



Defence Children Services



# Education Advisory Team (UK)

Defence Children's  
Services – Specialist  
Support Services

Educate the Child – Support The Family – Defend The Nation



Defence Children Services

# Who are Defence Children Services?

<https://dcs.school/>

Defence Children's Services (DCS) provides a single focus for all issues related to Service children and young people, providing high-quality education at 22 schools and settings in locations around the world. DCS also directly supports Service families, providing advice on a wide range of educational matters both overseas and in the UK, delivered by specialist education and advisory teams.



- DCS Schools & Settings
- DCS Specialist Support Services – this includes the following -
- Education Advisory Team (UK)
- Overseas Education Supportability Team
- Specialist Services (Education Welfare, Safeguarding, EPSL etc.) – who support DCS S&S

# Who are the Education Advisory Team (UK)?

- Part of the MOD's Defence Children Services
- We support all Armed Forces families upon request
- No geographical limits
- Provision of free confidential, professional educational advice for Armed Forces families



# What can EAT(UK) support with?

- School Admissions and Appeals.
- Families on the Move.
- Curriculum Concerns.
- Support colleagues on educational matters.
- Boarding education considerations.
- Additional Educational Needs.
- *DCS has an overseas team with a similar remit as above.*



# EAT(UK)

## How can we help?

CEA – Provide  
ISN for initial  
applications

School  
Admissions/  
Appeals advice

Retention of  
SFA – SEND –  
Advice when  
outside of  
regulations

Advice on  
educational  
issues – e.g.  
School  
exclusions

Provide SEND  
advice and  
guidance

Transition  
advice when  
moving  
between Local  
Authorities

Transition  
advice when  
moving  
between the 4  
countries of  
UK

Support with  
educational  
transition on  
return from  
Overseas

State  
maintained  
and  
independent  
support

Review and  
manage SENA  
applications

CEA – PACCC  
casework  
educational  
risk input

CEA –  
Boarding  
School  
Considerations  
& other advice

# Who are the Overseas Education & Supportability Team?



Defence  
Children  
Services

## Overseas Education and Supportability Team (OEST)

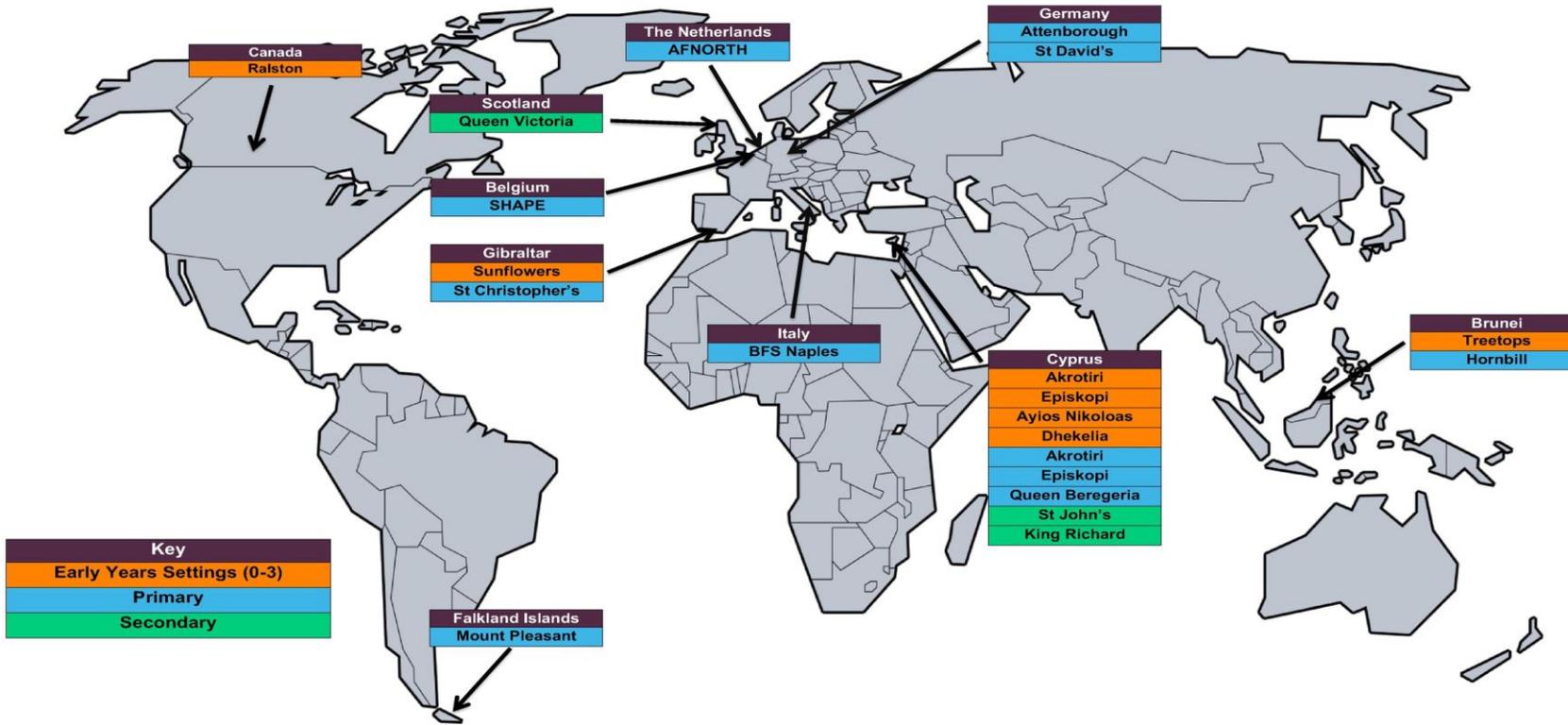


