

WELCOME >



Dear Friend,
It is my pleasure once again to be writing to you and, before I go any further, I do hope you and your family are continuing to keep safe and well.

As you will see from my covering letter, this will also be the last time I will be writing to you, as I retire as CEO at the end of the year. I could never have anticipated that most of my last year with this wonderful charity would be leading it through such remarkable and difficult times. As I said in the spring of this year however, we had to adapt, and adapt quickly to ensure that we supported all those that we work with, but especially those in most need. As you will see inside this edition, the team at RCET rose to the challenge and through all of our services, we have responded to support children and young people in innovative ways through this pandemic.

But now to the future and it is my great pleasure to welcome Laura Falconer to RCET as the new Chief Executive. Laura brings a wealth of experience and knowledge and I absolutely wish her every success.

Finally, and for the last time, thank you for all your support during the last five years – both to RCET and to me personally. You are the lifeblood of RCET and I very much look forward to looking in from the outside on the next stage of RCET's journey.

Colin Flinn
Chief Executive, RCET

NEW CEO

RCET welcomes new CEO Laura Falconer

"I AM HONOURED AND EXCITED TO HAVE BEEN SELECTED TO LEAD THIS VITALLY IMPORTANT CHARITY"

We are delighted to announce Laura Falconer as our new Chief Executive following the retirement of Colin Flinn in December of this year. Laura will join RCET at the end of November and will take over as Chief Executive from January 2021.

Our Chairman Malcolm Noble writes: "We are hugely proud of what has been achieved by Colin and the team over the last five years. We have enhanced existing services and developed new ones. We have adopted a children's rights approach with a commitment to listening to, and acting on the voices of Armed Forces children and young people. We have doubled our workforce and implemented new organisational and financial strategies which allow RCET to have a

stronger and more sustainable future.

"We are delighted that Laura will be joining us as our new Chief Executive and believe that she is the right person to build on RCET's successes and help us to reach every Armed Forces child, or young person in Scotland who needs us."

Laura will join RCET from Barnardos where she is currently Assistant Director of Impact: Mental Health & Wellbeing. She brings with her more than 30 years of experience in supporting children and young people, and developing and managing children's services.

On her appointment, Laura said: "I am honoured and excited to have been selected to lead this vitally important charity. I am passionately committed to ensuring our



children and young people are at the centre of all we do, and I am looking forward to working with them and the team to lead RCET into the next stage of its development."

Young people from our Military Youth Voice Scotland Forum were involved in the recruitment process, and in choosing Laura as the new Chief Executive. They said: "Felt more involved in RCET and it was nice to have an impact on who was going to be listening to me. Felt like I was going to impact on the future children that will be helped."

"I am passionately committed to ensuring our children and young people are at the centre of all we do, and I am looking forward to working with them and the team to lead RCET into the next stage of its development"

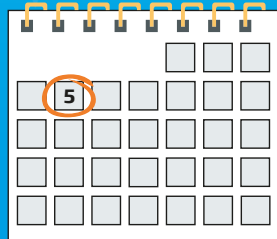
RCET festive times



DECEMBER 2020

During the festive period, the staff at RCET will be taking a well-earned break. RCET will close on

Monday 21 December 2020



JANUARY 2021

We will reopen on **Tuesday 5 January 2021**

We hope everyone has a lovely and safe Christmas and New Year.



You can keep up to date with us on our website rcet.org.uk or follow us our social media channels, on Facebook at [RCETScot](https://www.facebook.com/RCETScot) and Twitter @RCET_Scot

SUPPORT

R&R Young Carers Fund Launched!

We launched our R&R Young Carers Fund through generous support from the Scottish Veterans Fund, managed by Veterans Scotland.

What will we fund?

The Fund allows Armed Forces Young Carers to apply for up to £250 to spend on respite items or activities of their choice. This can be alone, with friends, or with their cared-for person or other members of their family. With the current Covid-19 restrictions in mind, the activity does not have to be a holiday break or day activity, it can be anything that suits the young carer's needs.

Why was the Fund created?

The Fund was created to support Armed Forces young carers. Being a young carer can be hugely rewarding, but it can also be tough and getting the right break at the right time is so important.

