

Welcome to “Key Messages for Educators and Practitioners: Primary School and Early Years Level”, creating awareness and understanding of Children and Young People from Highlands Armed Forces community.

This learning and awareness document has been informed and created based on the voices of Highland’s Children and Young People, their families and Partners of The MLG (Education) Group.

(Please note – all links/references referred to in this pdf are listed at a later stage).

The Military Liaison Group (Education) supports children of Armed Forces Families in an educational context Highland wide and it is a vehicle with the vision “for understanding and supporting the needs of the Armed Forces Community and the local area in an educational context”. It is a tri-service group and is represented by Navy, Army and RAF for the Armed Forces Community; Regular Service, Reserve Service or Veteran/Ex-Serving.

This group provides a wide network of support in Highland for Armed Forces Families and is the education arm of Highland Council’s Armed Forces Covenant.

The MLG (Education) Group is led by Highland Council’s Positive Relationships Team and is made up of key partners that directly represent the Serving, Reservist and

Veteran/Ex-Serving communities:- 3SCOTS, 7SCOTS and Poppyscotland and experts within this field along with the Children and Young People from these communities, The Army Welfare Service, a Local Councillor who is the Armed Forces Champion, Forces Children Scotland, ADES National Transitions Officer, Skills Development Scotland, The Family Federations (Navy, Army and RAF), Moira Leslie an Independent Adviser (Education and Wellbeing -Armed Forces Children and Young People), Highlife Highland, Reading Force as well as representatives from Highland's Early Years settings, Primary and Secondary Schools and Further Education. In addition, MLG works closely with tri-service HIVE information services, and wider Armed Forces Covenant Partners.

The MLG (Education) Group logo reflects the message and vision of the group: to support the Children and Young People in Highland's Armed Forces Community. The logo was designed by a pupil from Alness Academy and The MLG (Education) Group is proud to be represented by this logo.

Key Messages for Educators and Practitioners: Primary School and Early Years Levels

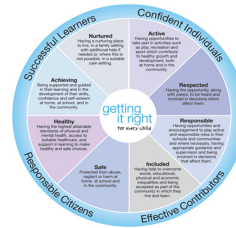
Understanding of and support for Children and Young People from Armed Forces Families

Some children and young people from Armed Forces families can cope well and have a level of resilience that helps buffer them from the unique challenges that can be part of being from an Armed Forces family.

However some children and young people, at times, may need extra support. Recognising and supporting their needs is key to supporting their overall wellbeing and ensuring their Rights, UNCRC.

UNCRC Article 12: You have the right to give your opinion, and for adults to listen and take it seriously.

The following pages share the voices of our Highland Primary School pupils.



Highland continues to build closer relationships with its Armed Forces Community encouraging understanding, participation and promoting positive engagement, inclusion and integration.

The work of The MLG (Education) Group is underpinned by the UNCRC Rights of the Child and builds an inclusive partnership with Children and Young People through consultation and shared discussions leading to informed decision making with the whole child in mind.

It is important to note that Children and Young People from Armed Forces families are all “Highland’s Children” and they are supported within the Highland Practice Model. However, research supports that this group of Children and Young People have specific and at times unique needs which we need to be aware of and familiarise ourselves with. Using the GIRFEC framework supports meeting these unique needs holistically.

Identification of Children and Young People from Armed Forces is key. Research informs us that 10% of all communities are made up of Armed Forces families however many do not identify at the time of enrolment in schools. Encouraging families to identify as being from the Armed Forces, Navy, Army or RAF (Regular Service, Reservist Service or Veteran/Ex-Serving) is key to ensure we can support their Children and Young People to be and do their best. Enrolment Forms and the Head Teacher Guidance for Enrolment specifically asks these questions to encourage

identification. The Enrolment Form provides an electronic link to a leaflet “Why do we want to know?”. Hard copies of Enrolment Forms include this form as an appendix.

The information contained in this pdf is transferrable to all three of the Armed Forces Services that the Children and Young People may be part of; Navy, Army or RAF. More detailed information and support from the specific Family Federations can be accessed later in this document.

