



Welcome to our May 2022 Newsletter

We are delighted to announce that on Monday 9th May at 10:30am, Fiona Jones, from Regular Forces Employment Association (RFEA) the EM3 Caseworker Veterans will be our guest speaker.



RFEA EM3 Armed Forces families helps veterans, partners, spouses, and their children to gain new skills in emerging industries including digital, medical technologies, gaming, sustainable construction, cyber, and space and satellite.

This is a unique opportunity to access free accredited courses and qualifications via our expert partners and get personal careers and employability support from our dedicated caseworkers who have all either served, are military-spouses, or have lived experience of forces family life. Now open for enrolment:

<https://www.rfea.org.uk/jobseekers/register/>

start your personal development journey and future-proof your career!

*EM3 LEP initiative part-funded by ESF



**FIZZIN'
WITH
FLAVOUR**

Well-Being
Group
with Ali
at 12:00 pm



V&F-LP
GROUP
Wellbeing
REVITALISING VETERANS & FAMILIES
РЕВІТАЛІЗІНГ ВЕТЕРАНІВ ТА СІМ'ЯНИХ



Grab a snack, & come right back because
it's.....

Time for Hot-Topics.....

Veterans UK | Armed Forces Pension Scheme | **February 2022**

Appeals & Disputes

Your Pension Scheme Administrators aim to get decisions right first time, and to ensure processes are timely and fair. However, there are occasions where members believe we have come to the wrong decision, or that they have suffered maladministration.

If this occurs, you can access our Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure (IDRP) at no cost. The IDRP will look at all information and evidence relating to your dispute and aims to provide you with an outcome within 60 working days.



Our IDRP Fact Sheet provides more information on what is covered and what isn't covered: bit.ly/IDRPFactsheet

If you disagree with the decision after IDRP, you can complain to The Pensions Ombudsman (TPO), free of charge. To find out more, including contact details, visit TPO's website:

www.pensions-ombudsman.org.uk

If you have general requests for independent information or guidance concerning your pension arrangements contact:

Money Helper
Tel: 0800 011 3797
Website:
www.moneyhelper.org.uk



Help and Support

If you have a question about your Armed Forces Pension please call the JPAC Enquiry Centre on **0800 085 3600** or **0044 141 224 3600** if calling from abroad.

Open Monday to Friday 7am to 7pm, please ensure you have your Service and National Insurance Numbers ready.

You can find useful information on all the Schemes by visiting:

www.gov.uk/guidance/pensions-and-compensation-for-veterans

Tell us how we are doing



Please take a couple of minutes to complete our feedback survey

<https://bit.ly/AFPSQDFeedback>

Pension Increase

This year, Armed Forces Pensions have increased by 3.1%. The Pension Increase is based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) 12-month inflation rate in September of the preceding year, which was 3.1% in September 2021. This increase is effective from 11 April 22.

If you are in receipt of an AFPS pension, your next P60 will confirm the increase. If you are still serving, your pension savings are



increased slightly to track inflation. This is known as indexation, and it is based on the Average Weekly Earnings index and is similar to money in a bank account earning interest.

AFPSFeb22



FIZZIN'
WITH
FLAVOUR



Win your spot in the celebrity relay!

Don't miss your chance to party with the stars at this summer's Superhero Tri powered by Marvel!

Boom! The event of the year is back & so are our Celebrity Team Captains! We'll be turning up this year's 'Summer Street Party' vibe to the max at our headline event & our celebs are looking to celebrate with some SUPER competition winners!

Each Team Captain is on the hunt for two fun-loving teammates to take on a relay stage each of the Celebrity Superhero Tri – a 150m swim, a 3km cycle/push, or a 1km push/run.

Meet your SUPER Celeb Team Captains [here!](#)



How to enter

To enter, simply click on the button below to share your SUPER story & your own unique superpower for your chance to win.