In 2018 we surveyed more than 100 Armed Forces children and young people from across Scotland online. This showed that more than 20 per cent were young carers, with a third of these having significant caring responsibilities such as giving medication, and personal care.

Even more reported undertaking caring responsibilities without identifying as a carer, so we knew there was more of a hidden group who weren't accessing any support services. On top of this, we also know that many Armed Forces young people were taking on caring roles or additional caring responsibilities, sometimes temporarily when a parent was deployed.

The circumstances of Armed Forces young carers' lives can often add additional complexities to the types of support they might need while also leaving them more likely to be isolated from local community networks and universal services.

This prompted us to launch the R&R Young Carers Fund in October. We believe that the Fund is needed now more than

ever as lockdowns and restrictions can see young carers caring responsibilities increase, and their opportunities for respite decrease. We also know that many families, especially those from Veteran households, had their finances impacted by Covid-19 exacerbating the ability of young carers in the household to access respite activities.

How do I apply?

Young carers can apply by downloading our Application Form & Guidance Notes from our website at www.rcet.org.uk/help/family-support/young-carers-support

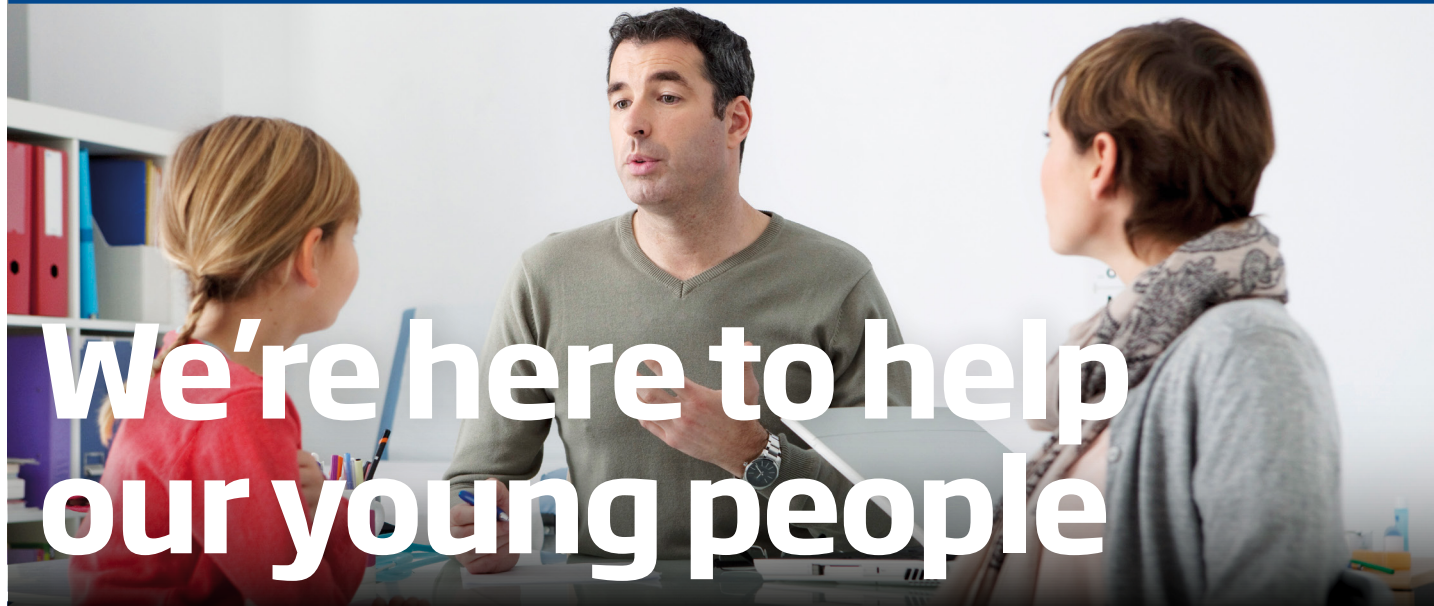
Your application needs to be signed by a Supporter – somebody you know and trust such as a support worker or a guidance teacher – and we recommend that you fill in the form together. This will help you with any questions you may find difficult to answer and to make sure you've thought about some of the challenges that might prevent you from taking part in your chosen respite activity.

