

Supporting Service Children in Education in Wales Fund GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES

2023/24

School type: Primary

Local authority: Bridgend

Number of Service children: Six

SSCE-WF awarded: £1,000

Project summary: Funding was allocated for staff time and resources to deliver 6 Emotional Literacy Support (ELSA) sessions to their Service children through fortnightly check –in's. The sessions gave the Service children an opportunity to discuss and talk about their emotions, learn new coping strategies and work on resilience and self- confidence in a safe space with a safe adult. Story books with the theme of different emotions were purchased to support the delivery of the check-in sessions. Staff at the school were also allocated time to better understand the experiences and needs of Service children in Wales by completing the SSCE Cymru e-learning training.

School type: Primary

Local authority: Powys

Number of Service children: Two

SSCE-WF awarded: £1,000

Project summary: Funding was awarded to this school to develop the use of play-based therapy (Lego) and dedicated staff time to support the Service children with their specific needs. The objective was to support the two Service children develop strategies that can be used particularly during challenging times, such as dad's deployment. As a result of the sessions, the Service children are becoming more able to explore and explain their feelings and have developed strategies to build resilience. This has also had a positive impact on National Test results where there has been a shift in performance across all tested areas.

“Time to work closely and liaise / meet with mum has been invaluable and has had a significant impact when building a positive relationship between home and school.” Service Children School Champion

School type: Primary

Local authority: Neath Port Talbot

Number of Service children: 11

SSCE-WF awarded in 2023/24: £1,000

Project summary: Purchase resources and materials to support activities that take place in their Little Troopers clubs. The Little Troopers Wellbeing pack allowed Service children to talk about their experiences as part of an Armed Forces family. Other resources and materials further supported activities that allowed the whole school to develop their positive relationship with their local Armed Forces community. As requested by the Service children, they were presented with SSCE Cymru sashes and earned themed badges throughout the activities they took part in during their Little Troopers clubs.

“It made us feel special and we had badges like our dad.” Service child

School type: Primary

Local authority: Conwy

Number of Service children: 21

SSCE-WF awarded: £5,000*

Project summary: Staff time to increase their knowledge of Service children’s experiences by completing the SSCE Cymru E-learning and undertake Trauma Informed Schools (TIS) training. The training raised awareness of some of the challenges that military life can bring such as trauma around separation, transition and the impacts parental resettlement can have on our Service children. Staff are now better prepared to support Service children by providing protection, support around relationships and regulation, and a chance to reflect on the events of military life.

“Attending SSCE Cymru training in addition to the whole school TIS training gave me the knowledge and understanding to best support our Service children.” Teacher

**From 2024/25, the SSCE-WF project application option changed from £5k to £3k projects.*

2024/25

School type: Primary

Local authority: Rhonda Cynon Taf

Number of Service children: Two

SSCE-WF awarded: £1,000

Project summary: The need for this project was identified through talking to/with and observing this school's two Service children. Staff at the school had observed that they were struggling with various challenges and events such as their father’s imminent deployment, which were slowly starting to take their toll and affect their behavior in and outside of school. The school recognised a need for intervention and for a member of staff to be assigned as their key person, who would be available to talk and deliver ELSA sessions with them, to help them develop skills to manage their anxiety and worries around their father’s deployment and learn how to regulate their emotions. The funding would allow for this member of staff to develop their knowledge and understanding, train to deliver ELSA, cover the hours required for morning check-ins and to run weekly ELSA sessions, until the Service children can cope independently and adjust to new situations.

School type: Primary

Local authority: Blaenau-Gwent

Number of Service children: 10

SSCE-WF awarded: £1,000

Project summary: This school applied for funding to use staff time to identify their Service children and run some Pupil Voice sessions to listen to their thoughts and feelings before tailoring the project to meet their needs. This could be wellbeing sessions, trips, attending celebratory events and utilising outside agencies to meet and understand the needs of the Service children at the school and to ensure integration within the school community. Resources will be purchased to host events that celebrate the Service children and highlight the 'highs and lows' that they may experience being part of an Armed Forces family. The school plans to measure the outcomes of support and how this could be improved moving forward. The school's aim is to embed good practice and prioritise work with their Service children to make them feel welcomed, supported and safe in their educational setting.

School type: Primary

Local authority: Monmouthshire

Number of Service children: 14

SSCE-WF awarded: £3,000

Project summary: Service children at the school will work in small groups supported by a staff member to compose storyboards and maps of their life experiences, explaining their journey thus far. By working together, they will be encouraged to share highlights and adventures that celebrate their achievements. They will discuss their differences and how they can support each other through commonalities in their home life. They will use the information collated to compose a script for an individual video clip, which will be edited together with others to create an informative movie. This will reflect on their individual challenges and what qualities they have developed to overcome such challenges and be shared to educate the wider school community. This project will develop language, literacy, numeracy and digital skills to allow sustainability within the school setting and provide professional development for members of staff. The project will also contribute towards key priorities within the School Improvement Plan, enriching teaching and learning experiences for a real-life purpose.

The Armed Forces families within the community will be invited alongside governors, staff, other parents and local authority representatives to the premier of the movie. Offering an opportunity to share their experiences with a wider audience to celebrate alongside their children. The movie will also be shared on social media platforms to promote diversity, equity and inclusion within the local area.