We're looking for strong Superhero spirit & want to hear all about you, your life & what your superpower is. Be as creative as you like!

Who can enter

All we ask is that each entrant considers themselves to have a disability (of any kind) and that you've signed up for Superhero Tri 2022.

The winners are very welcome to bring Sidekick family & friends to support them on their chosen celebrity relay stage if they wish.

ENTER HERE!



Wheelchair Sector Grant Programme



Please note, these grants are for charities and organisations only.

Individuals cannot apply for help with wheelchair funding through this grant programme.

Who can apply

Through this new grant programme we aim to support charities and organisations to make an immediate impact for disabled people, by awarding funding to improve and expand their access to good quality affordable wheelchairs. We are focussed on awarding grants in this area on:

- Funding to fill current gaps in provision for groups of people who are excluded from receiving help from existing sources/providers.
- Funding to enable charities and organisations to help individuals by topping up self-funding.
- Funding raising awareness of the challenges faced by disabled people in obtaining suitable, quality and affordable wheelchairs.

- Funding programmes to help fund high quality and affordable equipment.
- Funding to schemes, programmes and initiatives that already exist, and who provide best practice solutions, but need further support to remain operational or scale up the service they can provide to help more disabled people.

For further information please visit the website:

<https://www.motability.org.uk/charitable-grants/grants-to-charities-and-organisations/wheelchair-sector-grant-programme/>



M6toll

Mobility Exemption Pass

Information & application form

Toll exemption for disabled customers

Are you eligible for a Mobility Exemption Pass?

If you are disabled or an organisation which transports disabled persons you may be entitled to toll exemption for your vehicle when using the M6toll motorway (the "M6toll"). Please check the criteria in sub-paragraphs (A) and (B) below to see if you and your vehicles are eligible for exemption before making an application in writing using the Mobility Exemption Pass application form.

(A) A vehicle is an exempt vehicle when it is being used, or kept for use, by or for the purposes of a disabled person who satisfies sub-paragraph (B) if-

- (i) the vehicle is registered under the Vehicle Excise and Registration Act 1994 (the "Act") in the name of the disabled person; and
- (ii) no other vehicle registered in his or her name under the Act is an exempt vehicle under this sub-paragraph (A).

(B) A disabled person satisfied this sub-paragraph if-

- (i) he or she is in receipt of, and is claiming, a disability living allowance by virtue of entitlement to the mobility component at the higher rate;
- (ii) he or she is in receipt of a mobility supplement, or
- (iii) he or she has obtained, or is eligible for, a grant under-
 - (a) paragraph 2 of Schedule 2 to the National Health Service Act 1977;
 - (b) section 46(3) of the National Health Service (Scotland) Act 1978; or
 - (c) article 30(3) of the Health and Personal Social Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1972; in relation to the vehicle.

Organisations, which operate a vehicle used for the carriage of disabled people, are eligible for toll exemption if the vehicle is recognised by the Secretary of State for such purposes.

If you're unsure call our Customer Services Team on 0870 850 6262

Please note that a Blue Badge (formerly Orange Badge) cannot be accepted as proof of entitlement.



Open consultation

Mental health and wellbeing plan: discussion paper and call for evidence

Summary

This discussion paper and call for evidence seek views on what we can do to improve everyone's mental health and wellbeing.

This consultation closes at
11:45pm on 5 July 2022

Consultation description

The government is committed to improving mental health and wellbeing outcomes, particularly for people who experience worse outcomes than the general population. This is a key part of our commitment to 'level up' and address unequal outcomes and life chances across the country.

The government has committed to develop a new cross-government, 10-year plan for mental health and wellbeing for England to support this objective.

We want to ensure our new plan responds to the public's priorities and set out what we can all do as a whole society to drive better outcomes. We all have mental health, and all have a part to play in changing things for the better.

Therefore, we are launching a discussion paper and call for evidence to ask the public a range of questions to help develop the new plan.