A specialist team within Defence Children Services (DCS) with a focus on all issues regarding Service children's education overseas.

### How can OEST help?

- OEST provides advice and guidance for Service Personnel and eligible MOD civilians about education in overseas locations;
- OEST coordinate the assessment of educational supportability required for any Service Personnel travelling abroad (MASO);
- OEST provide educational advice on supportability and allowances in overseas locations;
- OEST work with DCS schools to develop high quality provision for children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND);
- OEST support parents when children have needs that emerge while overseas;
- OEST run the MOD Virtual School for all children in non-DCS school areas.

# DCS Schools and Settings Locations



DCS Schools & Settings are committed to meeting the individual needs of children whilst they are outside of the United Kingdom.

Wherever practicable and within the opportunities available (at UK standard) in each location, DCS aims to provide pupils who are assigned overseas, the highest quality of learning by ensuring that the appropriate provision is made for each child.

Details of each school and setting (including SENCo contact details) can be found on the DCS website. The website also includes the DCS SEND Directive & SEND Strategy.

<https://dcs.school/>

# MASO: Military Assessment of Supportability Overseas

The MOD needs to be confident that a child's educational needs can be met in any overseas location. This means that, before any Service person travels abroad, they must ensure their children have Confirmation of Educational Supportability.

All children aged 0-18 require Confirmation of Educational Supportability before accompanying their parent on an overseas assignment.

## What is a MASO?

The MOD Assessment of Supportability Overseas (MASO) is a process for assessing whether the resources and support required for a child with additional needs are available in and overseas command/setting. The MASO also gives education, health and care teams time to prepare for the child's arrival to support smooth transitions.

The MASO process can also be used to assess the supportability of all children where parents intend to Elect to Home Educate in the overseas are.

