

## CYPE(6)-13-22 - Paper to note 2

**Jeremy Miles AS/MS**  
Gweinidog y Gymraeg ac Addysg  
Minister for Education and Welsh Language



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref MA/JMEWL/1800/22

Jayne Bryant MS  
Chair  
Children, Young People and Education Committee  
[SeneddChildren@senedd.wales](mailto:SeneddChildren@senedd.wales)

24 May 2022

Dear Jayne,

Thank you for your letter of 22 April about Welsh Government support for Service children in Wales. You raised a number of questions to which I respond as follows.

### Data collection

The Welsh Government does not currently collect any education-related data on Service children, however, the previous Minister for Education in the last Senedd term gave an undertaking to look into the possibility of collecting this data, one possible method being via the Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC).

If PLASC were the chosen method, then changes would need to be made to the Regulations governing the collection of data from schools. Sections [537](#) and [537A](#) of the Education Act 1996 provide powers for the Welsh Ministers to prescribe the information that schools must provide to local authorities and the Welsh Ministers. The current Regulations governing this are the [Education \(Information About Individual Pupils\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2007](#) and the [School Performance Information \(Wales\) Regulations 2011](#).

Work had begun to include the necessary regulatory changes to be made in the 2019 legislative programme. However, as a result of the UK's Exit of the EU and the Covid pandemic, the potential work on data collection was postponed. I, with my officials, am now considering the possible methods which would enable this data to be collected. I will provide a further update as this work progresses.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

## **Service children numbers**

As noted above the Welsh Government does not currently collect the level of information you have requested. The most recent census data (2011), identified that there are Service families with children up to the age of 16 across all 22 local authorities in Wales. The 2011 census data indicates that there are a minimum of 2,486 children in Wales where the HRP (household reference person) indicated that they were in the Armed Forces. This does not include information where the non-HRP(s) is/are in the Armed Forces, or information on veterans or Reservists, or where families with Service children do not live at the same address. The data for the 2021 census will be available later this year.

As an interim measure, the Supporting Service Children in Education (SSCE) Cymru programme has been working with local authorities and schools in Wales to collect data on the number of Service children in Welsh schools, along with the Regional Schools Liaison Officers (RSLOs). SSCE Cymru has identified that in March 2022 a total of 2,677 Service children in 589 schools across Wales. The SSCE Cymru data provides learner numbers by [local authority](#).

## **Armed Forces Covenant Fund engagement**

The Ministry of Defence's Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust, worth £10m per year, supports the Armed Forces Covenant by delivering funding programmes that make a positive difference to Armed Forces communities across the UK. Officials from the Welsh Government are represented on the Regional Funding Panel for Wales. Since its inception in May 2015, Wales has successfully bid for funding of £6,060,078 from the Trust, to date.

## **Regional Schools Liaison Officers (RSLOs)**

The WLGA, in collaboration with 160th (Welsh) Brigade, secured funding from the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust to appoint four RSLOs for a two-year project starting in September 2020.

The RSLOs work collaboratively with the SSCE Cymru Programme Manager to deliver support to local authorities and schools directly, providing training, advice and support. Their programme of work is invaluable and includes:

### *School Visits*

Structured school visits which include support with:

- working towards achieving [Armed Forces Friendly Schools Cymru](#) status;
- using SSCE Cymru [School toolkit](#) and [tools](#);
- Service children discussion groups;
- engaging with the Armed Forces; and
- accessing funding.

## *Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Training*

Two-hour training sessions, delivered virtually for schools. To date, RSLOs have delivered CPD sessions to 169 participants from 74 schools.

## *Schemes and experiences for Service children*

- **Armed Forces Friendly Schools Cymru** – launched in April 2022, this award is given to schools that:
  - embed good practice for supporting Service children;
  - create a positive environment for Service children to share their experiences; and
  - encourage schools to become more engaged with their Armed Forces community.
- **Month of the Military Child (April)** – support schools to highlight the important role Service children play in the Armed Forces community.
- **Little Troopers virtual workshop** - gives service children the opportunity to come together with others. Through a series of activities, they will explore some of the unique challenges they experience as members of the British Armed Forces community and to celebrate what it means to be a 'Little Trooper'.
- **2022 Autumn rugby international: Wales vs Fiji** – In partnership with the Welsh Rugby Union, on Remembrance Sunday, the RSLOs provided nine Service families from across Wales with tickets to the Wales vs Fiji rugby match in Cardiff.
- **Service children residential experience** – 15 Service children from East Wales attended a health and well-being activity residential experience held at the Amelia Trust Farm over three days, ran by Forces Fitness and SSCE Cymru.

Funding to extend the RSLO project to March 2023 has been secured via the MoD's Education Support fund. No decisions have yet been made on securing funding post-March 2023.

## **Views on the work of SSCE Cymru**

The SSCE Cymru programme provides invaluable support to Service children in Wales. The programme provides universal support to all who are involved in the education of Service children, and provides resources, advice and support for schools, local authorities and families. The activities of SSCE Cymru include:

- coordinating the work of the RSLOs and an SSCE Cymru Participation Lead Officer;
- producing and maintaining resources on its website including tools to support schools, local authorities and Armed Forces families;

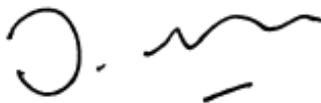
- maintaining networks of key stakeholders and attending events and national meetings to ensure Wales is involved in research and other opportunities to spread understanding of the needs and experience of Service children. This provides a vital link between UK organisations and Wales; and
- coordinating the distribution of £200,000 Welsh Government targeted funding to local authorities and schools to directly support children locally.

In recognition of the importance of this programme, I have agreed that Welsh Government funding of £270,000 is secured once again for 2022-23 to support Service children in Wales. Going forward, an indicative budget of £270,000 for 2023-24 and 2024-25 has also been agreed.

### **Pupil Development Grant (PDG) extension – Service Pupil Premium**

All learners, including Service children, are entitled to support via the Pupil Development Grant so long as they meet the eligibility criteria. There are no current plans to introduce a Service Pupil Premium for Service children, as in England. The Welsh Government recognises that our provision in Wales is different to elsewhere in the UK. The way that we support our Service children is more tailored via the direct links between SSCE Cymru and RSLOs, and our local authorities, schools and the children and young people themselves.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large 'J' followed by a series of wavy lines and a short horizontal stroke at the end.

**Jeremy Miles AS/MS**

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