University of Southampton

Faculty of Environmental and Life Sciences

School of Psychology

The Voice of Service Children: A Systematic Review of Service Children's Experiences and a Study Exploring School Belonging in Children of Service Personnel

by

Kirsty Jean Daniels

Thesis for the degree of Doctorate in Educational Psychology

June 2021

Abstract

Chapter 1 provides an account of the research background and how understanding the needs of UK service children sits within the national context and personal position of the researcher. Chapter 2 presents a systematic review of existing research that gathered the voices of service children in the UK. Searches for this review identified six research papers that were critically appraised in order to better understand the experiences of service children in the UK. A number of common themes emerged relating to the highs and lows of service life, recognising both the challenges and positive outcomes being a service child can bring. These themes were referenced in relation to parental deployment and mobility, and key findings emphasised the importance of social relations as both a risk and protective factor for these individuals. The findings highlighted the need to examine the impact of parental deployment and school transition on the relational needs of service children. Chapter 3 presents a qualitative study that explores school belonging in children of service personnel. Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) was used to explore the lived experiences of six service children and their sense of school belonging. IPA was viewed through a critical realism lens. Five main themes developed from the analysis: defining school belonging; fostering connections and improving communications (at the individual and systemic level); school support: positive attitudes and understanding of the issues facing service children; transition; and impact on child's phenomenon. From these findings a number of practical suggestions were identified.

Table of Contents

Table of Tables

Table of Figures

Research Thesis: Declaration of Authorship

Print name: Kirsty Jean Daniels

Title of thesis: The Voice of Service Children: A Systematic Review of Service Children's Experiences and a Study Exploring School Belonging in Children of Service Personnel

I declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

I confirm that:

1. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
2. Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
3. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
4. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
6. Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
7. None of this work has been published before submission

Signature: .... Date:

Acknowledgements

Definitions and Abbreviations

CEAS – Children's Education Advisory Service

CYP – Children and Young People

DCSF – Department for Children, Schools and Families

DfE – Department for Education

EP – Educational Psychologist

FamCAS – Families Continuous Attitude Survey

HoCDC – House of Commons Defence Committee

LA – Local Authority

MMAT – Mixed Method Appraisal Tool

MOD – Military of Defence

NfER – National Foundation for Educational Research

PRISMA – Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses

SCISS – Service Children in State School

Tri-Service – The Royal Navy, British Army and Royal Air Force

USA – United States of America

UK – United Kingdom

The Voice of Service Children: A Systematic Review of Service Children's Experiences

and a Study Exploring School Belonging in Children of Service Personnel

Chapter 1 An introduction to understanding the needs of UK service children

The aim of this introduction is to provide the reader with a transparent account of the research background and how understanding the needs of UK service children sits within the national context and personal position of the researcher. Consideration is given to the researcher's personal connection to the military community and the potential effects of the researcher's biases, beliefs and personal experiences on the research process, as well as the researcher's epistemological stance. Attention is given to the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact disruptions had on the research project and resulting ethical considerations and challenges.

1.1 Introducing service children

Service children are those children or young people who have a parent(s) serving in the Armed Forces. This includes the Royal Navy, British Army and Royal Air Force. There is recognition by Government that the turbulent and highly transient lifestyle associated with service life can place service children at a disadvantage and have a negative impact on their educational attainment and general wellbeing (DfE, 2010). Legislation and a number of policies exist to raise awareness and support for serving personnel and their families, including service children and their educational continuity (HoCDC, 2006; MOD, 2018). Very little is known about what the policy means in practice, but the overarching purpose is the need to appreciate and be sensitive to the needs of service children as a distinct and vulnerable group that warrants attention.

1.2 Researcher's own perspective

Reflexivity means "sensitivity to the ways in which the researcher and the research process have shaped the collected data, including the role of prior assumptions and experience" (Mays & Pope, 2000, p 51). The validity of qualitative research can be improved if the researcher pays attention to their own personal biases and identifies these throughout the research process. This is considered important due to the interpretative nature of qualitative analysis and the effects of the researcher's perspective on the data collected. This section aims to make transparent to the reader the researcher's own beliefs and values on the subject area and the "distance" between the researcher and those researched (Mays & Pope, 2000).

The decision to conduct research with service children was informed and influenced by the researcher's personal ties to military life. As the wife of a serving officer in the British Army, and the mother of two children, the researcher held her own perceptions and experiences of forces family life. Throughout the research, there were times when the researcher wanted to share their own thoughts on the importance of supporting service children, and at times, this could be evidenced in the writing and tone the author used when providing the rationale for the piece of research. For example, there was a tone in the writing that something 'should' be done.

The author is aware from personal experience of the challenges forces families face, having experienced a number of separations through operational deployments as well as the challenges associated with mobility (relocating on average every three years). There is little doubt that the author felt very passionate about the need to better support service children in the school environment, and this is most evident in the author's recent transition out of military life to ensure educational stability for her children. Recognising the personal nature of this transition, and one that is not applicable or appropriate to all forces families, the author became increasingly interested in how service children come to think about and understand their own experiences of service life and to what extent service life dictates and/or shapes their educational experiences. As a trainee educational psychologist, the author wanted to know the 'best' way to support service children in school. However, careful attention was paid to ensuring the research did not evoke the author's own emotions and perspectives on the matter. This included using a reflective diary (see Appendix G) to record the researcher's own values and facilitate reflexivity as a means to ''monitor the tension between involvement and detachment of the researcher and the researched as a means to enhance the rigor of the study and its ethics" (Berger, 2013, p 3). It could be argued that a personal familiarity and experience with service life enhanced the researcher's ability to develop rapport and may have shaped the nature of the researcher-participant relationship. It is plausible to suggest that participants were more willing to share knowing the researcher's military connection and facilitated an empathetic dialogue.

1.3 Ontology, epistemology and research methodology

The purpose of this section is to provide the reader with the ontological and epistemological positions of the author and the compatible methodology. The aim is to provide a coherent rationale for conducting qualitative research and why it was pertinent to ask the following "how" questions within the empirical paper:

- How do service children describe their sense of school belonging?
- How are service children who transition to a new school welcomed into the school's own culture?

The view of the researcher is consistent with the philosophical approach of critical realism. Critical realism is a philosophy rooted in a realist ontology (i.e., what is real, the nature of reality) and subjective epistemology (Larkin, Watts & Clifton, 2006). The realist ontology implies there is a reality that is independent of human beings, but the subjective epistemology implies that our knowledge of it is subjective and dependent on the person and on their background. A critical realist perspective assumes that human beings are not able to access this reality directly but always approach it from a particular perspective and thus with some form of bias (Larkin, Watts & Clifton, 2006). Therefore, a critical realist stance suggests that an external reality exists which is independent of human perception, but also recognises the role of subjectivity and human perception in the production of knowledge about the world (Larkin, Watts & Clifton, 2006). Critical realists can gain knowledge "in terms of theories, which can be more or less truthlike" (Danermark et al., 2002, p. 10). This study aimed to understand how service children had subjectively experienced and made sense of their shared phenomenon of being a service child and its impact on their sense of school belonging. Hence, the researcher sought to understand the participants' experience of 'reality', and not the reality itself.

The intention of the research was to understand the lived experiences of service children, and IPA (Smith, 1996), with its roots in critical realism (Bhaskar, 1978), was considered an appropriate methodological approach for the research questions in this study. The aim of IPA is "to explore in detail how participants are making sense of their personal and social world, and the meanings particular experiences, events, states hold for participants" (Smith & Osborn, 2003, p. 53). The approach draws on the philosophies of phenomenology and hermeneutics (Smith, 2004). The approach is phenomenological in that it is concerned with an individual's lived experiences and the sense they make of their experience. The connection to hermeneutics is evident in IPA's dual interpretative stance where "the participants are trying to make sense of their world; the researcher is trying to make sense of the participants trying to make sense of their world" (Smith & Osborne, 2003, p 51). IPA encourages the researcher to reflect upon their own knowledge and beliefs about the phenomenon in question through a process of bracketing which is used to make sense of the phenomenon from the perspective of the participant (Husserl, 1969). However, there is a need in IPA to also recognise the subjective role of the researcher during the process of interpretation (Smith, 1996) and the inevitability of these biases and assumptions when trying to make sense of

participants' experiences (Eatough & Smith, 2017). In this sense, the researcher can only aim to get as close to the participants' view as possible (Larkin, Watts & Clifton, 2006).

1.4 From systematic review to empirical research

A systematic review on service children's experiences was conducted and findings emphasise the value of relationships to service children, both as a mechanism for coping with parental deployment and school transition. Building and maintaining positive relationships appear fundamental to service children's experiences and their emotional wellbeing in school, and this could be understood from the perspective of belonging: "the extent to which they [students] feel personally accepted, respected, included and supported by others – especially teachers and other adults in the school social environment (Goodenow & Grady, 1993, p. 60-61). The empirical study therefore aimed to explore service children's perceptions of school belonging in order to increase awareness of service children's experiences (i.e., their sense of school belonging) and develop greater understanding and support for schools on how to meet their relational needs. The study considers practical suggestions for professionals in education that are culturally responsive to service children's individual needs and considers the role of relationships and establishing links with the MOD community and associated charities. Consideration is given to how schools could welcome service children into the school's own culture and prevent them from becoming isolated or feeling alone.

1.5 The Covid-19 pandemic

It is important to recognise the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the author's research project, most notably on the recruitment of participants. Adjustments to the research project were made to account for the school closures caused by the COVID-19 restrictions; these disruptions made it impossible to recruit through schools as initially intended and further challenged the dissemination of research information to attract interest and participation from children. The significance of this concern was that data collection only commenced in March 2021 with the recruitment process spanning a period of 6 months from the initial ethics approval. Recruitment in the end was facilitated through social media, military charities and organisations. More generally, there was a sense that participation in research was valued by the population, but not at a time when families were grappling with a global crisis and home schooling as a result of restrictions.

1.6 Ethical considerations

Conducting the interviews online made building rapport with the participants much more challenging and was hindered by IT difficulties in some instances. To help overcome this challenge, the researcher utilised their skills as a trainee educational psychologist to help build rapport and establish a positive relationship. For example, prior to the interview schedule the researcher asked the participants to share and talk about something they enjoyed doing (i.e., hobbies/interests). For some participants this included conversations about gaming and Lego. One participant spoke enthusiastically about doing stunts on his scooter.

Participants may have found it hard to talk about their personal experiences of having a parent who serves in the military, and this created a risk of harm in the sense that it might have evoked feelings of upset. Participants were made aware that they did not have to answer all of the questions if they felt uncomfortable about doing so and were informed that they could cease participation at any time. Where interviews took place with the child at home, the researcher ensured that an adult with parental responsibility was in the household so that if the participant did become upset the researcher could inform the parent of the distress the participant experienced so that further support could be provided if deemed appropriate. Only one interview took place with the child in school and, in this instance, the researcher checked with a member of the school staff prior to talking to the participant and ensured they remained present and available. Given the researcher's connection to military life, the researcher was able to sign post participants to appropriate charities and organisations if deemed appropriate.

1.7 Dissemination

The researcher aims to disseminate the outcomes of this research to inform educational practice and to maximise the support for service children in school. Recommendations from the research could help to inform school climate interventions that reflect the values of service children. In doing so, the experiences of service children can be appreciated and built into future strategies and policies of schools to help support the relational needs of service children and promote positive social and emotional outcomes for these targeted individuals. The following Journal has been identified for dissemination: Educational Psychology in Practice

Chapter 2 A systematic review of service children's experiences: What can be learned

from the voice of service children in the UK?

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 Service children in the UK

Children and young people (CYP) with parents in the armed forces face unique challenges (Ofsted, 2011), with frequent moves, high levels of uncertainty, and parental deployment posing significant threats to CYP's social, emotional and mental health. Much research focuses on the negative impact of military life, with evidence to support heightened stress and anxiety among children (Royal Navy and Royal Marines Children's Fund, 2009). Despite these findings, there is also evidence that service children thrive across the armed forces community, harnessing their shared experiences as a support system for fostering resilience (Easterbrooks, Ginsburg & Lerner, 2013). In this sense, being part of a forces family can be rewarding. Service children often define themselves as being part of a military family, and express pride in their parent serving in the armed forces (Children's Commissioner for England, 2018). As such, experiences of belonging and connection to the armed forces community appear central to a child's ability to cope with the many stressors of military life.

In the legislation (DfE, 2010; SCISS), CYP with parents in the armed forces are referred to as service children. Children whose parents have left the service or remain with the non-serving parent following divorce or separation fall under the definition of a service child as they too may continue to be affected by the challenges associated with being a service child (whether presently or in the past) (HoCDC, 2006). Accordingly, the House of Commons Defence Committee recommend that the MoD and the DfE (2010) treat as a service child "any child of school age whose parent has served in the UK Armed Forces during that child's school career" (p. 24). Within this review, the term 'service child' will be preferred in line with the above recommendation, except where other connotations (i.e., military families, armed forces families) are used in published research outside of the UK.

2.1.2 Legislation and policies for service children

July 2008 marked the introduction of a UK Service Personnel Command paper, 'The Nation's Commitment: Cross Government Support to our Armed Forces, their Families and Veterans' (MoD, 2008). The aim was to ensure that CYP with a parent(s) serving in the armed forces are not disadvantaged with respect to housing, employment and educational attainment. With reference to education, the DCSF introduced into the school census a service child identifier in 2008 so that CYP known to have parents serving in the armed forces could be identified and attainment data monitored. This was with the view to understanding the impact that being a service child has on educational outcomes. Parents/carers however are under no obligation to declare this information and therefore, at present, it is not possible to accurately identify and account for the total number of service children in the UK. The 2019 Families Continuous Attitude Survey (FamCAS) indicates that 79% of service families have children, 53% of all service families have at least one child of school age, and 34% of families with children require early years childcare (0-4) (MOD, 2019).

The drive towards supporting CYP from service families led to the establishment of The Directorate Children and Young People (DCYP) in 2010 for the purpose of devising policy and strategy relevant to service children worldwide (DfE, 2010). Inherent in its responsibility is education, with the Children's Education Advisory Service (CEAS) forming an integral part. The CEAS offers advice and support to service families, schools and local authorities relating to the challenges and demands imposed on them by military life, including pupil mobility and parental deployment. Examples of support by the CEAS include localised information about schools and admissions, support with special educational needs and financial benefits.

The Armed Forces Covenant (published in May 2011) "is an enduring covenant between the people of the of the United Kingdom Her Majesty's Government and all those who serve or have served in the armed forces of the Crown and their families" (p. 1). Its introduction was deemed necessary because military service removes a degree of choice from members of the armed forces community, namely in relation to healthcare, housing and education. As such they are at risk of being disadvantaged by their service. For example, more than 20,000 service families in the UK are reported to be on the move every year (The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Children's Fund, 2009) reflecting constant change and adaptation to new settings. Acknowledgement is given to the need to raise awareness of issues affecting the armed forces community and local authorities are required to pay 'due regard' to the identified needs of service families, including those of service children and their educational continuity. An example of the covenant in action can be found in the work of the Solent Armed Forces Partnership Board (SAFB) representing Portsmouth, Southampton, Gosport and

the Isle of Wight authorities. The SAFB carried out a needs assessment in 2018 with the aim of further understanding the experience of the armed forces community within the Solent region. Mobility, social integration, support and consistency of provision were identified as unique and additional challenges for service families, and areas for future development and focus.

OfSTED (2011) have further identified the need to monitor the educational outcomes of service children, recognising the dynamic and complex nature of military life and the possible negative impact this can have on service children's academic attainment and social and emotional development (HoCDC, 2006).

Evidently, there is the recognition in legislation and policy for targeted support for service children to ensure that identified causes for concern, unique to military lifestyle, can be appropriately addressed and mitigated without disadvantage. Very little is known about what the policy means in practice, but the overarching purpose is the need to appreciate and be sensitive to the needs of service children as a distinct and vulnerable group that warrants attention.

2.1.3 Reported outcomes for service children

There is a paucity of research exploring the impact of mobility and deployment on service children's academic attainment and social and emotional development in the UK. Much of the evidence available is from international research, primarily from the USA. Parallels can be drawn between the UK and the USA in relation to the transient lifestyle of the military and parental deployment, but the lack of UK empirical research into service children raises possible questions around cultural boundaries (for example, public opinion and understanding of military service and service life) (The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Children's Fund, 2009).

Research exploring the educational attainment of service children is not conclusive. There is some evidence to suggest that being a service child has a negative impact on their education (Dobson, 2000; Strand & Demie, 2006); other research, however, finds no significant evidence of this (DfE, 2010). In a report by ERIC and later by the DfE in a 2008 analysis on the effect of mobility on service children's educational attainment, service children were reported to perform at academic levels equal to or surpassing the national average (ERIC, 2003). Findings from the 2009 survey, commissioned by the Service Children's Education (SCE) reported a high level of parental satisfaction regarding many aspects of their children's educational experiences, with specific reference to the five Every Child Matters outcomes (ECM, 2003). Primary to secondary school transition was identified as an area for development with greater emphasis on partnership working (including

information sharing) and school to parent communications needed (White, Marshall, & Rudd, 2009). It is important to note, however, that the SCE is part of the MoD and are responsible for the education of service children who are stationed outside of the UK: accordingly, the relevancy of these findings to UK based service personnel should be treated with caution. The SCE was set up to champion the needs of service children overseas and as such are likely to have a skilled workforce, adept to meeting the needs of service children; these schools are situated near military bases with a high number of service children on roll. This may be in contrast to schools in the UK with a smaller number of service children on roll when evidence to support the benefits of being part of a community is taken into consideration (NfER, 2007; White, Marshall, & Rudd, 2009).

Parental responses from a survey commissioned by The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Children Fund (2009) found that 64% of families expressed some dissatisfaction with the standard of their child's education when changing schools, citing inconsistency, specifically in relation to syllabus content, as a chief concern. These figures are much lower than satisfaction rates reported by parents in the SCE survey (overall parental satisfaction was reported to be between 75% and 95%).

A fair amount of research with service children is comparative: research often aims to compare the outcomes of service children with those of their civilian peers. Williamson, Stevelink, Da Silva and Fear (2018), in a systematic literature review of 9 studies in US school settings, reported no difference in the wellbeing of children from military families to that of children from civilian families. The authors conceptualised psychological wellbeing to include externalising behaviours (e.g., engagement in fights), substance use and mental health problems (suicidal ideation, depression and PTSD). A distinction was drawn, however, for children with deployed parents, noting an increased risk of engaging in externalising behaviours and substance misuse for these individuals, particularly within older age groups. The RAND corporation (2009) also found that older children were more likely to exhibit problem behaviours (i.e., fighting or drinking) during parental deployment, while younger children experienced more anxiety.

The emotional cycle for deployment (Logan, 1987) considers how children's behaviour may change/fluctuate during different stages of the deployment cycle: anticipation of loss, detachment and withdrawal, emotional disorganisation, recovery and stabilisation, anticipation of homecoming, renegotiation, and reintegration and stabilisation. Considering this framework, it is not possible from the above research to ascertain at which stage of deployment elevated levels of anxiety and behavioural regulation were experienced for CYP, limiting the conclusions drawn. Moreover, the authors' definition of wellbeing as the absence of negative things rather than the presence of positive things is noteworthy and it is perhaps more prudent to consider the findings from a

resiliency framework since no difference in wellbeing was reported and instead may suggest resilient individuals as opposed to the mere absence of clinical symptoms.

