# SSCE Cymru school survey
## (2019) – findings

# Introduction

**Why?** SSCE Cymru works with schools across Wales to gain an understanding of the challenges Service children face in education and information on what schools are doing to help Service children overcome these barriers. This survey was an important way to capture this information across Wales; to find out what would help schools to support their Service children achieve their full potential and ensure Service children are not disadvantaged in their learning.

**How?** Members of the SSCE Cymru network supported the production of the school survey by suggesting draft content during the SSCE Cymru Stakeholder Day (March 2019), contributing content, testing the survey and promoting it with schools in Wales.

**Who?** SSCE Cymru is aware of 388 schools in Wales that currently have Service children enrolled. These schools were invited to participate in the online survey, requesting that it be completed by the headteacher or member of staff responsible for supporting Service children. 167 schools either fully or partially completed the survey.

**When?** Survey responses were submitted between April-June 2019.

## Executive summary

SSCE Cymru is pleased with the range of schools across Wales that took the time to share their experiences.

The responses help us to understand the challenges schools face in supporting Service children, what support is the most beneficial and what schools would find beneficial in helping them to support their Service children. There are a lot of good practice examples in schools in Wales, with education professionals working hard to understand the needs of this specific group of learners. However, many of the responses suggest schools are unaware of the experiences of Service children and are therefore unprepared to support them with their unique needs. No formal mechanism for capturing data on Service children contributes to the lack of understanding in schools.

The findings from this survey will provide evidence to impact policy in Welsh Government, specifically the need to identify Service Children through the Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC). It will also support policy and system changes in schools and Local authorities, and contribute to new SSCE Cymru resources.

## Comparisons in findings

Throughout the survey result findings sections, it has been noted where there are significant differences in the responses from the four Key Local Authorities that have well-established military communities:

- Vale of Glamorgan – RAF St Athans
- Isle of Anglesey – RAF Valley
- Pembrokeshire – Cawdor Barracks/Brawdy (Haverfordwest)
- Powys – 160 Brigade and Wales Headquarters (Brecon).

# Respondents

The survey result findings are based on **155 English** and **12 Welsh** responses. Percentages have been rounded to the closest 0.5%.

**The 167 schools were made up of:**

## 1.1 Type of school

- 123 (74%) Primary
- 32 (21%) Secondary
- 6 (4%) Special
- 3 (1%) Through
- 163 (97.5%) Maintained
- 4 (2.5%) Independent (fee-paying).

## 1.2 School language

- 122 (73%) English-medium
- 23 (14%) Welsh-medium
- 12 (7%) English-medium with significant use of Welsh
- 8 (5%) Dual stream
- 2 (1%) Bilingual.



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## 1.3 Number of schools from each Local authority

- 1 (0.5%) Blaenau-Gwent
- 6 (3.5%) Bridgend
- 11 (6.5%) Caerphilly
- 4 (2.5%) Cardiff
- 11 (6.5%) Carmarthenshire
- 1 (0.5%) Ceredigion
- 3 (2%) Conwy
- 2 (1%) Denbighshire
- 5 (3%) Flintshire
- 8 (5%) Gwynedd
- 2 (1%) Isle of Anglesey
- 2 (1%) Merthyr Tydfil
- 11 (6.5%) Monmouthshire
- 3 (2%) Neath Port Talbot
- 15 (9%) Newport
- 13 (8%) Pembrokeshire
- 18 (1%) Powys
- 21 (12.5%) Rhondda Cynon Taff
- 6 (3.5) Swansea
- 0 (0%) Torfaen
- 19 (11%) Vale of Glamorgan
- 5 (3%) Wrexham.

## 1.4 Number of Service children (SC) in schools

| No. of SC in school | Schools with that number | Total no. of SC |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 22 | 22 |
| 2 | 23 | 46 |
| 3 | 21 | 63 |
| 4 | 13 | 52 |
| 5-9 | 19 | 132 |
| 10-14 | 7 | 83 |
| 15-19 | 2 | 31 |
| 20-29 | 2 | 49 |
| 30-39 | 1 | 35 |
| 40-49 | 3 | 134 |
| 50-99 | 0 | 0 |
| 100-150 | 1 | 100 |
| 151+ | 1 | 151 |
| Unknown* | 52 | ? |
| | | **898 Service children in the 115 schools.** |

* Schools were unsure how many Service children they had enrolled.