Open consultation

Mental health and wellbeing plan: discussion paper and call for evidence

This discussion paper is asking people:

- how can we all promote positive mental wellbeing? (chapter 1)
- how can we all prevent the onset of mental ill-health? (chapter 2)
- how can we all intervene earlier when people need support with their mental health? (chapter 3)
- how can we improve the quality and effectiveness of treatment for mental health conditions? (chapter 4)
- how can we all support people living with mental health conditions to live well? (chapter 5)
- how can we all improve support for people in crisis? (chapter 6)

We want to hear everyone's views on these questions. This includes:

- children and young people, adults, and older adults who have experienced mental ill-health
- people who have cared for someone affected by mental ill-health
- people who work or volunteer in health and social care services who support people with their mental health

- people who work or volunteer in places where they meet people who are affected by mental ill-health (such as schools, job centres and housing associations)
- academics and experts who work on mental health

This discussion paper is published by the Department of Health and Social Care, and has been informed by conversations with stakeholders, people with lived experience and government departments.

The easiest way to participate in the call for evidence is by completing the online survey:

<https://consultations.dhsc.gov.uk/623ac367ea9bcd4c024d6df9>

by 11:45pm on 5 July 2022.



Kingsclear Memory Cafe



8am to 10am - Last Thursday of Every Month


Join us for our Memory Cafe to hear from our team and guest speakers providing information and advice around living well with dementia. It is an opportunity to ask questions and share experiences in a safe and supportive environment.

Get in
touch


Call us on freephone 0808 223 5516
Email to book a place j.barr@caringhomes.org
Park Road, Camberley
Surrey, GU15 2LN

Kingsclear
CARING HOMES

We appreciate that the following article is from October 2020 but feel that these issues are still relevant today, as affects the senior veterans within our communities, who served British on these nuclear tests operations.



Nearly 70 years on, why is Britain still refusing to truly recognise its nuclear test veterans?



By **Laura Cooke**, Freelance journalist

Friday 23 Oct 2020 10:56 am

When Gordon Coggon opened his eyes he found himself surrounded by a suffocating white fog.

He could not see the coconut tree he was leaning against or even his own hands. Men around him were crying out in terror, and while Gordon felt an overwhelming urge to flee, there was nowhere he could run to escape the giant toxic cloud.

'Moments earlier, I'd seen the shadow of the bones in my hand whilst my eyes were shut and my head tucked into my hands,' he recalls. 'I could literally feel the Gamma ray travel through my body.'

'At that moment I thought I was being burnt alive.'

Gordon's memories may sound like something out of an apocalyptic horror movie, but he had in fact just witnessed Grapple X, one of Britain's largest nuclear weapons tests, just 20 miles from ground zero.

The RAF serviceman was one of around 22,000 British service personnel who witnessed nuclear tests on mainland Australia, the Montebello Islands off Western Australia and Christmas Island in the South Pacific, during the 1950s and 60s, with the first blast happening 68 years ago this month.

The men were usually issued with little, if any, protective equipment, exposing them to high levels of radiation. After the tests, they were ordered to keep quiet about the horrors they had witnessed.

Many went on to suffer ill health, with an increased rate of cancers, infertility and birth defects observed in veterans and their descendants.



The UK refuses to acknowledge that those involved were exposed to harm (Picture: Bryan Pitt)



Aircrafts would be flown through the mushroom cloud (Picture: BNTVA)

Although these tests were nearly 70 years ago, for decades the men who were present have fought the British Government for recognition and recompense for their suffering.

Yet the UK refuses to acknowledge that those involved were exposed to harm, despite countries like the US and France offering official recognition or compensation to their own veterans for their own tests.

The British programme began with Operation Hurricane on 3rd October 1952 and culminated in Grapple, a set of four nuclear weapons test series of early atomic bombs and hydrogen bombs carried out in 1957 and 1958 at Malden Island and Christmas Island.