High Mobility

“... the lifestyle can be tough, and that multiple school moves often leave children feeling unsettled and anxious. For children with additional needs or teenagers in the middle of exam courses, moving around adds another layer of complication.”

(Anne Longfield, the Children's Commissioner for England)

“I've been in 12 different houses. This is my tenth school.” (14 year old girl)



Sense of Belonging and Identity

High mobility is part of Armed Forces life. Mobile pupils may have their sense of belonging, identity and authority compromised and undermined at times. The following approaches may be helpful towards embedding an ethos of belonging and to address these aspects directly:

- building relationships with pupils by making them feel noticed and valued as individuals
- celebrating achievements
- giving pupils the skills to make friends with others
- having a “Positive Relationships Policy” based on positive choices

“Mobility” refers to the whole family moving from one place to another, resulting in a move of school for the Child or Young Person. Many families from the Armed Forces community move within the UK and the rest of the world on a regular basis with some families moving approximately every 2 years.

Most children from Armed Forces Families are able to cope with these changes but some Children and Young People may need extra help at this time. Education systems are different in the four devolved nations of the UK so moving between them can be difficult particularly for children with identified additional support needs. Forward planning can sometimes be difficult when timescales for moving are different to those required by education authorities to plan and ensure appropriate and continuous education for children from Armed Forces Families.

Interrupted Learning

Change can be highly emotive. Children may be leaving their extended family and friends to start again in another area with a different education system. Children may arrive at a school to find that their new class is covering a topic they have studied previously or that they have a gap in their learning. Children and Young People may have had an established and trusted support network within their previous school however at their new school this may take time to develop. Feeling like the only one who doesn't know how to do something but not knowing who you can trust to talk to about it can lead to feelings of isolation. Interrupted learning can have an impact on a young person's self-esteem and may lead to feelings of despondency.

Helpful further reading can be found on the Enquire website, a link to this is on a later page.

I Serve Too

He puts on his flight suit,
he puts on his combat boots,
he puts on his dog tags,
he puts on his hat,
he packs his duffel bag and says goodbye.
I may not wear the uniform, but
I serve too.

He missed my music program,
he missed my birthday,
he missed Christmas,
he missed my soccer games and swim meets,
he missed our family vacation,
he missed my achievements,
he is gone when I need him most.
I may not wear the uniform, but
I serve too.

I let him go for your freedom of speech,
I let him go for your right to vote,
I let him go for your right to be free,
I let him go knowing he might not come home.
I may not wear the uniform, but
I serve too.

I see the flag and I feel reverence,
I hear the anthem and I try to be brave,
I hope for the day I can embrace my hero,
I may not wear the uniform, but
I serve too.

Written by Maren Kalberer, a Military child (2016)

Our Voices – Primary School

UNCRC Article 12: You have the right to give your opinion, and for adults to listen and take it seriously.

I feel very sad when he goes (P1).
I miss him a lot (P1).
I have nobody to play with games with me at home (P1).
When my Dad's not here we can play on my brothers pull out bed (P3).
I can't play tag with him or walk the dog with him and I miss doing that (P4).
I worry that my Dad will die (P2).
I get a decent sleep when Dad isn't here because he doesn't snore and keep me up (P4).
More of our friends come over to visit (P2).
I get worried that the bad guys will kill him (P2).
We visit my Granny and Granny and sometimes my Granny gets me toys from the shop (P1).
I get worried I won't ever see him again (P1).
My sister is mean to me when I'm at home and Dad's away (P1).
I can't play games with my Dad after dinner anymore (P2).
I can't play with him or walk the dog with him and I miss doing that (P4).
I worry that my Dad will die (P2).
I get a decent sleep when Dad isn't here because he doesn't snore and keep me up (P4).
More of our friends come over to visit (P2).
I get worried that the bad guys will kill him (P2).
We visit my Granny and Granny and sometimes my Granny gets me toys from the shop (P1).
My friends get to come over more- I can go to my friend's house every day (P3).
I worry he won't come back, ever (P2).
He's away for such a long time (P1).
Family time when Daddy is back (P2)!He can't fix things for me – like my Xbox (P4).
He brings me back toy's- LOL and OMG dolls (P1).
One time my Dad came home on crutches so sometimes he can get hurt when he's away (P3).
I don't ever get to see my Dad and I feel sad he won't ever come home ever again (P2).
I feel scared he may get injured or hurt or that he might not remember us when he comes home (P3).
When they come home we get to feel so happy (P3).
Dad can't tell me off when I get in trouble when he's away (P2).
Really, really, really feel so much happiness when they come back (P3).
We get to come to Camouflage kids group in school (P2).
I cry for my Daddy when my brother is mean to me but he's not there to help (P2).
My Dad doesn't fall asleep and snore during movies (P3).
I can sleep in bed with my Mum (P4).
We get to go to visit our friends house more often and sometimes we get to stay there overnight (P2).
I'm sad he can't play with me (P4).