## 1.5 Service Children (SC) with Additional Learning Needs

- 70 SC in 31 schools with School Action ALN
- 43 SC in 24 schools with School Action Plus ALN
- 36 SC in 11 schools with Statements
- 2 SC in 2 schools with Other ALN.

*122 responses*

## 1.6 Service that is most prominent in school community

- 64 (51%) British Army
- 13 (10%) Royal Navy
- 13 (10%) Royal Air Force
- 5 (4%) Royal Marines
- 5 (4%) Veterans*
- 1 (1%) Reservist
- 25 (20%) Unknown.

*126 responses*

*That left the Armed Forces within the past six years.

# Findings

## Mobility data

**2.1** 35 schools indicated a total of **334 Service children that arrived mid-year** during the 2018/19 academic year.

**2.2** 19 schools indicated a total of **206 Service children that left mid-year** during the 2018/19 academic year.

This presents challenges to schools in finding the time and resources to support a new learner.

*126 responses*

### Key findings:

- 62% more Service children joined schools in Wales mid-year than left mid-year, during the 2018/19 academic year. This could support suggestions that Service families are choosing to settle in Wales after a posting, either when transitioning out of the Armed Forces or for the Service personnel to no longer be accompanied.

# Challenges

**3.1** When asked what they felt were the three most significant **challenges to Service children's education**, schools indicated:

### Primary schools

- 43% Emotional impact of separation
- 28.5% Emotional impact when parent/s return from deployment/ training
- 22.5% Emotional impact during deployment
- 19% Making friends
- 17% Adapting to different curriculums in different administrations
- 17% Learning Welsh (this was higher, at 25% when just looking at Welsh-medium schools)
- 14% Impact on family lifestyle when parent/s transition out of the Armed Forces.

*84 responses*

### Secondary schools

- 33.5% Making friends
- 29% Missing curriculum content (after a move)
- 21% Adapting to different curriculums in different administrations
- 21% Missing friends and family from previous school/home
- 21% Learning Welsh
- 16.5% Emotional impact of separation
- 12.5% Emotional impact when parent/s return from deployment/ training.

*24 responses*

38% of all schools indicated they do not feel their Service children have any specific challenges in relation to their Armed Forces lifestyle. This is significantly lower, at 20%, when looking at just the four Key LAs[1].

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1 That have well-established military communities (Vale of Glamorgan, Isle of Anglesey, Pembrokeshire and Powys).

**3.2** When asked what are the three most significant **challenges they face in supporting their Service children**, schools indicated:

**Primary**

- 44% Supporting Service children with their emotional and Wellbeing needs

- 31% Gaining an understanding of the Armed Forces Lifestyle

- 25% Funding

- 21.5% Supporting Service children with gaps in their learning.

*84 responses*

**Secondary**

- 41.5% Supporting Service children with gaps in their learning

- 33.5% Gaining information on a Service child from a previous school

- 29% Supporting Service children with their emotional and Wellbeing needs

- 25% Supporting Service children learning Welsh for the first time.

*24 responses*

32% of all schools indicated they feel well equipped to support their Service children with their unique needs related to their Armed Forces lifestyle. This is lower, at 24%, when looking at just the four Key LAs[1].

This demonstrates the importance of the SSCE Cymru mission and development of new resources.

*Key findings:*

- The types of challenges schools felt their Service children faced in education, and the types of challenges schools faced in supporting their Service children, differed greatly between Primary and Secondary Schools.

- When just looking at the responses from Welsh-medium schools, the percentage that indicated challenges with supporting Service children learning Welsh for the first time did not differ greatly from all responses.

- Schools from the four Key LAs[1] were more aware of the challenges their Service children face in education, in comparison to schools in all Local authorities in Wales, yet they felt less equipped to support them.



