Sally Griffin, NERUPI, University of Bath</i>
14.55	Break – refreshments, networking and exhibition (15 mins)
15.10	Panel discussion
15.50	Evaluation
15.55	Closing comments
16.00	Conference close

WORKSHOPS - SESSION 1	ROOM
<p>HOW CAN RESEARCHERS COMMUNICATE IMPACTFUL AND CHILD-ORIENTATED RESEARCH?</p> <p><i>Lucy Robinson, Department of Education, University of Oxford</i></p> <p>Research impact is an integral part of a research project. However, it is often the case that academics focus on types of research impact that are targeted at other researchers and/or practitioners, policymakers and funders. Whilst important, these can miss out the communities which the research is about. Therefore, in this workshop, participants will learn about how academic research could, and should, be communicated in ways that are both impactful and child-orientated. Drawing on my doctoral research, this will be in the context of service children. How can we, as researchers, share their voices in child-orientated, ethical, meaningful and impactful ways?</p>	GLAMORGAN & HIREATH SUITES
<p>HOW CAN WE USE THE NEW UCAS DATA TO IMPROVE THE JOURNEY FOR STUDENTS FROM UK ARMED FORCES FAMILIES?</p> <p><i>Nicola Turner, UCAS</i></p> <p>The new UCAS data allows us to see the emerging patterns and behaviours of applicants from UK Armed Forces families, but what does it tell us about the specific challenges they face – and how can we use it to help improve their journey to HE? This workshop will highlight the key data points from the 2023 cycle, bringing together delegates' knowledge and experience to add context, identify emerging challenges and opportunities, and suggest ways to support Service children's decision-making. We will also give an overview of targeted UCAS resources to help inform conversations with young people making their next steps.</p>	ANUERIN BEVAN & AFON TAF SUITES
<p>RETHINKING 'VOICE': LAYING FOUNDATIONS FOR IMPACTFUL ENGAGEMENT WITH SERVICE CHILDREN</p> <p><i>Dr Claire Lee, Oxford Brookes University</i></p> <p>SCiP Alliance members share a commitment to translating Service children's voice into impact. But what does 'voice' really mean, and how can we engage with it? Informed by the presenter's expertise in dialogic research with Service children, including her arts-based doctoral research, this workshop explores how our understanding of 'voice' profoundly shapes how meaningfully we can engage with young people. Through practical exercises and discussion, the workshop will critically examine different concepts of 'voice'. Participants will clarify their own understanding and take away ideas for participatory practices that ensure that Service children's voice truly informs the work they do.</p>	CARDIFF SUITE

