SSCE Cymru funding advice

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Introduction

This document provides advice from the SSCE Cymru team for schools and local authorities, to assist them when applying for funding to support their Service children/local Armed Forces community.

The advice provided is general, and not specific to any particular funding stream.

The document also includes a checklist of suggested actions to help when preparing and completing a funding application, and a list of funding ideas/suggestions.

Information about current funding programmes available to support Service children can be found on the SSCE Cymru website.

Advice

BEFORE – understanding your Service children's needs and investigating support/funding options

- Engage with your SSCE Cymru Regional School Liaison Officer (RSLO) – to learn about the various resources, tools and support available from SSCE Cymru.
- Listen to your Service children to identify their needs – consider working with the SSCE Cymru Participation Lead Officer to do this.
- Consult your school community (parents/carers of Service children, staff, governors etc.) to better identify the needs of the Service children in your school – this could be through formal methods (e.g., surveys) or informal methods (e.g., discussions).
- Engage with your local Armed Forces (AF) contact(s) and/or Armed Forces Covenant Liaison Officer (AFLO) – to understand the local AF context.
- Explore the SSCE Cymru website good practice examples to see how other schools in Wales have supported their Service children.
- Read the SSCE Cymru evidence reports (from consultation activities with schools, Service children, parents/carers) and Service Children's Progression (SCiP) Alliance – The Voice of Service Children report to establish how the needs of Service children in your school link to the needs of Service children across Wales.
- Discuss the challenges/barriers of the Service children in your setting with your RSLO, and identify ways to overcome them.
- Check which funding streams are available and relevant to your setting (based on eligibility, objectives/aims etc.) – read the full guidance documentation, and see case studies and examples of previous funding success, provided by the different support funds (ESF, AFET, AFCFT-FCF).

- Explore different project ideas to establish and confirm the most appropriate avenue of support. Remember:
  - o Each Service child's experiences are unique, therefore a blanket approach to support their needs may not always be appropriate.
  - o Service children may have some positive/unique experiences that can enhance your school community.
  - o The experiences of different types of Service families may vary (e.g., veterans, Reservists, Navy, RAF, Army).
  - o Funding applications should focus on project activities, rather than employing members of staff. Projects may include elements of staff time to deliver the project activities, along with all other project costs (e.g., training, resources/materials).
- Read the examples and ideas of funded projects below in Annex 1.
- Work with your RSLO to explore options for accessing appropriate local authority support – if required support/funding isn't available from the local authority, then continue to investigate alternative routes.
- Investigate various funding streams to identify the most relevant option for the proposed project – see the SSCE Cymru website for available funding streams.
- Explore options for involving other schools from your cluster or local authority in the project and funding application – cluster bids demonstrate and support good practice, shared knowledge and value for money.
- Share your funding proposal with relevant local/regional organisations, e.g., through Armed Forces forums, to avoid duplication of similar projects, identify collaboration opportunities, and gain support.

DURING – writing an application for support/funding for your Service children

General advice

- Engage with SSCE Cymru throughout the funding application process. Send your RSLO a draft of your application in plenty of time (at least three weeks before the deadline), so that they may review it and provide feedback.
- Review ALL funding guidance and supporting documentation **BEFORE** and **AFTER** writing your application – to be sure that your project is focused on relevant content, and that it links to the funding aims and priorities.
- Be clear in the content, and use language that is easy to understand – avoid abbreviations and acronyms.

Preparing your application

- Check the funding stream information (deadlines etc.) – review the full guidance documentation.
- Identify the most appropriate person or people to support/complete the bid – this could be a collective approach, including the school business manager, senior leadership team, and all relevant teaching/support staff.
- Make a detailed plan and timeline for preparing and submitting your funding application, to be clear on timelines and responsibilities of all those involved.
- Consider how your project links to the aims and priorities of the funding stream you are applying for – be specific and clear about your objectives.