1 That have well-established military communities (Vale of Glamorgan, Isle of Anglesey, Pembrokeshire and Powys).

# Support

**4.1** When asked what the three most beneficial types of **support they offer to their Service children**, schools indicated:

### Primary

- 28.5% Tailored pastoral support
- 23.5% Dedicated member of staff to support Service children
- 22% Service children included in the Pupil Voice
- 18.5% Peer to peer support/ mentoring.

*81 responses*

### Secondary

- 37.5% Tailored pastoral support
- 33% Subject interventions
- 25% Dedicated member of staff to support Service children
- 16.5% Peer to peer support/ mentoring.

*24 responses*

41.5% of all schools indicated they don't currently offer any specific support to their Service children. This is much lower, at 28%, when looking at just the four Key LAs[1].
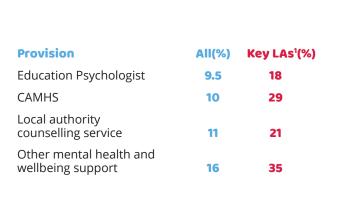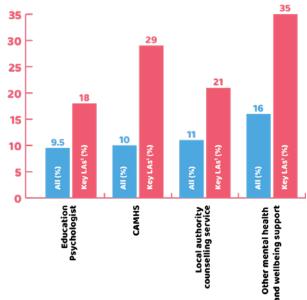


**4.2** 41% of schools indicated they have put **specific interventions in place to support a Service child** with specific needs. This is significantly higher, at 66%, when looking at just the four Key LAs[1].

Examples of these interventions include:

- Extra tuition
- Targeted teaching in core subjects
- ELSA support for emotional wellbeing
- MoD Intervention groups with a designated office
- 1:1 support
- Nurture/THRIVE support
- Anxiety support.

*117 responses*

1 That have well-established military communities (Vale of Glamorgan, Isle of Anglesey, Pembrokeshire and Powys).

**4.3** When asked if the school have ever **referred Service children to any of the following mental health and wellbeing provisions**, schools indicated:

| Provision | All(%) | Key LAs[1](%) |
|---|---|---|
| Education Psychologist | 9.5 | 18 |
| CAMHS | 10 | 29 |
| Local authority counselling service | 11 | 21 |
| Other mental health and wellbeing support | 16 | 35 |

*116 responses*

**4.4** 7% of schools indicated they had encountered **issues in meeting prioritisation thresholds for mental health and wellbeing support for a Service child**. This is higher, at 11%, when looking at just the four Key LAs[1].

Examples of the issues include:

- Action for Children age restriction of 11
- Limited number of Education Psychologist slots available each term
- Not having enough information from the previous school
- Moving school while on a waiting list and not being assessed.

**"The length a child is in school can hinder the process. When they arrive, it can be like starting over again to access support services. I can recall situations where families have lived married unaccompanied to facilitate the process."**

*115 responses*

**4.5** 15% of schools indicated they **monitor the academic progress of Service children** against non-Service children. This is significantly higher, at 35%, when looking at just the four Key LAs[1].

Examples of how this is being monitored include:

- End of Foundation Phase outcomes monitoring
- Service children identified as part of vulnerable groups analysis
- Using Incerts (online assessment package to track children and set targets against the National Standards in all areas of learning)
- In the same way as monitoring pupils eligible for Free School Meals.

*115 responses*

1 That have well-established military communities (Vale of Glamorgan, Isle of Anglesey, Pembrokeshire and Powys).

**4.6** Only 12% of schools indicated they **work collaboratively in a cluster to support their Service children**. This is significantly higher, at 28%, when looking at just the four Key LAs[1].

70.5% of schools indicated they **would be interested in working collaboratively** with other schools to support their Service children. This is even higher, at 93%, when looking at just the four Key LAs[1].

This is very positive in recognising the important impact SSCE Cymru can have in working with schools across Wales and promoting collaboration.

*117 responses*

***Key findings:***

- The most beneficial types of support offered to Service children by Primary and Secondary schools was largely the same.

- A substantial percentage of schools have put specific interventions in place to support their Service children or referred them for Mental Health and Wellbeing support. Many of these schools had issues meeting the prioritisation threshold, indicating a link to mobility, which presents a disadvantage to Service children. The percentages were higher in the four Key LAs[1].