1/3 surveyed had significant caring responsibilities

> If you need any help or have any questions about the R&R Fund, please email [Karen at familysupport@rcet.org.uk](mailto:familysupport@rcet.org.uk) or by calling 0131 322 7350.

Over 20% surveyed were young carers





We're here to help our young people

We hear from Children & Young People Development Manager Joanne Aitken on why SAMH is partnering with RCET to launch Your Mind Matters, our first bespoke wellbeing service for Armed Forces young people. She says:

"SAMH is delighted to be partnering with RCET on the Your Mind Matters programme, a brand new project, which aims to improve the wellbeing of children and young people from tri-service Serving, Reservist and Veteran families.

"This project is important because, while we know it can be really hard being a young person, it can be especially hard for children and young people from Armed Forces and Veteran families who face particular challenges such as parental deployments, repeated moves across the world, repeatedly making and losing important friendships, and additional caring responsibilities all of which can have a big impact on their confidence, wellbeing and resilience. We also know that children from some Veteran families will be facing their own

unique challenges as the family unit struggles with debt, unemployment, poverty, poor mental and/or physical health of a parent, and in some cases issues such as substance misuse and domestic violence."

As part of the project, SAMH has recruited a Wellbeing Worker who will work with children and young people living near Helensburgh and Kilmarnock. The Wellbeing Worker shall link with children, young people, their families, schools, health and youth groups to firstly understand what the needs are of these young people and what resources currently exist to support them. The Wellbeing Worker will organise a programme of individual work and group work that aims to help improve mental

health and wellbeing, reduce isolation, improve confidence and resilience including helping young people to develop the strategies to deal with life's challenges.

Alongside this RCET has recruited a Digital Participation Worker who will develop, alongside Armed Forces young people, a wellbeing tool which we hope will reach as many children and young people as possible across the country, ensuring all children and young people have access to information and support around wellbeing regardless of where they live.

Find out more about SAMH:

For more information. Visit www.samh.org.uk or follow [@SAMHTweets](https://twitter.com/SAMHTweets) on Twitter

- [f SAMHmentalhealth](https://www.facebook.com/SAMHmentalhealth) on Facebook
- [s samhscotland](https://www.instagram.com/samhscotland) on Instagram.

What to do if you or someone you love needs support:

If you need more information on mental health, you can use the SAMH Information Service and find helpful information on general mental health problems at www.samh.org.uk/info Their info team can help connect you with local mental health support and information. Their team is available Monday-Friday 9am-6pm (except on Bank Holidays) on 0344 800 0550 or info@samh.org.uk

If you or someone you care about needs help urgently, please contact organisations such as Samaritans or Shout! Both services are free, confidential and anonymous. They are available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Samaritans – Call 116 123 Shout! – Text SHOUT to 85258 Please seek out support via samh.org.uk/seekingsupport



"This project is important because, while we know it can be really hard being a young person, it can be especially hard for children and young people from Armed Forces and Veteran families"



Forces Matters 2021 RCET Conference

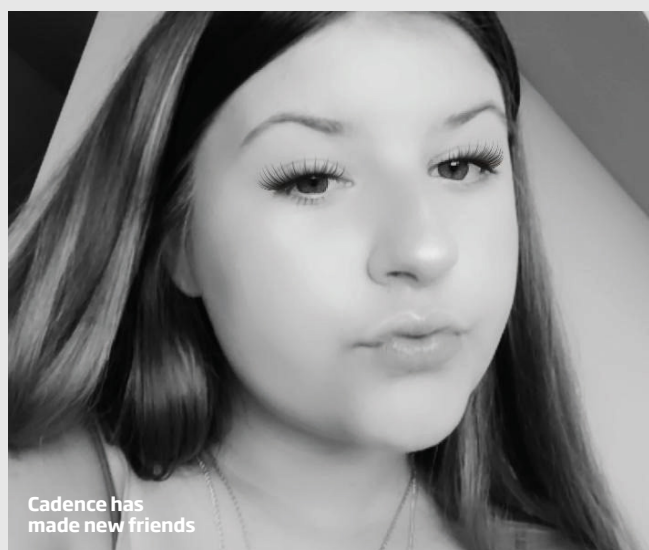
Date: 3 November

Location: Dynamic Earth, Edinburgh

SAVE THE
DATE

Group has boosted my confidence

CADENCE, A FORUM MEMBER OF MILITARY YOUTH VOICE SCOTLAND, SHARES WHY SHE JOINED OUR YOUTH PARTICIPATION PROGRAMME



Cadence has made new friends

I got involved in Military Youth Voice Scotland – RCET's National Youth Voice Forum – as I was able to meet other young people that experienced similar experiences as me and make new friendships. The Forum also allows me to express any opinions I have on important topics involving military life and those opinions can be used to help others who may be going through difficult situations.

