

Briefing note for schools and colleges

Military Service Children

Background

Children of military service personnel may experience particular challenges throughout their time in the education system. This may include moving schools (and homes) regularly from an early age, as parents are posted, disrupting their education and friendship groups and having a 'knock-on' effect on their lives as they move into adolescence. It can affect performance in qualifications, aspiration and progression. Four out of ten military service children who have the ability to progress to higher education are unlikely to do so¹.

Such difficulties are often compounded by other pressures, such as parental absence for extended periods on active duty, coping with bereavement or parental separation, carer responsibilities for a parent injured on active service and so on. This presents a set of unique challenges that conspire to erode desire to progress through the education system.

So what is being done?

Much work is being done in terms of post-16 research and trying to develop a more connected approach to military service children, in line with the Armed Forces Covenant and other initiatives, including the OfS Uni Connect programme.

The ultimate aim is to increase participation of military service children in further and especially higher education.

Contextual offers

For tutors or teachers involved in UCAS and university applications, the key point is that military service personnel can often qualify for a contextual offer from a university. This means that a lower grade offer would be made to reflect the particular challenges that military service children face.

What do we need to do?

Relevant personal information about a military service child student should be included in the UCAS application in order to trigger the university to consider a contextual offer. It may be appropriate for the student to include some of this information in their personal statement. For many, it should be

¹From research paper by the SCiP Alliance 'Further & Higher Progression for Service Children' McCullough & Hall, 2016.

included in the referencing information provided by the institution, so it is vital that tutors and teachers take this into consideration.

Be mindful that in many cases, where a parent or parents have left the armed services (often some time ago), the student may not consider themselves to be a military service child anymore but the contextual offer system is intended to acknowledge the ongoing effect of coping with the kind of challenges explained above.

Help

For more information and support – contact your Uni Connect Outreach assistant, who will be able to help you and your student with UCAS applications.

We have also just published a set of military service children booklets for students, parents/carers and school/college staff on applying to university.