In terms of emotional wellbeing, 83% of naval spouses say their children find it difficult when their serving father or mother has to go away for long periods of time, but it is the uncertainty, or worries regarding safety for the parent that extenuates the difficulties. A further 60% reported increased fear and anxiety levels, and behavioural problems at home (57%) and at school (36%) for children (The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Children's Fund, 2009). These findings highlight the challenges parental deployment poses on service children's emotional wellbeing.

A critical issue in supporting the needs of service children relates to both the identification of risk (i.e., pupil mobility, parental deployment) and protective factors. The concept of a military community is consistently reported in research to be a positive aspect of service life. For example, service children report a sense of family pride (The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Children's Fund, 2009) and a strong sense of belonging to their service community (Easterbrookes, Ginsburg & Lerner, 2013). Several studies show that service children may become more resilient, resourceful and independent. Schools have been identified as a protective factor for service children and have been described as a source of resilience (Atuel, Esqueda & Jacobson, 2011). This is based on the premise that positive relationships with teachers who are focused on providing a supportive and caring environment for service children can help mitigate known risk factors associated with this demographic (Astor et al., 2013).

Evidently, meeting the needs of service children requires a collaborative effort and effective communication between teachers and military community members. Transition is recognised to be pivotal to the success of service children's educational continuity: "providing structure and support is in place for forces children, and their parents, there is no explicit reason to suggest that high mobility has an adverse effect on their social and academic progress" (DfE, 2010 p. 11).

Service children in the UK are eligible to receive Service Pupil Premium (SPP). The premium was introduced by the Department for Education as part of the commitment for delivering the Armed Forces Covenant (DfE, 2010) and provides £310 per eligible pupil annually (The Armed Forces Covenant Report, 2020). SPP is to assist schools with the provision of pastoral support that service children may need in order to support their emotional wellbeing during challenging times. At present, no study has explored the impact of interventions implemented using the SPP, but examples of best practice are provided by the Army Families Federation (AFF) and include teddy bear mascots (such as 'Sergeant Camopatch'), social events for parents and children, and computer equipment for skype chat time.

Service children have a strong cultural identity to the military and much of the research base acknowledges this to be a factor that protects them against the challenges imposed by mobility and parental deployment. Overall, research that reports on outcomes for service children identifies some risk factors, but with appropriate intervention, namely communication and partnership working, service children are thought to be at no disadvantage to their civilian peers in terms of educational attainment and social, emotional wellbeing. There is a recognition in policy for the need to be sensitive and responsive to the unique needs of military families, but more work is needed to further understand what this policy means in practice, and where to get support. A notable gap in qualitative research exists, with a heavy reliance on survey data, most commonly representative of parent perspectives. Exploring the lived experiences of service children might perhaps be a more helpful and informative approach to learning more about how best to support service children. As stated by Kudler and Porter (2013), "military children do not exist in a vacuum; rather they are embedded in and deeply influenced by their families, schools, and the military itself" (p. 163). Accordingly, incorporating the views of service children in research will allow for a more inclusive understanding of the challenges and opportunities afforded to service children.

2.1.4 Rationale and aim

A central problem to understanding the experiences of service children in the UK is the paucity of research. Much analysis at present draws on the academic literature from the USA and, even then, much of the findings come from parent and teacher reports, some of which are retrospective. Service life must also be understood from the perspective of the child, and, in doing so, the experiences of service children can be appreciated and built into the future strategies and policies. Accordingly, this review specifically aims to answer the following research question: what do the voices of service children in the UK tell us about their experiences of service life and its impact on education and their social, emotional wellbeing?

2.2. Method

2.2.1 Systematic search

A systematic search of the literature was conducted using three databases: PsycINFO, Education Resources Information Centre (ERIC), and Web of Science. Initial scoping searches determined the relevancy of these databases. They provided access to abstracts and research

potentially relevant to the review question within the psychology, education and multi-disciplinary context. The decision to apply the limiter 'country of origin' was made to ensure experiences of service children in the UK were captured and remained relevant to the research aims in the context of UK military culture. Initial scoping searches determined limited published UK research and therefore results were not restricted by date or 'peer review' during the database search to ensure that relevant papers, such as theses and dissertations were also made available. Reference lists of relevant articles and review papers were also examined for eligible studies. The final search terms/key words generated by the author in 2021 can be found in appendix A.

Government websites were searched in order to provide access to government and policy statements, and white papers which were identified as specifically relevant to the defence sector in the UK. Further sources of grey literature were searched using Open Grey repository, The British Library, military organisations and google.

2.2.2 Inclusion and exclusion criteria

A defined set of inclusion and exclusion criteria was established before the literature search of databases was carried out to enable the researcher to accurately determine which papers would be subject for further analyses and subsequently included in the review. Studies were included if they: a) reported on children and young people of school age and those in higher or further education of at least one parent working in UK military services; b) were situated within the UK military context; c) presented quantitative, qualitative and mixed method analyses; d) had an outcome measure which reflected a personal or self-reported account of service children's individual experience; e) were published any year.

Table 1

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Study Item	Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Population	Children and young people of school age and those in higher or further education of at least one parent working in UK military services	Military service of the parents in other countries other than the UK
		Children and young people without a military connected parent
Phenomena of Interest	Papers that referenced experience of military lifestyle/community.	Papers that referenced systems not relating to the UK armed forces.

Country	Based in the UK	Based outside the UK military context
Type of Research	Primary research Academic journals, dissertations Peer reviewed, government papers	Secondary research e.g. Meta-syntheses, systematic reviews Editorials, opinion pieces, books
Study Design	Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods studies Exploration using self-report measures	Studies not using self-report measures
Outcomes	Outcomes that considered the experiences of service children, including qualitative research, questionnaires or survey measures	Outcomes related to academic, cognitive, health or other progress measures that did not reflect a personal or self-reported account of individual experience, for example IQ

2.2.3 Study selection

The initial search of databases resulted in 1,435 papers being recalled. These papers were exported into Endnote and 605 duplicates were removed resulting in 830 papers for review. 7 papers were identified from additional sources (See Figure 1 for PRISMA diagram depicting the flow of information through the different phases of this systematic review, Page et al., 2021). The screening process excluded 808 papers and then a further 16 were excluded by the inclusion/exclusion criteria.   3 papers were subsequently excluded after screening the full text. Most papers were excluded because they were conducted outside of the UK military context (see Appendix B). This resulted in the inclusion of 6 papers for review.
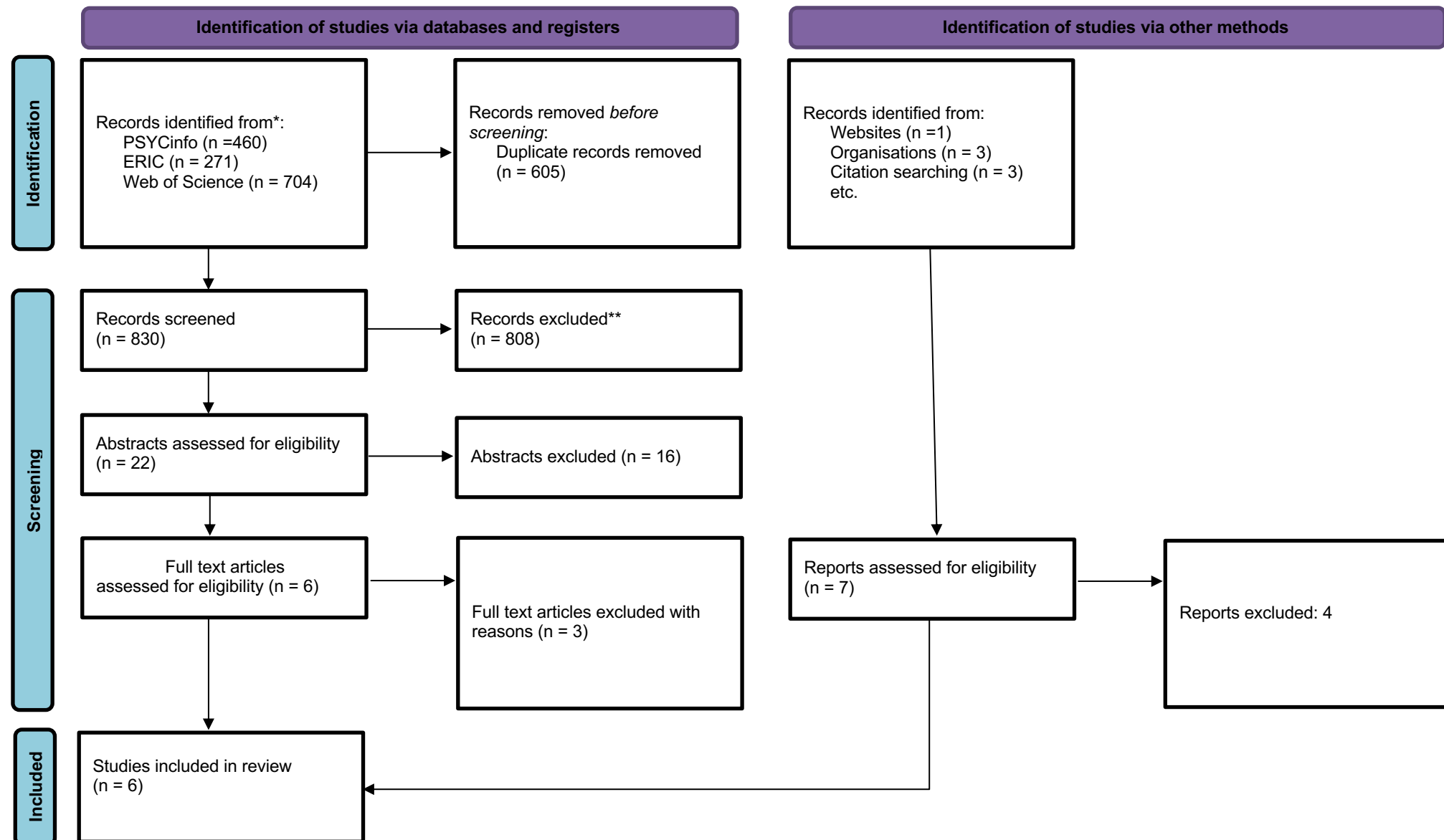
Figure 1 PRISMA Flow diagram illustrating the systematic search process

2.2.4 Overview of the quality of studies assessed

A quality assessment of the individual studies was carried out using the Mixed Method Appraisal tool (MMAT) Version 2018 (Hong et al. 2018). The MMAT was selected because it permits the appraisal of different methodological approaches (qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods studies). The MMAT encourages the use of descriptive information to appraise a study's quality (over and above a numerical score which may not be as informative) (Hong et al., 2019). Each study was therefore judged on the following ratings: (see appendix C for the full quality assessment table):

    A. Addressed
    B. Partially addressed
    C. Not adequately addressed
    D. Not stated

Generally, five of the six studies had clearly defined research aims with clear information given regarding the methods that were used to analyse the data. Where qualitative methodology was used, the perspective(s) of the researcher was transparently stated in two of the studies, and one would have benefited from a more systematic account of the process and supporting quotes. Across all studies, factors that lowered judgements of quality included small sample sizes, unreported information, and the lack of peer review. Specifically, Eodanable and Lauchlan (2012) was limited in design and analysis: there were too few participants and no control group to adequately derive findings and accurately assess the impact of the intervention beyond the quantitative descriptors. Positive descriptors were noted in the self-report measures, but the risk of participants under or over reporting must also be considered. Pre- and post-test measures were collected but the limited sample size likely contributed to the non-significant result.

A data extraction table can be found in appendix B and includes the list of author(s), year, participant information, method and findings. All papers are numbered and will be referred to by the corresponding number throughout the analysis (for ease of reference).

2.3 Results

2.3.1 Study characteristics

The six studies identified were carried out between 2007 and 2018. The voices and views of 505 service children with at least one parent working in UK military services were included within this review, with a further 151 in the comparative groups (civilian peers). The age of participants ranged from between 8 years to undergraduate (upper age not specified). The participants spoke of their experiences with service life across the tri-services: Army, Navy and RAF, but children from the RAF were proportionally fewer and were explicitly identified in one study only (6). Reference was given to age and gender of participants in all studies included, but participants' racial/ethnic identities were notably absent (or not explicitly stated). Noret et al. (2015) included additional information on whether participants had a special educational need or disability, and also whether they received school meals. Of these, a higher percentage of army children in both the year 6 (23.8%) and the year 10 and 11 samples (9.8%) reported having a special education need of disability compared to 4.8% (year 6) and 8.9% (year 10/11) of non-army peers. Only Eodanable and Lauchlan (2012) reported on the mean number of moves the participants had made: 2.92 for the Primary 5 children (Scotland educational system) (range of 0-8 moves) and 3.44 for the Primary 6 children (range of 0-11 moves). The University of Winchester (2016) made comment on service children with parents occupying different ranks; their sample had proportionally more children of officers (18%).

As part of the inclusion criteria, only studies that took place in the UK were included. The majority of the research took place in England, and two studies were conducted in Scotland (1,3). Reference was made to the army bases in Wales, but it was not clear whether the schools surrounding these bases were actively involved or simply contacted (5).

Research predominantly included the views of service children from forces families attending Local Authority maintained schools, with the inclusion of some independent boarding schools (1, 6). Two studies provided a detailed account of school population and associated data (e.g., attainment data, information on the surrounding community) (3, 5), others simply acknowledged whether there was a pupil population of service children. Service children were from transitional and non-transitional year groups. The study by the University of Winchester (2016) carried out research into the educational progression of service children and was the only one to include a sample of post 16 and undergraduates.

The source of funding was stated in two of the six studies (1,6) and Clifton (2007) acknowledged the integral aspects of her service life (as a child, and through marriage to an army officer) which could suggest a risk of bias.

2.3.2 Study design and methods

Two of the six studies collected data on the voice of service children by employing both qualitative and quantitative measures. One study measured the impact of an emotional literacy intervention (Seasons for Growth) relevant to children of armed forces families. This was an eight-week intervention and required professionals to be trained in that program which was designed to improve service children's coping skills. A range of quantitative measures were used to measure intervention outcomes including The Emotional Literacy Checklists (Faupel, 2003) (pre- and post-measures) and pupil survey. Quantitative data was supplemented by a qualitative analysis of focus groups and observations, but no control group was incorporated (3). The University of Winchester (2016) included both secondary data (quantitative and qualitative) from a range of sources (such as the MOD, Forces in Mind Trust, the Army Families Federation) and primary, empirical data drawn from three groups of participants (primary, secondary and undergraduate). Data was also derived from semi-structured interviews. Secondary data relating to school attainment and progression was also used to inform data analysis in the Noret et al. (2015) study.

Two of the studies used a longitudinal design, both of which were conducted in the school environment, but varied in length and complexity (1,2). Clifton (2007) used an ethnographic approach to better understand the educational experiences of army children at secondary level as a particular group (or culture) by comparing them to civilian peers at a second research site (in another surrounding school). Participant data (and group differences) were elicited through observations, field notes, and interviews (over the course of a year). Bowes (2018) aimed to explore the lived experiences of service children from a post-qualitative perspective and incorporated the exploratory methods of interview, video diaries, drawing and vignettes. One study incorporated a comparison group of non-military peers and participants were matched on school attended, family structure, gender and age (5).

All but one study recruited participants via the school. Jain, Stevelink & Fear (2016) contacted parents of an already existing cohort of fathers serving in the military to determine children's participation in their research. Data was collected using a self-report online questionnaire with open questions that allowed for qualitative responses.

2.3.3 Analysis

Where self-report measures were included, participant responses were analysed using content analysis (inductive). In the majority of studies, themes were identified to interpret and understand the data collected, although the specific process varied, drawing on the following approaches: thematic analysis (2,6) and assemblage (1). In the University of Winchester study (2016), it was not clear how the qualitative data was analysed beyond their statement of emerging themes; this would have benefited from a more systematic account of the process. One study coded their data using NVIvo, recognising its pragmatic relevance (2). The authors' choice of analysis, synthesis method and philosophical stance was clearly articulated in two of the studies (1,2).

2.3.4 Findings

2.3.4.1 Service lifestyle and parental deployment: what do service children say?

Parental deployment was described variously as: the experience of 'weekending,' where the serving parent lives away from home during the week; training exercise; and/or the deployment on operational and combat missions (i.e., tour of duty). All of the papers reported the emotional effects of parental absence on participants' general wellbeing as being feeling sad (1), worried (6) and lonely (2, 5), with implications for participants' engagement and motivation in school (1, 2, 6). These included increased incidence of emotional and behavioural problems (2, 6) and raised levels of anxiety (3). These included comments like: "I worry that he's going to get shot. One of his friends got shot in the neck" (Clifton, 2007, p. 113) and "last year she did go to a training course though and I do get the nerves then" (Bowes, 2018, p 127). The University of Winchester study (2016) concluded a parent's absence on deployment as the greatest disadvantage, and lack of contact was the most commonly reported negative aspect of having a father in the UK armed forces for participants (68%) (4). Three of the six studies found that supportive school and home environments lessened the adverse effects of deployment on service children (1,2,6).

2.3.4.2 Service lifestyle and impact of mobility: what do service children say?

The impact of mobility on children's education was apparent in five of the six studies (1,2,3,5,6). Overall, findings from these studies suggest that service children reported difficulties adjusting to a new school environment and curriculum. Key themes included 'curriculum gaps', 'catching up', 'differences in school teaching and learning approaches', 'SEN provision' and 'syllabus

changes' (6). Lowered levels of attainment were also reported (2,5). This was most applicable in the subjects of maths, science and history (5). Perceptions of school support varied but a number of factors relating to teacher practices and the classroom environment were noted (1,2,3,5,6). In Noret et al.'s (2015) study, a lower proportion of year 6 service children reported feeling like they 'get enough help with learning' in comparison to non-army pupils, but year 10 and 11 service children felt 'they were reaching their potential' (5).

Effective school-based support included relationships with teachers, and information sharing. Moving schools and finding the motivation to start anew in each place was further reported but mobility had no impact on participants' intent to go to university (6). Positive themes were also identified, however, and included opportunities to visit new and interesting places, developed cultural understanding and the opportunity to make friends with a larger number of children across multiple schools (4,6). There was also a degree of acceptance reported by service children: "it's always been part of my life and I am used to it" (Jain, Stevelink, & Fear, 2016, p 3).

The biggest challenge for service children moving school was identified in the context of social relationships. Bowes (2018) revealed that service children had concerns about establishing new friendships, and that these concerns preceded any academic challenges raised. The author concluded that relationships played an important role in the quality of participants' experiences in school. Further, Clifton (2007) made comment on mobility leading service children to withdraw from their teachers and peers as such relationships were not worth investing in for some participants, especially for those who had experienced a number of transitions. Participants commented on having to say goodbye to old friends (6) and leaving them behind (4) as a negative aspect of mobility, and a higher proportion of service children reported 'sometimes and often' to feeling lonely in school (5).