Through the Forum I would like to achieve accessible support for those with a military background to help them express their feelings on things such as deployment and big moves. I would also like to achieve a wider spread of awareness about how

such backgrounds can affect experiences in places like schools.

I believe others should get involved with Military Youth Voice Scotland because it's such an amazing group to be a part of. You are able to gain confidence in expressing your opinions and it also gives you many opportunities that you may not have been able to experience before.

This group has given me the opportunity to meet people like me and build friendships. It has helped me to develop my confidence and I can see a change in myself as my confidence grows and I am able to do more to make the changes I want to see.

“This group has given me the opportunity to meet people like me and build friendships”



We're lis

AS AN ORGANISATION WE BELIEVE THAT:

- THE EXPERIENCES OF ARMED FORCES CHILDREN MATTER
- THEIR VOICES DESERVE TO BE HEARD
- THAT THEY ARE THE 'AUTHORITY' ON THEIR EXPERIENCES
- THEY ARE THE BEST PEOPLE TO BE CHANGE-MAKERS FOR THEIR OWN COMMUNITY.

Young people's involvement in the process to recruit a new CEO began prior to the post being advertised. We held a session via Zoom to allow forum members to consider the qualities they would value in a CEO. These qualities were shared with the recruitment agency to ensure young people's voices

were heard in the development of the person specification for the role. Among other things, young people wanted the new CEO to be committed, confident and show respect to people no matter what their age.

Four young people volunteered to be part on a young person's interview panel, and they met with



Everything was outstanding

Great night, thank you

"I really enjoyed everything"

Creating new memories

Listening

Nina Collins and Scott Sangster to learn about interviewing skills and to develop their questions for candidates. The group decided to allocate a scoring system to support them to choose their preferred candidate. The young people thoroughly enjoyed the experience and we can't praise them enough for the diligent way they in which they undertook their roles. Here's some of their comments:

"I felt more involved in RCET and it was nice to have an impact on who was going to be listening to me. Felt like I was going to impact

of the future children that will be helped. I would love to participate in this sort of thing again!"

"I felt supported the whole way through so the system (of how we planned and did the interviews) was not difficult.

"I really enjoyed this opportunity. I think it was an amazing experience and it was nice to interact with others, I think it went really well and I liked the flow."

"I felt like I was actively involved in the decision, we worked well as a team."

"I really enjoyed this opportunity. I think it was an amazing experience and it was nice to interact with others. I think it went really well and I liked the flow"

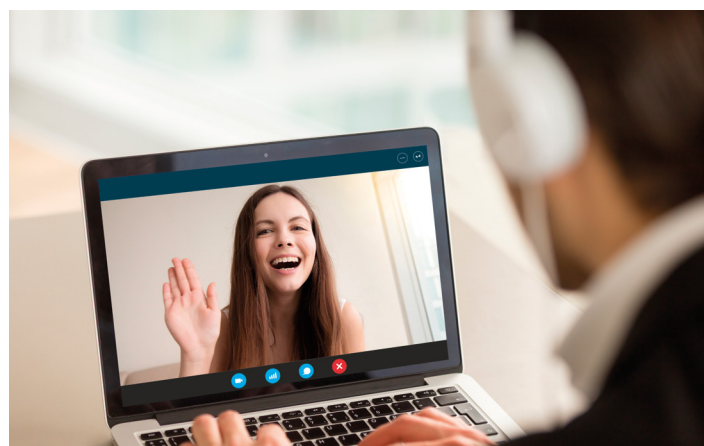
"Amazing! I enjoyed seeing my friends again and working with them. Thought we got across our views in the panel and listened to everyone. Would've loved to do it face to face but because of COVID totally understand and still loved it."

