Thriving Lives toolkit

helping schools support Armed Forces children

Contents

Thriving Lives Toolkit

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. Independent, UK-wide research carried out by the International Centre for Guidance Studies (iCeGS) at the University of Derby comprised:

- Literature review
- Surveys in which 493 schools participated
- In-depth, multi-case study investigations with Armed Forces children, senior leaders, teachers and support staff. The schools were specifically chosen to provide a balance of primary and secondary, proportions of Armed Forces children (from very low to high), while serving all three Armed Forces between them.

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. It is important to consider all seven.

The toolkit has been extensively tested across the UK and a steering group of stakeholders settled on the terminology used throughout in the light of differences across the nations. 'Armed Forces children' resonates across the UK whereas 'Service children' is less common in Scotland.

Partnership

The SCiP Alliance is a partnership of people supporting Armed Forces children's education and success. Partnership is fundamental to the Alliance's existence, but it is also a commitment to a way of working. Running through all seven principles for effective practice is the thread of meaningful and open collaboration with all those who have a stake in supporting Armed Forces children to thrive.

Asset-based

The SCiP Alliance takes an asset-based approach. It means we start with the strengths and focus on how to build on them. It does not mean avoiding problems or ignoring issues, instead it challenges us to focus on solutions and to never problematise children themselves. Like all children, Armed Forces children have huge potential, and their experiences provide wonderful opportunities to thrive.

Evidence-led

The SCiP Alliance starts with the best available evidence. The robust research underpinning the Thriving Lives Toolkit provides greater confidence that what we do can be effective. We can never know everything we need to know, but, combined with well-informed professional judgement and an unrelenting focus on the child, a sound evidence base helps provide a foundation on which Armed Forces children can thrive.

How to assess your practice

Emerging practice	Developing practice	Embedding practice
Schools with emerging practice will be actively reflecting on their activity and may be implementing actions to enhance their support, but to a small extent	Schools with developing practice will be addressing this principle to a good extent, but this may be partial or yet to be enhanced through regular monitoring and evaluation	Schools with embedding practice will fully address this principle with well-established work that is routinely monitored and evaluated and showing evidence of impact

Advice from Other Schools

This toolkit was developed by the SCiP Alliance in collaboration with a number of Uni Connect partnerships. The Toolkit was piloted in a variety of schools in 2020. Evaluation officers in six Uni Connect partnerships, led by Higher Horizons at Keele University, analysed feedback from schools and provided recommendations which have enhanced the content and format. Schools in the pilot ranged from those with a high proportion of Armed Forces children to those with only a few. Pilot schools served families from the Army, RAF and the Royal Navy in many different locations. All participants recommended that other schools educating Armed Forces children use this tool to consider their support for their Armed Forces children. The Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust funded UK-wide enhancement research and impact evaluation, on the basis of which the foundational Toolkit was updated.

Extensive consultation with schools confirms that the tool is highly practical and will support you in determining not only overall strategy, but specific actions. Schools suggest that you schedule time for it on a regular basis, using it as the basis of diagnostic and planning activities.

Many schools have highlighted its usefulness in developing governance documents and strategies.

Schools suggest that you use the toolkit not only to record your own thoughts, but as a tool for communication and collaboration within the school and in conversations with others, such as local authorities or inspection teams.

Schools identify the Toolkit's potential to provide a mechanism for schools to share practice, to develop shared activity or to collaborate on funding bids.

Thriving Lives toolkit

helping schools support Armed Forces children

The 7 principles of effective support

	Principle	Vision
1	Our approach is clear	Leaders' understanding and approach ensure resources and policies improve Armed Forces children's outcomes.
2	Wellbeing is supported	Tailored pastoral provision supports Armed Forces children's mental health and wellbeing.
3	Achievement is maximised	Teaching, assessment and support ensure the continuity of Armed Forces children's learning and progression.
4	Transition is effective	Systems and support ensure seamless transitions for Armed Forces children arriving at and leaving school.
5	Children are heard	Armed Forces children's diverse voices are heard and inform the support they receive.
6	Parents are engaged	Strong home-school partnerships help Armed Forces families feel valued as part of the school community.
7	Staff are well-informed	Supportive training and networks ensure all staff understand and support each Armed Forces child.