WORKSHOPS - SESSION 2	ROOM
<p>IT'S NOT JUST THEIR JOB, IT'S OUR WHOLE LIVES</p> <p><i>Meg Thomas & Robyn Pattison, Forces Children Scotland</i> <i>Sophia Dunn & Jaiden Kane, young people from Armed Forces families</i></p> <p>Our co-produced workshop considers the impact of policy on the rights of service children and young people. We will demonstrate the activities we used to explore the topic with young people and discuss the findings published in our report "It's not just their job, it's our whole lives". We will explore the key recommendations of the report and outline the impact of the report since its publication. Young people have been at the heart of this work. They will talk about what their involvement has meant to them and the difference they would like it to make.</p>	CARDIFF SUITE
<p>POETRY, ART & SONG: LISTENING TO OUR SERVICE CHILDREN</p> <p><i>Katie Salari, Never Such Innocence</i></p> <p>This workshop will dive into the unique practices and approach of the charity Never Such Innocence (NSI) and opportunities for military connected children to have their voices heard. NSI provides young people with creative tools (poetry, art and songwriting) to share their stories, thoughts and feelings. Throughout the year, NSI holds workshops, special events and a creative competition for Month of the Military Child. These powerful platforms positively impact the participants, their families and the wider armed forces community.</p>	ENFYNS SUITE
<p>DEVELOPING THE THRIVING LIVES TOOLKIT FOR THE HIGHER EDUCATION (HE) SECTOR</p> <p><i>Dr Amanda Carr & Dr Liz Spruin, ACCESS Learning</i></p> <p>This workshop will present the Thriving Lives Toolkit for Higher Education (HE), focusing on the outcomes of research into the experiences of students from Armed Forces families in HE. It will explore insights from service children and HE professionals, discuss the translation of findings into best practice principles, and detail the development of an evidence-based toolkit. Aligned with "Inspiring Impact," the workshop demonstrates how research directly informs HE policies and practices, fostering meaningful, evidence-led change that enhances the educational experiences of service children. It also highlights innovative collaborations and the direct impact on service children's lives.</p>	GLAMORGAN & HIREATH SUITES
<p>LINCOLNSHIRE'S FESTIVAL OF FRIENDS: A SCHOOLS' PROJECT TO SUPPORT SERVICE CHILDREN</p> <p><i>Shaun O'Neill, LincHigher</i> <i>Matt Blyton, Project Lead</i></p> <p>The Festival of Friends project, funded by the Armed Forces Education Trust and LiNCHigher, is an inspiring initiative focused on supporting Service children. Its core mission is to create and share effective practices in both educational and pastoral care, ensuring these children receive the best possible support. By promoting progression to further and higher education, the project aims to open new doors of opportunity, inspiring positive outcomes that can shape brighter futures for Service children. Through school based collaboration and dedication, the Festival of Friends is making a lasting and impactful difference in the lives of those it serves.</p>	ANUERIN BEVAN & AFON TAF SUITES

WORKSHOPS - SESSION 3	ROOM
<p>SUPPORTING SCHOOL TRANSITIONS: A NEW SUSTAINED COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO CREATIVE FORCES DAYS</p> <p><i>Sarah Harder-Collins & Vicky Fisher, University of Winchester</i></p> <p><i>Steve Baker & Clair Martin, Seekers Create</i></p> <p>The University of Winchester, in partnership with Bath Spa University, adapted the Creative Forces Day (CFD) model to focus on the transition of Service Children in KS2 and KS3. The teams worked with Seekers Create CIC, a dynamic social enterprise with previous experience of collaborating on CFDs. Together they developed an innovative series of activities to collect service child voice to shape a series of school teaching resources that were subsequently shared via a follow-up CPD workshop with school staff. This interactive session will introduce the new innovative and sustained approach to CFDs, sharing the resources and impact to date.</p>	CARDIFF SUITE
<p>SHARING STORIES TO INSPIRE IMPACT</p> <p><i>Millie Taylor & Joanna Wolfe, SSCE Cymru</i></p> <p>This workshop will explore the experiences of Service children in Wales, focusing on the unique challenges they may face, such as frequent relocations, family separations, and resettlement. Through a series of stories shared by schools and Service children, participants will gain insight into the impact of these experiences and the ways in which support can make a difference. Attendees will be invited to reflect on what has inspired them, engage in activities that encourage sharing of their own experiences, and contribute to discussions on best practices for supporting Service children</p>	GLAMORGAN & HIREATH SUITES
<p>IMPROVING PROVISION FOR MOBILE SERVICE CHILDREN WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS/ SEND</p> <p><i>Matt Blyton, Catterick Garrison ASSIST Project (GAP) Lead</i></p> <p>Catterick's two-year Garrison ASSIST Project (GAP) successfully aimed for a collaborative approach across 8 schools to improving SEND provision for mobile Service children, informed by the evidence-base and delivered by confident and highly trained staff. In this workshop, the project's lead will explore the following key questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the current situation for Service children with additional needs / SEND? • What are the distinctive experiences of Service children with SEND, their families and the schools that support them? • What was the GAP approach? • What impact has GAP had? • What is key to deploying GAP elsewhere in the UK? 	ANUERIN BEVAN & AFON TAF SUITES
<p>MEASURING IMPACT: THE NERUPI APPROACH TO EVALUATION</p> <p><i>Annette Hayton & Dr Sally Griffin, NERUPI, University of Bath</i></p> <p>The NERUPI* Framework is an established methodology used to evaluate the impact of initiatives that support the educational progression of students from groups who are underrepresented in higher education, such as Service Children. Some of its key outcomes already underpin the Creative Forces Day Evaluation Toolkit resource, including generating the learner voice to inform practice. In this workshop we will explore how the NERUPI approach and principles could be applied to evaluate the impact of a wider range of educational progression interventions with Service Children, supporting the engagement of SCiP allies in evidence-led action and the development of innovative practice.</p>	ENFYNS SUITE