School type: Secondary

Local authority: Pembrokeshire

Number of Service children: 70+

SSCE-WF awarded: £3,000

Project summary: This project is for the continued development of the good practice already embedded at the school. The funding will contribute to the annual staffing time for the Service Children's Coordinator, who

will continue to dedicate 15 days per academic year to the needs of the Service children/young people, this will include attending training, networking meetings and conferences. In September the school welcomed a large cohort of new Year 7 Service children, and they plan to deliver an activity through their already established Forces Life Club, to enhance their group cohesion. Following the success of their 'Purple Up' t-shirts they produced to celebrate Month of the Military Child (MotMC) last year, the current Forces Life Club members have requested that some of the funding be used to produce an FLC hoodie, something to be worn during their activities. They are in the process of designing the logo. The school will also ensure that some funding goes towards providing a healthy lunch at all the Forces Life Club meetings, as lunchtime has proven to be the most popular time for attendance.

School type: Secondary

Local authority: Powys

Number of Service children: 36

SSCE-WF awarded: £3,000

Project summary: The school will use funding to provide opportunities for Service children/young people to meet in school, share experiences, support one another by establishing a Forces Life Club for our Service pupils with outside support from the local Army Welfare Service. With guidance from both the SSCE Cymru team and the AWS, the school will focus on the unique needs of their Service pupils, by utilizing resources such as the SCiP Alliance Toolkit, SSCE Cymru and Little Troopers resources, the school will offer a safe and nurturing space. The Forces Life Club is a vital initiative that aligns with the school's mission to provide a supportive and inclusive environment for all its students. It will strengthen the ties with the local Armed Forces community and aim to explore opportunities for more positive involvement in school through celebratory events, such as Month of the Military Child and Armed Forces Day, enhancing inclusion and fostering a stronger connection within the wider community.

The funding will be used for staff hours to provide targeted Service child led support and planning help facilitate the members initiatives, such as planning future trips, educational visits to military bases and team-building activities. Purchasing resources to set up and run the FLC and refreshments for each meeting of the FLC.

School type: N/A

Local authority: Neath Port Talbot

Number of Service children: 131

SSCE-WF awarded: £3,000

Project summary: To establish and co-ordinate a Service Children network across a local authority. This would involve working with schools to nominate a designated Service Children School Champion in each school to share good practice, training and resources and establish more Little Trooper clubs in Primary settings. The funding will also partially go towards staff hours to allow the SCSC time to attend network meetings and complete the SSCE Cymru e-learning package, as well as to access relevant SSCE Cymru drop-in sessions to gain a better understanding of what support is available for the Service children in this LA. Funding would also contribute to supporting the SCSCs from our schools further by allowing them time out of classroom to plan involvement in the LAs celebratory events such as Month of the Military Child (MotMC) and Armed Forces Day.

School type: N/A

Local authority: Powys

Number of Service children: 313

SSCE-WF awarded: £3,000

Project summary: The title of this project is 'Celebrating Military Child Wellbeing: Honouring and Supporting Young Heroes' Health'. The LA plans to host an event at Pentre Farm for Service children/young people, bringing them together from all primary schools across the county. The funding will go towards hiring two large 70-seater buses, which will be available from Brecon and Newtown to ensure Service children can attend the event, hire of the venue with food and refreshments and resources to encourage shared creative craft time at the event and at school. One of the craft items will be linked to the focus of a Never Such Innocence competition, which will be announced in due course. This will be communicated back to the children's schools, with a request for schools to celebrate this at a school level with support from the Vulnerable Groups Team. The events will promote team building, foster connections across the LA, enhance wellbeing, and celebrate the Month of the Military Child. The range of activities planned reflects the diverse ideas shared by the children through pupil voice questionnaires that were collected by the LA. Games and activities will be tailored to be accessible for all ages and designed to help them make new friends and connections.

School type: N/A

Local authority: Monmouthshire

Number of Service children: 70+

SSCE-WF awarded: £3,000

Project summary: This LA will host the Wales National Armed Forces Day in 2025, and this will take place on Saturday, 28th June 2025 at Caldicot Castle and Country Park. In the lead-up to this day, there will be VE80 and Month of the Military Child as opportunities to raise awareness and for schools to participate in range of fun activities. The initial part of this project is to fully identify Service children/young people across the LA and update the data capture by ensuring that schools are collecting data and recording it on SIMS. This will refresh the information currently held at the LA and help the LA and SSCE Cymru to offer support to those schools that may need it. Encouraging all schools to participate in this activity by actively contacting each school office directly, with potential visits to schools themselves, in a more targeted approach by this LA. This will ensure that more schools are fully aware of any potential challenges and consider becoming an Armed Forces Friendly School.

Following on from the new data capture, this LA has identified an appropriate supplier locally, utilising local resources, to create approximately 400 wooden jigsaw pieces and a design has been agreed. These will be sent to all schools in the LA predominantly for Service Children and their peers. These pieces will be sent to schools following direct conversations with schools' staff. This will work out to around 10 per primary school and 20 per secondary school. A brief will be included with the jigsaw pieces for Service children to paint, draw, and stick...generally be creative and design something which symbolises the Armed Forces for them. With any spare jigsaw pieces following engagement with schools, being shared with local Cadet forces as an additional mechanism to engage with young people who are aligned to the Armed Forces (though not necessarily SC themselves).

Communication of this project will be coordinated with the Month of the Military Child in April 2025 and local authorities from across Wales will be encouraged to submit artwork to be included in the collage/display which

is to be displayed within the Castle grounds during Armed Forces Day 2025 (these will be paper based). The sessions will take place within schools after the Easter half-term towards the end of April which will allow sufficient time to follow-up with schools, and chase where necessary, to get as many jigsaw pieces returned as possible. The wooden jigsaw collage can be broken down and split across various buildings within the LA for permanent display following AFD.

There will be prizes for the best ones! With a separate prize structure between primary-age children and secondary-age children, the LA will ensure that the prizes are age-appropriate.

The grant funding will contribute to the staff hours, materials, postage and packaging costs and towards some of the prizes.