One paper investigated the impact of an emotional health curriculum (focused on 'feelings' and 'moving on') on the emotional literacy of participants who had recently experienced change and loss. Pre- and post- measures did not indicate a significant effect, but the authors' analysis of participants' views (using participant evaluations) indicated that the programme was well received with 75% of participants rating it positively, 11% rating it negatively and 14% indicating they did not know when asked about the value of the intervention. The study had a small sample size (n = 48) which may have contributed to the non-significant result.

2.3.4.3 The identity of service children

Three of the papers that explored the views of service children spoke explicitly about participants' identity as a service child and the impact this had on participant experiences and accounts (1,2,6). Bowes (2018) and Clifton (2007) outlined themes that identified how service children felt different from civilian peers and indicated ways in which this was a disadvantage (6), but also themes of similarity and being 'normal'. Participant accounts of identity varied as they positioned the significance of their experiences differently and this seemed to depend on the schools' ethos and the number of service children attending them (1,2,6). For some this could result in service children choosing to keep their status quiet (6). Clifton (2007) made comment on a 'clash of cultures between the army and the school' and the impact this had on participants' school experiences (e.g., the school did not appear to recognise participants' military backgrounds or incorporate aspects of military culture within the school environment). Interestingly, the more schools they had attended, the less likely participants were to join the military. This data was drawn from three groups of service children from primary schools, those at secondary school and undergraduates from military families (6).

Research by the University of Winchester (2016) reported a number of positive character traits. Participants felt that being a service child developed courage, bravery, confidence and resilience. Independence skills were further noted by the secondary school pupils.

2.3.4.4 School support

In Eodanable and Lauchlan's (2011) study, participants self-rated improved coping skills following the intervention and enjoyed taking part in the intervention with peers. Four of the six studies referenced factors relating to school support for service children and included pastoral support (including opportunities to talk) and participating in groups (such as HMS heroes) (1,2,5,6). Service children felt that support groups could be better if they could incorporate aspects of military culture. This included comments such as: "I would love to know what it's like on a submarine" (Bowes, 2018, p. 186). The findings from Bowes (2018) reflected service children's views about the type of school-based support they felt would be important to them (or would like), as opposed to school based support that was embedded into the school curricula (3). These further included relationships with teachers and opportunities to share and connect with other service children. The importance of school staff understanding and responding to the needs of service children was also identified (1). However, school-based provision tended to vary, with a lack of consistency across schools reported (1,6). From the participant accounts, there was little evidence to suggest a

coordinated programme of support for service children; one participant reported, "well I think it was when my brother was in P6 or P5, he started crying because my dad was away and the teacher didn't do anything about it, like she didn't even help him or anything" (Bowes, pg. 188) and there was a sense from service children that they expected little from schools and "just needed to get on with it" (6). The study authors in five of the six studies suggested that schools had the potential to support service children but that more needed to be done (1,2,3,5,6).

2.4 Discussion

The aim of this review was to synthesise research relevant to the voice of service children, providing insight into service children's views and experiences of service life; parental deployment and mobility were key facets to explore, to develop our insights into the highs and lows of service life for children. It is surprising the lack of research that exists, with only six studies that met the inclusion criteria despite rigorous searching and broad inclusion criteria. The review sought to explore the voices of service children in the UK and it was this stipulation that limited the number of studies found.

2.4.1 What can be learned from the highs and lows of service life for children and young people?

Through this review, a number of common themes emerged relating to the highs and lows of service life, recognising both the challenges and positive outcomes being a service child can bring. These themes were referenced in relation to parental deployment and mobility, and key findings pertaining to service children's educational experiences relate, most profoundly, to the importance of social relations as both a risk and protective factor for these individuals. The main challenge encountered by service children with parental deployment was the lack of connection with their deployed parent (and the associated feelings). For relocation, the biggest stress (or worry) for service children was making new friends and leaving others behind. For some, it appeared better not to invest emotionally with peers or teachers if a move was perceived likely, helping to 'neutralise' the process of moving school (Clifton, 2007). The concept of a military community is consistently reported in research to be a positive aspect of service life and a strong sense of belonging to their service community was reported and alluded to in all studies included in this review. Service children reported a strong sense of pride and feeling special as a service child (5,6). The studies reviewed

further suggested that service children 'kept together' in school with a shared understanding (2,6), again supporting this notion of collective experience.

Given these findings, relationships appear to be at the heart of service children's resilience and ability to cope with the challenges of military life. The intention of this review is not to disregard the educational challenges service children encounter when moving schools, but to acknowledge that the voice of service children placed greater emphasis on the social side of their experiences, than those of academic. Indeed, service children are challenged to navigate a new school environment and curriculum discontinuity, but how service children 'fit in' to a new school environment, establish friendships, as well as maintain connection with their deployed parent are key areas of concern for these individuals. Accordingly, this is what makes service children distinct as parental deployment and mobility brings a higher risk of relational challenges for these children and the negative impact this can have on their social and emotional wellbeing.

The research conducted by the University of Winchester (2016) made comment on the pastoral support for service children attending boarding schools and the inclusive environment this produced as "the quiet, unobtrusive watch kept" (p. 28). Comparisons were made with schools near military bases and/or with a high population of service children where the social and emotional needs of service children were understood. Conversely, service children tended to keep their 'status' quiet in schools where military culture was not as present, and Clifton (2007) made note of the clash of cultures between the army life and school. This raises questions about service children's sense of acceptance in school and the degree to which the number of service children in the school shapes their identity. There is wider evidence in the literature to suggest that positive relationships with teachers who are focused on providing a supportive and caring environment for service children can help mitigate known risk factors associated with this demographic (Astor et al. 2013). Findings in this review highlighted the value service children place on opportunities to connect, express, and be understood (i.e., interacting with others) but little is known about how the relational needs of service children are supported in school beyond their statement of value in this review.

When individuals worry about developing and/or maintaining relationships and social networks in the school setting, it is important to consider the impact of these relational stressors on their sense of school belonging and to what extent their service life and experiences place service children at risk of not belonging in school. Research has identified transition to a new school environment to be a time where sense of belonging maybe at risk (Gillen-O'Neel & Fuligni, 2013) and social concerns have been identified as a primary concern in transition studies (Akos & Galassi, 2004). Notably this includes disrupted friendships, meeting new peers, changes in classroom

structure, and degree of student participation in the classroom (Hardy, Bukowski, & Sippola, 2002). When this is considered in the context of military life and associated school transitions, service children will likely face specific challenges to their experiences of belonging in school. Baumeister and Leary (1995) suggested that "people need to perceive there is an interpersonal bond or relationship marked by stability, affective concern and continuation into the foreseeable future" (p. 500). However, multiple school transitions may undermine this key principle of belonging for service children who are not always granted time to invest in relationships. Research has found that in the absence of supportive peer relationships, children are at a greater risk for experiencing emotional distress, leading to decreased levels of motivation and engagement in the classroom (Kingery, Erdley & Marshall, 2011). Additional research is needed to clarify whether the social concerns identified by participants in this review translate into a reduced sense of belonging for service children.

2.4.2 What can be learned about school-based support for service children?

A number of the reviewed studies revealed participant accounts of self-reliance and this was associated with a perceived lack of support from schools. For some participants that "was just how it was" and they "would never tell teachers if they had a problem at home or at school" (Clifton, 2007, p. 107). The findings reflect the norms of military life as participants spoke about school transition and deployment as general expectations that have necessitated resilience, and indeed a number of resilient attributes were noted in this review. However, by accepting service children as being resilient there is the risk of assuming that service children are tougher than they actually are with one participant saying, "everyone counts you as a person who hasn't got much problems and are just normal like everyone else when actually it's a bit hard with moving and parents in the military, with them getting posted further away and in danger" (University of Winchester, 2016, p. 27). It is important to recognise that the feelings of sadness and worry reported by participants in this review will not be taken away by 'putting on a brave face', and without any formalised support in school, service children are at risk of negative socioemotional outcomes. There is evidence in the wider literature to suggest that adolescents who have experienced multiple school transitions report fewer affectional ties and less guidance (people to rely on) (Lucier-Greer et al., 2016). These findings illustrate the need to provide school-based support that is culturally sensitive to the needs of service children and made more explicitly available so that service children feel able to connect (including opportunities to talk) when needed. Taking service children's views into consideration and participating in military specific activities were regarded positively by participants and appeared particularly salient to service children who wanted to learn more in school about the military and their parent's job.

2.5 Strengths and limitations of this review

This is the first review of this type to be carried out due to the inclusion of UK research only. The decision to include grey literature enabled access to diverse evidence sources and reduced the risk of publication bias (Boland, Cherry & Dickson, 2017). This review helped to illuminate the views and perspectives of service children in the context of education, and an overall interpretation of the findings developed understanding of their unique needs in recognising the importance of relationships and the school environment.

However, this review is to a large extent limited by the lack of available research and methodological quality. Only six studies were included. 4 research papers were included (3,4,5,6) but only one of which was peer reviewed (3), two were unpublished dissertations for doctoral research that lacked transparency and replicability (1,2). Very little data was collected regarding deployment features (e.g., length of deployment) or rank of the serving parent. It is therefore unclear how these nuance differences may impact on service children's experiences. While it is not possible to match for all participant characteristics, additional factors such as socioeconomic status or rank were not disaggregated. Given that parents' rank may have influenced such aspects as service children's aspiration (for example, their intent to attend university) and, accordingly, of the nature of their school engagement, this distinction may have helped contextualise the findings further across all the studies in this review.

More studies that explore how differences between the military services may impact children and their schooling need may also be beneficial for future research with due regard to children's attainment and wellbeing outcomes. The voices of children from RAF families were underrepresented in the literature reviewed. Only one of the papers referenced seeking the views of children across all three of the military services (6), but recognition was given to the disproportionate representation, with the views of army and navy children most represented across all six studies. Moreover, the authors did not report on the differential outcomes of service children from different military branches, despite recognising that all three services were part of the sample (6). This is an important consideration when the form of family separation is likely to vary across the tri-services, as well as geographic transience ((FamCAS, 2019). More attention needs to be given to the demographics of service children instead of treating them as a single, homogenous group.

No reference was given to participants' ethnicity in any of the six studies. The absence of this demographic data makes it difficult to discern the cultural variance of service children's views represented. Given that the Brigade of Gurkhas is an integral and valued part of the British Army, for

example, it would be important to incorporate the views and voice of these service children in future research, particularly for the purpose of challenging stereotypes. All studies were conducted in the UK, and it can be argued that the paucity of research highlights the missing voice of service children who are often not consulted about their views and experiences of military life.

2.6 Conclusion and implications for professionals

Building and maintaining positive relationships appear fundamental to service children's experiences and their emotional wellbeing, but how adults can facilitate this, whilst ensuring an inclusive school environment, is not yet understood fully. In order to achieve this, there is a need to increase awareness of service children's experiences and develop greater understanding and support for schools on how to meet their relational needs. This in turn could have an impact on academic engagement and performance. It is not possible to generate these conclusions with a degree of confidence due to the methodological limitations inherent in the above studies and thus a tentative conclusion is drawn. Nonetheless, some practical solutions/suggestions can be drawn from the findings in this review. Guidance should be provided to schools about the importance of supportive school climates for service children and the encompassing role of caring and supportive relationships to fostering positive school experiences. This means increased emphasis on whole school factors such as principal leadership, as well as teacher and peer awareness, and support that is culturally relevant to the needs of service children (i.e., teachers have some understanding of what it is like to be a child in a forces family) (Astor et al. 2013). This could include access to supportive others, staff training specific to military culture as well as the skills necessary to develop student/teacher relations. More embedded approaches could be evident in policy, curriculum practice, and interventions that target coping skills, as examples (Eodanable & Lauchlan, 2011). There should be a continuation of education provision during transition between schools and schools should work with LAs and the military to facilitate this process more effectively.

Chapter 3 Exploring school belonging in children of service personnel

3.1 Introduction

Belonging has been identified as a fundamental human need. For example, Baumeister & Leary (1995) suggest it to be "almost as compelling a need as food and that human culture is significantly conditioned by the pressure to provide belongingness" (Baumeister & Leary, 1995 p. 498). This motivational need is well grounded in psychological theory (Bowlby, 1969; Bronfenbrenner, 1994; Maslow, 1943; Ryan & Deci, 2000), and subsequent research continues to find a strong impact of belonging on both emotional wellbeing and academic development (Bond et al., 2007; Kia-Keating & Ellis, 2007).

3.1.1 School belonging

An individual's sense of belonging in school is often cited as a protective factor against absenteeism and decreased risk-taking behaviour (Chapman, Buckley, Sheehan, Shochet & Romaniuk, 2011; Cohen, McCabe, Michelli, & Pikeral, 2009). Research has further demonstrated strong effects on academic outcomes, including increased motivation and persistence (Gillen-O'Neel & Fuligni, 2013; Goodenow, 1993; Sanchez, Cohen & Esparza, 2005;). Benefits associated with cooperative learning (Ghaith, 2003), increased self-esteem and positive mood (Began & Turner-Cobb, 2015) have also been reported. Specifically, O'Rourke and Cooper (2010) found friendship, belonging and optimism to be strong indicators of children's happiness and wellbeing. There is growing interest in school belonging as a modifiable construct that can be improved through interventions that target associated environmental contributors (Anderson, Hamilton & Hattie, 2003; Whitlock, 2006).

School belonging can be conceptualised within the literature as 'school connectedness' (Loukas, Suzuki & Horton, 2006), 'school bonding' (Maddox & Prinz, 2003), and 'school membership' (Goodenow, 1993) (to name a few) (Allen, Kern, Vella-Brodrick, Hattie, & Waters, 2018). While there is variation in terminology, a number of common factors contributing to school belonging can be identified in the research, namely: supportive and caring pupil-teacher relationships, positive peer relationships, fair and effective discipline (including student autonomy), student safety, emotional stability (including school enjoyment) and participation in extra-curricular activities (Allen et al., 2018; Libbey, 2004; O'Brien & Bowles, 2013; Whitlock, 2006). In a recent meta-analysis by Allen &

colleagues (2018), teacher support and positive personal characteristics, such as motivation and self-regulation, were identified as most influential to children's sense of school belonging.

For the purpose of clarity, the term 'school belonging' is preferred in this study and is defined as "the extent to which they [students] feel personally accepted, respected, included and supported by others – especially teachers and other adults in the school social environment" (Goodenow & Grady, 1993, p. 60-61).

3.1.2 Raising awareness: the importance of understanding military culture

Growing up in a military family creates unique challenges (Ofsted, 2011), including separation from parents (and subsequent reorganisations of family life), frequent moves and high levels of uncertainty (Royal Navy and Royal Marines Children's Fund, 2009). Accordingly, military lifestyle often presents challenges not of the family's choosing and the turbulent lifestyle makes it a distinct culture not experienced in the civilian world; the military have their own norms, values, class structure and their own language (army.mod, n.d.). Key facets of military culture include the role of honour and sacrifice, camaraderie and selfless commitment. The combination of these family pressures within the military way of life can influence children's socioemotional wellbeing and have a major impact on a child's educational experience (De Pedro, Astor, Gilreath, Benbenishty & Berkowitz, 2015).

Goodenow (1993) describes belonging as a psychological sense of membership that is created primarily via interactions. In school this can mean interactions with pupils, and pupils with their teachers. The challenges imposed by military life, however, may threaten service children's experiences of feeling like they belong in school, be this having to adjust to a new environment, differences in syllabus content, or negotiating new relationships with peers, adults, and school as a whole; children must learn to cope with these challenges as they try to 'fit in' to their new school system (Risberg, Curtis & Shivers, 2017). Multiple transitions could disrupt school connections (Pribesh & Downey, 1999), resulting in reduced school engagement and thus sense of school belonging for these children.

In the UK, there is a large population of service children attending LA schools and this special demographic could be better understood if the unique needs of service children (including their parent's roles and responsibilities) were appreciated. In conversations in a report published by the Children's Commissioner, Kin and Country: Growing up as an Armed Forces Child (2018), children reported that being part of an armed forces family made service children different to other children:

"civilian children, they just don't get it" (p. 3). There is a perception that civilian peers (and teachers) do not understand military life, and this lack of awareness can challenge service children's sense of belonging in school and may contribute to some of the social challenges (with peers) reported by service children (De Pedro, Esqueda, Cederbaum & Astor, 2014).

Social identity theory (Tajfel, 1974) highlights that people can be quick to divide themselves into their own 'categorised' groups that they can relate to: individuals have a tendency to be with people they are like, with shared understanding and purpose. However, enhancing difference could marginalise service children (as the outgroup) from that of the school community (ingroup). Perceptions towards military culture can be negatively stereotyped, leading to the generalisation of problem behaviours across service children. 'Military brat' is a term used by service children who attribute the cause of their negative behaviours to the stresses and constraining influence of military life (Queair, 2018). This ignores the extent to which the school climate 'fits' the cultural background and life experiences of service children who may have lower levels of school belonging (De Pedro, Astor, Gilreath, Benbenishty & Esqueda, 2014). Research has found that service children do not want to be treated any differently from their non-service peers. Instead, they want someone they trust in school who understands their unique contexts and is sensitive to their circumstances (Bowes, 2018; Clifton, 2007). This reflects the importance of caring relationships and can require a commitment from educators to understanding the norms and stresses of military life (Keegan, Hyle & Sanders, 2004). Evidently, there is a need to understand and appreciate the complexity of military life to foster the wellbeing and development of service children in schools.

3.1.3 School experiences: are service children at risk of *not belonging?*

There is a paucity of research regarding service children and very little is known about their sense of belonging in school; it remains largely unaddressed in UK educational research despite its relevance to wellbeing in school. Parallels can be drawn from findings in educational literature that explores links between high mobility, transition and psychological outcomes in other 'mobile' children, such as refugees and asylum seekers, and children from Gypsy/traveller communities. For example, Kia-Keating & Ellis (2007) explored sense of school belonging in Somali adolescents (n = 76) after resettlement in the United States and found that a greater sense of belonging was associated with participants' wellbeing and positive adjustment to school, including lower levels of depression and higher self-efficacy. Feelings of belonging were attributed to social relationships (attachment), commitment and feeling valued. These findings begin to provide insights into the primary factors educators need to consider when welcoming children into a school community, and

perhaps suggest an important area for future investigation with other 'transient' groups who may be at risk of lower levels of school belonging, such as service children. This is consistent with studies that have reported a link between school transitions and the wellbeing of service children (Eodanable & Lauchlan, 2011; Ruff & Keim, 2014).

Lucier-Greer et al. (2016) investigated the effects of context specific stressors (and resources) known to impact the wellbeing of service children and their families in the military using a within-group design. Engagement in military specific activities was found to mitigate some of the stressors associated with transition (such as isolation) because they offered the opportunity to develop relationships on common ground, "where military life is normalised" (p. 9). These findings complement the work of Ruff & Keim (2014), who identified that military knowledge (or lack of) amongst school staff was a factor influential in developing (or lowering) students' wellbeing in school. As such, experiences of belonging and connection to the armed forces community appear central to a child's ability to cope with the many stressors of military life (Easterbrooks, Ginsburg & Lerner, 2011). This is true of the belonging hypothesis: "frequent positive interaction with others must occur in a context of temporally stable and enduring framework of affective concern for each other's welfare" (Baumeister & Leary, p. 497). Systemic factors (Brofenbrenner, 1994) could therefore lead to a greater sense of belonging within the military community and this affiliation might be enough to maintain the wellbeing of service children and enhance coping ability during times of stress. Such inferences, however, do not tell us about service children's perceptions of the school environment and what implications this has for their sense of school belonging.