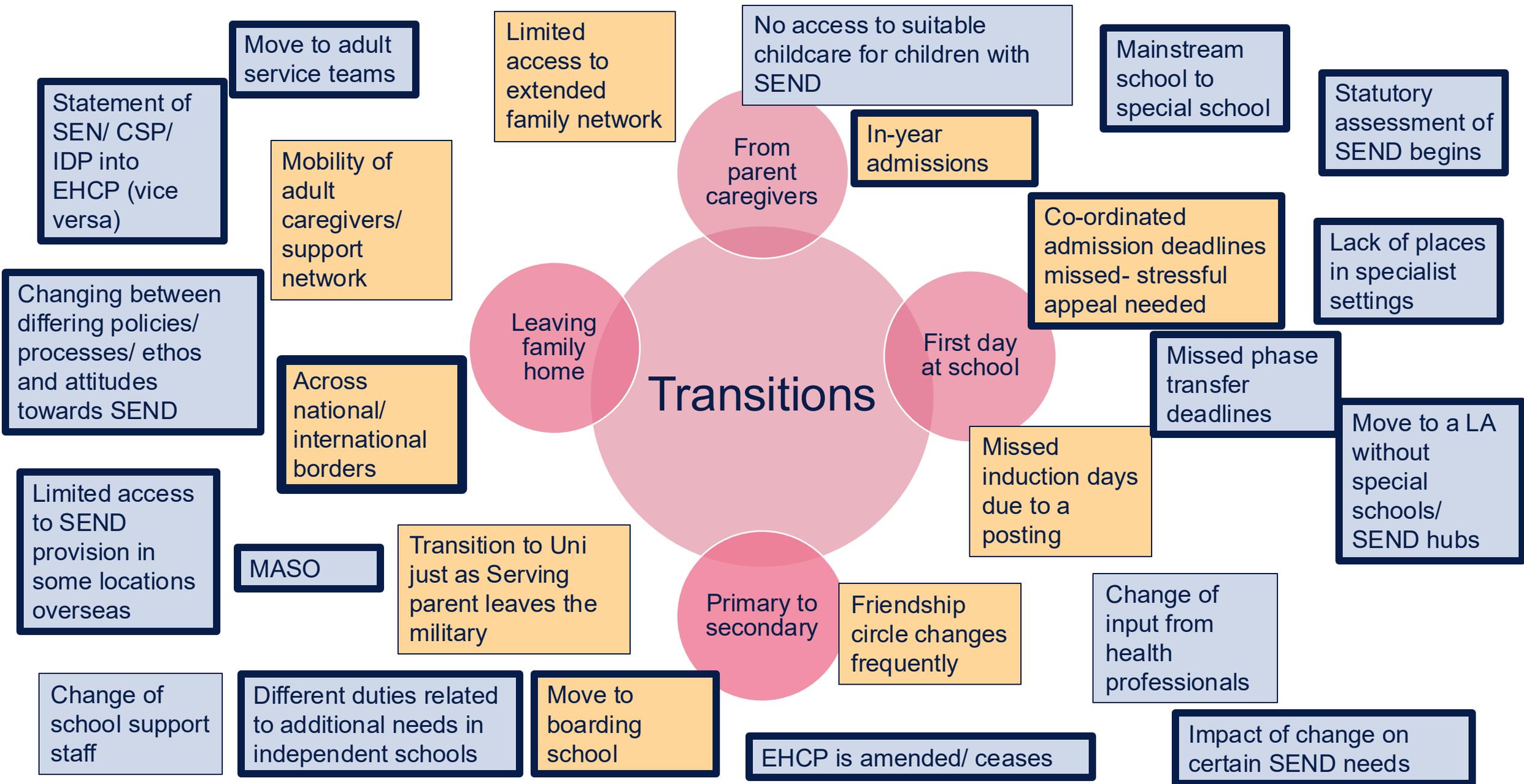


You can contact the OEST on the following email address:

[RC-DCS-HQ-OES@mod.gov.uk](mailto:RC-DCS-HQ-OES@mod.gov.uk)

# The 'Learning Journey' for a child from an Armed Forces family

- Many experience a greater number of educational transitions than their non-Service peers or more time separated from a parent- some don't!
- Movement between different education systems due to internal UK or overseas assignments.
- Some children who have a parent in the Armed Forces never move home or school but may spend much time separated from the Serving parent.
- Mobility may bring particular challenges for children from military families who have Additional Support Needs (ASN).
- Some Service children encounter opportunities beyond the realms of other children and can bring a wealth of experiences and personal strengths to a school.



# What do we hear from Armed Forces families?

Often the children/ young people have little influence over the planning of their learning journey- this can be exciting or contentious for them.

Parents are often unaware of the processes involved in obtaining a school place and effective provision for their children- it varies for each school, LA, country etc.

Parents often report feeling that they have a lack of control and become frustrated when agencies don't understand the implications of a Service-related lifestyle.

Families want to feel that their children will be included and belong.

First impressions from schools and Local Authorities really count!

# How might a Service-related lifestyle impact upon a child with ASN?

Frequent movement can result in a delay in needs being formally identified.

Time to develop relationships and evidence of graduated response to a child's needs can be limited which may make it difficult to evidence a history of need.

