

Tel: 07969102173

Contact: Matt Blyton

Email: matt.blyton@northyorks.gov.uk

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Web: www.northyorks.gov.uk

Dear colleagues,

I hope that the start of the new academic year has gone well; I imagine the calm of the summer holidays is all but a fading memory!

I wanted to write to you in order to raise your awareness of a number of things and to give you some key dates. Should you wish to discuss any of these, please don't hesitate to contact me or to speak with either of the Service Pupils' Champions (SPCs), Annabel Hall (Annabel.Hall@northyorks.gov.uk 07816648163) or Nickie Young. (Nickie.Young@northyorks.gov.uk 0742900785):

Service Families Strategy (SFSG) Meeting – Thurs 27th Sept 1.30 – 4pm County Hall, West Bk, Rm 2

The agenda for this key termly meeting for school leaders, MoD / welfare staff and LA officers will be sent to you shortly. On the 27th, we will have an opportunity to discuss the Children's Commissioner's recently published and helpful report, *Kin and County*, as well as to consider a year-long project I hope to launch for schools with the Universities of York and York St John. We are also being joined by two visitors to update us on some national things:

- Paula Rowe, the RBL's new Military Kids Club Heroes' Project Coordinator
- Anna Vrahimi, DCYP Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Leader (MoD Schools)

Paula will be travelling from Plymouth and will also make a couple of school visits the day before; Anna is based in Wiltshire and will also meet members of the LA's SEND team and then school SENCOs to help improve joint understanding and transition for mobile SEND Service pupils. **Please make every effort to attend this meeting, or to send a leader to represent you – please confirm attendance with Annabel.**

SEND support

Through our regular meetings with Jane Le Sage and her team members, there is now much better understanding of some of the issues schools face with mobile SEND pupils. Alison Hall is now a named Principal Assessment and Review Officer (PARO) for Service pupils, and the current financial year-long pilot to support children at SEN Support includes, as one of the 3 criteria, *pupils recently moved in with significant needs but without an ECHP* (up to £3000 additional funding). I hope that this will prove beneficial for some.

SENCO meeting with Anna Vrahimi – Friday 28th September, 0930 – 1130, Le Cateau Primary

Many thanks to Ian Mottram for offering to host this opportunity for Anna to meet with your SENCOs to share the MoD Schools' systems (including, SCANs, their version of ECHPs), consider best practice over transition and explore some of the issues that are still prevalent with some of our most vulnerable Service pupils. I have arranged this meeting as a two-way learning opportunity and do hope that your SENCO might be able to take part. Please let Nickie know if your school can be represented by Monday 24th September.

Annual Remembrance Service, Ripon Cathedral – Fri 9th November 1pm ('There, but not there!')

Today I met with Annabel, Canon Barry and Padre Huw (2.1 Engineers) for some further planning of the event, alongside Stephen Burke from the Invisible Man Theatre Company who has been commissioned

to provide some interactive drama during the service (involving 10 RBL military 'silhouette' figures that Annabel successfully bid for). I am now looking forward to the 6th Annual service even more than usual! We have a large number of VIPs wanting to attend, including the Lord Lieutenant's office and a number of elected members and military 'top brass', and with the theme linked to the centenary of the end of WW1, as well as this being the RAF's centenary birthday year, I expect a lot of media interest. Annabel has written to all schools; book early with her to avoid disappointment, as we have to limit numbers to 700 in total. Please also take part in the WW1 bookmark competition; the winning design will be professionally produced as a souvenir to all pupils attending.

MOD Education Support Fund (ESF) 2019 & 2020

Following concerted efforts of the MoD's Directorate Children and Young People (DCYP) and the SCISS Executive, I am delighted that this fund has been re-established for two further years to cover the remaining 'drawdown' period. Aimed at supporting schools with **exceptional mobility** and / or **deployment**, bids are invited from schools / groups of schools and LAs for the £3M and £2M from across the United Kingdom. SCISS Executive members will again score all English bids and will make recommendations to a national funding panel. Full details can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mod-support-fund-for-schools-with-service-children-grant-application-pack>

I expect there to be considerable interest and joint bids are likely to be more successful than smaller, individual schools ones. Since funding for our Service Pupils Champion post only runs until the end of this academic year, I will be working with Julie Hatfield (Prevention Service's Central Divisional Manager) to submit a bid for the post's continuation. Feel free to contact me, or either of the SPCs, for any advice over bids - it would also be helpful if you could let me know if you intend to submit a bid so that I can keep an overview / link schools up, as appropriate.