TODAY'S SPEAKERS



MILLIE TAYLOR

Programme Manager, SSCE Cymru

Millie manages the Supporting Service Children in Education in Wales (SSCE Cymru) Welsh Government funded programme. With a focus on setting strategic goals and a mission to embed support for Service children in schools in Wales. As the Programme Manager, Millie is an advocate for Service children, and always keen to speak with them directly. She has coordinated activities to involve Service children in the work of SSCE Cymru. Millie has created many opportunities for collaboration in Wales and is always keen to share good practice with organisations across the UK.



PHILIP DENT

SCiP Alliance Director

Philip was a secondary school teacher before leading a regional higher education access partnership. He founded a social enterprise championing whole-person, whole journey approaches and co-founded the National Network for the Education of Care Leavers, also leading its spin-out as a charity. He has worked throughout the UK and in Australia on leading progression practice, was an adviser to England's access regulator, and has researched, trained and advised schools, colleges, universities and agencies on factors impacting on thriving through the life-course.

Philip has been Director of the SCiP Alliance since it foundation in 2016 having led the research-practice project that laid its foundations.



ALISTAIR CARNS MP

Minister for Veterans and People

Alistair Carns grew up in Scotland, went to state school and joined the military at 19, working his way up to the rank of Colonel. He served and led during four tours in Afghanistan and was awarded the Military Cross in 2011 'in recognition of gallant and distinguished services in Afghanistan during the period 1 October 2010 to 31 March 2011'. From 2017 he served as an adviser to three UK Defence Secretaries. Recently he served as Chief of Staff to the Commander UK Strike Force where he was responsible for coordinating aircraft carriers and commando forces. He was appointed Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) for exceptional operational service in the 2022 Queens' Birthday Honours. Carns became Minister for Veterans and People at the Ministry of Defence on 9 July 2024. He was elected as the Labour MP for Birmingham Selly Oak on 4 July 2024.

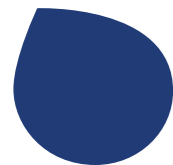


RILEY BARNES

SSCE Cymru Lead Ambassador

Riley's father served 22 years in the Royal Corps of Signals, and Riley was introduced to SSCE Cymru after winning the BBC Young Reporter competition. Through the competition, he produced a report on the challenges faced by service children. Now in Year 10 at Milford Haven School, Riley is an enthusiastic Scout with aspirations to join the Welsh Youth Parliament. He is running as a candidate for Preseli Pembrokeshire, where he aims to champion three key issues: education for service children, educational funding, and the long waiting lists for Additional Learning Needs (ALN) support in the NHS. These causes are deeply important to Riley and his siblings.

PANEL MEMBERS



RUSSELL COLLIER

Head of Education Policy Team - Armed Forces Families & Safeguarding, Ministry of Defence

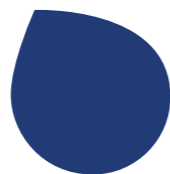
Russell joined the Ministry of Defence in 2016 and now leads the Education Policy Team (EPT) within the Armed Forces Families & Safeguarding team. The EPT oversees the 'Children's Education' workstream in the UK Armed Forces Families Strategy, providing expert input on MOD policies and advocating for Service children across various stakeholders, including government departments, local authorities, and schools. The team focuses on improving stakeholder engagement, educational transitions, and advising on education for Defence overseas 'isolated detachments'. Before this role, Russell was headteacher of a 3 to 18 school in the UK, with 20 years of experience in both state and independent sectors.