The last few months have been challenging for everyone. Young Scot's Lockdown Lowdown Survey¹ results highlighted the concerns young people had in terms of their wellbeing, education and future

employment prospects. The Youth Participation Programme, in partnership with MoD Community Development Workers, delivered 50 online sessions for forum members, giving young people an opportunity to keep connected with workers and each other. Young people shaped the sessions which focused around many different types of activities (Kahoot quizzes were a firm favourite!); most importantly the sessions gave young people the space to talk about their lockdown experiences and be reassured that we were there for them.

The sessions culminated in a Virtual Sleepout Event, which was devised with young people, they had the opportunity to chose activities and each young person attending was sent an activity kit to allow them to take part. Young people (and staff) really enjoyed the event which is something we would never have envisioned delivering at the start of the year!

1 <https://bit.ly/2TC1dzG>



Let's look at the facts and figures

WE'VE BEEN BUSY PROVIDING THE RIGHT SUPPORT TO YOUNG PEOPLE DURING THE COVID CRISIS

Over
£280,000
raised so far!

R&R Young Carers Fund
launched



Our first-ever virtual **Youth Voice Sleepover** conducted

"I've just been called the best mum in the world for signing my daughter up for the Sleep Out. She loved it thank you so much!"

Over

100

individuals supported with
Coronavirus Crisis Intervention.

A revolution in children's rights? Incorporating the UNCRC into Scots law

Following over a decade of campaigning by children's charities, organisations, and most importantly, children and young people themselves, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is set to become law in Scotland. On setting out the Scottish Government's Programme for

Government 2020-21, First Minister Nicola Sturgeon stated that the UNCRC Incorporation (Scotland) Bill will deliver "a revolution in children's rights". So why is incorporation important, and what difference will it make to the lives of children and young people in Scotland?

The UNCRC sets out human

rights that all children and young people are entitled to. These rights include the right to an education, the right to be listened to and taken seriously, the right [to housing, food and clothing, the right to relax and play, and the right to be protected from violence, abuse and neglect. The UK ratified the Convention



Sarah Rogers



30

Students supported to attend College or University



14 school children supported with school uniforms

In 2020...

- **Advisory Service** launched
- **3 Young Carers** supported through our Respite Fund
- **Your Mind Matters Wellbeing Service** launched
- **Digital Participation Worker** recruited.

in 1991 but it has not yet been incorporated into domestic law anywhere in the UK. This means that currently many of the rights in the Convention are not accessible to children and young people in the UK. This is set to change in Scotland, as the UNCRC Incorporation Scotland Bill will incorporate, as far as possible, the UNCRC into Scots law.

The importance of incorporation cannot be overstated. It is undoubtedly a huge step forward in making

rights real for children and young people across Scotland. Once the Bill is passed, the UNCRC will become binding in Scots law. The Bill aims to ensure that children's rights are respected and protected in the law in Scotland, and that public authorities are legally required to respect and protect children's rights in all the work that they do. Importantly, if children's rights are breached by public authorities, children, young people and their representatives, will be able to use the courts

to enforce their rights.

The legal significance of incorporation is of course crucial. Equally crucial, is the cultural change that learning from other countries suggests will be borne from this legislative change. Evidence from countries where incorporation has taken place such as Norway, Finland and Iceland indicates that incorporation results in increased awareness and understanding of children's rights at all levels of society, which serves to foster a greater culture of respect for

children and young people.

Ultimately, incorporation means that children's rights will be at the heart of decision-making, laws and policies in Scotland. This can surely only lead to better outcomes for all of Scotland's children and young people, including those from Armed Forces families. We look forward to seeing the Bill become law and hope it will mean the rights of all children and young people across Scotland will truly be fully recognised and respected in all aspects of their lives.

6

Resource Boxes
distributed

Over 100

Wellbeing Boxes
sent out

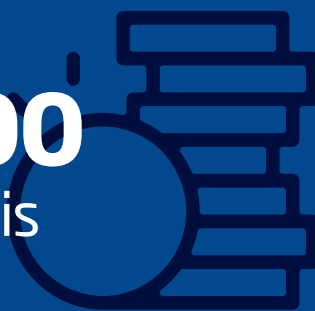
1 Family
supported through
our Family Time
Respite Fund



"I received a parcel today for my disabled daughter Eva. Thank you so much. Eva has no use of her limbs and is unable to speak but we help her to hold the pencils to make marks on the paper. Her wee face lit up yesterday making her dream catcher, so thank you. She especially likes her bar of chocolate. She's a happy wee girl"

Over £12,000

spent on Crisis
Intervention



Launch of Advisory Service

In recent years RCET has been receiving an increasing number of requests for advice on a wide range of issues from various individuals and organisations.