Partners of The MLG (Education) Group have gathered the voices of pupils from Highland's Armed Forces Families. This page provides a snapshot of these Primary School voices from the Inverness area in Highland. Future work seeks to extend this consultation to a wider number of Primary Schools and Early Years settings across the region.

"Forces Kids – This is my Life" is a DVD which provides voices and experiences of Children and Young People from Armed Forces Families. A direct link to this film and details of how you can obtain a free copy of the full DVD video can be found later in this document.

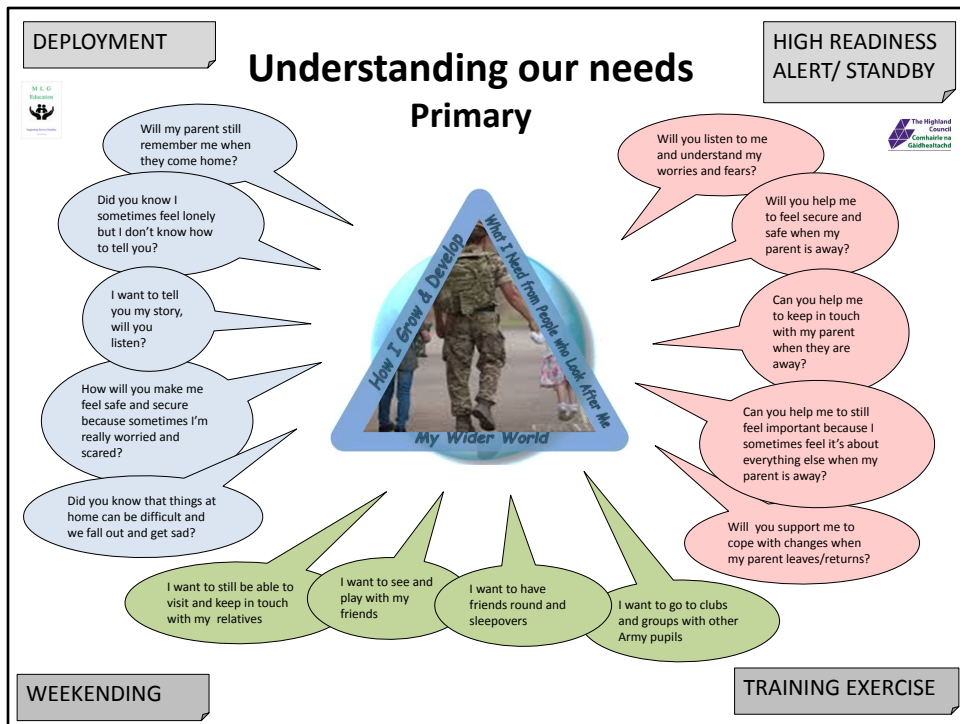
To help us gather more voices and views of Children and Young People from Armed Forces Families across Highland we would welcome the opportunity of meeting with your pupils. We want to make sure they are heard, that their voices are understood and acted on so they can be supported to be and do the best they can.