- Schools in the four Key LAs[1] are 20% more likely to monitor academic progress of Service children against non-Service children. This links to their greater awareness of Service children needs and engagement with the Armed Forces community.

- A low percentage (12%) of schools are working collaboratively in a cluster to support their Service children, but a large percentage (70.5%) would like to. Schools in the four Key LAs[1] are 16% more likely to be working collaboratively.
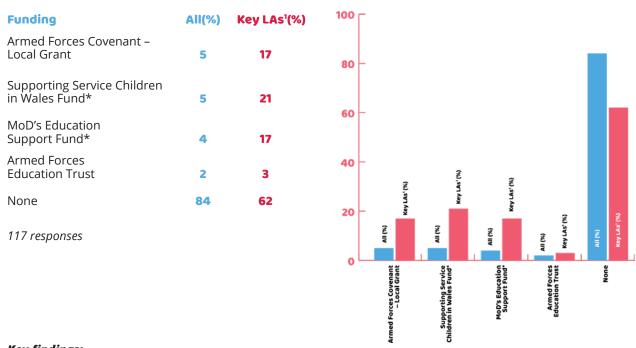




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1 That have well-established military communities (Vale of Glamorgan, Isle of Anglesey, Pembrokeshire and Powys).

# Funding

**5.1** When asked if they are **currently accessing funding to support their Service children**, schools indicated:

| Funding | All(%) | Key LAs[1](%) |
|---|---|---|
| Armed Forces Covenant – Local Grant | 4 | 7 |
| Supporting Service Children in Wales Fund* | 8 | 17 |
| MoD's Education Support Fund* | 6 | 14 |
| Armed Forces Education Trust | 2 | 7 |
| None | 83 | 65 |

*117 responses*

*Independent schools aren't eligible for these funds.



**5.2** When asked if they have **previously accessed funding to support their Service children**, schools indicated:

| Funding | All(%) | Key LAs[1](%) |
|---|---|---|
| Armed Forces Covenant – Local Grant | 5 | 17 |
| Supporting Service Children in Wales Fund* | 5 | 21 |
| MoD's Education Support Fund* | 4 | 17 |
| Armed Forces Education Trust | 2 | 3 |
| None | 84 | 62 |

*117 responses*



***Key findings:***

- Schools in the four Key LAs[1] are 18% more likely to be accessing funding to support their Service children. This links to their greater awareness of Service children needs.

1 That have well-established military communities (Vale of Glamorgan, Isle of Anglesey, Pembrokeshire and Powys).

# Armed Forces community

**6.1** 11% of schools indicated they have a **member of their governing body that is responsible for Service children**.
*117 responses*

**6.2** Only 2% of schools indicated they **participate in their Local authority Armed Forces Forum**.
*117 responses*

**6.3** 18% of schools indicated they **offer space to Armed Forces groups/charities to use for meetings/ networks/forums/events**. This is significantly higher, at 41%, when looking at just the four Key LAs[1].
*117 responses*

**6.4** When asked about the **level of engagement they have with Armed Forces organisations**, schools indicated:

| Organisation | Engaging with | | Not aware of (%) | Would like to engage with (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | All(%) | Key LAs[1] (%) | | |
| SSCE Cymru | 34 | 56 | 19 | 25 |
| The Royal British Legion (RBL) | 24 | 50 | 21 | 10.5 |
| MoD Children's Education Advisory Service (CEAS) | 6 | 10 | 39 | 13.5 |
| Armed Forces Covenant Liaison Officer (AFLO) | 4 | 10 | 38.5 | 14.5 |
| Army Families Federation | 2.5 | 11 | 40 | 10.5 |
| MoD HIVE unit (St Athan) | 2.5 | 11 | 36 | 5 |
| SSAFA the Armed Forces Charity | 2 | 5 | 39 | 7 |
| RBLs Military Kids Club (MKC) Heroes | 2 | 11 | 42 | 13.5 |
| Little Troopers | 2 | 10 | 43 | 11 |
| Reading Force | 2 | 10 | 40 | 10.5 |
| Naval Families Federation | 1 | 0 | 38.5 | 6 |
| RAF Families Federation | 1 | 0 | 38.5 | 9.5 |
| Military Kids Connect | 1 | 0 | 43.5 | 12 |
| MoD HIVE unit (Chepstow) | 1 | 5 | 37 | 7 |
| SCiP Alliance | 0 | 0 | 43.5 | 6 |
| MoD HIVE unit (RAF Valley) | 0 | 0 | 35 | 6 |

