



OUR SERVICE CHILDREN'S PROMISE

In June 2022, Rutland County Council led a series of events with council staff and early education and school practitioners, along with a group of children from military families. Their views have been central to creating this 'promise'; we will collectively hold ourselves to account to always follow it and have a commitment to achieving the principles of the Military Covenant, which in turn will help Service Children thrive when attending our early education settings and schools.

The Armed Forces Covenant is a promise by the nation that the Armed Forces Community should be treated fairly and face no disadvantage when accessing public and private services, with special provision made in appropriate cases for those who have sacrificed the most.

The three principles of the Armed Forces Covenant are set out in the Armed Forces Act 2006. These are the matters to which relevant public bodies must have regard and are as follows:

- 1. the unique obligations of, and sacrifices made by, the Armed Forces;**
- 2. the principle that it is desirable to remove disadvantages arising for Service people from membership, or former membership, of the Armed Forces; and,**
- 3. the principle that special provision for Service people may be justified by the effects on such people of membership, or former membership, of the Armed Forces.**

Service children are typically proud of their serving parent's job and being part of the 'military family'. They do not tend to want 'special' treatment, but they want their lived experiences to be understood. At times of challenge, such as separation from a parent or military postings, they can be particularly vulnerable and so need sensitive, tailored additional support. This may also be the case for their parents. This Promise outlines how we can all do our part in this so that any negative impact is minimised.

Service Children would like:

- To be treated as individuals recognising that each child has their own story.
- Recognition that sometimes they may need additional emotional support.
- Civilian friends to understand their lives better.
- Knowledgeable staff who 'get what it's like' being part of a military family.
- Safe spaces in their early years or school setting.
- Opportunities for support from other Service Children.
- Education provisions to celebrate the Armed Forces.
- More opportunities for the education workforce to hear directly from military families.



The Council will:

- Lead by example and aim to remove disadvantage for Service children when allocating school places.
- Signpost education providers to best practice and support.
- Remain an active partner within the MOD-LA partnership (MODLAP) group of Local Authorities.
- Promote and follow MODLAP's *Agreed Principles for the Transition of Armed Forces children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities* (SEND)
- Consider the impact on Service children in all relevant policy and guidance review.
- Promote and celebrate the *Month of the Military Child*.
- Promote the effective use of Service Pupil Premium spend.
- Work with the sector to review all outcomes for our Service children cohorts and highlight findings.
- Have easily navigatable routes to information.
- Listen to Service Children's voices and act on what they tell us.

Education provisions with Service Children will:

- Train all staff to understand Service Children's contexts.
- Deliberately listen to and act on Service Children's voices.
- Build effective relationships with military welfare teams.
- Be mindful of annual celebrations that deployed parents might be missing with their families.
- Celebrate the Month of the Military Child.
- Relentlessly chase missing transfer records.
- Be sympathetic to deployment-linked holiday requests.
- Regularly review practice using the SCiP Alliance's *Thriving Lives Toolkit*. (Schools)
- Be transparent in their use of Service Pupil Premium and review its impact. (Schools)