

Caledonian Postings

SPRING 2017 > UPDATES FROM THE ROYAL CALEDONIAN EDUCATION TRUST



EDUCATION: Focusing on the wellbeing of children and young people in Scotland

Radical changes ahead for Scottish school system

The Scottish Government is set to announce plans later this year for the introduction of a new Education Act, following the launch of a new consultation paper, which could influence the Scottish school system for generations to come.

The 'Governance Review – Empowering Teachers, Parents and Communities to Achieve Excellence and Equity in Education' unveiled by Education Minister John Swinney, seeks views about how education in Scotland is run, who should take decisions in relation to the education of children and young people, and how funding can be made fairer.

There has been much discussion about what he may have in mind and, if fundamental overhaul is needed, what form it should take. Our response to the consultation was concerned with the continued statutory duty of care on the Scottish Government to address the needs of all children in educational establishments – including children and young people from Armed Forces families, a potentially overlooked and vulnerable group.

With a 200-year history of supporting this cohort of young learners, we welcomed the opportunity to participate in this Governance Consultation, not only with general observations, which may affect all learners, but also with a specific focus on the issues, which may impact more significantly on learners from Armed Forces families.

In Scotland, there are 85,000 child dependents living with a veteran parent and thousands more child dependents living with serving members of the Armed Forces. The majority, if not all, of these children are in the Scottish school system and, as the only charity in Scotland whose focus is on the education and wellbeing of children and young people from Armed Forces families, we have a responsibility to ensure their interests are given due consideration in the consultation.

Our responses to the 17 questions in the consultation highlighted the specific education needs of children and young people from Armed Forces families relating to: transitions; admissions; additional support needs; funding formulae; parental engagement; initial teacher training; continuing professional development; and models for networks and clusters.

For those interested, our full response to the Governance Review can be downloaded from our website www.rcet.org.uk

We all need to take responsibility for getting it right for every child and delivering excellence and equity in our schools, and the consultation is an important step forward in the right direction. Please be assured that RCET will do everything we can to support these aims on behalf of Armed Forces learners and their families.

A strong future

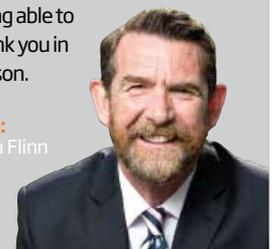
Hello and welcome to the latest issue of Caledonian Postings. By the time you receive this, I will have been in post a few months shy of a year – everything doesn't seem so new anymore.

It's an exciting and challenging time to have joined RCET. Our move to Scotland is now complete and without doubt, after 200 years this was the correct decision. It's right that as we seek to serve the children of Armed Forces personnel in Scotland that we are here, at the heart of the action. This does not mean we will lose our London roots. We have a rich history and I look forward to working closely with our London based supporters, both at an individual and organisational level.

I'm proud to have joined a charity who sees itself as 'Scotland's Armed Forces Children's Charity'. Too often the needs and interests of those children have been forgotten or ignored and those most in need of support can slip through the net. Over the coming year, we will be considering how best we can meet that need and as a small charity how we should fund any new services we want to develop. I will keep you up to date with our deliberations.

Finally, can I thank you, our loyal supporters. Without you, RCET could not undertake its vital work and in the months to come I look forward to meeting more of you and hopefully being able to thank you in person.

CEO:
Colin Flinn



Shining a light on the needs of children and young people

There are currently an estimated 240,000 veterans living in Scotland. While there are many Armed Forces charities working with the veterans themselves, there has been very little focus on the children within these families. Veteran families make up 10 per cent of Scotland's population and we estimate there are approximately 85,000 child dependents living with a veteran parent.

The vast majority of veterans make the transition to civilian life very successfully – entering into employment, settling into new homes and contributing positively to their local communities. For a small percentage however, this is not the case and quite often in these instances it's the young people who need our support.