SCISS / annual North of England conference

Ian Mottram and I will be attending the Autumn term National Executive (NEAC) meeting later this month when one of the agenda items will be to consider future conferences. As you are no doubt aware, the SCISS NEAC is made up entirely of volunteers and does not have its own funding stream, although recent conferences have been financed through ESF grants. I hope that this might continue now the fund is back and am keen to host another North of England conference, if there is the interest from schools – I have earmarked **Friday 8th February 2019**, so you might want to hold this date.

Over the summer, a SCISS NEAC working party, which I have been a member of, has met with the Service Children's Progression (SCiP) Alliance's Director to explore ways to strengthen the collaboration between the two groups, including the possibility of future shared finance. I hope to be able to update you on this at the SFSG meeting. In the meantime, SCISS resources and all conference slides can be located at

<https://www.scipalliance.org/>

Service Pupil Champion's website and monthly blogs

If you have never seen it, do take a look at the SPCs' website <http://www.servicepupilschampion.co.uk/>. Nickie and Annabel also publish a really useful monthly blog, the September edition of which is just about to be published and which includes details of the welcome change to the Common Transfer Form from this month, to include a Service pupil 'flag' and follow-up questions. They continue to be available to provide early intervention support to vulnerable Service children and families, as well as:

- Anxiety and Self-Esteem Workshops (free!)
- Awareness training on all matters relating to Service Children for staff (free!)
- Emotional First Aid courses for vulnerable parents
- Liaison with military colleagues

Please use them!

Developments with York University & the University of York St John

Next week, Annabel and I will be attending a *North Yorkshire Military Service Children / SCiP Alliance Strategy* planning meeting to explore possible collaboration for future projects and events. These are likely to include offering a further two free University taster days for Service children, following the success of last June's two **Creative Forces days**. Further details to follow, but these may be held in November. There will also be termly **SCiP Alliance North East and Yorkshire Hub** meetings for educational professionals to support the progression of Service pupils into further and higher education. The first of these meetings was held last term and I will share dates as soon as they are planned – secondary colleagues are encouraged to support these.

The two universities are also currently collaborating with the SCiP Alliance and several other National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP) consortia on a pilot funded project this year which will develop enhanced mechanisms and tools for professional support in three areas:

1. Effective mapping and targeting tools and methods to ensure that resource is directed efficiently;
2. Approaches and resources supporting professional development, including the development of high quality effective practice hubs, staff training and tools/guidance for work with service children;
3. An organisational framework to enable schools, colleges, universities and other allies to develop strategies and activity that improve outcomes.

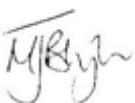
I will keep you updated on developments.

And finally...

As some of you will be aware, I have been working with the DCYP and other LA Service pupil leads on a number of issues, including the availability (or lack of) national datasets from the DfE. For a number of years, NYCC through its Strategy & Performance Team has produced an LA *Service Pupils' Profile*. This is currently the envy of many other LAs and many Headteachers tell me they find it useful for comparison to their own Service pupils' data. Tom Bryant (who heads this team) and I are now looking to develop a wider dataset for potential national rollout. As the current Profile is based on census data (which doesn't include academies) we are moving to the use Service Pupil Premium pupils this year (which will include all schools). I attach an initial prototype (using 2016-17 data) and Tom and I would welcome your feedback before producing a 2017-18 version. **Please take a few moments to review this and either email me your thoughts or share them at the SFSG meeting.**

I look forward to working with you again this year; exciting times for supporting our Armed Forces' pupils.

Kind regards,



Matt Blyton, CYPS Strategic Lead for Service Pupils