In an attempt to address the knowledge gap, De Pedro et al. (2014) compared school climate perceptions among military students with those of non-military students in the same schools. Data was collected from eight military connected school districts serving elementary, middle and high school students in the USA. A survey of responses found that military students reported a lowered (and more negative) perception of school climate. They reported fewer supportive relationships and less frequent participation in meaningful activities (such as clubs and other extra-curricular activities). Evidently, there is an increasing appreciation for school belonging on the social and emotional impact of service children specifically, but this study has key limitations. For example, it employed a cross sectional design and therefore it is not possible to infer a causal relationship. Furthermore, when the (limited) UK research is considered, service children do not seem to identify as being fundamentally different from their civilian peers (Bowes, 2018; Clifton 2007), limiting the relevance to UK children of studies such as that of De Pedro et al..

3.1.4 The current study

Generally, service children's sense of school belonging is not understood. Very little is known about how educational professionals welcome military children into the school community and what effective practice looks like in this area. Arguably, service children are the missing voices in military connected research, and more research is needed to explore their school climate perceptions, most notably what adds to and what hinders their sense of school belonging. There is a need to explore their perceptions to understand better the impact school experiences have on their social and emotional wellbeing in light of their unique experiences. There is evidence to support the value of school belonging and strong connections with teachers and peers for academic and socioemotional outcomes, and it remains to question whether this holds true for service children also. In doing so, the experiences of service children can be appreciated and built into future strategies and policies of schools to help them to understand and meet the relational needs of service children.

3.1.5 Research questions

The aim of the study was to explore service children's perceptions of school belonging, and the research was designed to address the following questions:

1. How do service children describe their sense of belonging in school?
2. Do service children's perceptions of belonging differ between schools with a large number of service children and schools with a small number of service children?
3. How are service children who transition to a new school welcomed into the school's own culture?
4. What adds to, and what hinders service children's sense of belonging and how does this impact upon their social and emotional wellbeing?

3.2 Method

3.2.1 Research design

This study employed a qualitative, exploratory design with an IPA focus (Smith & Osborn, 2007). This was particularly relevant for addressing the research questions because it offered an in-depth approach to data analysis for understanding the lived experiences of service children in the UK

(their phenomenon). With regards to belonging, the researcher was not primarily concerned with the nature of belonging per se, but with the individual person, and their experiences and understanding of belonging. Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) looks for themes across all participants from the start of the coding process, whereas IPA requires them to be identified within participants first, before going on to an across participant analysis. Therefore, IPA was better suited to the research questions in this study.

3.2.2 Semi-structured interviews

In line with the exploratory nature of this study, semi-structured interviews were chosen as the primary means of data collection suitable for IPA analysis (Smith & Osborn, 2007). The interview schedule employed acted only as a guide to allow other questions to emerge and facilitate depth where appropriate. The development of the interview was guided by the literature on belonging and questions were designed to explore participants' perceptions of school belonging and their associated experiences of being a service child. The interview schedule further aimed to establish school-based support for service children and also encouraged participants to share their opinions on what they feel is important for service children in school. The full interview schedule can be found in Appendix E

Participants were informed that the researcher had herself been part of a military family during the recruitment stage. By doing this, the interview was identified as a human encounter where there was a shared understanding between interviewer and interviewee (Qu & Dumay, 2011). This knowledge was shared with the aim of establishing rapport and trust during the interview process and facilitated an empathetic dialogue.

In an IPA context, the researcher applies a 'bottom-up,' inductive approach to coding. School belonging was reflected upon from the perspective of the participants' engagement with it (i.e., codes were generated from the data), rather than verifying pre-existing theory or literature. This allowed for unexpected topics and discussion to emerge during data collection and analysis (Smith, 2004). It could be argued that a truly inductive approach is not possible given the researcher's reading and own identity as being part of a military family. A written personal reflection was completed after every interview to help mitigate potential bias introduced by the researcher in conversation. This helped the researcher to approach analysis from the interviewee's perspective and adjust their assumptions accordingly (Larkin, Watts, & Clifton, 2006).

3.2.3 Recruitment

An email was sent to representatives from various schools who are part of the cluster group 'Pompey's Military Kids'. Pompey's Military Kids is an organisation dedicated to improving the provision in schools for service children. In response, two schools indicated interest and facilitated recruitment. Consent forms were sent to the parents of all service children on roll. This led to the recruitment of three participants. Due to difficulties in recruiting (as a consequence of COVID19/school closures), recruitment channels were further expanded through social media, military charities and organisations following ethical approval. The charity Aggies, for example, supports serving members of the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, Royal Fleet Auxiliary and their families. They provide pastoral support and facilitate a number of projects to help families stay connected (Aggies, n.d.). This led to the recruitment of three more participants. As such, an emergent sampling method was employed (Patton, 2002). All interviews were conducted via video link due to ongoing coronavirus issues.

3.2.4 Use of Microsoft Teams

All semi-structured interviews in this research study took place via video link using Microsoft Teams which was approved for use by the University of Southampton. Participants were provided with a 'user guide' to facilitate the process of installation with information on how to join the platform for the interview (see Appendix E). All interviews were recorded and transcribed as soon as possible and then securely deleted/destroyed.

3.2.5 Participants

Six participants were interviewed (males = 4, females = 2) from four primary schools in the South of England between the ages of 6 and 10 years. All participants had at least one parent serving in the armed forces (navy = 4, army = 2). Recruitment was supported by word of mouth through colleagues in the Aggies organisation and contacts from other educational psychology professionals. Participants' identities were concealed using pseudonyms (generated by the researcher) in the interview report as a means of respecting their confidentiality. The number of service children on roll at the schools concerned was not objectively gathered but assessed via children's perceptions.

3.2.6 Procedure

Ethical approval from the University Research Ethics Committee was granted on date (Ethics Approval Reference, see Appendix H). A detailed information sheet outlining the nature and purpose of the study was distributed to both the participant (see Appendix J) and the participant's parent/carer via email (see Appendix I). In adherence to ethical guidelines, participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time without prejudice and that individuals' data would be kept confidential. An opt-in parental consent form was signed by parents/carers (see Appendix K) and sent to the researcher via standard email. In addition, participating children's written consent was obtained and again sent to the researcher via standard email prior to the interview (see Appendix K). Participant assent was obtained at the start of the interview both for taking part in the interview, as well as a separate assent for the interview to be recorded.

All semi-structured interviews in this research study took place via video link using Microsoft Teams and this warranted some additional ethical considerations. Where interviews took place with the child at home, the researcher: 1) ensured that an adult with parental responsibility was in the household, 2) connected with this adult, prior to connecting with the child 3), checked that the parent(s) consented to remote interview, 4) obtained participant assent at the start of the interview, 5) ensured contact took place in shared spaces such as the living room. Only one interview took place with the child being located at school and in this instance, the researcher checked with a member of the school staff prior to talking to the child and ensured they remained present and available. All semi-structured interviews took place at a time that was convenient for the participant. All semi-structured interviews were recorded and ranged from 20 to 60 minutes.

The interview began with an icebreaker/getting to know you task to help participants feel relaxed and comfortable. This was then followed by a series of questions and prompts as outlined in the interview schedule. This was used flexibly with each participant to allow for further exploration of interesting areas that the participants discussed. The researcher checked with the participant periodically to ensure they were OK and wanted to continue. Participants were informed that if for any reason they did not want to answer a question if they felt uncomfortable about doing so or wanted to withdraw from the interview they could. At the end of the interview, participants were invited to ask the researcher any questions they had regarding the research. All semi-structured interviews were transcribed verbatim by the researcher and during this process all identifiable information was removed (including the participant's name).

3.2.7 IPA

The data was analysed using the six-stage approach to Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis as described by Smith, Flowers & Larkin (2009), which takes an iterative and inductive form (Smith, 2007). The researcher completed an analytic diary reflecting on their own preconceptions and processes prior to coding the data. This was to facilitate 'open' coding and 'bracketing' the self in order to allow an idiographic focus during analysis (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). It is, nonetheless, unattainable to eliminate all preconceptions but the 'inevitable partial' nature of the interpretative process (Larkin, Watts, & Clifton, 2006) is highlighted throughout the paper and carefully reflected upon. The researcher transcribed all interviews to ensure immersion in the data. Each interview recording was listened to twice and the researcher engaged in reading and re-reading with the aim of exploring fully the participant's perspective. Themes were generated per participant in the first instance (and organised in tables identifying themes and superordinate themes per participant). Early coding began using a line-by-line analysis which considered the language use and meaning of single sentences in isolation and then relating it back to the whole text/transcript (using the hermeneutic circle process) (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). Preliminary themes were identified in a more interpretative consideration of the text (patterns of meaning), and then looking for connections between emergent themes and superordinate concepts using a process of abstraction and subsumption. An in-depth analysis of single cases was completed before moving on to the next case for subsequent analysis. Patterns were identified across the whole data set (i.e., across participants) once each transcript had been engaged with separately. These patterns were then combined to construct a final table of sub-ordinate themes.

3.2.8 Participant information

Basic biographical information was collected from participants to inform the qualitative analysis and help contextualise the findings. This information included the age and gender of the participants, the military service to which they belonged, and participants' experiences of deployment and transition.

Jacob and Dougie were brothers (but were spoken to separately). Jacob was aged 10 years and Dougie aged 8 years. Their father was serving in the Royal Navy and currently away from home on operational deployment and was understood to be returning home very soon. They spoke of attending a school with a high number of service children and they lived in a military community. The boys were due to transition to a new school due to their father's new posting which coincided

with Jacob's transition to senior school. Both participants were attending school as children of key workers. Jacob opted to take part in the interview when in school, whereas Dougie requested to be interviewed at home.

Daisy and Alex were also siblings (but again spoken to separately); Daisy was aged 8 years and Alex aged 6 years. Their father was serving in the army and was almost at the end of his career and service. The family were due to transition into civilian life in the coming months and hoped to relocate closer to their extended family. They lived in military accommodation. Both participants were home-schooled during the period of school closures.

Rachel was aged 8 years and went to a primary school where she said there were lots of other service children. Rachel's father was serving in the Royal Navy and had been deployed recently for a period of time. Rachel had not yet experienced a school transition.

Zack was aged 10 years and was understood to be the only service child in attendance at his primary school. Zack was in year 5 and had not yet experienced a school transition. His father was serving in the Royal Navy and had had periods of deployment in the past.

4.1 Results

Five master themes, each consisting of two to five related sub themes were identified and are outlined in table 1. Emerging themes are also identified for transparency (where applicable) and the initial theme tables for each individual participant are available in Appendix F. The impact of these perceived experiences on participants' phenomenon are presented case by case in order to illustrate the personal world of participants and the significance of being a service child on their own (individual) perceptions of school belonging

Table 2

Master themes and subordinate themes

Master theme	Sub-ordinate themes
Defining school belonging	• Social relationships (friendships and teachers) (6) • Positive (and inclusive) school experiences (6)
Fostering connections and improving communications (at the individual and systemic level)	• Opportunities for connection (with deployed parent) (5)

	• Fostering connections with other Service children (4)
	• Gaining knowledge about military culture (1)
School support: positive attitudes and understanding of the issues facing service children	• Meaningful participation in school activities (3) and engagement in military sponsored activities (3)
	• School support that is responsive and accommodating (4)
	• Supportive and sensitive adults who are available emotionally (5)

	• The protective role of school
	    o Helps to manage feelings of loneliness (3)
	    o Builds self-confidence (2)

Transition	• Coping with transition
	    o Nervousness (1)
	    o Worry (2)
	    o Excitement (1)
	    o Extended Family (4)
	    o Adjustment to a new environment (2)

	• Re-establishing friendships
	    • Loss of friends
	    • Lack of control

	• Things that might be done (buddy system) (2)
Impact on child's phenomenon	• Happy (5)
	• No different from other (non-service) children (2)
	• Sense of difference (1)
	• Generalisation of problem behaviours (anxiety, anger) (1)
	• Belief in school (2)
	• High expectations (1)
	• Student engagement (2)
	• Resilience (2)
	• Shared understanding (4) • Neighbourhood resources sense of community (3)

NB: Numbers in brackets reflect the number of times the subordinate theme featured in participant accounts.

4.1.2 Master theme: defining school belonging

All participants reported a sense of school belonging. They spoke of belonging in terms of their positive relationships in school, and the sense of value and inclusion they felt as a result of feeling cared for and understood by teachers and peers alike. Social relationships were identified to have a positive impact on participants' sense of school belonging and highlighted the importance of interactions for fostering connection and wellbeing for service children in this study as well as promoting positive inclusive experiences.

4.1.2.1 Sub-ordinate theme: social relationships (friendships and teachers)

The role of friendship was identified as an important basis for participants' perceptions of belonging in school: "what makes me feel included in school is like how I have lots of friends" (Dougie). Zack identified, "I have lots of friends there (school)…we all have lots of fun…we are happy." Daisy talked about the effects of her friendships in school - "you're not left out" – and described belonging as "you feel like you want to stay there." Daisy further attributed her sense of school belonging to her "friends, teachers, and the comments she puts in my book." Participants' perceptions of school belonging were described in relation to their experiences of social relationships in school and all participants spoke of having developed positive relationships with both peers and teachers.

4.1.2.2 Sub-ordinate theme: positive (and inclusive) school experiences

Participants reported healthy interpersonal relationships with teachers and peers using language such as feeling "happy" and "cared for." How the participants experienced these connections with respect for their background was characterised by a sense of inclusion. The following quote from Rachel illustrates this point:

because there's quite a lot of military families around where I live, em, the school look after the children and think about them and look after them quite well and make time for them which is good…that's why I like school

The experiences of being included and valued by others were influential factors in promoting participants' sense of school belonging.

4.1.3 Master theme: fostering connections and improving communications (at the individual and systemic level)

Participants spoke of their experiences with parental deployment and associated stress. However, opportunities to connect with their deployed parent in school was felt to have a positive effect on their wellbeing during this time. This included school being aware and supportive of their need to talk (as and when required), but also, perhaps more significantly, schools' understanding of military life for service children and how this was (explicitly or implicitly) communicated and valued in school. Participant accounts reflected a need (or desire) to be aware of and connect with other service children in school for developing individual resilience (if they knew others shared the same experiences), but also in developing a sense of inclusion and belonging for these participants.

4.1.3.1 Sub-ordinate theme: opportunities for connection (with deployed parent)

The impact of parental deployment on participants' wellbeing was highlighted, and four of the six participants spoke about opportunities to communicate and connect with their deployed parent in school as an important form of support for them. Jacob valued: "having time out of class sometimes to kind of think of your parents and think of all your good times." Rachel shared that: "daddy got a talking bear for me," and Zack reflected: "sometimes I think about him at school". Jacob's school experiences reflect a broader systemic understanding of the issues facing service children. He talked about his school's effort to foster open communication with his father during his deployment:

well at the moment they've got a thing where if your parents are going away, they've got a teddy and basically em, your parents take pictures of where they're going and they're (school) trying to get it around the world and then your parents keep on sending postcards back and you can send them either to the school on email or give them to the school

4.1.3.2 Sub-ordinate theme: fostering connections with other service children

Daisy reflected on the value of connecting with other service children in school and felt that a visual representation of when and where a parent is deployed would serve to promote a sense of commonality in school and perhaps elicit greater understanding and empathy from teachers during challenging times:

I think a map in the school could be good, maybe in the library to show where our daddy and mummies are so we can see we've got something in common, like, oh so and so's daddy is away at the moment and I'm not on my own if that makes sense… and then maybe the teachers could see when our parents are not there

Similarly, Rachel felt that:

kind of getting away from class and like seeing how many other children that are doing it so then you don't feel like you're on your own and you feel like you're not the only child that has somebody away, parents might go away a lot

A sense of belonging in school was further reinforced by participants' awareness of other service children in the school (with the exception of Zack). Jacob shared that: "it's nice to have someone else that feels the same as you." There was the sense that participants drew much of their comfort and support from fellow service children. Five of the participants also spoke of the benefits of 'patch life' and living in a military community.

4.1.3.3 Sub-ordinate theme: gaining knowledge about military culture

Only one of the participants spoke of their school incorporating aspects of military culture into the school environment. Rachel spoke of a time when: "once we did this and somebody's dad came in that was in the navy taught us loads of things they do like marching and stuff like that." Rachel also confirmed that:

as a forces child I get time out of school to go and do families' day or when the ship comes in when daddy came in, the school let me do that… you get like loads of things when you go, like balloons and activities and sweets and hot dogs. They came in at Christmas and I got the day off school for it

This quote emphasises the value of school embracing opportunities for Rachel to connect with the military community and appreciating the emotional impact of her father's return. Dougie also identified participating in military sponsored activities: "they sometimes put things on like sports day for armed forces children that I think are organised by the navy."

4.1.4 Master theme: School support: positive attitudes and understanding of the issues facing service children

The participants described a number of strategies/interventions that they found most helpful in school and similar support experiences were evident. Accounts suggest that taking part in activities, like forces club, had a positive effect on their wellbeing as well as pastoral care. Participants spoke of school support that was flexible and responsive to individual needs, especially during times of parental deployment.

4.1.4.1 Sub-ordinate theme: meaningful participation in school activities

For three of the six participants, school had established 'forces club' to provide opportunities for service children to express their feelings and develop friendships. Rachel reflected:

we do forces club at school, we have a teacher that takes us on a Friday morning…when daddy was away, I used to do stuff, make things. I had time out of the classroom. We go and like do stuff to try and get our minds off it. Cook things and go in like the wild area, just nice things'; at Christmas they take us to the pantomime one time a year

Similarly, Jacob recalls, "in school we've got a military service band and so every Thursday we go into the music room and do steel pans before lockdown and COVID."

4.1.4.2 Sub-ordinate theme: school support that is responsive and accommodating

There was the sense from all participants that they value school support that is responsive and accommodating to their individual circumstances. Dougie reflected on a time:

when my dad went away em, I found it hard and school gave me Lego therapy. So, if I was well behaved in the morning, I could get Lego therapy which was really helpful because normally when I like get stressed I go upstairs and play with my Lego because I like have a big imagination, I'm like yes this could be like a mini digger I'm driving

Rachel spoke about: "the teacher with the service children, em, when some of the service children are feeling sad, they just ask them, the special teacher if they have any time to see them, like the next day." She acknowledged the value of teachers being available to talk and foster open dialogue with service children because: "sometimes people don't think you're struggling and need help."

4.1.4.3 Sub-ordinate theme: supportive and sensitive adults who are available emotionally

Daisy also made reference to teachers as supportive adults who are available to help when needed: "if I was feeling sad at school because daddy was away, if it was at lunch or break time I'd wait until it was time to go in and I'd ask the teacher who was watching us when I need help." Alex agreed "it's nice when they sometimes cheer me up. They try to fix my problems."

4.1.4.4 Sub-ordinate theme: the protective role of school

Jacob and Zack commented explicitly on the role of school for reducing undesirable feelings: "if daddy is away a lot, I feel sad and miss daddy, but at school I don't feel like this. At school I feel pretty good" (Zack). For Jacob: "I'm like happy at school because I'm not as lonely with just my mum and my brother…it's helping me not be bored really and not down."