Findings from a recent evaluation conducted by RCET, revealed as many as 71 per cent of the young people we support through our grants programme are living with unemployment; 65 per cent of the families are living with debt problems. As many as 43 per cent are living with mental health issues and 49 per cent are living with either ill health or disability. Nine per cent of the young people we support are actually carers for their veteran parent.

We have awarded more than



SUPPORT: RCET supports and cares for hundreds of Armed Forces' families

£1 million in lifeline funding to families who need our support. This might be to help pay for essential school clothing or to fund after school clubs and activities that help develop their confidence as well as establish interests and friendships outside of school. We have also supported 800 Scots from low-income families into further education by contributing towards living expenses for those who wouldn't otherwise be able to afford to attend college or university.

As well as providing grants funding to those experiencing financial difficulties, disability

or ill health, we also run a very successful education programme in Scottish schools. This serves to raise awareness among teaching staff of the anxieties some Armed Forces children and young people experience during times of deployment and frequent moving of schools and the learning obstacles this can present.

Over the last five years, the Education Programme has delivered vital resources and support to in excess of 15,000 pupils, and more than 100 schools in Scotland. We also deliver CPD training to education practitioners addressing topics

such as Dealing with Separation, Developing an Emotionally Literate School and Moving Schools. The latest in this suite of training resources focuses on children living in a veteran family.

This is being particularly well received by the organisations we work with, many of whom have had to get by for too long with little in the way of relevant support materials, as is evidenced by Charlie Allanson-Oddy, Consultant Psychological Therapist at Veterans First Point Lothian. She said: "The effect of mental ill health on our families is well acknowledged. At VIP Lothian we encourage the



PHD RESEARCH: Evelyn Cook

SERVICE CHILDREN'S RESEARCH GROUP

The RCET Education Programme facilitates a small network of people who are interested in and / or are undertaking research involving Armed Forces families. The Service Children's Research Group (SCRG) has members from across the UK and they keep in touch via email sharing information and updates.

At the most recent SCSCG meeting, guests heard from PhD student Evelyn Cook who has been commissioned by RCET, in collaboration with the University of Stirling, to conduct vital research into the school experiences of young people from Armed Forces families in Scotland.

The study aims to explore how children and young people from armed forces families describe their experiences; what makes a positive difference to children's experiences and the implications for educational practice.

Evelyn reported at the meeting that all her fieldwork for the

Challenge events 2017

We are participating in an exciting programme of fun and challenging events across Scotland to help raise vital funds that will help young people from Armed Forces families who urgently need our support.



For both the Kiltwalk and Total Warrior events, RCET have secured free places for anyone who commits to raising funds for our charity. Please contact us if you would like more information or to take part.

Kiltwalk GLASGOW
Sunday, 30 April
50 free places available!

Forth Bridge Abseil
Sunday, 21 May
SOLD OUT

Kiltwalk ABERDEEN
Sunday, 4 June

50 free places available!

Kiltwalk DUNDEE
Sunday, 20 August
50 free places available!

Pedal for Scotland
Sunday, 10 September
Own places only

Total Warrior
Saturday, 16 &
Sunday, 17 September
50 free places available!

Kiltwalk EDINBURGH
Sunday, 17 September
50 free places available!



Roll of thanks

A huge thank you goes to all the individuals and organisations who have made generous donations in recent months.

- The Ann Jane Green Trust
- Caledonian Society of Holland Lincolnshire
- Caledonian Society of London
- The Christina Mary Hendrie Trust
- The Patron's Fund
- Queen Victoria School, Dunblane
- All of our regular individual donors.

Change of Bank Notice

Important notice: RCET changed bank in February 2017. Please destroy any record you have of our old account. If you wish to make a donation by bank transfer please contact the RCET directly on 0131 240 2224 or email fundraising@rcet.org.uk

engagement of families in all aspects of the service and have particularly noted a lack of culturally relevant written material that could foster greater understanding of this topic and a reduction in the stigma surrounding it.”