LEAH HUMPHREYS

Deputy Head Teacher, Prendergast CP School

Leah, from Pembrokeshire, has been an educator since 1999, teaching all primary age groups across four schools. She spent 17 years at Pembrokeshire's second-largest primary school, developing expertise in behaviour management and leading support units. Leah moved into leadership, focusing on curriculum design aligned with the new Curriculum for Wales, and became Deputy Head Teacher at Prendergast CP School in 2022. There, she oversees Teaching and Learning, curriculum development, and student progression. Prendergast CP School celebrates diversity, with 21% of students coming from homes where different languages are spoken. Currently there are 33 different languages represented in our school. Throughout the school, service children, mainly linked to 14th Signal Regiment Brawdy, make up 12% of the 428 children currently on roll.



MICHELLE ALSTON

Chief Executive, Forces in Mind Trust

Michelle began her career working in roles within politics and the civil service, working on parliamentary and policy issues. She has also worked in the higher education sector, in roles encompassing policy, quality assurance and administration, at the University of Leeds and Kingston University. She joined Forces in Mind Trust from her previous role as the Policy and Research Director at the Army Families Federation, where she engaged with policy makers in the chain of command and Government to raise issues faced by Army families. She is a Cobseo Clore Social Fellow 2019, and a former trustee of SSAFA and the Lloyd's Patriotic Fund. Michelle understands first-hand the challenges and benefits of military life, as her husband is a currently serving Army officer.



JASON POLLARD

Head of Wellbeing and Safeguarding in Education, Welsh government

Jason is a career civil servant with a diverse background. He began his career in operational delivery, working on international trade and European Structural Funding in Wales, and later supported Kuwait's reconstruction after the Gulf War. In recent years, he has focused on policy development, leading the devolution of the Fire and Rescue Service to the Welsh Government and working with Welsh Fire and Rescue Services. Jason also led NHS Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service policy for eight years. Currently, he works in the Welsh Government Education Department, supporting learners' emotional wellbeing and, after a recent reorganisation, overseeing safeguarding, anti-bullying policy, and the needs of Service children.

WORKSHOP LEADERS & CONTRIBUTORS



LUCY ROBINSON

Department of Education, University of Oxford

Lucy Robinson is a final year doctoral researcher at the Department of Education, University of Oxford, funded by an ESRC Grand Union DTP studentship. Her DPhil research engages in a meaningful and creative way with service children to explore how military life has shaped their experiences of education and sense of self. Before embarking on her DPhil at Oxford, Lucy completed her PGCE and MEd in Primary Education at the University of Cambridge. In addition to her DPhil work and role as Twitter Manager for the Defence Research Network (DRN), Lucy is a Trustee for the Armed Forces Education Trust (AFET).



MEG THOMAS

Acting CEO, Forces Children Scotland

Meg qualified as a Social Worker in 1993 and has worked in the statutory and voluntary sectors in both Australia and Scotland. She has further qualifications in social services leadership and management and in young people's leadership and participation. Four years ago, Meg made the move from service delivery to the world of policy and influencing. Meg is passionate about realising children's rights, particularly through amplifying the voices of children and young people to decision makers.



NICOLA TURNER

Senior Fair Access Adviser, UCAS

Nicola is Senior Fair Access Adviser at UCAS, where she has been involved in widening access and participation for students from under-represented and disadvantaged groups since she joined in 2016. She has co-authored UCAS reports on student mental health, disabled students, and care-experienced students, and works closely with expert organisations to help improve the experience of accessing higher education for under-represented and disadvantaged groups. A former teacher, Nicola is strong believer in the transformative potential of education, and the importance of collaborative working to drive improvements for learners – whatever their background. Outside of work, Nicola is a Trustee for the National Network for the Education of Care Leavers (NNECL).