4.1.5 Master theme: Transition

Service children are a 'mobile' demographic and school transition was a theme to emerge across participant accounts. The impact of transition on participants wellbeing and friendships was characterised by uncertainty and worry, but an admirable sense of resilience was evident. Participants were able to identify sources of support (i.e., extended family) and ways in which (they felt) schools could support them when transitioning to a new school.

4.1.5.1 Sub-ordinate theme: coping with transition

All participants have experienced a period of stability in school and Zack reported, "strong friendships" as a consequence of this. However, four of the six participants confirmed they will be transitioning to a new school soon and shared feeling anxious and "nervous" (Jacob). Dougie confirmed that: "my mum keeps trying to bribe me into going to a new school because I'm quite worried about it" and Daisy has "lots of questions and worries about what is going on." Alex was the only participant to report feeling "excited." Participants did however engage a positive outlook as they spoke positively about moving closer to family which was felt to lessen some of the negative feelings associated with their transition. Evidently, extended family was identified as a key source of support for these participants (and indeed their parents). Nevertheless, participant accounts draw attention to the apprehensions of service children and the impact transition can have on their overall wellbeing, which was characterised by uncertainty and worry.

4.1.5.2 Sub-ordinate theme: re-establishing relationships

Participants reflected on times when they had lost friends and wondered about making new ones. Daisy recalled, "in reception there was a girl called Holly who left, and I don't see her…it made me feel a bit sad because we had so much fun together and someone called Ava left. I never got to see her again after reception". Rachel is used to children coming and going: "they've got to go where their parents' jobs are…a lot of children come and go…I do find it hard sometimes because you get left". Her account reflects a sense of loss but eludes more explicitly to the expectations of military culture and the lack of control it can present for service children. It suggested an understanding of the sense of duty for military families. Dougie spoke of his apprehensions about re-establishing friendships at his new school saying, "my mum said if I don't have any friends in my new school, she would take me back down to Portsmouth so we can have, so I can have like a party down here." Accounts suggest that participants recognised (and experienced) the impact transition can have on existing relationships as well as the need to negotiate new relationships with peers. There was the consensus that threats to social connections could impact on their sense of school belonging at the time of their transition.

4.1.5.3 Sub-ordinate theme: things that might be done

Recalling a time when new children arrive at the school, Dougie explains:

I like it at (school) because when a new person comes in, they always have for like their first day, someone like helping them out and telling them what to do and like if this is the right area, so if I just came in and no one was guiding me I'd probably go to the toilets just to eat my lunch

Dougie felt that having a "buddy" at his new school would help him to navigate and adjust to his new school environment. Alex also thought he would value: "teachers helping me know what to do and where to put my bags and stuff." Again, Jacob reiterated the importance of friendships: "well just that if their parents are away that they've got loads of friends so that they don't feel alone."

4.1.6 Impact on child's phenomenon

As aforementioned, there is evidence that schools can and do influence service children's sense of school belonging. All participants reflected on feeling happy at school. Rachel explained that:

the teachers don't treat us any different for it, they don't moan and say oh your off for the day because it's normal to them, they know this is what like happens, I get to see my dad come off the ship

She reported that teachers continue to hold her to high expectations: "they're not really kicking you out of class so like if you haven't finished your work you still have to do your work after." Rachel presents with academic motivation and presents with an admirable sense of resilience: "I'm used to it and just get on with it." Her experiences in school and positive personal attributes appeared to have fostered a sense of school belonging.

Zack describes his experiences irrespective of being a service child: "I don't really know about these things…I don't really know what my dad does, I just play along in the day really." He does not identify with a military 'status' confirming that: "I don't really think there is much to it." Zack is the only known service child in attendance at the school and despite this, Zack holds perceptions of school belonging. Zack enjoys his learning and referenced the school motto and perhaps evidence of his belief in the school (in its faith and its values).

Daisy reported a sense of difference: "I like being a military family but I'm also looking forward to being a normal family" as she spoke about their transition to civilian life. She was encouraged by the support of her friends: "I've still got lots of friends…sometimes when I'm stuck my friends come and help me if they've finished." Social relationships appear to have fostered her reported sense of belonging.

Dougie reflected on his school experiences and did perceive a sense of belonging but spoke more personally regarding the impact of his father's deployment on his emotional wellbeing, and his associated difficulty separating from his mum (non-deployed parent) saying, "I get worried sometimes if mummy goes away, sometimes I get a bit angry…I'm happy going to school because there are other adults I just don't like being by myself." He generalised problem behaviours across service children and spoke of receiving "therapy" and "treatment" as an available form of support in school:

some armed forces children are like a bit naughtier because their dad or mums away, so they get a bit anxious…some children get a bit mad that's why they get treatment, like they get mad and angry, they slap people across the head for no reason

At his new school, Dougie suggested, "the teacher could probably like, if I make a mistake, or be a bit weird, or a bit naughty on the first day, not go harsh on me." Participant responses also suggest that the opportunity to connect with others who understand the challenges and rewards of

forces life is important and has implications for their sense of school belonging: "I think one of the important things for school is to be able to offer some support and understand the difficulties children experience when moving in and out of different schools…it helps people are really understanding." (Rachel).

5.1 Discussion

This chapter presents a consolidation of the themes identified in the previous section with respect to the following research questions:

1. How do service children describe their sense of belonging in school?
2. Do service children's perceptions of belonging differ between schools with a large number of service children and schools with a small number of service children?
3. How are service children who transition to a new school welcomed into the school's own culture?
4. What adds to, and what hinders service children's sense of belonging and how does this impact upon their social and emotional wellbeing?

Analysis of the findings suggest that school-based strategies had a positive impact on service children's sense of school belonging. Children's responses did not make a clear distinction between what their sense of belonging was like in school and the things which added to and hindered this sense of belonging. The researcher intentionally did not take a deductive approach which might have shaped children's answers more. In the context of inductive research therefore, research questions (1) and (4) will be grouped to better represent the data.

5.1.2 How do service children describe their sense of belonging? What adds to, and what hinders service children's sense of belonging and how does this impact upon their social and emotional wellbeing?

This study sought to explore service children's perceptions of school belonging from the participants themselves. It aimed to elucidate factors in the school environment that promote (or hinder) their sense of school belonging and its impact on their social and emotional wellbeing. As stated in the belonging hypothesis, "human beings have a pervasive drive to form and maintain at

least a minimum quantity of lasting, positive and significant interpersonal relationships" (Baumeister & Leary, 1995, p 497). Participants reported healthy interpersonal relationships with teachers and peers using language such as feeling 'happy' and 'cared for'. How the participants experienced these connections, with respect for their background, was characterised by a sense of inclusion, help-seeking (from teachers and other service children), and student engagement (in intra- and extra-curricular activities). All participants identified school as a source of strength that mitigated undesirable feelings of loneliness and low mood. Taken together, participant accounts are consistent with the literature on belonging and its benefits on social and emotional wellbeing.

There are a number of considerations about service life that participations want teachers to consider in order to be able to provide school support that is sensitive to their individual needs. For educators, there needs to be an awareness that the lifestyle of service children is different (and not them as individuals) and parental deployment was the primary catalyst for increasing their need for support. Participants saw the value in receiving pastoral support for their emotional wellbeing because of deployment but spoke most frequently about the importance of teachers showing compassion for the military way of life; understanding and acceptance of military culture was an important source of belonging for these participants.

Many aspects of these accounts triangulate with findings from previous research. For instance, De Pedro et al. (2015) identified school leaders' awareness of military specific life challenges as an important factor in supporting the overall wellbeing of service children in school, in addition to, caring teacher relationships, peer support, and school connectedness. In a recent study by the University of Winchester (2016), parental deployment was found to be the biggest disadvantage (and stress) for service children, and schools that were more informed about military life were more skilled at providing the right support (particularly for schools with high numbers of service children).

5.1.3 Do service children's perceptions of school belonging differ between schools with a large number of service children and schools with a small number of service children?

Having an understanding of service life can be important to the overall wellbeing of service children in school, but how explicitly this is communicated is likely to vary between children/families. It is important to acknowledge that for Zack, service life had little impact on his educational experiences and was, in fact, something he had not yet considered. This poses the question of when (or if) it is appropriate to consider its role within the school environment as not all service children

will identify as such. It raises the issue of sensitivity and how teachers can connect with these students without labelling (Ruff & Keim, 2014). Zack was the only service child in attendance at the school and there is the tentative suggestion that this may have had an impact on his perceptions and the meaning he assigned to his experiences. It could be argued that Zack may not have a strong service identity within the school environment due to a lack of recognition by the school. There was no suggestion that the school emphasised or valued this aspect of his identity or a marker that recognised the membership of the military community to which he belonged. Perhaps therefore, Zack is suppressing part of his identity in order to fit in and be accepted by his peers in school. These findings highlight how the school environment and its ethos could shape or temper the identity of service children. McCulloch, Hall, and Ellis (2018) found that service children tended to keep their 'status' quiet in schools where military culture was not as present and suggested this denied service children an outlet and acknowledgement for their pride. However, it was not possible to objectively analyse whether school belonging in children of service personnel was influenced by the number of service children on roll in this study. Therefore, the lack of data about the number of service children in each school and the small number of children in the study's sample means that there is limited empirical basis for these conclusions drawn.

5.1.4 How are service children who transition to a new school welcomed into the school's own culture?

The study's findings suggest a number of ways in which schools welcome service children into the school's own culture that are specific to the life challenges of service children. This support included teachers helping children to communicate with the deployed military parent, military connected student support groups (i.e., forces club and a military band), providing school accommodations (e.g., flexible attendance when parents return from deployment) and links with the military community (e.g., military sponsored activities). Participant accounts also reflected creative ways for coping with separation and sharing their life experiences (e.g., a map to indicate where in the world the deployed military parents were). The explicit nature of this support within the school environment seemed to have a beneficial effect on service children's sense of school belonging and created a school climate that was welcoming and supportive. De Pedro, Esqueda, Cederbaum & Astor (2014) suggested that schools should develop a 'collective consciousness' about the life experiences of service children to help create a school wide culture that supports and recognises the needs of service children, and this community support system was evident across five of the six participant accounts.

The participants spoke of moving school in the following ways: anxious, nervous, worried and excited. Re-establishing friendships and difficulty adjusting to their new school environment were identified by participants as a key source of apprehension, but the introduction of a school 'buddy system' was felt to lessen any apprehensions experienced. There is evidence in the wider literature to suggest that 'buddying' has a positive impact on children's wellbeing in helping to reduce any pre-conceived fears and anxieties associated with transition and also for promoting a sense of friendship, safety and belonging in school (Tzani-Pepelasi, Ioannou, Synnott & McDonnell, 2019). A peer support system could therefore facilitate positive adjustment for service children who transition into a new school culture. To do so effectively, any peer support system needs to be adopted as a whole school approach (McElearney, Roosmale-Cocoq, Scott & Stephenson, 2008) that addresses issues such as self-esteem, confidence, emotional health and wellbeing 'within school' context (Coleman, Sykes & Carola, 2017). This could include, for example, drop in-sessions and buddy/playground activities as well as group-based projects (such as forces club). The embedded nature of this support will further help create a school climate that is welcoming and supportive.

For many of the participants, belonging to an armed forces community seemed central to their sense of self and influenced who they sought support from. Service children were encouraged by each other because they have the same 'problem' and therefore did not have to suffer with the challenges of deployment in isolation. Opportunities to connect through peer-to-peer interactions would be an important consideration for schools to facilitate so that service children could provide social and emotional support for one another through a common bond. Military life offers a strong sense of belonging to a supportive community and school-based support that promotes these social connections would provide an outlet for service children to embrace their shared values and sense of identity (Easterbrooks, Ginsburg, & Lerner, 2013). One-to one peer support may therefore be most helpful for service children with whom they have something in common.

5.1.5 Strengths and limitations of the study and future research

The current study is the only one to have explored UK service children's perceptions of school belonging explicitly, and this novelty can be viewed as a strength of the study. While existing research holds a good deal of promise for understanding the challenges service children face, this study offers a qualitative exploration of service children's perceptions of school belonging and begins to elucidate the role of the school in cushioning the impact of military stressors and promoting wellbeing through supportive school climates.

Limitations of the current study can be considered in light of the global COVID-19 pandemic and its impact both on recruitment and the interview process. Recruitment was a challenge: the closure of schools limited access and willingness to participate (understandably, in a global crisis), leading the researcher to instead recruit independently through known military organisations. It was therefore difficult to objectively analyse whether school belonging in children of service personnel was influenced by the number of service children on roll as originally hoped or to analyse similarities and differences between service children within the same school and subsequently remains a recommendation for future research. Instead, participants' experiences are provided in the context of four schools across different LAs and accommodates a broader understanding of perceptions from a more geographically dispersed population.

The sample size was notably small but in line with IPA guidance; the purpose of the study was to develop a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of service children from the participants themselves ('in their shoes'), not to generalise findings to all service children

All six interviews were conducted during the UK lockdown, and as such, were adapted to facilitate dialogue via video link. Associated challenges included sound quality making it difficult to communicate easily and to hear what the participant was saying at times. In such instances, the researcher summarised elements of what they had heard and checked that the participant agreed with the account to help provide clarity. It should be noted that these were infrequent occurrences but nevertheless a challenge for the researcher to navigate, especially when compared to a face-to-face interview.

In the context of school closures, three of the six participants continued to attend as children of key workers, while the remaining three participants were home schooled during this period. It would be fair to suggest that participant responses might have been influenced by this unprecedented experience and perhaps inflated the importance of relationships (especially friendships) at a time when social distancing and other concerns prohibited social interaction. Nevertheless, notable relational themes were common across all six participants regardless of whether they were attending school (or not).

One of the participants opted to have the interview in school but the presence of the staff member, during the interview, may have impacted on the participant's responses. As the interview was conducted via video link, and the challenges facing service children may be difficult to talk about, the researcher felt that the presence of an adult was warranted in this instance. These ethical considerations were felt to outweigh any possible disadvantages of having a staff member in the room, and its impact on the participant's responses for the school-based interview.

A further recommendation for future research would be to employ a longitudinal design to allow for the emotional deployment cycle (Logan, 1987) to be considered and the impact this might have on fluctuating levels of wellbeing during different stages of the deployment cycle for Service children and what impact this has on their relationships in school. However, in light of the current findings, it is perhaps more prudent to explore the views of teachers, their knowledge of the armed forces community and how this influences their practice; specifically, how teachers promote a sense a belonging for service children based on the perspectives of educators.

6.1 Conclusion and implications for professionals

This study illustrated the applicability of belonging to service children in school and perhaps emphasised the importance of developing relationships for 'mobile' children through social systems that foster connections and improved communications at the systemic and individual level. Findings from this study illustrate service children's sense of school belonging and the impact these experiences have on their social and emotional wellbeing. Deployment and future plans were identified sources of stress and worry but mitigated through social relations (caring teachers, and peer to peer interactions). How service children experience belonging in school reflected a supportive school climate, that was responsive and accommodating to the individual needs of Service children. It is important for educators to appreciate diversity in society in a way that does not substantiate difference, and this holds true for service children also. Participants did not see themselves as different per se but sought compassion and understanding for the military way of life and its associated stressors. How educators approach this is a matter of sensitivity, but a whole school approach in collaboration with socio-ecological contexts (e.g., surrounding neighbourhoods, and MOD units) could be an accommodating step to forming these links (Astor et al. 2013). Participants' positive (and inclusive) school experiences promoted healthy development and reduced feelings of loneliness and low mood, illustrating the promotional role of school and its climate for the development of service children in this study. School transition can be a disruption to children's education and friendships, and findings from this study could provide educators with how schools could welcome service children into the schools' own culture and prevent them from becoming isolated or feeling alone. A number of practical suggestions can be discerned from the research. These include:

- Ensuring all staff have some awareness of the associated stressors surrounding the military way of life for service children as well as appropriate strategies that are culturally responsive to their individual needs which ensures a supportive and non-stigmatising ethos.

- Schools could consider a dedicated Service pupils' champion or an emotional literacy support assistant (ELSA) to develop supportive and understanding relationships with these children and encourage expression.

- Participation in school-based activities were noted repeatedly in participants' accounts and schools could consider establishing a 'forces club' or other related activities to provide opportunities for service children to make connections and develop friendships in a safe and encouraging environment.

- Establishing links with the community, MOD and associated charities and organisations (such as AFF) to share good practice.

- Service children will require a carefully planned transition to school with opportunities to connect with current students, such as a 'buddy' that facilitates social relations and mitigates some of the worries about navigating a new school environment.

6.2 Implications for Educational Psychology

The school ethos is important for enabling service children and young people to feel included. EPs are well positioned to work in collaboration with schools to develop a whole school community approach to supporting the needs of service children, and this should promote positive relationships, resilience, well-being and mental health in schools. EP support should be targeted at all elements of the school culture: strategy and leadership, systems and structure, parents and community, pupils and staff. More targeted EP support might include the implementation of programmes on social and emotional development in schools with the aim of developing service children's individual qualities (e.g., positive sense of self-worth) and resilient mind sets. Interventions might also be tailored to the development of social skills for service children that can assist them in navigating relational challenges during the transition. It is important to recognise that not all children have the necessary social skills to develop meaningful, lasting friendships and how schools foster this is an important point for consideration for EPs. Furthermore, EPs are well positioned to comment on observed declines in pupil behaviour, and reframe perspectives that risk discriminating against the child as a result of their service life experiences that may be contributing to the pupil's behavioural and educational difficulties, for example, through consultation.

References

Aggies (n.d.). Retrieved February, 2021, from http://www.aggies.org.uk

Akos, P., & Galassi, J. P. (2004). Middle and high school transitions as viewed by students, parents, and teachers. *Professional School Counselling, 7,* 212–221.

Allen, K., Kern, M. L., Vella-Brodrick, D., Hattie, J., & Waters, L. (2018). What schools need to know about fostering school belonging: A meta-analysis. *Educational Psychology Review*, 30, 1–34. doi.org/10.1007/s10648-016-9389-8.

Anderson, A., Hamilton, R.J., & Hattie, J. (2003). Classroom climate and motivated behaviour in secondary schools. *Learning Environments Research, 7*, 211-225. doi.org/10.1007/s10984-004-3292-9.

Army Be the Best. (2021, February). A soldier's values and standards. https://www.army.mod.uk/who-we-are/our-people/a-soldiers-values-and-standards/.

Army Families Federation (aff). (2021, February). Mod who's who. https://aff.org.uk/advice/education-childcare/mod-whos-who/

Army Families Federation (aff). (2021, February). Service pupil premium. https://aff.org.uk/advice/education-childcare/service-pupil-premium/.

Astor, R.A., Tunac, K., De Pedro, K.T., Gilreath, T.D., Esqueda, M.C., & Benbenishty, R. (2013). The promotional role of school and community contexts for military students. *Clinical Child and Family Child Psychology Review, 16*, 233-244.

Atuel, H.R., Esqueda, M.C., & Jacobson, L. (2011). The military child within the public school education system. *USC Center for Innovation and Research on Veterans and Military Families, Policy Brief, 1 –* 6.

