SSCE Cymru conference 2018 – activities

Activity 1: The implications and challenges we face following the conclusions of the ALN research

Sustainability of Liaison Officer roles

- Investigate ways to secure long-term funding
- Could this be a role within regional consortia?
- Raise awareness of the role and impact in schools
- Support schools wellbeing/pastoral support – to help with understanding needs of SC and accessing resources
- Introduce opportunities for networking of LOs.

All-Wales admissions data

- Standardised question should be asked by Local Authority during school application
- All schools should ask on enrolment forms
- SC question should be on the PLASC – and be used to help those schools and SC
- Identify a way to include SC in private education within a main database
- Review opportunity to link identification of SC to instant funding – eg SPP.

Supporting the needs of all Service children

- Identify the number and location of SC and regularly review data – through PLASC and at LA level
- Raise awareness of support available to schools and Service families
- Investigate possibility of identifying SC as a vulnerable group
- Suggest good practice to support emotional needs – through after school clubs and regular parent contact
- Review the challenges of transitional support – look into possibility of Liaison Officer in each LA
- Introduce training for school staff with resource templates for interventions and intro and exit packs
- Investigate possibility of identifying SC on Individual Development Plans (IDP)
- Help LAs and schools with small number of SC to understand additional needs of SC.

Information sharing protocols

- Can there be a single format across the UK and beyond?
- SC need to be identified from start of education – possibly with a unique pupil number and education passport which moves with the child
- Identify what data should be included on an 'Education passport' – attainment, interests
- Investigate whether £200,000 could be delegated rather than a grant scheme – relies on identification of SC location
- Look at possibility of all schools having SC marker on data set – which gets transferred with them
- Raise awareness of SC challenges with professionals
- Identify ways to overcome the challenge that mobility causes when getting a child's ALN statement
- GDPR challenges.

School-to-school transfers

- We hope that the introduction of Individual Development Plans (IDP) will help with data transfer of School Action and School Action Plus children
- Ideal situation is a single data system (UK and wider) to enable seamless transfer
- ALN act – look at adding SC specific guidance
- Knowledge on number and location of SC is needed
- Raise awareness of SC challenges in schools with low numbers of SC
- Encourage a consist approach from schools, LAs and across the UK

- Individual profiles – which parents pass between schools when moving (including section completed by the SC)
- Look at producing training package for schools to support SC
- Suggestions link to introducing team of Liaison officers across Wales for consistent approach
- Investigate the possible role of Estyn in highlighting SC.

Person-centred support for learners

- Look into SC being recognised in admissions code
- Question if support should be offered beyond school aged Service children
- Gain information from Service children through one-to-ones
- Investigate opportunity for one central database where actions are logged and this moves with SC
- Wales should recognise health plans sent from overseas
- Raise awareness of rights to SC and parents – including support on tribunals
- Person-Centred Planning (PCP) for SC with ALN.

Activity 2: Overcoming the challenges that Service children face

Mobility

Challenges:

- Frequent moves between communities and schools
- Being away from family support
- Making and leaving friends
- Different curriculums
- Age groups differ in different countries
- Parents require support
- Lacking confidence
- Early identification of ALN
- Wellbeing
- Identity in the community
- Language/accent barriers
- Clashes with tests and exams.

Support:

- MODs – Moving schools guide
- MODs – Pupil Information Profile (PIP)
- Welsh Government – Welcome to Wales Guide
- Supporting Service Children in Wales fund
- Charities
- Liaison Officers in schools
- MOD Welfare systems (HIVEs)
- One page profile?
- 'Thrive' and 'ELSA' support – when need is identified
- SSCE resources
- Family Federations.

Ideas:

- Parental pride – family being proud of history and experiences and sharing with school. Avoids putting SC in situation with a news story.
- Good communications in schools with parents – particularly during family stress periods
- Schools facilitating contact with deployed parents – particularly when in different timezones.
- Liaison support workers in schools (community) – funding staff, resources, room. Helping new families to get involved in the community. Consistent support for SC. Keeping detailed records of SC.
- Unique individual reference number – central website to maintain records, data and personal profile. Help overcome gaps in curriculum.

- Transition plan – help schools pass on information about a child moving school (background, support needs etc.) Part of ALNco role or other key member of staff.
- SC coordinator in the Local Authority – merged into an existing team. Covering education support and possibly community engagement.
- SC advisory teacher per regional education consortia – sustainable support for a number of schools. Provide advice on curriculum, exams access, ALN, link to community development. Raise awareness of Service families in community and promote support available. Organise collaborative working.

Gaps in curriculum

Challenges:

- Different curriculums in different countries
- Curriculums can be taught in different order
- KS4 pupils – choosing preferred options is very difficult or impossible
- Transition during exam/testing periods or key stages of education
- Different teaching methods
- Expectations of curriculum – Welsh language
- Different qualifications available in different places
- Different benchmark for national tests between countries.

Support:

- MODs – Pupil Information Profile (PIP)
- Individual school information gathering and support (if they are aware of SC)
- Extra tuition
- Parental and child engagement
- National tests (if shared).