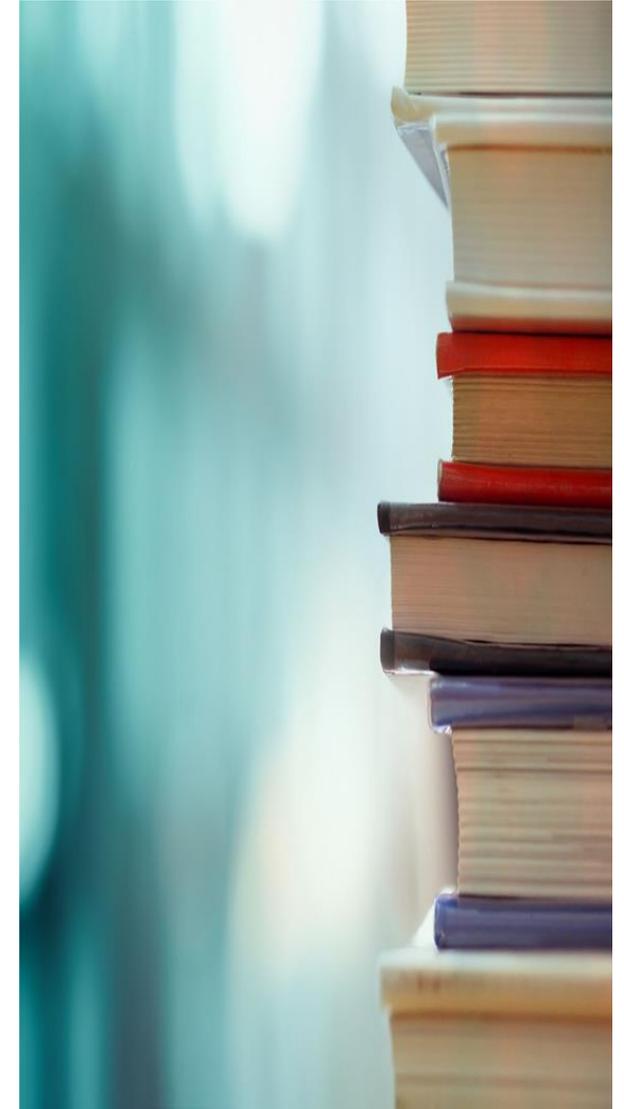
There is sometimes a parental perception that needs go unaddressed because a child is moving soon.

Families feel that their children may find themselves repeatedly dropping to the bottom of waiting lists each time they move.

Inconsistency in type of provision to meet needs, each time a move occurs including shortage of resources.

# Transition: Points to consider

- **Each country of the UK has its own education law and policy.**
- **What is mandatory in one country may not be in another i.e., EHCP in England is required for a special school place.**
- **Clinical diagnoses such as ADHD and autism are routinely classified by the same manual UK wide and should be acknowledged.**
- **All information about a child's additional support needs should be accepted and acknowledged by a school to help with understanding the picture of need and planning provision.**
- **Parents should expect that their children will be offered an education which enables them to thrive and be respected.**
- **Parents are the experts about their children and should feel listened to.**



# Education Advisory Team (UK) – School Admissions

## School Admissions Code England 2021

### Section 2.21

For families of service personnel with a confirmed posting, or crown servants returning from overseas, admission authorities **must**:

- a) allocate a place in advance of the family arriving in the area provided the application is **accompanied by an official letter** that declares a relocation date. Admission authorities **must not** refuse to process an application and must not refuse a place solely because the family do not yet have an intended address, or do not yet live in the area.
- b) use the address at which the child will live when applying their oversubscription criteria, as long as the parents **provide some evidence of their intended address**. Admission authorities **must** use a Unit or quartering address as the child's home address when considering the application against their oversubscription criteria, where a parent requests this.



# Additional Support Needs in Scotland

## Scottish Framework:

*The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act, 2004*, replaced the *Education (Scotland) Act, 1981* with the effect that:

- The Scottish and other UK systems diverged with “SEN” disappearing from the official Scottish educational terminology. Wales has since followed this. The Northern Ireland system is currently under review.

*Section 15 of the Standards in Scotland’s Schools Act, 2000* introduced:

- A presumption that ALL children will be educated in a mainstream school. This is similar UK wide.