ROBYN PATTISON

Policy and Parliamentary Officer, Forces Children Scotland

Robyn has a background in parliamentary work and third-sector volunteering. Since joining Forces Children Scotland in 2023, she has supported the Influencing Strategy and co-authored the report, "It's not just their job, it's our whole lives." Growing up in a veteran family, Robyn is passionate about raising awareness of the challenges faced by forces children. She is committed to amplifying their voices and ensuring decision-makers understand their needs. oices of children and young people to decision makers.



SOPHIA DUNN

Young person from an Armed Forces family

Sophia is 16 and lives in Moray and is in her sixth year at school. Her Dad served in the Army for 24 years, retiring in 2021. She has lived in various locations around the UK before her family settled in Moray. She loves ice skating and volleyball and is really enjoying the philosophy course she is doing this year at school. In 2020 she attended an online book club which was being co-delivered by Forces Children Scotland and Army Welfare Service and from there got involved in volunteering with Forces Children Scotland. Since then, she has been involved in numerous projects to raise awareness about the experiences of children and young people from forces families. Her highlight was the Tornado of Change Campaign which spotlights the experiences of children and young people when their parent leaves the forces. Most recently she met with Natalie Don-Innes, Minister for Children, Young People and The Promise and is looking forward to hearing about the changes that will happen following their meeting.



KATIE SALARI

CEO, Never Such Innocence

Katie is the CEO of Never Such Innocence, a charity which gives children and young people a voice through creative arts. The Voices of Armed Forces Children Programme allow Service children to share the challenges and opportunities they face as a result of their parent being in the military. Katie has worked with young people for over 20 years, including 5 years at the US Army Garrison Stuttgart. She has a Masters Degree in Youth Development.



JAIDEN KANE

Young person from an Armed Forces family

Jaiden is 16, lives in Fife and is studying for his advanced highers this year at school. His Dad left the Army in 2017 after serving for 17 years. Jaiden has been actively involved in Forces Children Scotland's Participation work since meeting our Participation Manager at a young carers event in 2022. At home he helps to care for his elder sister who has complex needs. He loves music and football and plays for a local team. Volunteering for Forces Children Scotland has given him the opportunity to take part in new experiences and to build his confidence. He wants to spread awareness about some of the challenges young people from forces families face.



SARAH HARDER-COLLINS

Deputy Director Student Support and Success / Chair of the SCiP Alliance board, University of Winchester

Sarah has worked in widening participation for over 15 years having first started as a Project Officer for Aimhigher. As Deputy Director of Student, Support and Success, Sarah leads the Academic Success, Student Journey, Students and Money and WP teams at Winchester. For the last 8 years she has led widening participation at the University of Winchester with institutional responsibility for all elements of the Access and Participation Plan, externally funded access and outreach programs and chairing the SCiP Alliance Board. She also was a founding trustee for the National Educational Opportunities Network (NEON) and is the Safeguarding Governor for the South Hampshire College Group.



VICKY FISHER

Student Journey Co-ordinator, University of Winchester

Vicky joined the University of Winchester in 2023, having previously worked for over a decade within primary education. In her role as Student Co-ordinator, Vicky supports current students throughout the university as a first point of contact: offering advice, guidance and practical help on a wide variety of issues. She also provides tailored support to groups of students identified within Winchester's Access and Participation Plan. As part of her outreach activities, Vicky collaborates with colleagues across the Winchester District and beyond on projects aimed at learners of all ages and the staff that support them.



DR CLAIRE LEE

Research Fellow, Centre for Psychological Research, Oxford Brookes University

Claire Lee is a Research Fellow at Oxford Brookes University, specialising in ethical participatory research with children. A former Service child and primary school teacher of Service children, Claire holds an MSc and PhD in educational research. Her doctoral work focused on the learning lives of children from Armed Forces families. She is currently leading funded research into the educational experiences and outcomes of Service children with additional needs. Claire is also a member of the SCiP Alliance Management Group.