Gordon was present for two, including Grapple Y, which remains the largest British nuclear weapon ever tested, dwarfing the bombs that were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki heralding the end of World War II.

'There was a very large downpour that night when all the sky was blue apart from the bomb cloud, which hung over the main camp for a long time,' Gordon recalls. 'Some of the young guys always stood naked in the rain to cool down, and there was talk that particular rain was black rain (radiation).'

Follow us today on:

 www.linkedin.com/in/veterans-families-listening-project-aa9a74b0/

 www.facebook.com/VeteransnFamiliesListeningProject

 @VnF_LP


Veterans & Families – Listening Project
email: veteransnfamilies@yahoo.com
www.vflp.org.uk

V&F-LP is an independent member of ASDIC.
The association of Ex-Service Drop-in Centres.
Linking Veterans' Drop-ins together across the
United Kingdom.





'I was covered in radioactive water from the spray I was using,' remembers Gordon (Picture: Gordon Coggon)

Gordon was ordered to wash the engine casing of an aircraft which was flown through the mushroom cloud following the blast.

'I was covered in radioactive water from the spray I was using,' he says. 'A week later I had carbuncles on my neck and back, which kept coming back for about six months. I still have the scars.'

Gordon, now aged 82, says his health problems started some years after the final test.

He lost all his teeth after turning 40, and was later diagnosed with a bent spine, prostate cancer and Type 2 diabetes after suffering years of digestive problems, which he attributes to the bombs.

'But I am one of the lucky ones,' says Gordon, 'because many of my comrades died young.'



When he returned home, Douglas developed skin problems, diabetes and lost all his teeth (picture: Douglas Hern)

Douglas Hern flew out to Christmas Island on his 21st birthday. He was present for five tests in the Grapple series.

A ship's cook with the Royal Navy, Douglas had been seconded to take part in the tests.

Like Gordon, he was ordered to sit with his back to the bomb and put his hands over his closed eyes before rising to his feet for the blast.

The 84-year-old, who lives near Spalding, in South Lincolnshire, says, 'There was this sudden vision of all the bones in your hands, like an x-ray, in front of your closed eyes. Then

at the same time you feel the heat of the flash. That is like opening a huge oven and it goes all the way through you.'



Bryan Pitt ready for Parad in Lima, shortly after the Grapple tests finished (Picture: Bryan Pitt)

For some tests, Douglas and his fellow seamen were dressed in just shorts and flip flops.

Afterwards lorries took away the bodies of thousands of dead birds and fish that washed up on the shore, killed by the radiation. From these same contaminated waters, Douglas and his fellow sailors caught crayfish to barbecue on the beach.

When he returned home, Douglas developed skin problems, diabetes and lost all his teeth. He now has bony spurs growing from his ribs into his chest.

Musculoskeletal problems are a common complaint among veterans. Often servicemen did not realise their colleagues had suffered similar ailments until making contact with the British Nuclear Test Veterans Association (BNTVA).

Bryan Pitt was present at Grapple and started experiencing problems a year after leaving the Navy in 1960.

'A disc went in my lumbar region but although I don't recall doing anything to cause it, I never put it down to the bombs,' he says.

'Over the years I have had a lot of treatment with both NHS and private chiropractors and have spent thousands. I later had another disc go in my neck, I've had both hips replaced and for a very long time joint pain. I only learnt via BNTVA that many others had reported skeletal problems.'

Among the things he witnessed on Christmas Island, Bryan, from Worcester, recalls three planes, which had been used to collect samples from the mushroom cloud, being dumped in the Pacific Ocean.



Bryan has ended up spending thousands of pounds on treating his ill health (picture: Bryan Pitt)

'When all was over, we shot the three aircraft over the bow,' he explains. 'They were lend-lease American aircraft, and the Yanks did not want them back after being contaminated.'

The Grapple series was Britain's final tests in the

region. But British servicemen were called upon again just a few years later to provide support to the US.