Our approach is clear

Leaders' understanding and approach ensure resources and policies improve Armed Forces children's outcomes.

Thriving Lives toolkit

Evidence suggests:

- *Clear policies and strong cultural awareness of the life of a Armed Forces child at a school's strategic level are key to effective support*
- *A central aspect of school transparency and support is the targeted deployment of resources, including any dedicated funding where available*
- *Monitoring Armed Forces children's outcomes and the impact of spend and activity can improve the effectiveness of support*
- *There are 6 key questions for schools to consider*

What this might look like:

Research identified that practice supporting this principle *may include*:

- Having a clear strategy for the targeted deployment of any dedicated funding
- Publishing a dedicated strategy for supporting Armed Forces children, for example through the school website
- Evaluating the impact of a dedicated strategy, changing it when it is deemed not to be presenting good value for money
- Monitoring and reporting on outcomes for Armed Forces children
- Governing body minutes (England and Wales) or Parent Councils (Scotland) evidencing challenge around Armed Forces children's academic progress, achievement and wellbeing
- Strategy and leadership is informed by Armed Forces children's voices
- Named staff contact

Examples from practice:

"We receive funding from the Education Support Fund to employ MoD learning support assistants who support the Service children in and out of the classroom"

(MoD School Coordinator, secondary school, Wales)

"Appointing a Forces Families Liaison Officer has really benefitted our Service children and families, providing a link between school and home." (Senior leader, primary school, England)

"Time for staff to be involved with local cluster group for Service families; transport costs for Service Children to participate in activities organised by the cluster; half-termly get-togethers with the Service children at our school and the neighbouring junior school." (Senior leader, primary school with 2 pupils on roll, England)

Emerging practice	Developing practice	Embedding practice
Schools with emerging practice will be actively reflecting on their activity and may be implementing actions to enhance their support, but to a small extent	Schools with developing practice will be addressing this principle to a good extent, but this may be partial or yet to be enhanced through regular monitoring and evaluation	Schools with embedding practice will fully address this principle with well-established work that is routinely monitored and evaluated and showing evidence of impact

Our approach is clear

Leaders' understanding and approach ensure resources and policies improve Armed Forces children's outcomes.

Thriving Lives toolkit

REFLECT	EVIDENCE	SELF-ASSESSMENT			ACTION	DATE
Reflect with stakeholders on these key questions	Identify current practice that demonstrates where you are now	Assess your current practice			Identify actions to enhance your support	Agree a deadline for your actions
		Emerging	Developing	Embedding		dd/mm/yy
1.1 - To what extent are all those involved in leadership, governance and Armed Forces child support aware of funding and other resources available to support Armed Forces children?						
1.2 - To what extent do you monitor how dedicated funding is spent?						
1.3 - To what extent is support informed by evidence and monitored for effectiveness?						

1 **Our approach is clear**

Leaders' understanding and approach ensure resources and policies improve Armed Forces children's outcomes.

Thriving Lives toolkit

REFLECT	EVIDENCE	SELF-ASSESSMENT			ACTION	DATE
Reflect with stakeholders on these key questions	Identify current practice that demonstrates where you are now	Assess your current practice			Identify actions to enhance your support	Agree a deadline for your actions
		Emerging	Developing	Embedding		
						dd/mm/yy
1.4 - To what extent do Armed Forces family voices and Armed Forces representation inform those responsible for leadership, governance and Armed Forces child support?						
1.5 - To what extent do those responsible for school governance ensure Armed Forces children's outcomes are monitored and appropriate support is delivered?						
1.6 - To what extent do your admissions arrangements take account of Armed Forces families' frequent, mid-term and short notice moves?						

Wellbeing is supported

Tailored pastoral provision supports Armed Forces children's mental health and wellbeing.

