

Lincolnshire's Festival of Friends 2023/24

A Schools' Project to Support Service Children

Shaun O'Neill & Matt Blyton



Life as a Service Child

Ella Muir, Y12 student at Sir Robert Pattinson Academy



LINCHIGHER

Who are LiNCHigher?

- Lincolnshire's Uni Connect Partnership since 2017
- Uni Connect brings together 29 partnerships of universities, colleges and other local partners to offer activities, advice and information on the benefits and realities of going to university or college.
- The programme supports the strategic goal that students' access to higher education is not limited by their background, location or characteristics.
- Office for Students (OfS) – [Uni Connect Guide](#)



What does Uni Connect do?



Targeted Outreach: Aims to help young people from targeted local areas make well-informed decisions about their future education.

Strategic Outreach: Aims to support strategic activity and engagement to address local outreach gaps.

Attainment Raising: Aims to improve the academic attainment and progress of pupils and support their progression into higher education.

Signposting: Aims to offer an efficient and low-burden route for schools and colleges to engage with Uni Connect programme offer and higher education outreach activity.



"The Local Authority was delighted with how the project was led by Matt Blyton and supported by LiNCHigher. It was a privilege to be involved in it. The Education Team and colleagues working in schools have witnessed the direct impact of the project in terms of improving outcomes for Forces children and young people (in their widest sense) and the impact on early KS2 data"
- Michelle Dewland, Education Locality Lead, Lincolnshire County Council

"Our Forces Club has real benefits for these children. They look forward to their weekly meetings where they work on projects with other children who understand their situation. They also appreciate having a designated adult to help them with any specific issues or problems which may arise at other times. Our parents also value the additional support which we have in place for their children." (Sarah Sheardown, Deputy Headteacher)



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"I loved help making the booklet, I wanted to tell people what I had done in Forces group and to show new people joining what a great thing it is to be part of."
(Year 6 child)

"I love popping along to the club and chatting to my friends. I felt so proud to be a military child when we held our military child Enrichment Day."
(KS2 pupil)



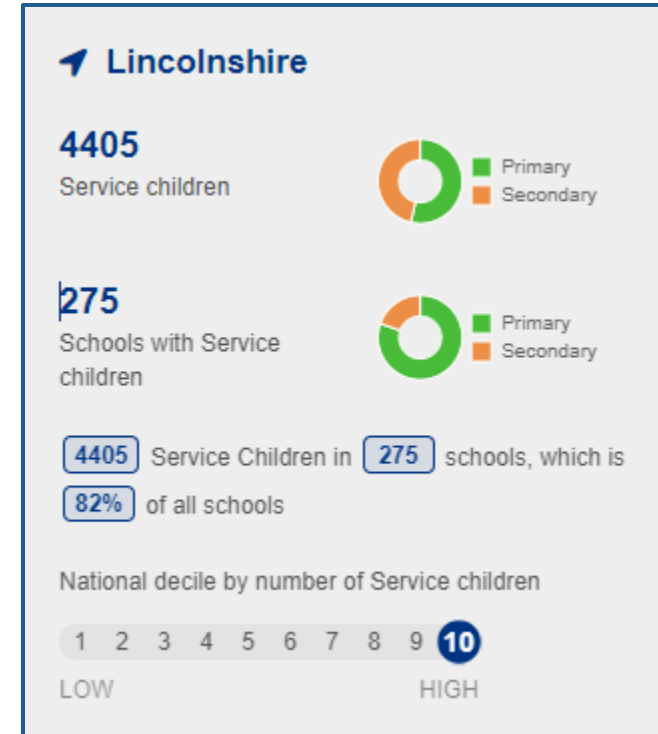
'Little Troopers has been really valuable for our daughter, providing a supportive group which understands the unique challenges of military life, especially moving homes and parental absence. It has been wonderful for her to have this community of Military children to share their experience and know she is part of a larger and wider military family.'
(Parent of a Year 2 Little Trooper)



Context: The need for the Festival of Friends

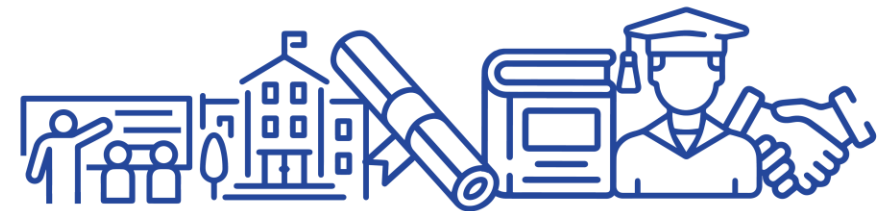
Why Lincolnshire?