*117 responses*

*Key findings:*

- Many schools were unaware of the key Armed Forces charities and support organisations (including the Families Federations, SSAFA, Little Troopers, Reading Force and MoD HIVE units) but many would like to engage with those organisations.

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# SSCE Cymru resources

**7.1** When asked what **resources they would find beneficial in helping them to support their Service children**, schools indicated:

- 58% Toolkits/information packs
- 58% Funding guidance
- 54% Mental Health and Wellbeing support for Service children information
- 51% School checklist (suggesting activities)
- 50.5% Good practice guide
- 45% PowerPoint Presentation for school staff and pupils – on the Armed Forces and Service children experiences.

The four Key LAs[1] prioritised some of the other suggested resources:

- 59% Questions to ask a new Service child template
- 52% Organisation and resources guide/directory
- 48% Pupil transfer profile (recommending SC information to be passed between schools).

*117 responses*

**7.2** 98% of schools indicated they would be interested in receiving an **SSCE Cymru information pack**.

*116 responses*

*Key findings:*

- The most popular resources that schools wanted in the four Key LAs[1], differed from the responses from all schools in Wales. The resources that the schools in the four Key LAs[1] requested, suggests they have an understanding of the needs of their Service children but would like information and tools on how to support them.

- Nearly all schools (98%) would like an information pack on how to support Service children.

# SSCE Cymru training

**8.1** 59% of schools indicated they would be interested in attending a training session on supporting Service children in education. This is even higher, at 72%, when looking at just the four Key LAs[1].

*116 responses*

**8.2** When asked **which members of staff would benefit from training** on supporting Service children in education, schools indicated:

- 51% ALN/SENCO
- 46% Headteacher
- 45% Teachers
- 36% LSAs
- 34.5% Governors.

*116 responses*

1 That have well-established military communities (Vale of Glamorgan, Isle of Anglesey, Pembrokeshire and Powys).

**8.3** When asked **how many members of staff would benefit from** training on supporting Service children in education, schools indicated:

| Number of staff | School responses (%) |
|---|---|
| 1 | 16.5 |
| 2 | 22.5 |
| 3 | 10.5 |
| 4 | 7 |
| 5-10 | 16.5 |
| 11+ | 15.5 |

*116 responses*

**8.4** When asked **what type of training package they would prefer** (out of seven options), schools indicated:

- 59.5% Information pack sent to school

- 50% Digital training package.

34% of schools from four Key LAs[1] indicated they would like a one-to-one meeting with SSCE Cymru, in comparison to only 17% of the overall schools. This could be linked to schools in the four Key LAs[1] having a greater awareness of the needs of their Service children.

*116 responses*

***Key findings:***

- The majority of schools (59%) would be interested in attending a training session.

- The preferred type of training package is a digital package.

## What next?

- The evidence from the survey will be used to support policy and system changes in schools, Local authorities and Welsh Government

- SSCE Cymru will be encouraging and supporting schools in Wales to identify their Service children

- The findings from the survey will impact the content of the new SSCE Cymru Toolkits, due to be launched by the end of 2019

- New SSCE Cymru resources/tools will be developed, considering what the schools have indicated they would find beneficial

- A Service children digital training package will be developed to raise awareness in schools of the experiences of Service children and offer advice on how schools can support them

- To ensure SSCE Cymru gathers a strong understanding of the experiences of Service children in education, surveys for Service children and parents of Service children will also be developed and responses captured from October 2019. Contact ssce@wlga.gov.uk for more information

- SSCE Cymru will carry out a follow up survey with the same schools in 12-18 months to measure the impact of the new SSCE Cymru Toolkits, website and training package.

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