Thriving Lives toolkit

Evidence suggests:

- *Provision of pastoral support for Armed Forces children is a priority*
- *A school environment attuned to the experiences of Armed Forces children can promote positive development*
- *Armed Forces children may need extra support during periods of transition and discontinuity*
- *There are 5 key questions for schools to consider*

What this might look like:

Research identified that practice supporting this principle *may include:*

- Opportunities for Armed Forces children to explore their experiences and feelings with other Armed Forces children in clubs such as those facilitated by the MKC Heroes network
- Engagement with parents to be aware of upcoming deployments
- Supporting a child to research and map a deployed or weekending parent's location
- Exploiting any opportunities in the curriculum to support children and their peers to understand where a deployed parent is stationed
- Embedding understanding of Armed Forces in the curriculum
- Ensuring all staff understand the range of Armed Forces children's potential experiences and emotions during the different stages of deployment and separation
- Organising resources for families to maintain connections during periods of separation

Examples from practice:

"There's a lot of people I can talk to. We have a wellbeing teacher we can ask questions and checks up on us and they give us activity sheets to discuss our feelings"

(Armed Forces child, secondary school, Wales)

"Our ELSA … provides an after school 'Forces Fun Club'. They also meet weekly with any child who has a parent away on deployment and supports with letter writing."

(Senior Leader, Primary School, England)

"Every child whose parent goes away gets a 'knitted doll' of their parent and the parent has a small knitted 'child'."

(Senior leader, primary school, England)

Emerging practice	Developing practice	Embedding practice
Schools with emerging practice will be actively reflecting on their activity and may be implementing actions to enhance their support, but to a small extent	Schools with developing practice will be addressing this principle to a good extent, but this may be partial or yet to be enhanced through regular monitoring and evaluation	Schools with embedding practice will fully address this principle with well-established work that is routinely monitored and evaluated and showing evidence of impact

Wellbeing is supported

Tailored pastoral provision supports Armed Forces children's mental health and wellbeing.

Thriving Lives toolkit

REFLECT	EVIDENCE	SELF-ASSESSMENT			ACTION	DATE
Reflect with stakeholders on these key questions	Identify current practice that demonstrates where you are now	Assess your current practice			Identify actions to enhance your support	Agree a deadline for your actions
		Emerging	Developing	Embedding		
2.1 - To what extent do you create opportunities for Armed Forces children to meet, and explore experiences together?						dd/mm/yy
2.2 - To what extent is your pastoral support informed by Armed Forces children's voices?						
2.3 - To what extent do you have mechanisms to provide tailored support when Armed Forces children need it while ensuring that they are not singled out unnecessarily?						

2 **Wellbeing is supported** Tailored pastoral provision supports Armed Forces children's mental health and wellbeing.

Thriving Lives toolkit

REFLECT	EVIDENCE	SELF-ASSESSMENT			ACTION	DATE
Reflect with stakeholders on these key questions	**Identify current practice that demonstrates where you are now**	**Assess your current practice**			**Identify actions to enhance your support**	**Agree a deadline for your actions**
		Emerging	Developing	Embedding		
2.4 - To what extent does pastoral support take account of points of stress including deployment/weekending, school moves and caring responsibilities?						dd/mm/yy
2.5 - To what extent do you nurture Armed Forces children's identities, and help them feel understood?						

Teaching, assessment and support ensure the continuity of Armed Forces children's learning and progression.

