

Service Children and their Educational Progression

Tuesday 8 October 2024

Research by MacCullouch and Hall (2016) showed that although service children were seen to attain as well as or better than their peers from non-military backgrounds at GCSE, their participation rate in higher education was lower. Department for Education (DfE) data over the period 2017-18 to 2019-20 indicated that the gap in higher education progression between service children and non-service-non FSM children had increased to 5%.

While a service child might attain well and often display positive qualities such as open-mindedness, pride, determination, resilience and being self-possessed, particular challenges associated with being a child of current or former military service personnel may have an impact on the likelihood of their accessing and succeeding in higher education. These challenges include geographical mobility, challenges to wellbeing that may also affect their experience of education and caring responsibilities. Since 2022 UCAS have given students the opportunity, if they wish, to indicate whether their parents or carers have a military background. In January 2024 the Office for Students included service children in their Equality of Opportunities Risk Register (EORR) and recognised the need for better understanding of the very specific and complex barriers that they face in accessing and succeeding in higher education.

At this NERUPI event we will:

- Explore the impact of service life on Armed Forces families and raise awareness of the particular challenges that service children face
- Examine research-based information on service children's educational progression and discover how this has been used to inform higher education policy-making, including the EORR
- Hear how the Service Children's Progression (SCiP) Alliance works to improve outcomes for children from Armed Forces families
- Find out from a NERUPI colleague how their university is supporting service children
- Encourage participants to identify and discuss key elements of an effective intervention strategy that might effectively support the educational progression of service children.

◆ **09.45 Registration**

◆ **10.00 Welcome, introductions and poll on current engagement**

Dr Sally Griffin, Research and Development Officer, NERUPI, University of Bath

◆ **10.10 Who are service children and why they are considered at risk of inequality of opportunity in educational progression?**

Phil Dent, Director, Service Children's Progression Alliance

In this presentation Phil will introduce the 4 Ds of service children's lives as a framework for improving understanding of their experiences and the outcomes that can result. Following the SCiP Alliance's theory of change, he will chart the journey and role of research and researchers in the Alliance's work to realise thriving lives for service children in collaboration with other key stakeholders, including the policymakers that set the context, the funders that enable action and the practitioners that make the difference.

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- ◆ **10.40 The lived experience**
Shared realities of Armed Forces family life, including the barriers to education, how this can be complicated by the challenges of SEN and the opportunities for service children to develop into self-starting, resilient young adults.
- ◆ **11.00 Questions to the panel**
Understanding and supporting service children.
- ◆ **11.15 Short Break**
- ◆ **11.30 Putting NERUPI into practice when working with service children**
Dr Katie Groves, Head of Schools & Colleges Engagement,
Anglia Ruskin University
In this presentation, Katie will share how the NERUPI Framework is used at every stage of her work with service children - intervention design, theory of change, evaluation planning and delivery.
- ◆ **11.50 Questions to the panel and discussion**
Using the NERUPI Framework with service children programmes.
- ◆ **12.10 Group Activity**
In this activity participants will consider the key elements of an effective intervention strategy that might support and evaluate the educational progression of service children.
- ◆ **13.00 Roundup**
- ◆ **13.15 Close**