Baumeister, R. F., & Leary, M. R. (1995). The need to belong: Desire for interpersonal attachments as a fundamental human motivation. *Psychological Bulletin*, *117*(3), 497–529.

Begen, F.M., & Turner-Cobb, J.M. (2015). Benefits of belonging: Experimental manipulation of social inclusion to enhance psychological and physiological health parameters. *Psychology & Health*, *30*, 568–82. doi:10.1080/08870446.2014.991734

Berger, R. (2013). Now I see it, now I don't: researcher's position and reflexivity in qualitative research. *Qualitative Research, 15(*2*)* 1 – 16 doi: 10.1177/1468794112468475.

Bhaskar, R. (1978). A realist theory of science, Hassocks: Harvester Press.

Boland, A., Cherry., M.G., & Dickson, R. (Ed.) (2017). Doing a systematic review: a student's guide. 2nd edition SAGE.

Bond, L., Butler, H., Thomas, L., Carlin, J., Glover, S., Bowes, G., & Patton, G. (2007). Social and school connectedness in early secondary school as predictors of late teenage substance use, mental health, and academic outcomes. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 40*, 357.e9- 357.e18. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2006.10.013

Bowes, E.R. (2018). Researching the experiences of children and young people from armed forces families. [Unpublished doctoral dissertation], University of Stirling.

Bowlby, J. (1969). *Attachment and loss* (Vol. 1). Basic Books. http://doi.org/10.1177/000306518403200125

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3*(2), 77-1-101.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1994). Ecological models of human development. In *International Encyclopaedia of Education* (Vol. 3, pp. 1643–1647). Elsevier Sciences, Ltd. doi.org/http://www.psy.cmu.edu/~siegler/35bronfebrenner94.pdf.

Chandra, A., Martin, L. T., Hawkins, S. A., & Richardson, A. (2010). The impact of parental deployment on child social and emotional functioning: Perspectives of school staff. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 46*(3), 218–223.

Chapman, R. L., Buckley, L., Sheehan, M. C., Shochet, I. M., & Romaniuk, M. (2011). The impact of school connectedness on violent behaviour, transport risk taking behaviour and associated injuries in adolescence. *Journal of School Psychology*, *49*(4), 399–410.

Clifton, G. (2007). The experience of education of the army child. [Unpublished doctoral dissertation], Oxford-Brookes University.

Cohen, J., McCabe, E.M., Michelli, N.M., & Pickeral, T. (2009). School climate: research, policy, practice and teacher education. *Teachers College Records, 111(1)*, 180-213

Coleman, N., Sykes, W., & Groom, C. (2017). Peer support and children and young people's mental health. *Social Science in Government*. Department for Education.

Danermark, B., Ekström, M., Jakobsen, L., & Karlsson, J. C. (2002). *Explaining society: An introduction to critical realism in the social sciences.* Routledge.

Daniels, K. (2020). Thesis proposal: Exploring school belonging in children of service personnel, unpublished manuscript, University of Southampton

Department for Education. (2010). The Educational Performance of Children of Service Personnel (No. DFE-RR011). Department for Education.

De Pedro, K. T., Astor, R. A., Gilreath, T. D., Benbenishty, R., & Berkowitz, R. (2015). School climate, deployment, and mental health among students in military- connected schools. *Youth & Society, 50(1)*, 93–115. doi.org/10.1177/0044118X15592296.

De, Pedro, KT., Esqueda, M.C., Cederbaum, J.A. & Astor, R.A. (2014). District, school and community stakeholder perspectives on the experiences of military-connected students. *Teachers College Record, 116, 1-32.*

De Pedro, K.T., Astor, R.A., Gilreath, T.D., Benbenishty, R., & Esqueda, M.C. (2014). School climate perceptions among students in military-connected schools: a comparison of military and nonmilitary students in the same schools. *Military Behavioural Health, 2,* 2-13 doi.org/10.1080/21635781.2013.837795.

Directorate Children and young people (DCYP). (2021, February). https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/directorate-children-and-young-people.

Dobson, J.M., Henthorne, K., & Lynac, Z. (2000). Pupil mobility in schools: University College London.

Easterbrooks, M.A., Ginsburg, K., & Lerner, R.M. (2013). Resilience among military youth. *JSTOR,* 23(2), 99-120.

Eatough, V., & Smith, J.A. (2017). *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis*. In: Willig, C. & Stainton-Rogers, W. (eds). Handbook of Qualitative Psychology 2nd Education. London, UK: Sage, p 193 – 211.

Educating Service Children: Eleventh Report of Session 2005–06 (HC 1054).

Edwards, L. (2004), Service Children's Education: An exploration of the strategies employed to mitigate the adverse effects of pupil mobility on social and academic progress. [unpublished dissertation]. University of Exeter.

Eodanable, M., & Lauchlan, F. (2011). Promoting positive emotional health of children of transient

armed forces families. *School Psychology International, 33(1)*, 22-38

doi.org/10.1177/0143034311406819

ERIC (2003), Providing Highly Mobile Students with an Effective Education. ERIC Digest: ED482918

2003-11-00.

Ghaith, G. (2003). The relationship between forms of instruction, achievement and perceptions of

classroom climate. *Educational Researcher, 45*(1), 83–93.

doi.org/10.1080/0013188032000086145.

Gillen-O'Neel, C., & Filigni, A. (2013). A longitudinal study of school belonging and academic

motivation across high school. *Child Development, 84*(2), 678-692. doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-

8624.2012.01862.x

Goodenow, C. (1993). The psychological sense of school membership among adolescents: Scale

development and educational correlates. *Psychology in the Schools*, *30*(1), 79–90.

Goodenow, C., & Grady, K. E. (1993). The relationship of school belonging and friends' values to

academic motivation among urban adolescent students. *Journal of Experimental Education*,

62(1), 60–71.

Government UK. Children's Education Advisory Service (CEAS). (2021, February).

https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/the-childrens-education-advisory-service-ceas.

Government UK. Children's Commissioner for England (2018). *Kin and country: Growing up as an

armed forces child. https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wp-

content/uploads/2018/06/KIN-AND-COUNTRY-Growing-up-as-an-Armed-Forces-child.pdf*

Hardy, C. L., Bukowski, W. M., & Sippola, L. K. (2002). Stability and change in peer relationships

during the transition to middle-level school. *Journal of Early Adolescence, 22,* 117–142.

Hong, Q. N., Gonzalez-Reyes, A., & Pluye, P. (2018). Improving the usefulness of a tool for appraising

the quality of qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods studies, the Mixed Methods

Appraisal Tool (MMAT). *Journal of Evaluation in Clinical Practice*, *24*(3), 459–467.

https://doi.org/10.1111/jep.12884

Hong, Q. N., Pluye, P., Fàbregues, S., Bartlett, G., Boardman, F., Cargo, M., Dagenais, P., Gagnan,

M.P., Griffiths, F., Nicolau, B., O'Cathain, A., Rousseau, M.C., & Vedel, I. (2019). Improving

the content validity of the mixed methods appraisal tool: A modified e-Delphi study. *Journal of Clinical Epidemiology*, *111*, 49–59.e1. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclinepi.2019.03.008

House of Commons Defence Committee. (2013). The armed forces covenant in action? Part 3: Educating the children of service personnel (HC 586, No. 4). The Stationery Office.

House of Commons Defence Committee. (2006). Educating Service Children: Eleventh Report of Session 2005–06 (HC 1054). The Stationery Office.

House of Commons Education and Skills Committee. (2003). Every Child Matters. The Stationery Office.

Husserl, E. (1969). *Ideas: General introduction to pure phenomenology* (W. R. Boyce Gibson, trans.): Allen & Unwin.

Jain, V., & Stevelink, A.M., & Fear, (2016). What are the best and worst things about having a father in UK armed forces? Analysis of free text responses. BMJ Military Health, 163(2), 1-4.

Keegan, D., Hyle, A.E., & Sanders, V. (2004). Cultural competence, educators, and military families: understanding the military in a department of defence dependents school. *Journal of School Leadership*, *14*(6), 600-620. doi.org/10.1177/105268460401400601

Kia-Keating, M.M & Ellis, H.B. (2007). Belonging and connection to school in resettlement: young refugees, school belonging and psychosocial adjustment. *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 12*(1), 29-43. doi.org/10.1177/1359104507071052

Kingery, J.N., Erdley, C.A. & Marshall, K.C. (2011). Peer acceptance and friendship as predictors of early adolescents' adjustment across the middle school transition. *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly, 57*(3), 215 – 243.

Kudler, H., & Porter, R. (2013). 'Building communities of care for military children and families', *Future of Children, 23*(2), 163-185.

Larkin, M., Watts, S. & Clifton, E. (2006). Giving voice and making sense in interpretative phenomenological analysis. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *3*, 102-120.

Libbey, H. (2004). Measuring student relationships to school: Attachment, bonding, belonging, and engagement. *The Journal of School Health, 74*, 274–283. doi:10.1111/j.1746-1561.2004.tb08284.

Logan, K.V. (1987). The emotional cycle of deployment, US Naval proceedings.

Loukas, A., Suzuki, R., & Horton, K.D. (2006). Examining school connectedness as a mediator of school climate effects. *Society for Research on Adolescence, 16*(3), 491-502. doi.org/10.1111/j.1532-7795.2006.00504.x

Lucier-Greer, M., Arnold, A. L., Grimsley, R. N., Ford, J. L., Bryant, C., & Mancini, J. A. (2016). Parental military service and adolescent well-being: Mental health, social connections and coping among youth in the USA. *Child & Family Social Work, 21*(4), 421–432. https://doi.org/10.1111/cfs.12158

Maddox, S.J., & Prinz, R.J. (2003). School bonding in children and adolescents: conceptualisation, assessment, and associated variables. *Clinical Child and Family psychology Review, 6*(1), 31-49. DOI https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1022214022478

Maslow, A. H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review*, *50*(4), 370–396. http://doi.org/10.1037/h0054346

Masten, A.S. (2013). Competence, risk, and resilience in military families: conceptual commentary. *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review, 16*, 278-281. DOI 10.1007/s10567-013-0150-2

Mays, N., & Pope, C. (2000). Qualitative research in health care: Assessing quality in qualitative research. *British Medical Journal, 320*, 50-52.

McElearney, A., Roosmale, Cocoq, S.R., Scott, J & Stephenson, P. (2008). Exploring the anti-bullying role of a befriending peer support programmes" a case study withing the primary school setting in Northern Ireland. *Child Care in Practice, 14*(2), 109-130 doi.org/10.1080/13575270701868694

McCulloch, J., Hall, M., Ellis, S. (2018). The education of children from military families: identity and agency. *Educational Futures, 9*(2), 1758 – 2199.

Ministry of Defence. (2008). The nation's commitment: Cross-government support for our armed forces, their families and veterans (Cm 7424). The Stationery Office. Retrieved February, 2021, from https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the- nations-commitment-cross-government-support-for-our-armed-forces-their- families-and-veterans.

Ministry of Defence. (2011). The Armed Forces Covenant. The Stationery Office.

Ministry of Defence (2019). UK Tri-Service families Continuous attitude Survey results. Retrieved February, 2021, from

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_
data/file/819929/Tri-Service_Families_Continuous_Attitude_Survey_2019_Main_Report.pdf

Noret, N., Mayor, H., Al-Afaleq, H., Lingard, S., & Mair, E. (2015). The educational attainment of army
children. *The Unit for Child and Youth Studies.* York St John University, aff.

NFER (2007). Service Children and school performance: Key findings document. Retrieved February,
2021, from, http://www.nfer.ac.uk/emie/detail.asp?id_content=5531&id_category=277&id_
Ref=4583&level=3&detail=news

O'Brien, K.A. & Bowles, T.V. (2013). The importance of belonging for adolescents in secondary school
settings. *The European Journal of Social and Behavioural Sciences, 5*(2), 319-332.

Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) (2011*). Children in service
families. The quality and impact of partnership provision for children in Service families.*
Ofsted.

O'Rourke, J.O., & Cooper,M. (2010). Lucky to be happy: A study of happiness in Australian primary
students. *Australian Journal of Educational & Developmental Psychology, 10*, 94-107.

Page MJ, McKenzie JE, Bossuyt PM, Boutron I, Hoffmann TC, Mulrow CD, et al. (2021). The PRISMA
2020 statement: an updated guideline for reporting systematic reviews. *BMJ*;372:n71. doi:
10.1136/bmj.n71

Pietkiewicz, I., & Smith, J.A. (2014) A practical guide to using interpretative phenomenological
analysis in qualitative research psychology. *Psychological Journal, 20*(1), 7-14. DOI:
10.14691/CPPJ.20.1.7

Pribesh, S., & Downey, D. B. (1999). Why are residential and school moves associated with poor
school performance? *Demography, 36*(4), 521–534. https://doi.org/10.2307/2648088

Qu, S.Q., & Dumay, J. (2011). The qualitative research interview. *Qualitative Research in Accounting
and Management, 8(*3), 238-264.

Queair, E.C. (2018). Children of the U.S. military and identity: a narrative inquiry into the "brat"
experience. [Unpublished doctoral dissertation], Antloch University.

RAND Corporation (2009), Military children face more emotional challenges as parental deployments
grow longer, study finds. ScienceDaily.

Retrieved February, 2021, from:

http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2009/12/091207095503.htm

Risberg, S., Curtis, L., Shivers, L. (2014). A professional development school in action: meeting the needs of military connected students and families. *Educational Considerations, 42*(1), 43-48.

Royal Navy and Royal Marines Children's Fund (2009). The overlooked casualties of conflict report. Retrieved February, 2021, from http://rnrmchildrensfund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/overlooked_casualties_of_conflict_report.pdf.

Ruff, S.B., & Keim, M.A. (2014). Revolving doors: the impact of multiple school transitions on military children. *The Professional Counselor*, 4(2), 103-113.

Ryan, R., & Deci, E. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *The American Psychologist*, *55*(1), 68–78. http://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.55.1.68

Sanchez, B., Cohon, Y., & Esparza, P. (2005). The role of sense of school belonging and gender in the academic adjustment of Latino adolescents. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 34(6)*, 619-628. http://doi.org/ 10.1007/s10964-005-8950-4.

Service Children's Progression Alliance. Service children in state school (SCISS). (2021, February). https://www.scipalliance.org/about/partners/service-children-in-state-schools

Slaten, C.D., Ferguson, J.K., Allen, K.A., Brodrock D.V., Waters, L. (2016). School belonging: a review of the history, current trends and future directions. *The Educational and Developmental Psychologist*, *33*(1), 1-15 doi.org/10.1017/edp.2016.6.

Smith, J. A. (1996). Beyond the divide between cognition and discourse: Using interpretative phenomenological analysis in health psychology. *Psychology and Health, 11,* 261- 271.

Smith, J.A. & Osborn, M. (2003). Interpretative phenomenological analysis. In Smith, J.A. (Ed.), Qualitative psychology: A practical guide to methods (pp. 51-80). Sage Publications Ltd.

Smith, J., Flowers, P., & Larkin, M. (2009). Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. Sage.

Strand, S., & Demie, F. (2006). Pupil mobility, attainment and progress in primary school. *British Educational Research Journal, 32*(4), 551–568.

Tajfel, H. (1974). Social identity and intergroup behaviour. *Social Science Information, 13*(2), 65– 93.
   doi.org/10.1177/053901847401300204

The Armed Forces Covenant Annual Report 2018. Retrieved February, 2021, from
   https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_
   data/file/757801/6.5006_MOD_Covenant_Annual_Report_2018_FINAL_WEB.PDF

The Armed Forces Covenant Annual Report 2020. Retrieved May, 2021, from
   https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_
   data/file/943501/6.6856_MOD_Covenant-Annual-Report-2020_Full-
   Pages_A4_v16.1_web_3_.pdf

The Armed forces Community within the Solent. Armed forces Covenant. (2018). A needs
   assessment prepared on behalf of the Solent Armed forces Covenant Partnership Board.

The University of Winchester (2016). *Further and Higher progression for Service Children: Research
   Paper.* In partnership with Military of Defence, p 1-46.

Tzani-Pepelasi, C., Ioannou, Synnott, J., & McDonnell. D. (2019). Peer support at schools: the buddy
   approach as a prevention and intervention strategy for school bullying. *International Journal
   of Bullying Prevention, 1,* 111-123.

White, K., Marshall, H., & Rudd, P. (2009). Service Children's education: Survey of parental views.
   London: Nfer Nelson Publishing Company Ltd. Retrieved February, 2021, from http://
   www.nfer.ac.uk

Whitlock, J. (2006). Youth perceptions of life at school: Contextual correlates of school
   connectedness in adolescence. *Developmental Science, 10*(1), 13-29.
   doi.org/10.1207/s1532480xads1001_2

Williamson, V.W., Stevelink, S.A.M., Da Silva, E., & Fear, N.T. (2018). A systematic review of
   wellbeing in children: a comparison of military and civilian families. *Child and Adolescent
   Psychiatry and Mental Health, 12*, 1 -11.