CLAIR MARTIN

Founders & Director, Seekers Create CIC

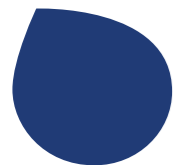
Clair is a socially engaged community artist and entrepreneur with over 20 years experience in the creative industries. Clair is the founder and director of Seekers Create CIC. Seekers aim to empower communities through creativity, connection, and meaningful engagement. Clair works with a team of creatives to design and deliver unique, inclusive learning experiences for and with the community. Creative elements include STEAM workshops. Large scale community murals and digital and physical trails across Portsmouth and surrounding areas.



DR LIZ SPRUIN

Head of Learning and Development, ACCESS Learning

Liz is a Chartered Psychologist with a PhD in Investigative Psychology and MBA in Collaborative Leadership. She has over 15 years of experience in research, higher education, and impactful project leadership. Throughout her career, Liz has focused on translating research into meaningful action, particularly in supporting hard to reach populations. Liz currently leads the Thriving Lives toolkit for Higher Education project, focused on enhancing the experiences and to support for students from Armed Forces families. Her approach to research and practice is deeply impact-oriented, ensuring that interventions are not only evidence-based but also directly improve the lives of those they are designed to support.



JOANNA WOLFE

Participation Lead Officer SSCE Cymru

Joanna has first-hand experience of Armed Forces life, having been a Service child herself and later marrying a long serving member of the Army. They have two children and have lived in many locations whilst 'following the flag' before settling in Wales. As the SSCE Cymru Participation Lead Officer, Joanna's role involves listening to Service children and supporting schools with setting up Service children clubs where they can come together to share their experiences and be celebrated for the important part they play in our Armed Forces community.



DR AMANDA CARR

Director, ACCESS Learning

Joanna has first-hand experience of Armed Forces life, having been a Service child herself and later marrying a long serving member of the Army. They have two children and have lived in many locations whilst 'following the flag' before settling in Wales. As the SSCE Cymru Participation Lead Officer, Joanna's role involves listening to Service children and supporting schools with setting up Service children clubs where they can come together to share their experiences and be celebrated for the important part they play in our Armed Forces community.



MATT BLYTON

Independent education consultant (Catterick Garrison ASSIST Project (GAP) and Festival of Friends Project Lead)

Matt has over 20 years of experience in education, having served as a primary school teacher in England and Singapore, deputy head, headteacher, and a school consultant for the MOD. In 2008, he joined North Yorkshire Council's school improvement team, where he worked across all phases of education for 13 years. Since January 2022, he has been an independent education consultant across England. Matt has a deep commitment to supporting Armed Forces children, is a member of the Alliance's Management Group, and is the longest-serving member of the SCISS national executive committee. He led the two-year Garrison ASSIST Project in Catterick and the Festival of Friends school-improvement projects in North Yorkshire, Oxfordshire, and Lincolnshire. Matt was instrumental in the development of the Thriving Lives toolkit and led a team of advisers that produced 50 school case studies and self-evaluation guidance materials to enhance educational outcomes.



STEVE BAKER

Founders & Director, Seekers Create CIC

Steve Baker is a seasoned leader with over two decades of experience in community engagement and organisational development. As Director of Seekers Create CIC, Steve has led creative projects that amplify local voices and foster inclusive initiatives. His career, including roles as Chief Executive at London South Bank University Students' Union and Deputy Chief Executive at Goldsmiths Students' Union, has focused on empowering individuals and communities.