Writing your application

- Be mindful of the word count for each section of the application.
- Start with a summary of the project – to be clear on your plans, who the project will support (Service children), and the key outcomes.
- Provide specific examples of the challenges that Service children in your school/local authority face (consider the impact of deployment, mobility and separation).
- Provide evidence of how you have identified the needs of your Service children. Include details of how you have consulted with your school community (Service children, parents/carers, school staff etc.) and what you have identified. **NOTE:** Avoid making assumptions about the needs of Service children, and instead, focus on your personal experience of the children and families that you work with – use SSCE Cymru evidence to support your own observations.
- Use quantitative evidence (e.g., School and Service children data, anomalies, fluctuations etc.) and qualitative evidence (e.g., quotes from discussions) throughout the application.
- Explore costs of the project and include a full breakdown that is clearly and accurately calculated – this will help the funding panel to establish value for money, and possibilities of partial funding where appropriate.
- Consider the timeline for the project delivery – be realistic and be specific with the details.
- Include details of activities that your school/local authority (LA) is already doing to support Service children (e.g., completing SSCE Cymru CPD, working towards SSCE Cymru Armed Forces Friendly Schools Cymru status, running clubs for Service children/families, celebrating Month of the Military Child).
- Include details of any previous funding that you have secured to support Service children – share details of the positive outcome(s), and be clear about how this new project will differ.
- Include details of how you have explored options for funding this project (e.g., through the local authority), and explain why alternative funding support is **not** available.
- Include ways that the project will benefit the wider school community, as well as the Service children involved.
- Include details of partnership working and collaboration:
  - Remember that a school environment which has a positive relationship with the Armed Forces community will be beneficial to Service children and their peers.
  - Detail how you will involve other schools, partner organisations (e.g., Armed Forces charities), Armed Forces contacts, the local authority, and SSCE Cymru in your project.
- Include details of how you are planning to ensure sustainability with this project. **NOTE:** this is very important for the funding panels to understand. Evidence sustainability by:
  - Identifying ways of embedding good practice in the school/local authority, which will also help to demonstrate value for money.
  - Considering the short-term and long-term impacts.
  - Explaining what legacy the project will leave behind.
  - Ensuring a realistic sustainability plan is considered, including sources of ongoing funding (where necessary), resources, and succession planning.
  - Including an explanation of how upskilling staff could have a long-term benefit.
  - Including details of how there will be a lasting impact to the Service children involved in the project.
  - Detailing any other funding streams that the school/local authority has applied for so that the work may continue.

- Include details of how you plan to measure the outcomes of this project:
  o In both the short term and long term.
  o Using quantitative methods, e.g., improved academic results, wellbeing results, behaviour records, survey results from the start vs. end of the project etc.
  o Using qualitative methods, e.g., quotes from formal/informal feedback, positive feedback from pupil ambassadors and the Armed Forces community, pupil engagement etc.
  o Using Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Timely (SMART) targets.
  o In relation to local and national measures, e.g., monitoring of key academic performance indicators against local authority and Welsh education expectations (literacy, numeracy, attendance), comparing target grades/results.

  REMEMBER: You are part of a larger project that seeks to better understand the needs of Service children and what works to support them – monitoring is therefore essential.

AFTER – monitoring and measuring the impact of your funded project

- Continue to work with SSCE Cymru to deliver the project successfully – access advice/support as necessary.
- Regularly review the implementation of your project – to ensure progress is being made, and that it is aligned to the original project aims and priorities.
- Keep project partners informed of progress – to seek advice and identify further collaboration opportunities.
- Share good practice with other schools/local authorities – support them with developing ideas for future funding projects.
- Measure the impact of the project outcomes at regular intervals – report back to the funders as required.
- Implement sustainability plans – to continue activities at the end of the funding period.
- Consider ways to develop the project further, after the current project timeline, with different/adjusted/enhanced activities and outcomes – and explore options for funding the next phase.

Checklist

NOTE: See the above advice section for further information on all recommended checklist items.

BEFORE – understanding your Service children's needs and investigating support/funding options

Ref.	Actions/activities	✔
1.1	Engage with your SSCE Cymru Regional School Liaison Officer (RSLO) – discuss challenges/barriers of your Service children.	☐
1.2	Listen to your Service children to identify their needs.	☐
1.3	Consult with your school community to gain their perspective on the needs of the Service children in your setting.	☐
1.4	Engage with your local Armed Forces Covenant Liaison Officer (AFLO).	☐
1.5	Explore the SSCE Cymru website and look at the tools, resources, and good practice examples it offers.	☐
1.6	Explore the SSCE Cymru evidence reports to make links between the needs of Service children in your setting, and the needs of Service children across Wales.	☐
1.7	Investigate funding options on the SSCE Cymru website.	☐
1.8	Decide on your project idea (what you want to be funded).	☐
1.9	Work with your RSLO to explore options for accessing appropriate local authority support.	☐
1.10	Look at case studies and examples of previous successful projects (ESF, AFET, AFCFT-FCF).	☐
1.11	Ask your RSLO to show you examples of previous successful funding applications.	☐
1.12	Explore options for involving other schools from your cluster/local authority in the project and funding application.	☐
1.13	Share your proposal with relevant local/regional organisations to avoid duplication of similar projects.	☐

DURING – writing an application for support/funding for your Service children

Ref.	Actions/activities	✔
2.1	Thoroughly read ALL the funding guidance and supporting documentation – to be sure your project objectives link to the funding aims.	☐
2.2	Identify the most appropriate person or people to complete the bid.	☐
2.3	Make a detailed timeline for preparing and submitting your funding application.	☐