Ideas:

- Remote/online learning – a pupil could follow an online course that they started in their previous school and sit an exam or submit coursework at the end of the year. Links to digital competency element of new curriculum.
- More flexible or person-centred curriculum.
- Robust assessment and targeted intervention support in schools – share resources/activities with parents (eg homework or extra support).
- Formal handover pack/procedure – need for training and development, discussion at LA/regional level to find the most appropriate school for SC (relating to best matched curriculum experience).
- Access to funding to ensure actions can be facilitated.

Deployment

Challenges:

- Possible lack of communication with deployed parent/s
- Short notice of deployment
- Possible psychological, emotional and wellbeing additional needs
- Behaviour changes - attachment issues, feeling isolated, withdrawal, attitude towards learning
- Dealing with bereavement or serious injury
- Lack of understanding from peers in school
- Feeling of diminished support networks
- Bullying – due to parents absence making them vulnerable
- Possibilities of emotional stress of remaining parent
- Anxiety of what is happening to parent while away
- Managing the media/social media input and output
- Re-adjustment to different home arrangements/different roles.

Support:

- Reading Force materials

- SSCE website – digital stories, toolkits
- Deployment packs
- Emotional support – family, friends, items (teddy)
- Education support officers/school Liaison Officers
- Military Clubs (eg MKC Heroes)
- HIVE, Army Welfare Service
- Pastoral support from unit
- Armed Forces Covenant grants
- Supporting Service Children in Wales Fund
- Skype rooms in schools
- School counselling
- Support depends on the schools knowledge of SC challenges.

Ideas:

- Identification and funding – provide resources in line with England. More robust data on service children in schools. Clarify definition of SC. Improve communication streams about funding for schools.
- Professional learning and awareness raising – improve whole school understanding of challenges and strengths of Service children. Raise awareness and understanding of the extend of Service children in schools across wales.
- Linking this into wider strategic agenda – linking to ACE (adverse Childhood Experiences) agenda and development. Identify SC as a vulnerable group (Looked After Children, Gypsy Travellers, ALN etc.)
- Military children's clubs – peer-to-peer groups. Wales wide. Mentoring/ambassadors. Alumni – talk to group about their experiences.
- Social networking – advice and evidence for schools, parents and young people.
- Service child champions – voice advocate. Young people to speak for themselves at youth councils.
- Increased communication between service community.
- Package of opportunities and activities of support – pull together details of services/support, opportunities to come together.

Understanding experiences of SC

Challenges:

- Young Service children don't themselves understand that their lifestyle is different to their peers
- Lack of awareness of SC needs in schools
- SC may not want peers to know as they don't want to be singled out
- SC don't want to keep repeating their stories and experiences – particularly when negative
- Older SC are more aware of challenges both parents face and take on additional roles to help.

Support:

- Community engagement with Service families
- Support groups in schools for SC
- Targeted pastoral support
- Celebrating diverse backgrounds
- MOD community staff
- Army Welfare Services
- RAF community support
- HIVE information/support.

Ideas:

- Sharing good practice between schools – case studies. Central knowledge hub.
- Raise staff and pupil awareness – understand how they can support SC. Having a named person in school who takes this responsibility.
- Community support (3rd parties, charities) – raising greater awareness of how they support SC and families.
- Showing SSCE short films during assemblies – possibly add questions to prompt discussion.
- Outreach days – with older SC and undergraduates from Service families, delivering discussion groups with younger SC. Feedback to schools on how they can do more.

Collaborative working

Challenges:

- Lack of knowledge on number and location of Service children
- School systems not speaking to each other, within Wales and with other countries
- Pupil information not passed on
- Accessing additional resources from LA
- Positive engagement with families
- Changing needs of Service community – 'family stability' which can vary between families.

Support:

- MPCT working with Llantwit Major HS and Brecon HS
- Liaison Officer posts
- LA – Armed Forces Champions, Education services
- Covenant meetings/support
- Service stakeholders – family federations, SNAP
- SSCE website
- Family federations.

Ideas:

- Dedicated Service lead in every school – current Liaison officers are extremely important. While funding isn't there for every school, a targeted staff member would be a start. Could be a spouse/volunteer role.
- PLASC – asking if the child is from a Service family.
- Awareness raising events – communicating and talking to Service families and the wider community. Sharing best practice. More schools need to attend the SSCE conference.

Involvement in the community

Challenges:

- Lack of knowledge on armed forces lifestyle in the community
- Lack of knowledge on who the service families are
- Lack of knowledge on issues Service families face
- Small percentage of SC in community
- Lack of support groups
- Perceived stigma – causing forces families to not want to identify themselves
- Mobility of community
- Isolated locations and dispersed families.

Support:

- Armed forces covenant grants
- Armed Forces Liaison Officers
- School Liaison Officers
- Forces welfare officers, Armed Welfare Services
- Community events
- Organisational support – eg SNAP
- SSCE
- Supporting Service Children in Wales Fund
- Family federations.

Ideas:

- Standardise data collection.
- Identifying families – so that support can be given to them.

- RSG – follows child through education system.
- Raise awareness through Armed Forces integration day – remembrance services in schools. Armed forces involved in the curriculum. Break down barriers.
- Collaborative working between schools – share best practice.
- Short length community projects – so Service families can get involved. Eg 6-9 month Art projects.