ANNETTE HAYTON

Senior Research Fellow NERUPI Convener, NERUPI, University of Bath

Annette Hayton convenes NERUPI (Network for Evaluating and Researching University Participation Interventions) and was previously Head of Widening Participation at the University of Bath and Goldsmiths, University of London. With extensive experience in supporting progression to higher education, she has developed strategies to ensure positive university experiences for all students. Annette focuses on integrating educational theory, research, and evaluation to drive change within the education system. As co-developer of the NERUPI Framework, she has published numerous books and articles on widening participation and serves as Innovative Practice Editor for the journal 'Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning.' Annette is also a member of ICHAM at the University of Bath and a Trustee of Midsomer Norton Schools' Partnership, leading the Bath Hub.



SHAUN O'NEILL

Community Projects Manager, LiNCHigher

Shaun qualified as primary school teacher and worked in a range of educational settings supporting vulnerable and underrepresented young people before moving to LiNCHigher. Since joining the Uni Connect programme, he has chaired the Lincolnshire and East Midlands Regional SCiP Hub, running individual and collaborative events for schools across the region. He works with schools and community groups, designing and implementing community-based projects and school based schemes of work that aim to identify and support under represented young people.



DR SALLY GRIFFIN

NERUPI Research and Development Officer, NERUPI, University of Bath

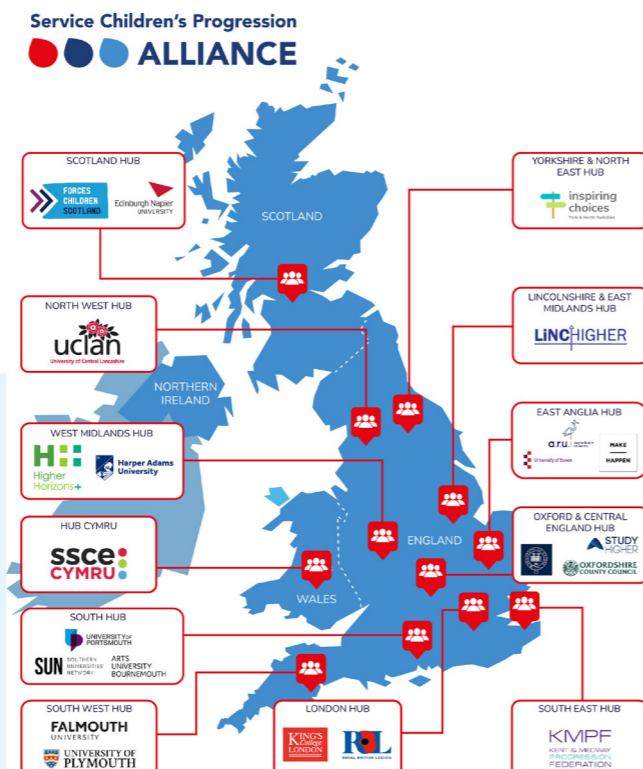
Dr Sally Griffin joined the NERUPI team in March 2022 as a NERUPI Research and Development Officer. She has worked in widening participation for over twenty years and prior to joining NERUPI was the Access and Participation Manager at Bath Spa University, where she developed, wrote and reported on the university's Access Agreements, Widening Participation Strategic Assessments and Access and Participation Plans, and managed activities designed to support successful progression to higher education. While at Bath Spa University, she was an early adopter of the NERUPI Framework, participating in its pilot and development stage. A strong supporter of the importance of collaboration to widen participation, Sally was involved in a range of national and regional boards and steering groups including Aimhigher, the local Uni Connect Wessex Inspiration Network and the Service Children's Progression (SCiP) Alliance. In 2017, Sally was elected as the first Chair of the SCiP Alliance Practice Group which brought together practitioners, researchers and policy-makers to develop new support mechanisms and collaborations. She also served as Honorary Treasurer of the War Widows' Association of Great Britain between 2016 and 2019.