Evidence suggests:

- A commitment to *support Armed Forces children to maximise personal levels of achievement is a priority*
- *Transition impacts on attainment in a range of ways, including the disruption of moving, non-alignment of subjects and exam boards, missing curriculum and repeated curriculum*
- *The emotional impact and stress that deployment and separation have on Armed Forces children can affect academic attainment*
- *There are 6 key questions for schools to consider*

What this might look like:

Research identified that practice supporting this principle *may include:*

- Assessment of new arrivals, taking into account the need for a sense of security before undertaking assessments
- Ongoing assessment and monitoring
- Ensuring that a strong focus is placed on ensuring that a Armed Forces child's emotional health and wellbeing is supported as a precursor to academic achievement
- One-to-one support or catch-up sessions
- Ensuring Armed Forces children are offered additional careers support and exposure to alternative trajectories
- Support for developing and showcasing strengths
- Understanding the national picture on Armed Forces children's achievement and what it means for your approach
- Catch-up support to address curriculum gaps
- Support to access extra curricular opportunities

Examples from practice:

"Head of inclusion allows a setting period of less than a month before meeting with parents and pupils and taking information from staff to discuss any gaps. Catch up in the form of alternative homework."

(Senior leader, middle school, England)

"I get Welsh catch up lessons and they've given me a dictionary to help me which I carry around with me"

(Armed Forces child, Secondary school, Wales)

"We'll try and celebrate a topic that a new student has covered that we don't do, so we'll ask them to talk to the class about that theme."

(Teacher, primary school, England)

Emerging practice	Developing practice	Embedding practice
Schools with emerging practice will be actively reflecting on their activity and may be implementing actions to enhance their support, but to a small extent	Schools with developing practice will be addressing this principle to a good extent, but this may be partial or yet to be enhanced through regular monitoring and evaluation	Schools with embedding practice will fully address this principle with well-established work that is routinely monitored and evaluated and showing evidence of impact

12

Achievement is maximised

Teaching, assessment and support ensure the continuity of Armed Forces children's learning and progression.

Thriving Lives toolkit

REFLECT	EVIDENCE	SELF-ASSESSMENT			ACTION	DATE
Reflect with stakeholders on these key questions	Identify current practice that demonstrates where you are now	Assess your current practice			Identify actions to enhance your support	Agree a deadline for your actions
		Emerging	Developing	Embedding		
3.1 - To what extent do you assess on entry and monitor Armed Forces children's achievement, learning gaps and preferences, support needs and interests and skills?						dd/mm/yy
3.2 - To what extent do you address gaps and mitigate curriculum and qualification discontinuity?						
3.3 - To what extent do you track and regularly review Armed Forces children's outcomes and progress, and tailor support in response?						

3 **Achievement is maximised**

Teaching, assessment and support ensure the continuity of Armed Forces children's learning and progression.

Thriving Lives *toolkit*

REFLECT	EVIDENCE	SELF-ASSESSMENT			ACTION	DATE
Reflect with stakeholders on these key questions	Identify current practice that demonstrates where you are now	Assess your current practice			Identify actions to enhance your support	Agree a deadline for your actions
		Emerging	Developing	Embedding		
						dd/mm/yy
3.4 - To what extent do you address Armed Forces children's additional learning support needs?						
3.5 - To what extent do you celebrate prior learning and help Armed Forces children make the most of their strengths?						
3.6 - To what extent do you provide tailored careers and decision-making support for Armed Forces children?						

4 **Transition is effective**

Systems and support ensure seamless transitions for Armed Forces children arriving at and leaving school.

Thriving Lives toolkit

Evidence suggests:

- *A robust and supportive transition procedure for pupils both entering and leaving schools is a priority*
- *Not only may Armed Forces children relocate more than non-Armed Forces children, but many move in the middle of the school year*
- *Armed Forces children require bespoke pastoral support for repeated transition*
- *Proactive and planned support can be particularly important for children with specific educational needs*
- *There are 6 key questions for schools to consider*

What this might look like:

Research identified that practice supporting this principle *may include:*

- Identifying Armed Forces children on entry through admission processes
- Identifying current Armed Forces children through requests to parents for updated information
- A standing staff meeting item about Armed Forces children and any those joining or leaving the school
- Liaising with Armed Forces children's previous or next school
- Processes to ensure the first day goes particularly smoothly and a Armed Forces child feels welcomed, such as a buddy system (for both children and parents) and clear information for both child and parents
- A clear, regularly reviewed mobility policy
- Leaving and arriving rituals, such as songs in assembly or special booklets of memories to keep
- Arrivals and leavers display boards with photographs and affirming messages

Examples from practice:

"Our ELSA will visit pupils in the current setting where possible and have conversations with the current school to get an understanding of the child."