Appendix A Search Strategy

Search with OR		Search with OR		Search with OR
perspective*		service		child*
view*		army		student*
voice*		navy		youth
	Search with AND	air force	Search with AND	adolescen*
		milit*		Teenage*
		"military connected"		"young people"
		"armed forces"		

Appendix B Excluded Papers

References	Reasons for Exclusion
Classen, A.I. (2014). Needs of military families: family and educator perspectives. Unpublished dissertation. University of Kansas.	Did not include children's perspectives
De-pedro, K.T., Esqueda, M.C., Cederbaum, J.A., Astor, R.A. (2014). District, school and community stakeholder perspectives on the experiences of military-connected students. *Tecahers College Record, 116*, 5, 1-18.	Non UK population
DeZee, K.J., Corriere, M.D., Chronister, S.M., Durning, S.J., Hemann, B., Kelly, W., Hanson, J.L., Hemmer, P., Maurer, D. (2009). What does a good lifestyle mean to you? Perspectives of 4th-year U.S. medical students with military service obligations in 2009. *Teaching and Learning in Medicine, 24*, 4, 292-297.	Non UK population
Fletcher, K.L. (2015). Perspective on needs of school children within national guard famlies from military-affiliated providers and civilian educatirs: implications for school social work. *Dissertation Abstracts Internationa Section A: Humanities and Social Sciences*, 76	Non UK population
Hardoff, D., & Halevy, A. (2006). Health perspectives regarding adolecents in military service. *Current Opionion in Pediatrics, 18*, 4, 371-375.	Non UK population
Kelker, C.E. (2016) Exploring transition experiences of military students in hawaii from the perspective of public high school principals. Unpublished dissertation. Northcentral University, School of Education, US	Non UK population
Knobloch, L.K., Knobloch-Fedders, L.M., Yorgason, J.B. (2017). Military children's difficulty with reintegration after deployment: a relational turblulence model perspective. *Journal of Family Psychology, 31*, 5, 542-552.	Non UK population
Legree, P., Gade, P.A., Martin, D.E., Fischi, M.A., Wilson, M.J., Nieva, V.F., McCloy, R., & Laurence, J. (2000). Military enlistment and familiy dynamics: youth and parental perspectives. *MIlitary Psychology, 12*, 1, 31-49	Non UK population
Milburn, N.G., Lightfoot, M. (2013). Adolescents in wartime US military families: a developmental persepctive on challnegs and resources. *Child and Family Psychology Review, 16*, 3, 266-277.	Non UK population
O'Neill, J. (2011). "It's hard for me, I move a lot." Designing and implementing a one-year pilot project to supporyt service children at halton school during periods of mobility and parental deployment.	Unable to access full text
Owlett, J.S., Richards, K., Wilson, S.R., DeFreese, J.D., Roberts, F. (2015). Privacy management in te military family during deployment: adolescents' perspectives. *Journal of Family Communication*, 15, 2, 141-158.	Non UK population

Pye, R.E., & Simpson, L.K. (2017). Family fnctioning differences across the deployment cycle in british army families: the perceptions of wives and childen. *Military Medicine, 182*, 1856-1863.	Children's views elicited through drawings of the family.
Rose, C., & Rose, P. (2018). *Identifying shared priorties for action to ensure the educational success of service children and to better enable theor progression throuh further and higher education into thriving adult lives and careers. A stakeholder consultation.* Service Children's Progression Alliance.	Identified the needs of practitioners, rather than examining the needs of service children.
Sears, J.A. (2011). Teacher perspectives of instructng struggling readers who are children of miltary personnel. *Dissertation Abstracts International Section A: Humanities and Social Sciences, 72,* 140.	Did not include children's perspectives
Schroeder, D.F., Gaier, E.L., Holdnack, J.A. (1993). Middle adolescents' views of war and american military imvolvement in the Persian Gulf. *Adolescence, 28,* 112, 951-962.	Non UK population
Stacy, B., Oh, E.J., Williams, R.L. (2007). Militariasm and sociopolitical perspectives among college students in the US and South Korea. Journal of Peace Psychology, 13, 2, 175-199.	Non UK population
Stone, S.L.M. (2017). Internal voices, external constraints: exploring the impact of military service on student development. *Journal of College Student Development, 58*, 3, 365-384.	Non UK population
Strobino, J., Salvaterra, M. (2000). School transiions among adolescent children of military personnel: a strengths perspective. *Social Work in Education, 22*, 2, 95-107.	Non UK population
Roscoe, B., Stevenson, B.W., Yacobozzi, B.K. (1988). Conventional warfare and united states military involvement in laTIN america: early adoelscents's views. Adolescence, 23, 90, 357 -372.	Non UK population
Wilson, S.R., Chernichky, S.M., Wilkum, K., Owlett, J.S. (2014). Do famly communicatin patterns buffer children from difficulties associated with a parent's military deployment? Examining deployed and at-home parents' perspectives. *Journal of Family communication*, 14, 1, 32-52.	Non UK population

Appendix C Data Extraction Table

Table 2

Data Extraction Table

Ref ID	Citation	Type of paper	Participants	Methodology	Key Findings
1	Bowes (2018)	Unpublished thesis	Service children (N = 41) (age, 8– 14) from 5 schools in Scotland (3 primary, 2 secondary)	Qualitative: Object elicitation, video diaries, peer interviewing, drawing and vignettes. Assemblage analysis.	Experiences of parental deployment characterized by feelings of sadness, loss, worry and uncertainty with implications for engagement in school. Parental deployment (and associated feelings) varied according to purpose (i.e., training exercise or tour of duty), and length of time (short vs. long term separation). Coping strategies: social and material activities (e.g., distraction, friends, class work) and opportunities to talk and share feelings, tangible objects, video calls, working together as a family. CYP identified both positive and negative aspects of relocation – friendships identified as most important aspect of moving school. Effective school-based support included relationships with teachers, opportunities for expression, shared experiences/understanding, uneven provision of support across schools.

Ref ID	Citation	Type of paper	Participants	Methodology	Key Findings
2	Clifton (2007)	Unpublished thesis	4 focus children from one secondary school with a high number of Service children on role. Inclusion of an additional secondary school (comparison school). Group interview (N = 7 children) 25 interviews with 'other' participants (including parents, teachers, Ministry of Defence representatives)	Ethnography 3 forms of interview, field notes, documentary analysis, observation	Five themes: 1. the army children developed individual coping strategies and had unique perceptions, 2. Mobility, 3. There is a clash of cultures between the army and the school, 4. The culture of the home has an effect on the educational experiences of the army children, 5. There is a sense that neither the army nor the schools understand the experience of education of the army children Mobile lifestyle has a negative impact on Service children's educational experiences (lower levels of attainment reported) Moving schools was considered from a social perspective (i.e., experience of making and losing friends) Service life was a part of participants identity (but not all)
3	Eodanable & Lauchlan (2012)	Peer review	Primary school serving a large number of pupils from army families (N= 30, aged 9 to 10 years and N = 18, aged 10 to 11 years old). Total n = 48	Answer statements about their skills and learning: yes, no, don't know Classroom and playground observations Analysis of school reports and policies	CCK: Non-significant result – no increase in participants emotional literacy scores as a result of the intervention. SFG: Of the 28 responses, 21 statements (75%) were answered positively, three (11%) negatively and four (14%) as 'Don't Know'. Suggests a positive recognition of feelings and coping strategies as a result of the intervention.
4	Jain, Stevelink & Fear, (2016)	Journal article	Adolescents, aged 11-16 years (N= 171) with a mean age of 13 years Girls (N= 85) Boys (N = 86)	Qualitative – online questionnaire Content analysis used to code the qualitative data into themes	Impact on child mental health and social wellbeing is an important consequence of work in the military. Adolescents acknowledge both positive aspects and negative aspects of their parent working in the military. Negative impact of parent in military – lack of contact most commonly reported. Positive impact of parent in military – sense of pride and financial benefits.

Ref ID	Citation	Type of paper	Participants	Methodology	Key Findings
5	Noret, Mayor, Al-Afaleq, Lingard & Mair (2015)	Research paper	8 Secondary schools in total - Secondary school pupils (year 10 and 11) (N = 102). 4 primary schools in total - primary school pupils (year 6) (N= 42). Total n = 144 An equal number of non-army pupils made up the primary and secondary school samples.	Project A: Pupil survey and attainment data Thematic analysis was utilized to analyse qualitative responses.	Academic: Lower attainment scores in English compared to civilian children. Primary: A lower proportion of year 6 army pupils compared to civilian peers reported that they agreed with the statement '*I get enough help with learning'.* Secondary*:* A higher proportion of year 10 and 11 Service children, compared to civilian peers strongly agreed with the statement *'I feel I am reaching my potential'* Lack of curriculum continuity: 52.4% of year 6 pupils and 33.3% of year 10 and 11 service children reported having studied aspects of the curriculum more than once (maths, science and history). SEMH: year 6 Service children reported feeling lonely in school and did not like break times very much. Additional needs of service children include parental deployment, and mobility (i.e., effects of lack of continuity and stability on academic performance) Inclusion of activities to support CYP's integration into schools Information sharing important. Teacher confidence.

Ref ID	Citation	Type of paper	Participants	Methodology	Key Findings
6	The University of Winchester (2016) (no authors identified)	Research paper	Primary school children (N= 38) Secondary school children (N=39) Undergraduate students (N=13) Total N = 90	Questionnaires – part 1 was completed by parents, part 2 was administered to the children to gain the Service child's views. Interview	Over half of the Service children intended to go to university. Some intended to join the military whilst others definitely did not intend to join the military – influenced by the number of moves/schools attended. Parents' rank impact on their children's intent to attend university or join the military – those of SNCOs indicated the greatest intent to go to university and to join the military, those of NCOs indicated the lowest intent A parents absence on deployment is by far the greatest disadvantage. Moving schools and finding the motivation to start anew in each place is a challenge Service children experience greater pressures post 16 due to their increased maturity and understanding of their families situation.

Appendix D Quality assessment of included studies

✔ = adequately addressed, ✔✖ = partially addressed, ✖ = not adequately addressed, NS= not stated & NA = not applicable

				Screening Questions		Qualitative Studies				
RefID	First Author	Year	Citation	Are there clear research questions?	Do the collected data allow to address the research questions?	Is the qualitative approach appropriate to answer the research question?	Are the qualitative data collection methods adequate to address the research question?	Are the findings adequately derived from the data?	Is the interpretation of results sufficiently substantiated by data?	Is there coherence between qualitative data sources, collection, analysis and interpretation?
1	Bowes, E	2008	Bowes (2018)	✔	✔	✔	✔✖ the method did not involve participants in all stages of the research process. This was explicitly stated but would have benefited from further explanation	✔	✔	✔✖ more details needed regarding the analytical process followed. Required a high degree of interpretation from the researcher
2	Clifton, G	2007	Clifton (2007)	✔	✔ Engaged in extensive fieldwork	✔	✔	✔ Focus was detailed and complex. Highly immersive.	✔ Interviews and observations where combined with interviews with parents and teachers	✔ An interpretative and reflexive process but could have provided a more coherent, and succinct reporting

| 4 | Jain, V | 2016 | Jain, Stevelink & Fear (2016) | ✓✗ Broad aims stated but needs clear research questions | ✓✗ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓✗ Incomplete data | ✓✗ Limitations relating to the application of the coding scheme | ✓✗ The paper is brief and reductive |

				Screening Questions		Mixed Method Studies				
RefID	First Author	Year	Citation	Are there clear research questions?	Do the collected data allow to address the research questions?	Is there an adequate rationale for using a mixed methods design to address the research question?	Are the different components of the study effectively integrated to answer the research question?	Are the outputs of the integration of qualitative and quantitative components adequately interpreted?	Are divergences and inconsistencies between quantitative and qualitative results adequately addressed?	Do the different components of the study adhere to the quality criteria of each tradition of the methods involved?
5	Noret, N	2015	Noret, Mayor, Al-Afaleq, Lingard & Mair (2015)	✓	✓✗ There was insufficient data provided on pupil attainment for primary school children, therefore only secondary attainment data presented	✓	✓✗ Unable to compare attainment scores with non-service pupils due to insufficient attainment data obtained	✓	✓✗ Little integration evident. More details would have improved this	✓✗ Analysis did not consider other demographic information known to impact on attainment

THE VOICE OF SERVICE CHILDREN

3	Eodanable, M	2012	Eodanable & Lauchlan (2011)	✓✗ The aim is stated but would benefit from clearer research questions	✓	✓	✓✗	✓✗ Too few participants to adequately derive findings Authors' were involved in the development and delivery of the intervention.	✓ No-control group to adequately derive findings and accurately assess the impact of the intervention beyond the quantitative descriptors.	✓✗ focus groups
6	The University of Winchester	2016	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓✗ Lack of clarity regarding analysis and therefore interpretation Would have benefited from a more systematic account of the process and supporting quotes

Appendix E Interview schedule

1.　　　　Problem free talk - can you tell me 3 important things about yourself?
2.　　　　What does feeling like you belong mean to you?
3.　　　　Do you think it is important to feel like you belong at school? Why?
4.　　　　Do you feel like you belong at this school?
- What makes you feel like people care about you at school?
- What makes you feel welcome at school?
- What makes you feel included at school?
- How does being a service child effect how you feel you belong at this school?
5.　　　　Have you ever moved to a different school? How do you feel about moving school?
6.　　　　Tell me about your friendships with other pupils.
- What makes these friendships stronger (or weaker).
- How does being a service child effect your friendships?
7.　　　　What support do you receive in school?
- What has been most helpful?
- What has been unhelpful?
- Has any of this support been connected to you being a service child?
8.　　　　What do you think is important for service children in school?
- What can teachers do to make you feel like you belong?
- What can your classmates do to make you feel like you belong?
9.　　　　Is there anything else you would like to talk about?

Appendix F Themes and Supporting Quotes

Case 1: 'Jacob' (all identities anonymised)

Initial Theme(s)	Quotes
Defining school belonging	'I'm glad I'm at school'
School reduces feelings of loneliness	'I'm like happy I'm at school because of, so I'm not as lonely with just my mum and my brother'
School builds self-confidence	'it's helping me not be bored really and not down' (self-esteem)
Value of social interaction	'I like playing with my friends'
Friendships a source of help and support	'well just that if their parents are away that they've got loads of friends so that they don't feel alone'
Shared understanding	'so, they can meet other people that have the same, em, em, don't know how to say, em, the same problem; 'it's nice to have someone else there that feels the same as you'
Keeping in touch through social media	'my friend who is not at school at the moment, on google hangouts, me and him talk to each other…we're talking to each other quite a lot'
Family a source of help and support	'my granny, grandad and uncle live up there so every day I should be going to theirs'
Supportive teachers	'some places where I go loads of people just don't answer to me and my teachers do'
Nervousness	'I lived in Warrington when I was really young and I'm going back there soon'; 'a bit nervous'
Sense of loss	'I'm going to go to senior school straight away now, so I go up there and just go to senior school so, I don't have any friends completely'
'Patch life' and sense of community	'because my dad's in the navy I've found two friends near my house, one that's in school, one that's not and they are on the same estate as me because my dad is in the navy'
External/monetary benefits	'my dad, because he's in the navy, and my mum used to, we could get service discount and tickets for troops'
Meaningful participation in school activities	'in school we've got a military service band and so every Thursday we go into the music room and do steel pans before lockdown and COVID there was em, an afterschool Art club or something like that for the military and they did loads of stuff like that. I didn't go there because, I don't know really but I know that some people came back from it saying that they really liked it'
Opportunities for connection with deployed parent	'having free time out of class sometimes to kind of think of your parents and think of all your

	good times'; 'Well at the moment they've got a thing where if your parents are going away, they've got a teddy and basically em, your parents take pictures of where there going and there trying to get it around the world and then your parents keep on sending postcards back and you can send them either to the school on email or give them to the school'.

Case 2: 'Zack'

Initial theme(s)	Quotes
Defining school belonging	'I have lots of friends there' (school); 'it feels good for example maybe me and my friend, we are having a little discussion sometimes I feel good because like we are all agreeing on the same thing in the group'; 'we all have lots of fun...we are happy
Protective role of school (as buffer against undesirable feelings)	'if daddy is away a lot, I feel sad and miss daddy, but at school I don't feel like this. At school I feel pretty good'; 'so, at school I don't really think about it but when I come home, I think about it more'.
Sense of loss	when he leaves, I feel like OK he's gone but I wish he was able to stay home'
Opportunities for connection (with deployed parent)	'sometimes I think about him at school but other times I just pay attention to the school'
Knowledge about military culture	'I don't really know about these things'; 'I don't really know what my dad does, I just play along in the day really'
Stability	'no, I've never moved school'; 'I made a friend in reception and since then we've been really close together all the way until year 5 and we are still very close together now'
Sense of indifference	'no, it doesn't affect anything, no'; I don't really think there's much to it'
Support for learning	'we go on a maths website that our school uses on the computer and it lasts about 20 minutes'
Student engagement	'I do enjoy my learning and things that we do and sometimes since we don't get enough work, the work isn't really helping me, my mum gives me some homework that will help me and some extra things to do'
Belief in school (in its faith and it's values)	'at school we have a certain school motto, it's loving to learn and learning to love...I think it means that you need to work hard to learn, try and have fun to learn and also learn to be kind to others and maybe also express feelings, yeah, be kind to one another'.

Case 3: 'Rachel'

Initial theme(s)	Quotes
Sense of belonging	'I like school'
Belief in school (it's value and purpose)	'because you need to learn to get a job and if you don't learn you won't get a job and then you get a rubbish job like something and you won't be able to write or how to read or how to do the alphabet or anything if you never went to school'
Meaningful participation in school activities	'we do forces club at school, we have a teacher that takes us on a Friday morning'; 'when daddy was away, I used to do stuff, make things. I had time out of the classroom. We go and like do stuff to try and get our minds off it. Cook things and go in like the wild area, just nice things'; 'at Christmas they task us to the pantomime one time a year'
Gaining knowledge about military culture	'we mostly get booklets'; 'once we did this and somebody's dad came in that was in the navy taught us loads of things that they do like marching and stuff like that'
Positive school climate perception	'because there are quite a lot of military families around where I live, em, the school look after the children and think about them, and look after them quite well and make time for them which is good'…that's why I like school'
Reluctance to change	'I don't want to move'
Discontinuity in learning	'a lot of kids move around and sometimes they move, but most, when you're like a year 4, they'll put you in like a year 3 class or if you're a year 3 they'll put you in a year 2 class and see how you get on and if you're really good at that they'll put you up back to where you were so you can catch up'
Friendships and sense of loss	'a lot of children come and go'; 'I do find it hard sometimes because you get left'
Lack of control	'they've got to go where their parents' jobs are'
Opportunities for collaboration	'our LSA has been like getting stuff out for us to play and we do like group stuff like throwing a ball and then if somebody drops it you have to count to five or ten and hen if that person has it and it gets to 10 or 5 it explodes on them'
Support that is responsive and accommodating	'the teacher with the service children, em, when some of the Service children are feeling sad, they just ask em, the special teacher if they have any time to see them em, like the next day.
Shared understanding	'kind of getting away from class and like seeing how many other children that are doing it so

	then you don't feel like you're on your own and you feel like you're not the only child that has somebody away, parents might go away a lot'; ' I think I get on with forces kids outside of school more because they understand more'.
High expectations	'there not really kicking you out of the class so like if you haven't finished your work you still have to do your work after'
Positive attitudes and understanding of the issues facing Service children	'The teachers don't treat us any different for it, they don't moan and say oh your off for the day because it's normal to them, they know this is what like happens, I get to see my dad come off the ship'; 'I'm used to it and just get on with it'
Engagement in military sponsored activities	'as a forces child I get time out of school to go and do families' day or when the ship comes in when daddy came in, the school let me do that and you get to do like when you do it you do like, will you get like loads of things when you go, like balloons and activities and sweets and hot dogs. They came in at Christmas and I got the day off school for it'; 'families day…they had cartoons and people dressed up in different costumes and you can get your face painted and you get like loads of food. They've also got a place called Aggies which are quite good. They know who I am, and they set some stuff through today. There quite nice and we have a chat. We get dinner sometimes and I'll get to meet some of the friends I know from different schools.
Opportunities for connection (with deployed parent)	'daddy got a talking bear for me, 'I love you Rachel'. Daddy went away a lot when I was younger, he went to sea'.
Seeking help	'sometimes people don't think your struggling and need help. Daddy goes back to sea in February'.
Understanding of the issues facing Service children	I think one of the important things for school is to be able to offer some support and understand the difficulties children experience when moving in and out of different schools….it helps when people are really understanding
Resilience	'I'm used to it and just get on with it'

Case 4: 'Daisy'

Theme(s)	Quotes
Perceptions of belonging	'you feel like you want to stay there'; you're not left out; 'friends'; 'teachers and the comments she puts in my book';
Transition	'we are thinking about moving schools'
Family as a source of support	'we are getting towards the end of daddy's career in the army and are thinking about a house near family'; everyone in our family apart from us lives there'
Anxiety	'I have lots of questions and worries about what is going on'
Loss of friendships	'there's some friends that have left that I don't see very often and some that left I normally see. In reception, there was a girl called Holly who left, and I don't see her…it made me feel a bit sad because we had so much fun together and someone called Ava left. I never got to see her again after Reception, and Sienna, and Victor left'
Friendships a source of help and support	I've still got lots of friends'; sometimes when I'm stuck my friends come and help me if they've finished'
Seeking help – supportive and sensitive adults who are available emotionally	If I was feeling sad at school because daddy was away, if it was at lunch or break time I'd wait until it was time to go in and I'd ask the teacher who was watching us when I need help'
Making connections	'I think a map in the school could be good, maybe in the library to show where our daddy's and mummy's are so we can see we've got something in common, like, oh so and so's daddy is away at the moment and I'm not on my own if that makes sense?'
Understanding of the issues facing Service children	'yeah, and then maybe the teachers could see when our parents are not there'
Sense of difference	I like being a military family but I'm also looking forward to being a normal family.
Neighbourhood resources	'There are some of my friends in my class that live on my street and I really enjoy playing with'