- Lincolnshire is in the top national decile by number of Service children
- 351 schools in Lincolnshire have at least one Service child on roll
- 139 schools in Lincolnshire have 10 or less Service children on roll
- 98,307 children in Lincolnshire schools (Reception to Year 11)
- 4,560 (5%) Service Children in Lincolnshire schools



Key Challenges and Aims

- Supporting schools with low numbers of Service children on roll
- Ensuring schools feel confident in the allocation of Service Pupil Premium (SPP)
- Encouraging and supporting schools to sign up to, and make progress on, the SCiP Alliance's Thriving Lives Toolkit



THE NEED

WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE

The children of armed forces personnel have huge potential, but are at risk of underachieving and too few practitioners are equipped and confident to support them.

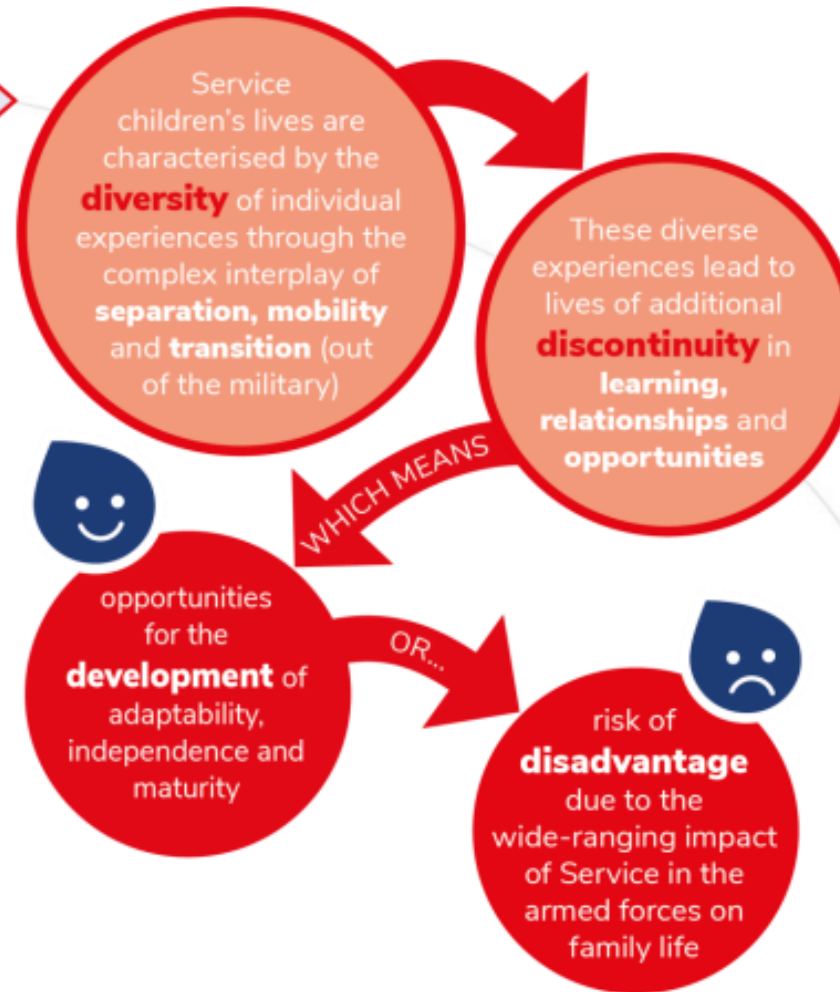
Service children:

- Are less likely to access higher education
- May attain less well, if they move schools a lot
- Can have hidden caring responsibilities and mental health and wellbeing challenges

But definitely:

- Have huge potential

Service Children's Progression
 ALLIANCE



 HIGHER



Key Research Findings

- 'Four out of ten Service children who have the ability to progress into higher education are unlikely to do so.'
- 'Mobility and deployment are two overarching issues that may impact on Service children', through:
 - 'Discontinuity of provision through delays, poor communication and transition arrangements, (especially SEN and those sitting examinations), curriculum changes'
 - 'Emotional wellbeing, disrupted friendships, increased potential for bullying'
 - 'Increased emotional and behavioural problems'
 - 'A higher incidence of mental health issues in children and parents'
 - 'Increased incidence of the child as carer.'

Service Children's Progression
 **ALLIANCE**

(McCullouch and Hall, 2016)

Thriving lives for service children

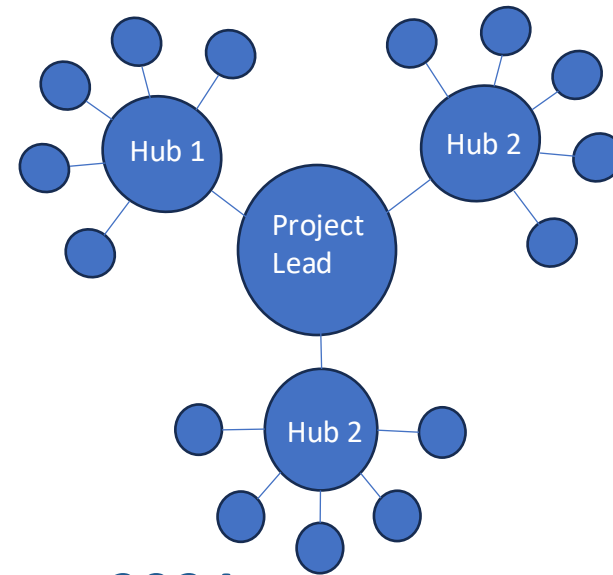
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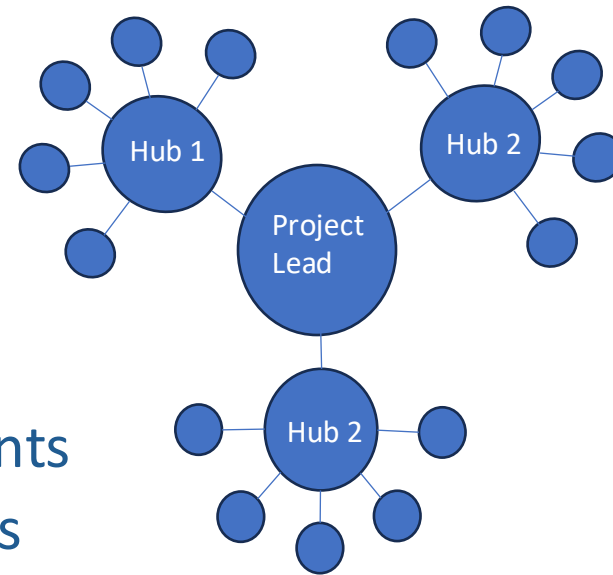
Implementation

- Secured funding from the Armed Forces Education Trust
- Creation of the Hub/Spoke network
- Organisational engagement:
 - Lincolnshire County Council
 - Local military bases
 - Local universities
- School engagement:
 - 39 schools signed up in October 2023
 - 27 attended the celebration event at BGU in June 2024
 - 23 have submitted case studies on school improvement projects



Implementation

- Wide range of school improvement projects:
 - Enhancing school to school transition
 - Deployment support
 - Running/attending special events
 - Establishing peer support mechanisms
 - Awareness raising
 - Strengthening support for Armed Forces parents
 - Creating/updating sections on school websites
 - Policy reviews



Next Steps

- Creation and dissemination of publication
- Supporting schools to develop their improvement projects
- Maintaining and developing relationships between schools
- Creation of Service Children Awards in Lincolnshire





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