(Senior leader, primary school, England)

"I want to be recognised as part of the community. I have something to offer. It is really nice being an older military kid, helping the younger ones to know there's people like me"

(Armed Forces child, secondary school, Scotland)

"The buddy system helps. It makes you have an automatic friend."

(Armed Forces child, secondary school, England)

Emerging practice	Developing practice	Embedding practice
Schools with emerging practice will be actively reflecting on their activity and may be implementing actions to enhance their support, but to a small extent	Schools with developing practice will be addressing this principle to a good extent, but this may be partial or yet to be enhanced through regular monitoring and evaluation	Schools with embedding practice will fully address this principle with well-established work that is routinely monitored and evaluated and showing evidence of impact

Thriving Lives toolkit

REFLECT	EVIDENCE	SELF-ASSESSMENT			ACTION	DATE
Reflect with stakeholders on these key questions	Identify current practice that demonstrates where you are now	Assess your current practice			Identify actions to enhance your support	Agree a deadline for your actions
		Emerging	Developing	Embedding		dd/mm/yy
4.1 - To what extent does your school identify Armed Forces children?						
4.2 - To what extent do you work with outgoing and incoming Armed Forces families through the long transition process?						
4.3 - To what extent do you welcome Armed Forces families, both before and after their moves, and ensure a positive experience from the first day?						

16

4 Transition is effective

Systems and support ensure seamless transitions for Armed Forces children arriving at and leaving school.

Thriving Lives toolkit

REFLECT	EVIDENCE	SELF-ASSESSMENT			ACTION	DATE
Reflect with stakeholders on these key questions	Identify current practice that demonstrates where you are now	Assess your current practice			Identify actions to enhance your support	Agree a deadline for your actions
		Emerging	Developing	Embedding		
4.4 - To what extent do you work with Armed Forces children's previous or future schools to transfer records and find out about learning, wellbeing, achievements, interests, skills and their family context?						dd/mm/yy
4.5 - To what extent do you minimise discontinuity in additional support, for example by minimising re-assessment of needs?						
4.6 - To what extent do you help Armed Forces children build new and maintain existing relationships?						

5 **Children are heard**

Armed Forces children's diverse voices are heard and inform the support they receive.

Thriving Lives toolkit

Evidence suggests:

- *It is vital that Armed Forces children are heard and that support is consistently improved in the light of the learning*
- *Armed Forces children benefit from being actively involved in developing support*
- *Failure to listen can result in a sense of isolation*
- *There are 5 key questions for schools to consider*

What this might look like:

Research identified that practice supporting this principle *may include*:

- Specific arrangements are made in all student representation bodies to ensure Armed Forces children's voices are heard
- Armed Forces child involvement with local Armed Forces community forums and groups
- Facilitating sharing of Armed Forces child experiences through arts such as drama, picture books and poster displays
- Mechanisms for the school to capture views from members of Armed Forces child support groups
- Enabling participation in conferences and forums for Armed Forces children run by LAs, Armed Forces charities and universities
- Using surveys to gather feedback from families about induction procedures, concerns and school processes
- Ensuring Armed Forces children feel heard by documenting and celebrating how their views inform change

Examples from practice:

"We do activity days where we engage with the community, spread the children's stories, get their voices heard, and share what their lives are like."

(Armed Forces support teacher, Primary School, Scotland)

"We created arts sessions based on a day in the life of a Service child, role models and place. We then developed focus groups based on the subjects that had come out of these areas of discussion."

(Stories Outside The Wire primary project lead, England)

"We celebrate and recognise the immense feelings of pride that children feel about their parents."