## Supporting Children's Learning: Statutory Guidance on the Education (Code of Practice) 2017 identifies categories of children who **may** potentially have ASN:

- ✓ have motor or sensory impairments
- ✓ have low birth weight
- ✓ are being bullied
- ✓ **are children of parents in the Armed Forces**
- ✓ are particularly able or talented
- ✓ have experienced a bereavement
- ✓ are affected by imprisonment of a family member
- ✓ are interrupted learners
- ✓ have a learning disability
- ✓ have barriers to learning as a result of a health need, such as fetal alcohol spectrum disorder
- ✓ are looked after by a local authority
- ✓ or who have been adopted
- ✓ have a learning difficulty, such as dyslexia
- ✓ are living with parents who are abusing substances
- ✓ are living with parents who have mental health problems
- ✓ have English as an additional language
- ✓ are not attending school regularly
- ✓ have emotional or social difficulties
- ✓ are on the child protection register
- ✓ are refugees
- ✓ are young carers

**It is pertinent to note the breadth of this definition and that needs can be short or long-term.**

# Terminology used in Scotland which is not used elsewhere:

## GIRFEC:

Getting It Right For Every Child – describes how services should be integrated on a multi-agency basis to ensure the needs of individual children are best met.

## SHANARRI:

Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected and Responsible, and Included – these are the health and wellbeing (HWB) indicators upon which a child's needs should be assessed



# Education is Devolved!

Example of where things can get complicated: Supporting children with Additional Educational Needs.

**Encourage your families who have children with additional needs to contact EAT UK for early support.**

	Wales	England	Scotland	Northern Ireland	MOD Schools
What is it called?	Additional Learning Needs (ALN)	Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND)	Additional Support Needs or Support for Learning (ASN)	Special Educational Needs (SEN)	Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND)
Who should I turn to?	ALNCo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SENDCo</li> <li>• SENCo</li> <li>• AENCo</li> <li>• Inclusion Manager</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principle teacher for ASN</li> <li>• Guidance Teacher</li> </ul>	SENCo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SENDCo</li> <li>• SENCo</li> </ul>
Which Plan?	Individual Development Plan (IDP)	Education Health & Care Plan (EHCP)	Coordinated Support Plan (CSP)	Statement of SEN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service Children Assessment of Needs (SCAN)</li> </ul>

# Education Advisory Team (UK) – Statutory Guidance

The SEN Code of Practice (1998)  
Education Authority Northern Ireland

AWS Children's Education Support  
Officer

## Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales (2021): guidance

18.29. A maintained school, FEI or local authority when deciding upon ALN, preparing or reviewing an IDP for a Service child or young person **must**

- (a) take into account any relevant issues arising from the nature of their parent's service (e.g. the effects of Service induced mobility),
- (b) consider seeking advice from the CEAS, and
- (c) use all available relevant evidence in respect of the child or young person, including any previous educational plans or other documents relating to the child or young person's needs, such as an EHC plan (in relation to England), a statement (in relation to Northern Ireland), a Co-ordinated Support Plan (in relation to Scotland) and the Service Children's Assessment of Need completed by MoD Schools.



## Additional support for learning: statutory guidance (2017)

The Act provides the legal framework for supporting children and young people in their school education, and their families. This framework is based on the idea of additional support needs. This broad and inclusive term applies to children or young people who, for whatever reason, require additional support, in the long or short term, in order to help them make the most of their school education and to be included fully in their learning. Children or young people may require additional support for a variety of reasons and may include those who:

- are children of parents in the Armed Forces

## Special educational needs and disability code of practice for England

10.55 In having regard to this Code of Practice and in meeting the aspirations of the Armed Forces Covenant, which attempts to eliminate or mitigate some of the potential disadvantages faced by Service families, all those with statutory responsibilities towards Service children with SEN should ensure that the impact of their policies, administrative processes and patterns of provision do not disadvantage such children because of their Service-related lifestyle.