John Lax, an air wireless mechanic in the RAF, was just 20 when he arrived on Christmas Island in September 1961.

Like many servicemen, John was not aware of any impending bomb tests, but soon found himself at the heart of Operation Dominic, a series of 27 tests led by the Americans, aided by British troops.



'We were issued with a radiation film badge (a device used for measuring radiation dose) and some very dark goggles and these were the extent of our safety equipment,' he says. 'When a test was taking place, we were instructed to put on long trousers, a long sleeve shirt and, wearing the goggles, sit on the football pitch with our backs to the blast.'

'This was only enforced for the first two or three bombs, after that we just stayed in bed and turned away from the blast.'

'As a 20-year-old this was more of an inconvenience than anything else, particularly as the detonations were always very early in the mornings,' he adds. 'Later in life the potential damage to health was more disconcerting and how this would impact on future offspring.'

Although John did not suffer any health problems which could be attributed to his tour of Christmas Island, two of his children have undergone surgery for a series of benign tumours.

Some veterans were left sterile following the tests. For those who were able to start a family, the effects of the bombs reverberated down through the generations.

The story of Douglas Hern's daughter is as tragic as it is disturbing.



Douglas; daughter Gill died in 1977, aged just 13 (Picture: Douglas Hern)

Aged 11, Douglas' beloved daughter Gill was diagnosed in 1975 with Cushing Syndrome, a rare form of adrenal cancer more usually seen in horses and dogs.

'Firstly she started developing a hump on her back, then she started to put on weight and develop the face of an old lady,' Douglas recalls. 'And she was covered in hair – in the end we were shaving her face every day.'

Gill underwent operations on her spine and surgery, which left a large incision that went all the way around her torso.

Douglas claims his daughter was repeatedly photographed and examined at the hospital without his knowledge, and says he was left in the dark by those treating Gill.

'They never really told us what they removed from her,' he says.' They discussed very little with us.'

Gill died in 1977, aged just 13. Douglas' other daughter is unable to have children.

RAF sergeant Peter Inglis Parkin BEM served in the trials team for Grapple and was present for every detonation. He conceived twin sons in the spring of 1959 shortly after the tests were completed



Peter Inglis BEM three months before he passed away (Picture: Keith Inglis)

Peter died of carcinomatosis, an aggressive form of cancer, in June 1988, aged just 55.

His son Keith is currently battling prostate cancer and last month underwent surgery for the condition. His twin Ian was also affected by the disease.

'My twin brother contracted testicular cancer in 1993, aged 33, five years after our father passed,' explains Keith, who lives in Basingstoke, Hampshire.

'He had radiotherapy treatment from which he is now presenting with a requirement for facial reconstruction to enable him to eat, attributable to the radiotherapy all those years ago.

'Both of us have been referred for testing to match our chromosome DNA to irradiated test veterans.'

It is believed just 1,500 veterans are still alive today. The ex-servicemen and their families have been battling the Ministry of Defence for recompense and recognition for years. Various promises of assistance from successive governments have come to nothing.



Keith is currently battling prostate cancer (Picture Keith Inglis)

In 2009, a group of veterans won a High Court case, which paved the way for them to sue the MoD.

In turn, the MoD argued that too much time had passed, and the claim was excluded under limitations regulations.

The case ended up in the Supreme Court in 2012, where the veterans ultimately lost. The court sided with the MoD and ruled it was too long since the problems emerged.

A Freedom of Information request later revealed that between 2005 and 2010 alone the MoD had spent over £1.8million defending the case.

There was a ray of hope in 2018, when Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson promised a medals review and new health research.

However the medals have yet to materialise. The results of a new health study was expected in 'mid-2020'.

In August this year, the MoD and Veterans UK produced new guidance for claiming compensation for a list of specified conditions relating to exposure to ionising radiation, including various cancers.