2.4	Consider how your project links to the aims and priorities of the funding stream you are applying for.	☐
2.5	Start with a summary of the project – be clear on plans, who the project will support, and the key outcomes.	☐
2.6	Provide specific examples of the challenges that Service children in your setting face.	☐
2.7	Provide evidence of **how** you have identified the needs of the Service children in your setting – who you have spoken with and what you have recognised.	☐
2.8	Use quantitative and qualitative data examples throughout your application.	☐
2.9	Explore costs of the project – include a full breakdown that is clearly and accurately calculated.	☐
2.10	Consider the timeline for the project delivery – be realistic and specific with details.	☐
2.11	Include details of activities that your setting/LA is already doing to support Service children.	☐
2.12	Include details of any previous funding that you have secured to support your Service children and how this was successful.	☐
2.13	Include details of how you have explored options for funding this project, and explain why this alternative funding support is **not** available.	☐
2.14	Include ways that the project will benefit the wider school community, as well as the Service children involved.	☐
2.15	Include details of partnership working and collaboration (other schools, partner organisations, Armed Forces charities, the LA, SSCE Cymru).	☐
2.16	Include details of how you plan to measure the outcomes of this project – in the short and long term.	☐
2.17	Include details of how you are planning to ensure sustainability with this project – consider longevity and legacy.	☐
2.18	Finalise first draft of the application.	☐
2.19	Review draft application – check language is clear and consistent.	☐
2.20	Send draft application to RSLO, and other relevant project partners, for feedback (at least three weeks before the deadline).	☐
2.21	Review ALL funding guidance and supporting documentation before submitting – to be sure that your project focuses on relevant content that links to the funding aims and priorities.	☐
2.22	Make amends to the application based on feedback from your RSLO and project partners.	☐
2.23	Submit application – ensure you receive a confirmation of receipt.	☐

AFTER – monitoring and measuring the impact of your funded project

Ref.	Actions/activities	✔
3.1	If unsuccessful – ask the funder for feedback on your application, and consider amending your application so that you can re-apply during the next funding round. *If successful, complete ref. 3.2 – 3.9 below.*	☐
3.2	Continue to work with SSCE Cymru for advice and support.	☐
3.3	Regularly review the implementation of your project – ensuring progress is being made.	☐

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3.4	Keep project partners informed of progress.	☐
3.5	Engage with your local Armed Forces Covenant Liaison Officer (AFLO).	☐
3.6	Share good practice with other settings/local authorities.	☐
3.7	Measure the impact of the project outcomes at regular intervals – report back to the funders as required.	☐
3.8	Implement sustainability plans – to continue activities at the end of the funding period.	☐
3.9	Consider ways to develop the project further – explore options for funding the next phase.	☐

Annex 1

Funding ideas and suggestions

The following are ideas/examples of activities that schools and LAs could incorporate as part of funded projects to support Service children. The suggestions are based on the knowledge of the SSCE Cymru team and examples of previously successful school/LA projects.

Coordinated projects

Local authorities and or schools could consider coordinating a project which would benefit a number of schools and Service children. Projects could include:

- Coordinating a timetable of engagement activities with the Armed Forces
- Creating opportunities for schools to collaborate and share good practice
- Producing resources for schools and/or Service families
- Running events for schools and/or Service families
- Organising a theatre/art project for Service children in collaboration with a local organisation
- Organising trips/visits to Armed Forces museums.

School staffing time

Funding applications should focus on project activities, rather than employing members of staff. However, projects may include elements of staff time to deliver the project activities. This could include dedicated staff hours to:

- Provide 1:1 tuition, catch-up sessions, language support, and/or subject interventions
- Run a nurture group for Service children
- Deliver the Little Troopers Wellbeing course
- Run an after-school/lunchtime club for Service children (e.g., Forces Life Club)
- Organise and run Armed Forces family events
- Complete the SSCE Cymru e-learning training

- Attend conferences/events/training sessions relevant to supporting Service children in education
- Engage with SSCE Cymru materials (School Toolkit and Tools)
- Engage with the Regional School Liaison Officers for Service children, and take appropriate actions based on conversations with the team
- Achieve Armed Forces Friendly Schools Cymru status
- Coordinate school cluster meetings to share good practice and ideas about supporting Service children.

Courses/training for school staff

Where needs are identified, staff members may benefit from participating in training relevant to supporting Service children and their needs. Courses/training could include:

- Emotional support (e.g., ELSA)
- Wellbeing support (e.g., Thrive)
- Mental health support
- Counselling
- Mindfulness
- Trauma recovery
- Attachment
- Therapy (e.g., Lego therapy).

Resources

Consider purchasing resources that are relevant to supporting Service children with their academic and pastoral needs.

- See SSCE Cymru Tool 13: Recommended resources for suggestions of appropriate books, wellbeing materials, learning Welsh materials, and items to support conversations around the Armed Forces.
- Other resources a school may wish to consider purchasing include:
  - Literacy and numeracy resources
  - Welsh language support resources
  - Materials required to run an after-school/lunchtime club
  - Resources for running Service family events
  - Digital equipment
  - Assessment tools for monitoring behaviour, wellbeing, and/or attainment.
- Funding could support the introduction of:
  - An outdoor learning space
  - A wellbeing area.

Outsourced projects/packages

Members of the SSCE Cymru Network (including Forces Fitness, Little Troopers, Never Such Innocence, Your North etc.) can also offer packages of support to individual schools, or groups of schools, to work with their Service children. Please liaise with your RSLO for further information.