Requests include advice on resources, training, coping with separation when a parent is working away from home, funding, transitions, additional support needs and many more. Much of the time we are able to deal with these requests ourselves but occasionally we need to signpost to other organisations.

We are therefore pleased to announce the launch of our Advisory Service with the publication of a comprehensive partner/stakeholder directory, available at www.rcet.org.uk

We have made every effort to include all our existing partners but should you feel your organisation has been omitted, please contact Moira Leslie direct on edprogofficer@rcet.org.uk

Anyone wishing to access the Advisory Service can use the dedicated number **0131 322 7358** or email edprogofficer@rcet.org.uk Monday-Friday 9am to 5pm.

"RCET's Advisory Service was hugely helpful with my inquiries. As a University student, I was writing an assignment on service children in education. The excellent insight and expertise provided by the Advisory Service was significantly useful for my research. The Education Programme Manager also kindly sent me resources and handouts that have since caused productive conversations amongst my colleagues and peers on how best to support service children. I am hugely grateful to the Advisory Service for their assistance and support."

We are grateful for funding from the British & Foreign School Society to launch our new Advisory Service.

Scott reflects on his September Run 100 to Raise 100 challenge

Last month, Youth Participation Worker Scott Sanster participated in the Run 100 to Raise 100 challenge to raise funds for RCET and managed to collect a fantastic £350.

Scott gives us an account of his experiences fundraising for Armed Forces Children and Young People 'virtually' and from home during a global pandemic:

"I took on this challenge as I wanted to raise my game and complete 100km each week for the month of September. I wanted the challenge to be both physical and personal while also highlighting my commitment to Armed Forces Children and Young People.

"One of the biggest challenges I faced during the Run 100 to Raise 100 Challenge was managing my time. Completing 100km a week took at least 10 hours out of my weekly



schedule, but I still managed to achieve 44km during one of my runs – my longest run on record so far. I have learned that to achieve distances like these, we must maintain a positive mental attitude.

"The best part of the challenge was during the quiet moments of my daily runs in the early morning or dark evenings when I could fully appreciate

the beauty of the great outdoors and the local wildlife.

"The worst part of this challenge, or any virtual fundraising challenge for that matter, was keeping up the motivation to complete my weekly goals. It was hard when my supporters could only view my progress through a screen instead of face-to-face.

"Despite this, I do believe that virtual challenges are a great way to bring communities together. For example, The Virtual London Marathon which was held during an exceptionally wet weekend in October united participants as they knew that they were all in it together.

"In this current global climate, we are not alone.

"Thank you to all those that support me. It is very much appreciated."

'United in our thoughts' to mark Remembrance Day

The 11th of November 2020 was probably the most unique Remembrance Day in our lifetime. Unable to carry out our traditional commemorations we came together virtually or commemorated personally in our homes, gardens or wherever we felt it was safe to do so.

For more than 200 years, RCET has not only commemorated the fallen but has given a separate moment of reflection for those children impacted by WWI, WWII and modern-day conflicts.

Our Policy and Research Officer Sarah says: "As the nation comes together, united in our thoughts though we are physically separated, to mark Remembrance Day it is important to reflect on the impact of war on children and young people including those young boys who have lost their lives in historic conflict. Many more children felt the impact of war at home too. WWI saw the biggest loss of fathers in

modern British history with an estimated half a million killed in the conflict. Many of those who returned home to their families bore the mental and physical scars of both WWI and WWII. Throughout the war, children experienced disruption to their home life and education and faced challenges of coping with the emotional and practical impact of absent parents and the deaths and injuries of family and friends.

"In reflecting on the challenges faced by children during WWI and WWII, it's important to remember that some of these continue to face children and young people in Armed Forces families today. Being part of an Armed Forces family can be a hugely rewarding experience, but it can also be tough with children and young people facing a range of challenges including coping with parental absence, high levels of mobility, disruption to education, and in some cases the injury or death of a parent."