(SENCO, junior school, England)

Emerging practice	Developing practice	Embedding practice
Schools with emerging practice will be actively reflecting on their activity and may be implementing actions to enhance their support, but to a small extent	Schools with developing practice will be addressing this principle to a good extent, but this may be partial or yet to be enhanced through regular monitoring and evaluation	Schools with embedding practice will fully address this principle with well-established work that is routinely monitored and evaluated and showing evidence of impact

Children are heard

Armed Forces children's diverse voices are heard and inform the support they receive.

Thriving Lives toolkit

REFLECT	EVIDENCE	SELF-ASSESSMENT			ACTION	DATE
Reflect with stakeholders on these key questions	Identify current practice that demonstrates where you are now	Assess your current practice			Identify actions to enhance your support	Agree a deadline for your actions
		Emerging	Developing	Embedding		
5.1 - To what extent are Armed Forces children represented in school and other forums?						dd/mm/yy
5.2 - To what extent do Armed Forces children's voices inform your strategies, approach and actions throughout the school?						
5.3 - To what extent do Armed Forces children feel heard and understood?						

Children are heard

Armed Forces children's diverse voices are heard and inform the support they receive.

REFLECT	EVIDENCE	SELF-ASSESSMENT			ACTION	DATE
Reflect with stakeholders on these key questions	Identify current practice that demonstrates where you are now	Assess your current practice			Identify actions to enhance your support	Agree a deadline for your actions
		Emerging	Developing	Embedding		
5.4 - To what extent do you act on feedback and ideas from Armed Forces children?						dd/mm/yy
5.5 - To what extent do you monitor and communicate your actions in response to listening to Armed Forces children?						

Parents are engaged

Strong home-school partnerships help Armed Forces families feel valued as part of the school community.

Thriving Lives toolkit

Evidence suggests:

- *A commitment to work effectively with Armed Forces families is a priority*
- *Close relationships with parents enable a school to understand the family situation and upcoming deployment, separation or moves*
- *Empathy, communication and collaboration with families are required in order to foster confidence in school provision*
- *There are 5 key questions for schools to consider*

What this might look like:

Research identified that practice supporting this principle *may include*:

- Workshops for parents
- Support groups for Armed Forces families
- Identification and support for parents' emotional health and wellbeing
- Virtual communication with the 'away-from-home' parent
- Employment of an Armed Forces family liaison officer
- Identifying and supporting young carers in Armed Forces families
- Supporting families with consistent behavioural strategies
- Signposting families to other sources of support
- Awareness of family circumstances
- A clear positive welcome to new Armed Forces families

Examples from practice:

"Close liaison with parents means we know when separation/ deployment is likely and can support, if required."

(Teacher, primary school, England)

"We have done a lot of work with families when dad comes home; we have sit down meetings with the parents to think about how it will work when one person re-enters the family home."

(Teacher, primary school, England)

"We are always very flexible when parents are unable to make school events so that every chance is given to them to attend when they're not able to"

(Head Teacher, Primary School, Wales)

Emerging practice	Developing practice	Embedding practice
Schools with emerging practice will be actively reflecting on their activity and may be implementing actions to enhance their support, but to a small extent	Schools with developing practice will be addressing this principle to a good extent, but this may be partial or yet to be enhanced through regular monitoring and evaluation	Schools with embedding practice will fully address this principle with well-established work that is routinely monitored and evaluated and showing evidence of impact

Parents are engaged

Strong home-school partnerships help Armed Forces families feel valued as part of the school community.

Thriving Lives toolkit

REFLECT	EVIDENCE	SELF-ASSESSMENT			ACTION	DATE
Reflect with stakeholders on these key questions	**Identify current practice that demonstrates where you are now**	**Assess your current practice**			**Identify actions to enhance your support**	**Agree a deadline for your actions**
		Emerging	Developing	Embedding		dd/mm/yy
6.1 - To what extent do you provide support to Armed Forces families?						
6.2 - To what extent do you help Armed Forces families build strong relationships with each other and with the school community?						
6.3 - To what extent do you liaise with parents and if appropriate local Armed Forces personnel about deployment and mobility?						

