

## Exciting times for education

### RCET secures new partnerships to support Armed Forces children

These are exciting times for our Education Programme as it continues to go from strength to strength, writes Moira Leslie, RCET Education Manager.

As we revealed in the last issue of *Caledonian Postings*, the 2018 Year of the Young People campaign, which is being led by the Scottish Government in collaboration with a team of delivery partners, aims to give young people aged eight to 26 new opportunities to influence decision-making on issues affecting their lives.

Listening to the voices of our young people has, and continues to be, an important part of our work and

as you'll see on page 4 is set to play an even greater role going forward.

Recently, we added the Open University (OU) and Children 1st to our ever-expanding network of partners. With the OU we will be exploring how their Young Applicants in Schools Scheme can benefit Armed Forces young people whose interrupted learning may have led to gaps in their education.

We will be working with Children 1st on a new project in Moray and our existing partnership with the Highland Council is a model of good practice that can be shared with other authorities – watch out for more details in the next *Postings*.

Following the huge success of the Teen Talks leaflets, we've produced five mini video clips highlighting issues raised by young people in the Teen Talks Project. These clips will soon be available through social media and our website.

I was lucky enough to be part of the Q&A panel at the SCiP Alliance National Conference in London on 8 October. I also presented a workshop on how RCET



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## WELCOME

Dear friend,  
Welcome to a rather different issue of *Caledonian Postings*, one that's starting to focus on big changes at RCET.

This is a time of significant development for our organisation.

We have a new five-year strategic plan and we're developing new services – all designed to help us support more Armed Forces children and young people from serving and veteran families.

Over the summer we've recruited new staff, planned new services, and continued to support many children and young people across the country.

What's more, we've brought new Trustees on board and carried on the task of refining our founding Objects so we can widen the support we give. On top of all this, Matthew Middler, our Fundraising Manager, moved on to pastures new.

Since we're a small organisation this level of change puts us under pressure. Much of the work is ongoing and that means we're not quite ready to give you all the details. Crucially though, it has



not stopped us helping the children and families who depend on us.

Our Children and Family Support programme has continued to provide vital help at times of need. The RCET Education Programme has delivered resources, advice and guidance to a wide range of educationalists allowing them to better support Armed Forces children and young people.

We have some fantastic updates and stories to tell you – and we'll do so in the near future.

In this edition of *Postings* we are whetting your

appetite with some samples of the work under way.

Next time, we'll have a bumper issue with lots of news about our new services, including:

- Our Young People's Participation Project
- Our Family Support service including our Crisis Intervention Fund
- Policy development – how we aim to influence decision makers to improve the lives of Armed Forces Children
- A focus on our new staff and our Trustees
- More about the change to our Objects.

On behalf of all of us I would like to say a huge thank you to you for your continued support. You are helping us to grow and develop so we can enhance the lives of even more children and young people. At RCET there is lots to look forward to in 2019 and we are excited to share these developments with you soon. Meanwhile, may I wish you a very happy, enjoyable and peaceful Christmas.

**Colin Flinn**  
Chief Executive, RCET

Not seeing your parents/ Dad often when he's on deployment.

SUPPORT

# We are here for the children and their families

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uses research to inform its work. You can see more online at [www.scipalliance.org/events/scip-alliance-annual-conference](http://www.scipalliance.org/events/scip-alliance-annual-conference)

We're now working much more closely with the further and higher education sectors through our SCiP Scotland Hub.

We've contributed to online distance learning modules produced by the University of the Highlands and Islands. Our package includes an introduction, the chance to see the *Forces Kids - This is My Life* DVD and follow-up activities based on RCET's Support Pack.

It has already been used on nine Highlands and Islands campuses and it's hoped other educational establishments will take advantage of this useful pack. Indeed, a similar project is under way with Skills Development Scotland to enhance their in-house training programmes.

In response to more and more requests for advice from across the UK, we are developing our Advisory service. We're also increasingly being asked to provide bespoke training for people who support Armed Forces children and young people - Training the Trainers and working directly with the children and young people themselves.

These new developments are having a very positive impact on the direction and ongoing growth of the Education Programme.



The Children and Families Support Service has seen a massive increase in demand during 2018. By the middle of the year, applications were up by over 30 per cent compared to 2017, and we had increased our award to clients by more than £10,000.

We continue to be asked for help with school uniforms for younger children, and school activities for all age groups.

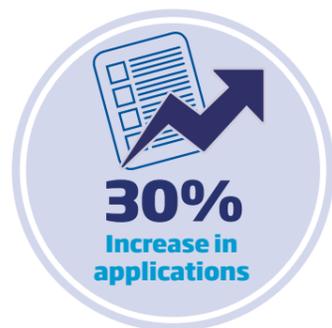
At the same time, we've seen a significant increase in people who need wider family support/crisis intervention services. Much of this is down to benefit reform and social policy changes affecting people who have limited resources.

Right now, we are focused on developing future

services. In particular, we're exploring a more targeted approach to respite care, and wider tailored support for young people (especially those who have a caring role), as well as expanding our crisis intervention funding.

We believe these services can be developed and delivered by increasing our partnership work with Children in Scotland and the wider children's charity sector. We have a clear aim of increasing the number of people we help by at least 10 per cent a year.

As always, we're determined to deliver high quality, tailored support services for children and young people from Armed Forces families living in a modern, inclusive Scotland.