If you have Children and Young People from the Armed Forces Community who are Regular Service, Reserve Service or Veteran/Ex-Serving (Navy, Army or RAF) and they would like to have their voices heard please get in touch with The MLG (Education) Group lead, Lou Kinnear: louise.kinnear2@highland.gov.uk

Another source of helpful information is The MLG (Education) Group Newsletter. This has a wide distribution both across Highland and Nationally, it can be accessed via the

Highland Council's Schools Hub and the Highland Council Armed Forces Website. The Newsletter seeks contributions and views from Children and Young People and input from education settings to highlight their good practice in supporting Children and Young People from Armed Forces families. It provides specific news that affects our Armed Forces communities, updates and key information for families, Educationalists and Practitioners.

Support for transition from school, careers information, advice and guidance is available from trained careers advisors from Skills Development Scotland. Direct links to these partner services can be found in a later page.



This page reflects thoughts and concerns Children and Young People have expressed and are reflected within the context of the My World Triangle framework. Please note this is a sample snapshot from the Primary level. Early Years settings may also find it useful to consider these.

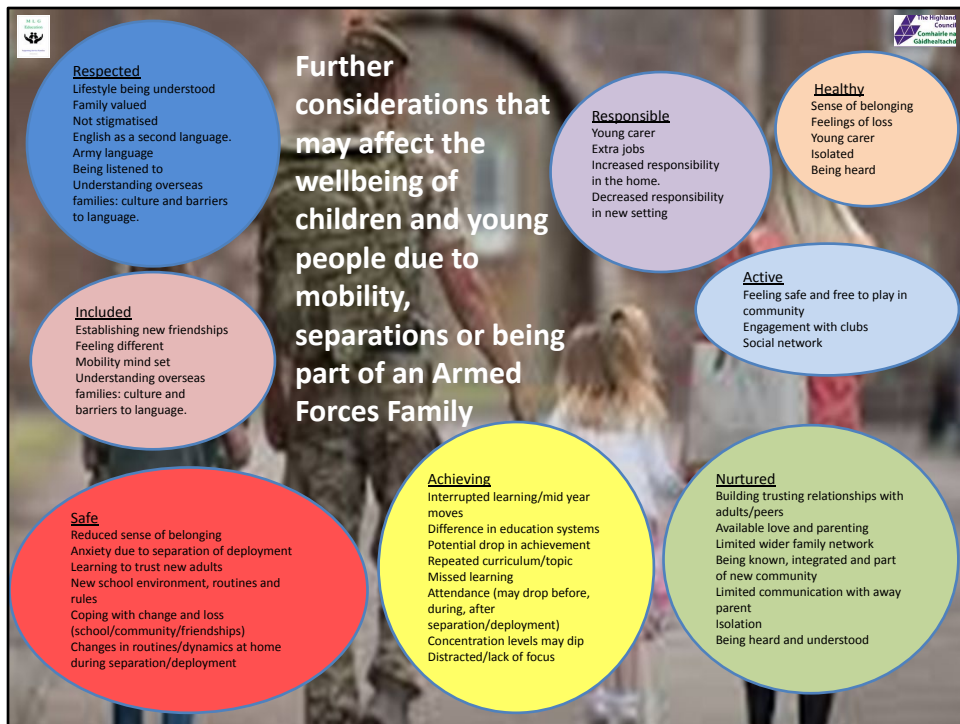
Using the GIRFEC framework and specifically My World Triangle, “supports a systematic approach for practitioners: how the child or young person is growing and developing, what the child or young person needs from the people who look after him or her, the impact of the child or young person's wider world of family, friends and community.” (Scot Gov, 2016)

Terminology

- **Deployment**: When an Armed Forces Service person is temporarily assigned to serve in a specific location within their own country or abroad. This may be part of an Operation or a peace mission.
Further reading and research of interest:
 - “The Parenting Cycle of Deployment”
 - “The Impact of Fathers’ Military Deployment on Child Adjustment”
- **Weekending**: When an Armed Forces person works away from home during the week and returns home at the weekend. Further reading of interest may be “The Affect of Non Operational Family Separations...”

- High Readiness Alert/Standby: At times Armed Forces personnel are given warning that they may be deployed, at very short notice (at times 12 hours), and therefore bags etc., need to be packed and left at the ready for an imminent departure.
- Training Exercise: When Armed Forces personnel are away for a shorter period of time to train in preparation for a specific task or upcoming deployment. This is generally either days or weeks rather than months.