6 **Parents are engaged**

Strong home-school partnerships help Armed Forces families feel valued as part of the school community.

Thriving Lives toolkit

REFLECT	EVIDENCE	SELF-ASSESSMENT			ACTION	DATE
Reflect with stakeholders on these key questions	Identify current practice that demonstrates where you are now	Assess your current practice			Identify actions to enhance your support	Agree a deadline for your actions
		Emerging	Developing	Embedding		
6.4 - To what extent are deployments, separation or impending moves shared with all staff appropriately?						dd/mm/yy
6.5 - To what extent do you support Armed Forces children to communicate with a parent when they are away?						

Staff are well-informed

Supportive training and networks ensure all staff understand and support each Armed Forces child.

Thriving Lives toolkit

Evidence suggests:

- *Whole school understanding of the context for Armed Forces children is a priority*
- *Supportive and well-informed teachers can be protective factors in situations such as deployment*
- *Armed Forces children's experiences can be diverse*
- *There are 5 key questions for schools to consider*

What this might look like:

Research identified that practice supporting this principle *may include:*

- Designated senior member of staff responsible for ensuring regular training and dissemination of information for example on upcoming moves and deployments
- Training run by specialist pastoral support staff or by outside experts
- Supporting staff attendance at local or national conferences
- Membership of local networks and attendance at meetings and events to keep up to date
- Drawing on the knowledge of teaching and support staff from an Armed Forces background
- Arranging training on an issue of relevance to all children but of particular concern for Armed Forces children such as separation
- Provision of simple evidence based introductory resources for all staff to be able to understand and to open up conversation with Armed Forces children
- Working with other schools to create networks and share ideas
- Reaching out to nearby university outreach teams

Examples from practice:

> *"A member of the SLT is responsible for ensuring staff are aware of the needs of Service children across the school. The head teacher and the member of the SLT as a whole read the latest research and ensure information is disseminated."*

(Teacher, primary school, England)

> *"We have a good relationship with the community officer. The wing commander is part of the governors so if there is anything that does crop up we know who to go to for answers and additional help"*

(Head Teacher, Primary School, Wales)

> *"We have a number of TAs who have experience with the Forces. These people understand both military and teaching."*

(Teacher, primary school, England)

Emerging practice	Developing practice	Embedding practice
Schools with emerging practice will be actively reflecting on their activity and may be implementing actions to enhance their support, but to a small extent	Schools with developing practice will be addressing this principle to a good extent, but this may be partial or yet to be enhanced through regular monitoring and evaluation	Schools with embedding practice will fully address this principle with well-established work that is routinely monitored and evaluated and showing evidence of impact

7 **Staff are well-informed**

Supportive training and networks ensure all staff understand and support each Armed Forces child.

Thriving Lives toolkit

REFLECT	EVIDENCE	SELF-ASSESSMENT			ACTION	DATE
Reflect with stakeholders on these key questions	Identify current practice that demonstrates where you are now	Assess your current practice			Identify actions to enhance your support	Agree a deadline for your actions
		Emerging	Developing	Embedding		
7.1 - To what extent do you have a named point of contact to help staff support Armed Forces children and families?						dd/mm/yy
7.2 - To what extent do you provide appropriate time for professional development around Armed Forces children?						
7.3 - To what extent do you ensure that all staff and those with responsibility for school governance have access to high quality training about supporting Armed Forces children?						

Staff are well-informed

Supportive training and networks ensure all staff understand and support each Armed Forces child.

Thriving Lives *toolkit*

REFLECT	EVIDENCE	SELF-ASSESSMENT			ACTION	DATE
Reflect with stakeholders on these key questions	**Identify current practice that demonstrates where you are now**	**Assess your current practice**			**Identify actions to enhance your support**	**Agree a deadline for your actions**
		Emerging	Developing	Embedding		
						dd/mm/yy
7.4 - To what extent do staff apply research and evidence-based resources in their support for Armed Forces children and families?						
7.5 - To what extent do staff engage in local and national networks focused on supporting Armed Forces children and families?						