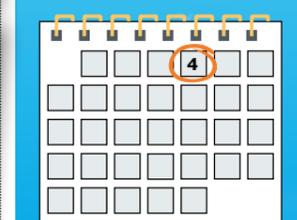


## Festive opening hours



DECEMBER 2018

RCET will close at **3.30pm** on **24 December 2018**



JANUARY 2019

We will reopen on **4 January 2019**, when normal working hours will resume.

You can keep up to date with us on our website [rcet.org.uk](http://rcet.org.uk) or follow us on our social media channels, on **Facebook at RCETScot** and **Twitter @RCET\_Scot**

## Safeguarding the NTO post to help Armed Forces children in Scotland



CAROLYN MACLEOD

Children of service families have a very particular lifestyle. Frequent moves, within the UK and overseas, create a pattern of regular transition between homes, friends and schools. This means it can be difficult for them to access all the learning opportunities available to them.

Most will attend several different schools during their years in education. While that brings some advantages, it also brings challenges. They may feel as though they're behind their classmates, or struggling to get to grips with a different education system.

In Scotland, we have processes and people in place to help Forces children settle into the education system. Carolyn MacLeod is one of them.

She's been on secondment to the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland (ADES) since 2012. As National Transitions Officer (NTO), her role is to help remove the barriers to learning that can be experienced by Forces children, and to support them as they move into, through and out of school education across the country.

Working with key partners across Scotland, like local authorities, schools, children's services and the Armed Forces, Carolyn's job is to facilitate increased understanding between the worlds of education services and the Armed Forces.

For the past six years, the NTO secondment has been funded by the MOD, through the Education Support Fund (ESF). That funding ceased on 31 July

2018. While a new ESF package will begin in April 2019, and ADES, in consultation with RCET, has already submitted an application for future funding for the NTO role, there remains a gap to fill.

"Carolyn's work plays a critical role in supporting the learning and education of Armed Forces children in Scotland," said Colin Flinn, Chief Executive of RCET. "It has been highly successful and RCET has been delighted to support ADES through Carolyn's secondment.

"It was vital to maintain the continuity of the NTO post, which is why we were pleased to step in and provide full funding as of the beginning of August."

In the coming months, Carolyn will focus on:

- Ensuring local authorities remain fully engaged

with the issues experienced by Forces children

- Continuing to identify and share good practice
- Meeting parents, children and young people to identify and support their needs
- Encouraging national data collection and analysis related to the education of Forces children.

Carolyn will also be further developing the website, [forceschildreneducation.scot](http://forceschildreneducation.scot) specially created to help parents, educators and partner organisations understand how the Armed Forces and the Scottish education sector can work together to provide Forces children with all the support, education and opportunities they need.



In November the nation paused to mark the centenary of armistice at the end of the First World War and to commemorate the contribution of all military and civilian servicemen and women.

RCET paid tribute and asked the public to remember the devastating effect WWI had on children and young people.

It is estimated that approximately 250,000 boys and young men under the age of 19 fought in the war. Stories abound of recruitment officers turning a blind eye to boys and young men lying about their age in order to enlist.

A significant number of these boys and young men were killed or injured. In the Battle of the Somme for example, approximately 18,000 'boy soldiers' died or were wounded.

It was not only boys and young men who experienced first-hand the horrors of war. There are stories of girls and young women lying about their age to join Voluntary Aid Detachments (VADs). VADs undertook a range of voluntary work with women carrying out duties caring for large numbers of sick and injured soldiers throughout Britain and overseas in field hospitals.

Read the full story online at [www.rcet.org.uk](http://www.rcet.org.uk)

# Meet the new members of the team

We'd like you to meet Nina Collins and Sarah Rogers, who share their first impressions of life at RCET

## NINA COLLINS

### Youth Participation Manager

I am delighted to have joined the team at the Royal Caledonian Education Trust as Youth Participation Manager. Along with starting to familiarise myself with the Armed Forces, I have been busy over the last few weeks, reaching out to connect with the dedicated professionals who work with Armed Forces families. I have also had the pleasure of meeting some young people who have already been very open with me about being part of an Armed Forces family.

RCET's Participation Project will provide Armed Forces children and young people a platform to talk about their experiences and inform the services provided for them. In

particular, it will look to reach vulnerable young people in both the serving and veteran communities, who are less confident in stepping forward to share their thoughts. In addition to developing some new forums, the project will seek to link to the existing flourishing forums already established.

A major survey has now begun which will enable RCET to compare the experiences of Armed Forces children and young people with their peers. The survey will be followed by focus groups, allowing us to discuss the issues raised in the survey in greater depth. Please contact myself or Sarah Rogers,



our Policy Officer, if you would like more information about the survey.

> Visit [www.surveylegend.com/s/1175](http://www.surveylegend.com/s/1175)



## SARAH ROGERS

### Policy and Research Officer

My role as your new Policy Officer is to develop our understanding of issues related to Armed Forces

children and young people. Issues like their mental health and wellbeing, their school education, access to funding for higher education and most notably, the lack of accurate data about them.

It's also my job to create a robust evidence base that will allow us to respond to and influence developments in law, policy and practice as they apply to Forces children. So I've spent my first few months developing my understanding of the Armed Forces

community, and of their young people in particular, and scoping out policy priorities for the coming year.

We're committed to making sure that those priorities directly reflect the views and experiences of our core group, which is why our priorities will also be determined in part by the findings of the survey created specifically for the people we're here to support.

It will be launching in the near future, and findings will help us identify the issues of most importance to children and young people in serving and veteran families.

Looking ahead, I'm excited about taking our policy work forward, and positively influencing developments that enhance the wellbeing of the children and young people we're here to support.