Separation can understandably be a very difficult time and within the Armed Forces context it can have wider emotional implications. “The Emotional Cycles of Separation” training provides helpful knowledge and information. **Please contact The MLG (Education) lead, Lou Kinnear for further information on this training: louise.kinnear2@highland.gov.uk**



This page shares the views of Partners of The MLG (Education) Group who are specifically engaged and skilled in understanding and working directly with the Armed Forces Community.

Needs of Children and Young People were identified and reflected within the GIRFEC framework of Wellbeing: SHANARRI. The information provided within the indicators gives rich and valuable insights for further consideration and discussion with staff teams.

SHANARRI further strengthens and upholds Children’s Rights (UNCRC) as stated by Education Scotland: “Children’s rights clearly relate to their wellbeing. If we value children and young people’s rights then we must provide a learning community which makes them feel included, where their achievements are valued and celebrated and where their voice is heard.”

Views from Parents of 3SCOTS families, Inverness

We want to get to know school staff better and for them to understand us and what its like being part of a military family.

If Reception and all staff understand and have an awareness of what it's like being from an Armed Forces family it will help with understanding us when we first arrive at the school.

It would be helpful as families if we understand the reasons why you want us to identify as being from Armed Forces Families. It would be good if this could be explained to us.

Please listen to why we may need to enrol our child in a particular school out with our catchment area. It maybe because of challenges we face.

Please can you make time to do longer "Emotional Check In's" with my child, it really helps them. Giving them the space and time to talk makes a difference especially at times when their parent might be or is going away.

Help us to understand the difference in regions with regards to year groups coming from for example, England to Scotland. Sometimes I feel my child is going back a year but I am told they are not.

It would be helpful to have a "Settling in Report" and not have to wait until parents evening or the usual report.

I worry about my child as there is a lot of bullying with military kids. What happens on the base can overflow into school and then back to the base. Talking about these issues with the school would be really helpful and to get advice as to how to resolve issues.

Being part of a military family can have unique challenges. Please understand and consider these challenges at times of assessment or if my child is referred to for example, JAG (Joint Admissions Group). Do they have an understanding of the pressures of military life?

Regular monthly Coffee Mornings hosted by the Unit Welfare Officer are held at "The Patch", Wimberley Way Community Centre, Inverness
Drop in and join us for a cuppa and chat
Contact 3SCOTS Welfare Office for dates & times: 01463 225907

3SCOTS Unit Welfare Officer (UWO) is a key partner to The MLG (Education) Group and ensures the Serving families are listened to, their voices shared with MLG and acted on.

These views were gathered directly from some of the parents of 3SCOTS Regular Service Soldiers families.

These may be of help to give wider understanding of families views and may be useful for Educators and Practitioners to reflect on and consider.

Links to information, resources and research referred to:

UNCRC Summary of Rights [Click Here](#)

For Highland's Children [Click Here](#)

Leaflet to encourage families to identify [Click Here](#)

Enquire: Supporting ASN Children of Armed Forces Families [Click Here](#)

Video "Forces Kids – This is My Life" [Click Here](#)

Highland Council Armed Forces Website [Click Here](#)

GIRFEC Framework My World Triangle [Click Here](#)

The Parenting Cycle of Deployment [Click Here](#) for abstract or search pdf of document

The Impact of Fathers' Military Deployment on Child Adjustment [Click Here](#)

The Affect of Non Operational Family Separations... "VFR Hub [Click Here](#)

The Affect of Non Operational Family Separations" NFF [Click Here](#)

GIRFEC Framework Wellbeing [Click Here](#)

GIRFEC Framework Wellbeing/UNCRC [Click Here](#)

**The MLG (Education) Group
Partners
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FOR FURTHER SUPPORT AND INFORMATION**



Further Information and Support
Ctrl & Click

Scottish advice service for
additional support for learning

ENQUIRE



Connecting Young Carers
A better life for unpaid carers in Highland

APPRENTICESHIPS . SCOT
From Skills Development Scotland