But the last line of the new guidance delivers a kick in the teeth to every Cold War hero: 'The policy is however, not an acknowledgement that those present at the tests were exposed to harm.'

This stance is in stark contrast to other nations which have recognised their surviving veterans.

In 2015, Fiji compensated all its veterans of British nuclear tests in the Pacific, with their prime minister, Frank Bainimarama announcing: 'Fiji is

not prepared to wait for Britain to do the right thing. We owe it to these men to help them now, not wait for the British politicians and bureaucrats.'

The United States Radiation Exposure Compensation Act has been providing compensation to its atomic veterans since 1990, including at least one Briton who was involved in nuclear testing in the 1960s.



'Even the award of a medal would demonstrate recognition of our service,' says John Lax
(Picture: John Lax)

Since it was set up in 1983, as well as fighting for recognition by the UK Government in the form of a medal for test attendance, the BNTVA also campaigns for developing welfare services to meet the needs of veterans, wives, widows and descendants.

Ceri McDade, chairman of the BNTVA, said to Metro: 'During the Covid-19 pandemic and its uncertainties, veterans have commented that the general

public are beginning to see the fear they have lived with daily for six decades concerning their own health and passing on genetic abnormalities to their families, for those who were able to have children.

'With this constant trepidation of physical illness, comes a mental impact from continual rumination about the tests and effects. They display a dichotomy of pride in service for their country, yet anger at being exposed to such deadly radiation at a close proximity.'

John Lax, now a trustee and secretary at the BNTVA, says: 'The British Government, who sent me to Christmas Island, has been reluctant to

recognise our service there and the veterans who have suffered as a result.

‘Even the award of a medal would demonstrate recognition of our service and show some appreciation of the suffering we have had to endure.’

Keith Inglis has written to his MP on the issue, but just like many others, he feels he has been stonewalled.

‘The silence is deafening,’ he says. ‘Condescending letters from the MoD are the only response.’

‘Over the years there have been scandals Her Majesty’s Government have tried to ignore – Thalidomide, Aberfan, Windrush, to name but three. ‘Perhaps now is the time for our test veterans to get the recognition and recompense they deserve, and their descendants.’

REF: <https://metro.co.uk/2020/10/23/britain-still-refusing-to-recognise-its-nuclear-test-veterans-13409365/>



A spokesperson for the Ministry Of Defence says:

“We are grateful to all those who participated in the British nuclear testing programme, which contributed to keeping our country secure. Any veteran who believes they have suffered ill health due to service has the right to apply for compensation. We want to reassure nuclear test veterans that their case for medallic recognition is being assessed by the independent Advisory Military Sub-Committee and recommendations will be made as soon as possible.”

They also added that three previous studies carried out by the National Radiological Protection Board found ‘no valid evidence’ to link participation in the test programme to ill health, and that the MoD has received the report

from the latest health study and is currently considering its findings.

*You can more footage of the Grapple tests on the **Imperial War Museum’s YouTube channel.***

The following is some interesting feedback on the above article:

Commenting on this article has ended

Sort by **Best** ▾

 **COPPERCAT** · 24 October, 2020

Something definitely isn't right here. As these men were involved in the testing surely their illness would come under the spotlight of effects of the radiation. Seems unusual that their conditions are on the rare side and their children (if not left sterile) are experiencing ill health at young ages. I don't feel the MoD or health authorities are following these men through their medical lives to see what is happening. How can they be so sure neither are linked? Seems terrible that the MoD should be ruled in favour of in court hearings because too much time has elapsed. If they can prove the conditions may be linked or can not be ruled out as effects they must be compensated. A medal is deserved but in my eyes not enough. Good luck to all the veterans and their families. *(Edited)*

👍 3 🗨

 **DAVID LEJDAR** · 24 October, 2020

So, what the MOD is basically saying is that when it comes to the supposedly most horrendous weapon the UK has, a pair of flip-flops is plenty to survive it? Seriously though, the mentioned three studies were a set of studies, with the latest from 2003 (in 2004 the National Radiological Protection Board ceased to exist). What they did was to compare 21,357 test participants to a control group of 22,333, and it was concluded that the test participation had not had a detectable effect on the participants' expectation of life, or on their risk of developing cancer or other fatal diseases.