> For more information about our Grants Programme, criteria for eligibility, or to obtain an application, please email grants@rcet.org.uk To request training or for more information about our Education Programme, email edprogofficer@rcet.org.uk or call 0131 240 2224, or visit our website www.rcet.org.uk

research is complete and the data analysis is now underway. The full findings are expected to be reported in autumn this year.

> If you or someone you know is interested in becoming a member of SCRG, please email edprogofficer@rcet.org.uk

Caledonian Postings is written and edited by Jen Nash. For enquiries or to submit editorial, email marketing@rcet.org.uk

Community Events

Throughout the summer, our fundraiser Matt will be attending military community events across Scotland to talk to serving personnel, veterans and their families about the support RCET can give to families in need. If you or someone you know might be interested in finding out more, then please do come along. If you know of an event that RCET

should attend, please contact us.

You can see us at:

- Leuchars Station Open Day
Saturday, 3 June
- Helensburgh Armed Forces Day
Saturday, 10 June
- Stirling Military Show
Saturday, 17 June
- RAF Lossiemouth Family Day
Saturday, 5 August

> To find out more about any of the community challenge events, to take part in our fundraising challenges - included above - or to register to make a donation, please call 0131 240 2224 or email fundraising@rcet.org.uk

> For further information on RCET, please visit our website at www.rcet.org.uk

Dazzling performance



BOTANICS RECEPTION:
Natasha Watson and Colin Flinn

Student network meeting

In February, RCET facilitated a meeting with students and staff from Barnard Castle, Lomond, Strathallan and Queen Victoria schools to discuss support for pupils from Armed Forces families. Among the topics discussed, they shared good practice from their own schools, ideas of what else they would like to do and how best to keep in touch. The students also put forward suggestions on what RCET could be doing to help, including:

- Setting up a student network online forum
- Providing articles for inclusion in their school handbooks
- Compiling a glossary of terminology used by Armed Forces families
- Staff training.

Our work with these young people to develop military language and hierarchy guides will not only benefit school staff but will also provide opportunities for training with helpline staff at other charities and organisations who may come into contact with Armed Forces children. Any secondary schools interested in finding out more about this project should email edprofficer@rcet.org.uk

Natasha Watson, 20, Jade Scott, 13, and Carla Grant gave very moving accounts of the support they received from RCET when it was most needed, at our 'Moving North' charity reception at Edinburgh's Royal Botanic Gardens.

Guests from the Edinburgh business community, armed forces community and third sector

attended the evening, which was a resounding success. As well as our three scholars, guests also heard a personal and hugely supportive testimonial of the importance of the Trust's work from RCET Honorary Vice President Brigadier Gary Deakin OBE, and were treated to a dazzling solo performance from Swan Lake by rising ballet star Natasha Watson.

SCSG meeting

The Service Children's Support Group (SCSG) provides a valuable service advising RCET on the best use of limited resources and sharing good practice in meeting the needs of children and young people from Armed Forces families. Members include individuals from state and independent schools, Scottish Government, Education Scotland, Association of Directors of Education in Scotland (ADES), Enquire, University of Stirling, Directorate Children and Young People (DCYP) and RCET representatives.

The guest speaker at the January meeting was Keir Bloomer, former Director of Education and then Chief Executive of Clackmannanshire Council. The title of his presentation was '*Why the Scottish Government's Governance Review is necessary and what the current issues are.*'

Dr Bill Maxwell, Chief Executive of Education Scotland, has confirmed he will be our guest speaker in May.

Register now for 'Building Brighter Futures Together'

Royal Caledonian Education Trust
Established 1911

Scotland's Armed Forces Children's Charity

Are you interested in or involved with supporting the education and wellbeing of Armed Forces children and young people?

REGISTER NOW

'Building Brighter Futures Together'
2017 Practitioners' Conference
7 November 2017
Dynamic Earth, Edinburgh
9am-5pm
FREE

Keynote Speaker: Dr Suzanne Zeedyk

Register your attendance at Eventbrite
www.rcetconference2017.eventbrite.co.uk

Organised by the Royal Caledonian Education Trust

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