

SSCE Cymru update – March 2021

About SSCE Cymru

The SSCE Cymru mission is to provide the best possible educational support to Service children in Wales. This is achieved through the following three areas of the programme mission:

- Gathering knowledge and evidence
- Producing resources and coordinating activities
- Supporting policy and systems.

Service children in Wales

Kirsty Williams MS, Minister of Education, has committed to identifying Service children, however currently there is no formal mechanism for this data collection process. SSCE Cymru is working with the Welsh Government to arrange for a question be added to the Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC).

The RSLOs have been working with all 22 local authorities to conduct a data collection activity, providing a snapshot of data as of 1st March 2021. The RSLOs are now working with the LAs to establish how they plan to maintain this data in the future.

LA	Schools with SC	Number of Service children		
		Definition 1*	Definition 2**	Total
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council	6	13	2	15
Bridgend County Borough Council	32	64	37	101
Caerphilly County Borough Council	24	64	50	114
Cardiff Council	31	59	23	82
Carmarthenshire County Council	44	77	64	141
Ceredigion County Council	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Conwy County Borough Council	18	41	35	76
Denbighshire County Council	25	50	52	102
Flintshire County Council	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Gwynedd County Council	8	9	11	20
Isle of Anglesey County Council	8	45	7	52
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council	21	36	30	66
Monmouthshire County Council	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Neath Port Talbot Council	26	72	Unknown	72
Newport City Council	24	72	18	90
Pembrokeshire County Council	20	118	47	165
Powys County Council	32	224	Unknown	224
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council	50	114	41	155
Swansea Council	30	53	43	96
Torfaen County Borough Council	17	25	Unknown	25
Vale of Glamorgan Council	27	286	Unknown	286
Wrexham County Borough Council	16	23	17	40
	462	1433	481	2007

Plus an additional 85 SC identified in four independent schools.

Regional School Liaison Officers (RSLOs) for Service children

Funded by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust, four RSLOs are now in post for the two-year project. Focused on supporting schools to understand the needs of Service children and embed activities to ensure sustainable support systems.

Further information about the RSLOs can be found on the [SSCE Cymru website](#), including a map of their regions and an overview of the ways they will be working with schools.

Case management

The mobility of Armed Forces families can have an academic, social and emotional impact on Service children. As a result, issues may arise that require support outside of the capacity of the school and/or local authority (LA). In these instances, the [Regional School Liaison Officers \(RSLOs\) for Service children](#) in Wales will work with the school and LA to identify support that could be accessed to overcome the barrier/s that the individual child or small groups of Service children are facing.

The RSLOs will coordinate intervention/s, monitor the progress and measure the impact, following a consistent all-Wales process. They will have access to funding for these interventions when required, which was secured as part of the funding bid to the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust.

The case management support from RSLOs is available for schools to access at any point of the year. Schools should contact the RSLO for their region to discuss accessing the support.

Month of the Military Child



April is designated as the Month of the Military Child, which highlights the important role Service children play in the Armed Forces community. It is a time to applaud Armed Forces families and their children for the daily sacrifices they make and the challenges they overcome. SSCE Cymru would like to encourage education settings to carry out activities during this month 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. Ideas of how schools can get involved are available [here](#).

SSCE Cymru – Service parent/carer survey report

During September-October 2020, SSCE Cymru conducted a 'parents/carers of Service children' survey. Giving them the opportunity to share their experiences about living in/moving to Wales, the impact their lifestyles have on their children's education and the support they have received from schools.

There were 121 full responses, which were used to produce the findings report analysis, available [here](#).

SSCE Cymru resources

- In 2020, SSCE Cymru launched a suite of new resources aimed at supporting schools, families and Service children. Everything is available on the new website www.SSCECymru.co.uk, including: [new SSCE Cymru School Toolkit](#), [Directory of support](#), [Welsh films](#) and [Case studies](#).
- A Covid-19 support information page is available on the SSCE Cymru website, which is regularly reviewed and updated www.SSCECymru.co.uk/schoolsandlocalauthorities/covid19support
- [Service children – funding guidance for schools in Wales](#) was last updated in August 2020 to now include information and advice on the funding available through the MODs Education Support Fund (ESF), the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust 'Force for Change programme' and from the Armed Forces Education Trust.
- Listening to our Service children – we have been running discussion groups with over 100 Service children in 14 schools across Wales to gain an understanding of their experiences. The findings report is available [here](#). These findings also fed into the SCiP Alliance [Listening to Learn: The Voices of Service Children](#) report.
- [SSCE Cymru Winter newsletter](#).

CPD training for schools

Developed by the RSLOs based on the content of the SSCE Cymru Toolkit, a training package is now available for schools and educators in Wales. The RSLOs will be delivering this training in schools during visits/virtual meetings, to educate school staff on the experiences of Service child and facilitate discussions on actions the school can take to embed good practice. The session can take up to two hours for a group of up to 10 participants.

Funding update

Welsh Government – Supporting Service Children in Education in Wales Fund (2020/21)

Welsh Government announcement: [£250,000 fund to support service children in schools across Wales](#). £200,000 is to be distributed to the local authorities in Wales in March 2021 based on funding plans developed with SSCE Cymru. For further information on how the funds will be distributed, visit the [SSCE Cymru website](#).

The Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust – Forces for Change Programme

Awarding grants up to £10,000 (previously £20,000) to projects supporting Armed Forces communities to become less isolated and engage more in their local area. Application deadlines for 2021 have not yet been set.

MODs

There were seven applications from schools in Wales for the MODs Education Support Fund 2021. Five of those were successful, securing just over £160,000 in total. The ESF guidance and applications process is currently being reviewed to reflect feedback from the regional panels.

Definition of a Service child

The Welsh Government have recently clarified their definition of a Service child to be:

A 'Service child' has parent(s) – or person(s) with exercising parental responsibility – who is/are Service personnel:

- *In HM Regular Armed Forces*
- *In full commitment as part of the full-time Reserve service*
- *Is a veteran who has been in service within the last two years*
- *One of their parents died whilst serving in the Armed Forces and the pupil receives a pension under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme or the War Pensions Scheme.*

SSCE Cymru also encourages schools and education settings to consider identifying and supporting Service children that fall outside of this definition by continuing to access and utilise the many resources available on the SSCE Cymru website and through the SSCE Cymru Network.

Plans for 2021

- Produce and launch a SSCE Cymru Service family guide.
- Produce an E-learning version of the CPD training package.
- RSLOs school visits/meetings – focused on helping schools to understand the experiences of their Service children and embed support.
- Organise a school conference – led by Service children.
- Enhance Service children voice in Wales.

For further information, contact: SSCECymru@wlqa.gov.uk