A thing about that though is that these studies looked at death certificates and at the data from cancer registry/ies. And what it apparently didn't look at (from what I can see looking at the study) is the age at which death happened, nor the age at which someone had cancer (something which is a topic in itself, since in the UK it wasn't mandatory to report cancer diagnosis until around 1990, before which the data was collected based on type of tumour). So, in the study a death in 1955 seems considered equal to a death in 1988 (additionally arguably with an increased cancer detection in 1988).

That isn't to say that every case e.g. of not rare prostate cancer is a result of short exposure to radioactivity (especially in conditions in which not everyone had a cloud of radioactive dust blown into their face for extended time). But I'd say that the study doesn't offer a full picture.

👍 1 🗨

 **KATE BOGTROTTER** · 23 October, 2020

My Uncle was among them...he has had unusual cancers since then, fingers and eye and another cancer not normally seen in humans. They were treated like guinea pigs.

👍 2 🗨

It is NEVER too late in raising awareness about of our military children...

CELEBRATING THE MILITARY CHILD

The Americans have been celebrating the contribution of the children of military families since 1986, and last year that initiative crossed the Atlantic.

This year, once again, Wales will be leading the UK version of the Month of the Military Child, thanks to the efforts of SSCE Cymru.

According to the MOD's Armed Forces Families and Safeguarding (AFFS) section, the designated month of April will see a number of events covering several themes.

"It's a recognition of the challenges service children face, raises the public's awareness of these children and celebrates their successes," said Andrew Malcolm, Senior Education Officer with AFFS.

"Events, awards and resources will align with the month, and it is an excellent way to celebrate this group of very unique children.

"The plan this year is to start small, linking many projects already run by the separate Services and charities under the banner of the #MotMC."

The hope is that schools can be provided with material to suggest ideas on how they might raise the profile of Service children, highlighting any additional needs they might have as well as flagging up how much of an asset such children are to schools.

Amongst the objectives for the month are:

- Promoting the positive image of Service children;
- Demonstrating to Service families and the wider civilian community that the MOD values the contribution Service children make;

- Reflecting on the topics raised by Andrew Selous' Living in our Shoes report and families strategy;
- Providing continuous professional development for schools, local authorities and charities to understand Service children
- Bringing together the charities supporting Service children to reduce duplication and encourage collaboration.

According to the SSCE Cymru website the official flower of the military child is the dandelion,

because its seeds are blown far and wide by the wind, but it will always plant roots and blossom wherever it lands.

SSCE Cymru is aiming to encourage education

settings to carry out activities during April to celebrate and raise awareness of the unique experiences this group of children and young people have and become a more Armed Forces-friendly environment.

Examples from Wales last year included:

- Service children created a presentation about their experiences which they shared with their class;
- All members of a school wearing something purple for the day. The class who wore the most purple had an extra ten minutes of playtime;
- Classes designed badges that might be suitable for Service children to wear;
- Creating dandelions and decorating the school with them to raise awareness of Month of the Military Child.

Although Welsh authorities have been amongst the quickest off the mark over the Month of the Military Child, it is hoped the initiative will be taken up just as enthusiastically across the rest of the UK, both by schools/local authorities and more widely in their communities – the Armed Forces Families and Safeguarding team has compiled a list of suggestions for schools that wish to participate.

A list of events and suggestions will be posted on the SSCE Cymru website – see www.sscecymru.co.uk/events/monthofthemilitarychild/default.htm for more details.





A two-day event bringing together the UK Armed Forces welfare community, showcasing and celebrating the drop-in community.