THRIVING LIVES TOOLKIT

The toolkit is available online here: <https://thrivinglives.scipalliance.org/>

Underpinned by rigorous research and thoroughly tested in school, the Thriving Lives Toolkit provides schools with a framework of 7 principles through which to reflect on their practice and a 3-tier set of CPD resources. The resources in this toolkit have been developed in collaboration with a range of partners across the UK, and consists of:

- An introductory animation
- A detailed resource introducing the evidence base, what schools can do to support their Service children and who can help
- School case studies.
- Survey Tool



TAKE ACTION

JOIN THE ALLIANCE

The SCiP Alliance brings together practitioners, researchers, policymakers and funders to build a stronger evidence-base, better policy, and enhanced support for Service children's education and progression, placing their voices at the heart of all we do. The Alliance is hosted by the University of Winchester and supported by the Ministry of Defence.



Director: **Philip Dent**

Head of Operations: **Rachel Lad**

Projects Manager: **Emily Flores**

Engagement Manager: **Victoria Fisher**

OUR STRATEGY: 2022-2026

COMMUNITY & IMPACT - How building our community will enhance our impact on Service children's lives.

By building the community that our research says is one of the Alliance's most valued assets, we will increase the number of allies working together and the quality of the support we provide for Service children - and the impact on their lives. By deepening our understanding of that impact and sharing that knowledge with the sector, we will continually strengthen the case for collaborative action - and engagement in our community. That is the Community Impact cycle.

BUILDING OUR COMMUNITY

Every day, throughout the UK and overseas, thousands of professionals - in education, research, governments, charities and more - contribute to UK Service children's wellbeing and success. They come together as part of the Alliance Community to enhance their work for Service children by sharing challenges, solutions, resources and the successes made possible through their collaborations.

ENHANCING OUR IMPACT

Rigorous research and its systematic application to practice and policy are in the Alliance's DNA. Allies repeatedly cite the robust foundations of the support the Alliance provides -

whether practical tools, training, guidance or resources - as key to improving the scale and quality of their work with and for Service children. Demonstrating and understanding the impact of that work will enable us to sustain and grow our impact.

OUR STRATEGIC APPROACH

Our independent community consultation demonstrated the high value placed on the Alliance and its activities, and it highlighted the significant potential of existing assets to achieve even more. In response, our strategy focuses on investing in existing strengths and targeted new developments to maximise our support for the community and our support for collective impact on Service children's lives. The strategic goals that follow demonstrate how we will embed, enhance and expand existing work, and establish key developments to achieve our community and impact goals.

COMMUNITY + IMPACT

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Practical, real life advice, supported by educational research

Service Pupil Coordinator, Secondary School

The Service Children's Progression Alliance conducted a large-scale UK-wide consultation which told us that professionals supporting Armed Forces children want to be better connected: with each other, with evidence and with support. The Thriving Lives Toolkit responds directly to this need.

The research identified seven principles for effective practice and a framework to help schools undertake evidence-based reflection and identify improvement priorities. Research does not identify any principle to be of more importance than any others.

OUR COMMUNITY GOAL

WE WANT THE FULL DIVERSITY OF STAKEHOLDERS SUPPORTING SERVICE CHILDREN TO BE DEEPLY AND SUSTAINABLY ENGAGED IN COLLABORATIVE ACTION ON OUR SHARED MISSION AND VISION.

OUR IMPACT GOAL

WE WANT TO SET THE STANDARD FOR EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE AND POLICY AT EVERY PHASE OF SERVICE CHILDREN'S LIVES AND TO BE THE VANGUARD OF RIGOROUS RESEARCH UNDERPINNING IT.

GET INVOLVED



GO TO OUR WEBSITE
TO FIND OUT MORE



USE THE ONLINE
TARGETING TOOL



ATTEND AN EVENT



SUBSCRIBE TO OUR
NEWSLETTER



USE THE THRIVING
LIVES TOOLKIT



JOIN A HUB



Ministry
of Defence



UNIVERSITY OF
WINCHESTER

Service Children's Progression



The Service Children's Progression Alliance is led by the
University of Winchester and supported by the MoD