Case 5: Alex

Theme(s)	Quotes
Perceptions of belonging	'happy'
Sources of school belonging	'my friends and my teacher'; it's nice when they sometimes cheer me up. They try to fix my problems'
Feeling positive about transition.	'Excited…that I get to be closer to my family'
Family an important source of support	'I've found it hard not seeing family; when they visit, I don't want them to leave'
Support for transition – help negotiating a new school environment	'teachers helping me know what to do and where to put my bags and stuff'
Student engagement	'school is amazing with the maths, the English, the reading, all kinds of stuff'

Case 6: Dougie

Theme(s)	Quotes
Friendships and belonging	'what makes me feel included in school is like how I have a lot of friends'
Stability	'I've been in the same school and haven't moved yet'; Until last year, my dad hadn't gone away which is why I have been in the same school for so long.
Transition	'we've had a few different houses, but I've stayed at the same school but I'm changing school soon'
Family a source of support	'my mum wants me to be closer to her mum and dad that's in Warrington, so we're going to move from Portsmouth to Warrington
Reluctance to change	'my mum keeps trying to bribe me into going to a new school because I'm quite worried about it'
Worry	'my mum aid if I don't have any friends in my new school, she would take us back here, she will take me back down to Portsmouth so we can have, so I can have like a party down here'
School support and adjusting to a new environment	'I like it at (current school) because when a new person comes in, they always have for like their first day, someone like helping them out and telling them what to do and like if this is the right area, so if just came in and no one was guiding me I'd probably go to the toilets just to eat my lunch'
Understanding of the issues facing Service children	'The teacher could probably, like, if I make a mistake, or be a bit weird, or be a bit naughty in the first day, not go harsh on me'
Anxiety (as a consequence of parental deployment)	'some armed forces children are like a bit naughtier because their dad or mums away, so they get a bit anxious, so they have like Therapy outside like Lego therapy'
Anger	'some children get a bit mad that's why they get treatment, like they get mad and angry, they slap people across the head for no reason'.
Support that is responsive and accommodating	'I used to have Lego therapy in year 3, I was naughty in the morning because I was a bit anxious that was my dad was away, that's why I got Lego therapy if I was good in the morning'; 'When my dad went away em, I found it hard and school gave me Lego therapy. So, if I was well behaved in the morning, I could get Lego therapy which was really helpful... Cos normally when I like get, stressed I go upstairs and play with my Lego cos I have like a big imagination,

	I'm like yes this could be this like a mini digger I'm driving
Things that might be done	'buddy system'
Stable friendships	'my friendships are normally quite strong'
Neighbourhood resources ('patch life')	'We live in a married quarter estate so all the children I play with when outside, there mums and dads are in the Navy or army, so all of my friends outside of school are navy and army'.
School support and autonomy	'they do have an armed forces club, but I don't go because I don't like it'
Engagement in military sponsored activities	'they sometimes put things on like sports day for armed forces children that I think are organised by the navy'
Separation anxiety	'I get worried sometimes if mummy goes away, sometimes I get a bit angry'; I'm happy going to school because there are other adults I just don't like being by myself

Appendix G Extracts from Reflective Research Diary

Extract 1

Reflection prior to conducting interviews: Prior to commencing the interviews, I wanted to reflect on my own feelings on this subject. I am aware of the negative assumptions I hold concerning service life. These relate most profoundly to the lack of uncertainty and control service life can present to military families. I recognise my own feelings of frustration, and disappointment in such instances and the impact deployment can have on family life. However, I also recognise that belonging to a military family can provide opportunities for resilience, and positive experiences. I have seen the sense of pride my son presents when walking onto a military camp to salute his father and how he chooses to adopt the role of soldier in his play. I also recognise that the nature and extent of my feelings will differ according to the aspect of military life I am experiencing at that time. For example, I will likely hold a more negative bias during times of deployment, than if I was attending a family day organised by the military where a sense of pride and positivity is more evident. Perhaps now that my chapter of military life has ended, I am able to hold a more balanced view on the subject that I am no longer directly experiencing? Nonetheless, these are my own assumptions, and ones that will likely vary from person to person.

Extract 2

Reflection following interview with participant 2: I have just finished my second interview and wanted to reflect on the experience and the feelings it evoked for the researcher. He spoke about service life in a way I was not expecting which was really interesting but also left me feeling a little saddened. The participant did not identify himself as a service child – the concept appeared irrelevant/unimportant. I tried to explore this further within the interview as the responses he gave were interesting and offered a valuable insight into his experiences/perceptions of service life. He spoke of his 'service identity' as something he had not thought about before and this left me wondering to what extent this was based on his own personal preferences, to the actions of his family or those of school. Was it therefore appropriate for me to continue the interview defining him as a 'service child' when this was not something he explicitly acknowledged in the interview? However, the aims and rationale for the research were explicitly stated in the participant information sheet and reiterated prior to the interview which the participant had consented to. He seemed comfortable and able to articulate his thoughts throughout our conversations together. At

the end of the interview, the researcher thought about her own identity within service life, and the values she attributed to embracing this aspect of her life as a means of coping with the challenges it presented. By adopting the role of 'military wife' the researcher benefited from the support of other 'military wives' who understood what it was like to have a spouse deployed overseas for a significant period of time, and the feelings a new posting could evoke when the time came to move on. I wondered about the impact the absence of this support could have and to what extent this would leave me feeling isolated or alone? From this perspective, I was saddened to learn that the participant did not explicitly embrace this aspect of his identity as a means of coping and drawing on the support of others but recognised my own biases in respect of this. Just because you have experiences associated with military life does not mean you are defined by it and the decision to embrace the 'service identity' was my own and not the decision of others or applicable to all experiences.

Appendix H Ethics Approval

Appendix I Information Sheet for Parents

Study Title: Exploring school belonging in children of service personnel

Researcher: Kirsty Daniels
ERGO number: 55787

Your child is being invited to take part in the above research study. To help you decide whether you would like to opt in, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the information below carefully and ask questions if anything is not clear or you would like more information before you decide opt in to this research. You may like to discuss it with others but it is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you are happy for your child to participate you will be asked to sign a consent form.

What is the research about?
My name is Kirsty and I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist. My role is to provide effective, evidence based psychological assessment and support to children and young people in education, and their families in order to remove barriers to learning and make a positive difference. I am part of a service family and would value the opportunity to give service children a voice and hear about their experiences in education. As part of my doctoral training at Southampton University, I am required to carry out a research thesis starting later this year. The project has been approved by Southampton University Ethics Committee.
This study aims to gain an understanding of the support available for children with parents in the armed forces attending primary schools in the south west to help build a clearer picture of what effective practice looks like in this area. Specifically, I am interested in exploring children's lived experiences of having a parent (or parents) serving in the military and how this will impact on their sense of belonging (connection) in school. Through this research, I hope to capture children's voices to explore the following questions:

5. How do service children describe their sense of belonging in school?
6. Do service children's perceptions of belonging differ between schools with a large number of service children and schools with a small number of service children?
7. How are service children who transition to a new school welcomed into the school's own culture?
8. What adds to, and what hinders service children's sense of belonging and how does this impact upon their social and emotional wellbeing?

Why has my child been asked to participate?
Your child has been asked to participate as I am interested in listening to and representing service children's voices and hearing about the support they receive in education. This research will aim to recruit 6 – 8 participants.

What will happen to your child if they take part?
To take part in this research, your child will be asked to meet with me and have a talk about their experiences in school. In the event that access to schools is restricted as a result of ongoing measures taken to reduce the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic an alternative arrangement will be sought whereby your child can be interviewed via video link and will last approximately 45 to 60 minutes. The talk will begin with an icebreaker/getting to know you task to help them to feel relaxed and comfortable. This will be followed by a series of questions. Our conversation will be recorded using a Dictaphone to make sure I remember it correctly and will be listened to again by the researcher to help identify similarities and differences across participants experiences. The findings will be included in a report and will be made completely anonymous through the use of pseudonyms. Your child will always have the chance to ask questions or decide that they do not want to take part anymore. The research project is due to end in June 2021.

Are there any benefits to your child taking part?
Through this research I would like to give service children a voice and hear about their experiences and opinions on many aspects of military life and the impact this can have on their education and developing friendships. This research can help to improve our current understanding of the support schools currently provide for service children and identify areas for future development.

Are there any risks involved?
Children and young people with parents in the Armed Forces face unique challenges, some of which may be difficult for your child to talk about when thinking about their own experiences and feelings. This may cause psychological discomfort or distress. Your child will be reminded that they can stop or withdraw from participation at any point during this research and if they do become upset I will communicate this to a member of staff who can offer support. If you would like further support, there are a number of military charities and organisations including the Armed Forces charity SSFA.

What data will be collected?

Personal data, including the name and age of participants, will be collected. A pseudonym will be assigned to each participant. Participating information and linked pseudonyms will be stored in a separate location accessible by the researcher and supervisor only. Identifying data will only be held for as long as is necessary to complete the research study.

Interview recordings will be stored securely until they have been transcribed (written down). Transcriptions will be checked for anonymity, so that your child's name is replaced with their pseudonym and any other names mentioned by them (including the name of their school or any reference to where they live) is deleted. Once transcription is complete, the recordings will be deleted.

All data collected will be stored using encryption and have password protected access. Contact details will be stored in a lockable cabinet for the duration of the study to allow the researcher to maintain contact with participants during the study.

Will my child's participation be confidential?
Your child's participation and the information we collect about them during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential.

Only members of the research team and responsible members of the University of Southampton may be given access to data about your child for monitoring purposes and/or to carry out an audit of the study to ensure that the research is complying with applicable regulations. Individuals from regulatory authorities (people who check that we are carrying out the study correctly) may require access to your child's data. All of these people have a duty to keep your information, as a research participant, strictly confidential.

Do I have to take part?
No, it is entirely up to you to decide whether or not you want your child to take part. If you decide you want to take part, you will need to sign a consent form to show you have agreed to take part. This can be handed into the school office for me to collect.

What happens if I change my mind?
You have the right to change your mind and withdraw your child's participation up to a week following their interview. Participants will be informed that they can ask their teacher or a designated adult in school, who will be able to contact the researcher to request withdrawal of their data. If you decide that you do not want to take part in the research I will destroy your child's information. I can be contacted via email: K.J.Daniels@soton.ac.uk.

What will happen to the results of the research?

Your child's personal details will remain strictly confidential. Research findings made available in any reports or publications will not include information that can directly identify your child. A one-page summary detailing the main findings of the research will be shared with the school, and a paper will be prepared for publication in a suitable peer reviewed journal.

Where can I get more information?
For further information please contact a member of the research team:
K.J.Daniels@soton.ac.uk
c.woodcock@soton.ac.uk
Caitriona.scully@portsmouth .gov.uk

What happens if there is a problem?
If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you should speak to the researchers who will do their best to answer your questions.
If you remain unhappy or have a complaint about any aspect of this study, please contact the University of Southampton Research Integrity and Governance Manager (023 8059 5058, rgoinfo@soton.ac.uk).

University of Southampton Data Protection Privacy Notice
The University of Southampton conducts research to the highest standards of research integrity. As a publicly-funded organisation, the University has to ensure that it is in the public interest when we use personally-identifiable information about people who have agreed to take part in research. This means that when you agree to take part in a research study, we will use information about you in the ways needed, and for the purposes specified, to conduct and complete the research project. Under data protection law, 'Personal data' means any information that relates to and is capable of identifying a living individual. The University's data protection policy governing the use of personal data by the University can be found on its website (https://www.southampton.ac.uk/legalservices/what-we-do/data-protection-and-foi.page).

This Participant Information Sheet tells you what data will be collected for this project and whether this includes any personal data. Please ask the research team if you have any questions or are unclear what data is being collected about you.

Our privacy notice for research participants provides more information on how the University of Southampton collects and uses your personal data when you take part in one of our research projects and can be found at
http://www.southampton.ac.uk/assets/sharepoint/intranet/ls/Public/Research%20and%20Integrity%20Privacy%20Notice/Privacy%20Notice%20for%20Research%20Participants.pdf

Any personal data we collect in this study will be used only for the purposes of carrying out our research and will be handled according to the University's policies in line with data protection law. If any personal data is used from which you can be identified directly, it will not be disclosed to anyone else without your consent unless the University of Southampton is required by law to disclose it.

Data protection law requires us to have a valid legal reason ('lawful basis') to process and use your Personal data. The lawful basis for processing personal information in this research study is for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest. Personal data collected for research will not be used for any other purpose.

For the purposes of data protection law, the University of Southampton is the 'Data Controller' for this study, which means that we are responsible for looking after your information and using it properly. The University of Southampton will keep identifiable information about you for 10 years after the study has finished after which time any link between you and your information will be removed.

To safeguard your rights, we will use the minimum personal data necessary to achieve our research study objectives. Your data protection rights – such as to access, change, or transfer such information - may be limited, however, in order for the research output to be reliable and accurate. The University will not do anything with your personal data that you would not reasonably expect.

If you have any questions about how your personal data is used, or wish to exercise any of your rights, please consult the University's data protection webpage (https://www.southampton.ac.uk/legalservices/what-we-do/data-protection-and-foi.page) where you can make a request using our online form. If you need further assistance, please contact the University's Data Protection Officer (data.protection@soton.ac.uk).

The data will be anonymised, as much as possible. This means that all personal data will be deleted and no longer accessible and therefore the research data cannot be traced back to an individual.

Thank you for taking the time to read the information sheet and considering taking part in the research.

Appendix J Participant Information Sheet

Date 04.03.21

Research project on service children's sense of belonging in school

My name is Kirsty and I am training to be an Educational Psychologist at Southampton University. My job is to help children and young people with their learning, their emotions and friendship. I usually visit children and young people at school or in their homes and they like to tell me about things that they enjoy, might find hard or would like some help with.

I am really interested in finding out more about what things help the children of armed forces communities feel a sense of belonging in school. I am especially interested in finding out how these pupils feel about school and how they would like their school to help them to feel connected and included in school.

I would like to invite you to meet with me and have a talk about these things. I'd like to meet you (via video link), tell you about the project and ask you about the support you receive in school. I am really interested to hear your views and ideas. Our talk would take no longer than 45 to 60 minutes and I would record our conversation to make sure I remember it right.

It is completely up to you if you want to take part.

You will always have the chance to ask questions or to decide that you don't want to take part anymore. If you decide that you don't want to take part after we have spoken, please tell your teacher who will be able to contact me, and I will destroy your information. Please do this within one week of our meeting.

I will write a report and include some of the things you say, but I will make sure I don't include your name.

Please talk to your parents about the project and have a think about whether you would like to take part. If you have any questions about anything, please ask your teacher to email me at K.J.Daniels@soton.ac.uk and I will email back. When we meet, I will check that you are happy to talk with me by asking you to sign your name on a form. I have included a copy of this form so that you can discuss it with your parents if you would like to.

I hope to meet you soon and thanks for reading this.

Kirsty Daniels

Appendix K Consent Forms

PARENT CONSENT FORM

Study title: Exploring school belonging in children of service personnel
Researcher name: Kirsty Daniels
ERGO number: 55787
Participant Identification Number (if applicable*):*

Please initial the box(es) if you agree with the statement(s):

I have read and understood the information sheet (03.09.2020*/version no. 2 of participant information sheet*) and have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.	
I agree to my child's participation in this research project and agree for their data to be used for the purpose of this study.	
I understand my child's participation is voluntary and they may withdraw (within one month) for any reason without their participation rights being affected.	
I understand that my child may be quoted directly in reports of the research but that they will not be directly identified (e.g. that their name will not be used).	
I agree for my child to take part in the interview for the purposes set out in the participation information sheet and understand that these will be recorded using audio.	
I understand that personal information collected about my child such as their name will not be shared beyond the study team.	

Name of participant (print name)……………………………………………………………………………

Signature of participant……………………………………………………………………………………….

Date………………………………………………………………………………..   …………………….

Name of researcher (print name)………………………………………………………………………….

Signature of researcher ……………………………………………………………………………………

Date…………………………………………………………………………………………………….….…

PUPIL CONSENT FORM

Study title: Exploring school belonging in children of service personnel
Researcher name: Kirsty Daniels
ERGO number: 55787
Participant Identification Number (if applicable*):*

Please initial the box(es) if you agree with the statement(s):

I have read and understood the information letter and discussed it with my parent.	
I understand that it is my choice to take part and that I can change my mind at any time without giving a reason. If I change my mind and no longer want to take part, I can ask my teacher to contact Kirsty to destroy my information (up to one week after my interview).	
I am happy to talk with Kirsty and to be recorded.	
I understand that Kirsty will keep my information safe and will not use my name in her reports.	

Name of participant (print name)……………………………………………………………………

Signature of participant……………………………………………………………………………
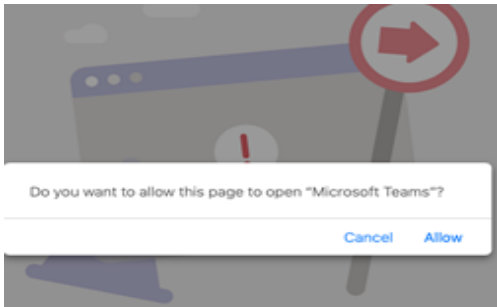
Date…………………………………………………………………………..   …………………

Name of researcher (print name)……………………………………………………………………

Signature of researcher …………………………………………………………………………

Date…………………………………………………………………………………………………..

Appendix L Microsoft Teams Guide

Set up the meeting in Teams by following these steps:	**Picture clues**
1. I will need your email address to set up a meeting.	
2. We recommend downloading the MS Teams app before our meeting. (https://products.office.com/en-gb/microsoft-teams/download-app) You do not need to sign into MS Teams before the meeting. If you try signing in you are likely to get a message saying, "something went wrong".	Sign in to Microsoft Teams Microsoft Something went wrong
3. You will receive an email which will invite you to a meeting. You do not need to 'accept' the invite. At the right time you click on the 'Join' button. Could you let me know your preferred phone number so I can phone you if there are any problems.	Join Microsoft Teams Meeting +44 20 3321 5213 United Kingdom, London (Toll) Conference ID: 645 926 100#
4. After pressing the 'Join' button Teams will ask you to download the Teams app or use the web instead. If you have downloaded Teams press the "Launch it now" button. **Mac users:** Safari does not fully support Teams meetings. Either use a different web browser (ie: Google Chrome) or press "Allow" to open the Team app.	Experience the best of Teams meetings with the desktop app Download the Windows app Join on the web instead Already have the Teams app? Launch it now Do you want to allow this page to open "Microsoft Teams"? Cancel Allow

5. Once you have clicked 'Join' you will be invited to wait in the lobby. I will get a message asking if I want to 'admit' you and once I click on the button we will be connected.