

Service Children and their Educational Progression

Research by MacCullough 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.

This NERUPI event 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 service children
- Present an example of practice from a NERUPI member whose university is supporting service children
- Support participants to identify and discuss key elements of an effective intervention strategy that might support the educational progression of service children.

09.45 Virtual Coffee and Registration

10.00 Welcome, introductions and Metimeter poll on current engagement

Annette Hayton, NERUPI Convenor, Senior Research Fellow, 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 be discussing who service children are, what research has shown us about their educational progression and their participation in higher education, key data sources, how the evidence has been used to inform higher education and wider policy-making and an insight into the work of the SCiP Alliance.

10.40 The Lived Experience

A parent shares the realities of Armed Forces family life.

11.00 Question and Answer Session

Understanding and supporting service children.

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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.

12.00 Questions and Answers and Discussion

Using the NERUPI Framework with service children.

12.20 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