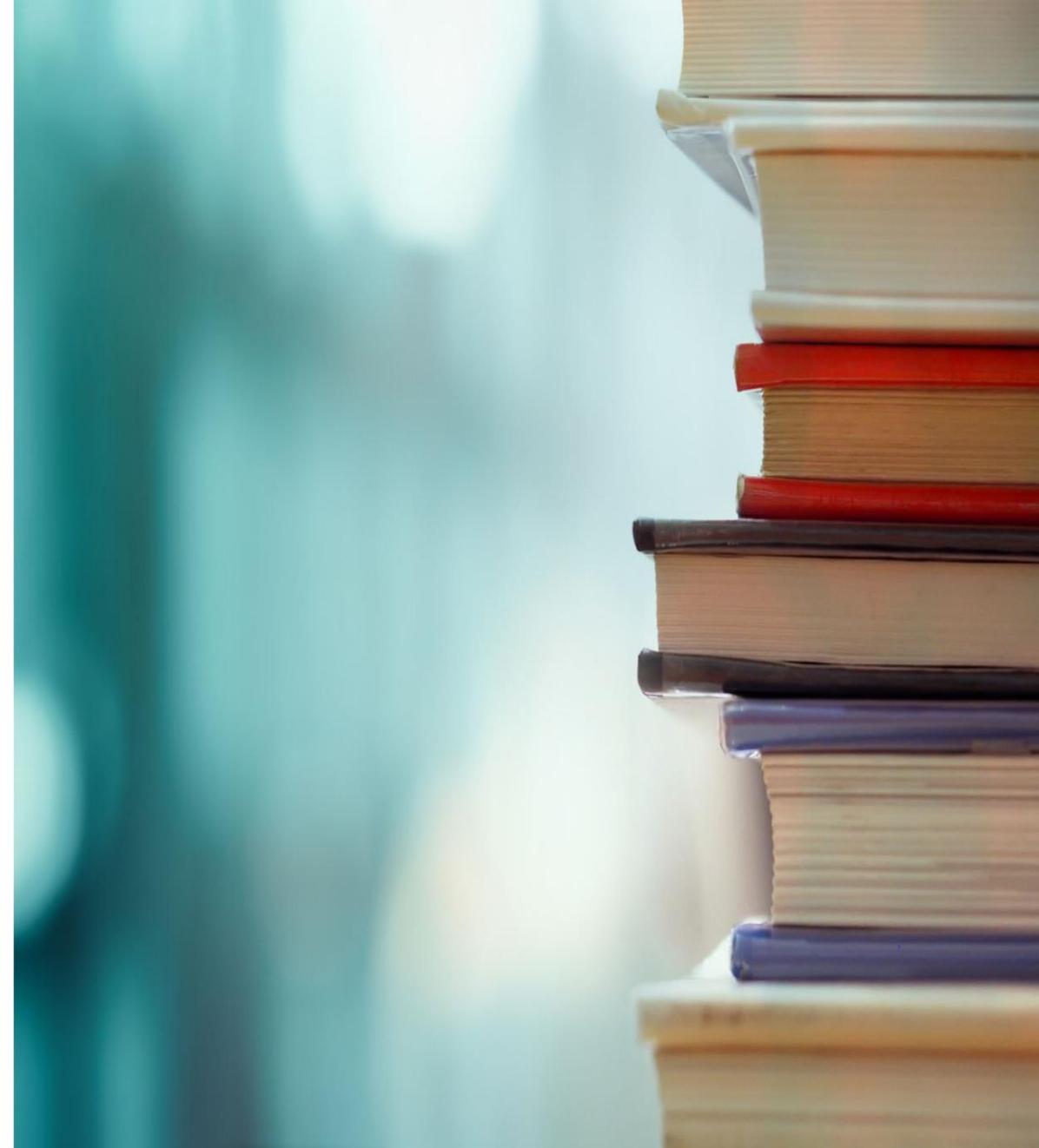
# SEND EHCP Data/Information from EAT (UK) 2024/25 Academic Year to date.

To date EAT (UK) Education SMEs are supporting or have supported 174 service children with EHCPs or DVA equivalents.

1. The biggest single challenge and issue that service personnel and their families are facing is their child being out of education because of moving.
2. Mirroring their non-service counter parts the next biggest issues are EHCP's (DVA equivalents) not being updated.
3. Lack of available and suitable Specialist Provision is acute in England and NI.
4. The 'process' and the Code of Practice (England) not accounting for the uniqueness of Service Families.

# Working with other MOD and non-MOD Stakeholders

- AFFS - Armed Forces Families and Safeguarding including MODLAP Forums
- UWOs – Training
- Family Federations and other Armed Forces charities
- Engage in working groups and research related to Service children's education with the aim of advocating about the experience of families
- CEA– on-going work with AF REM POL/PACCC
- Engage with Local Authority's to contribute to statutory assessments
- Support Local Authorities with information related to Service-related lifestyle upon request



# What support is available to your children's schools?

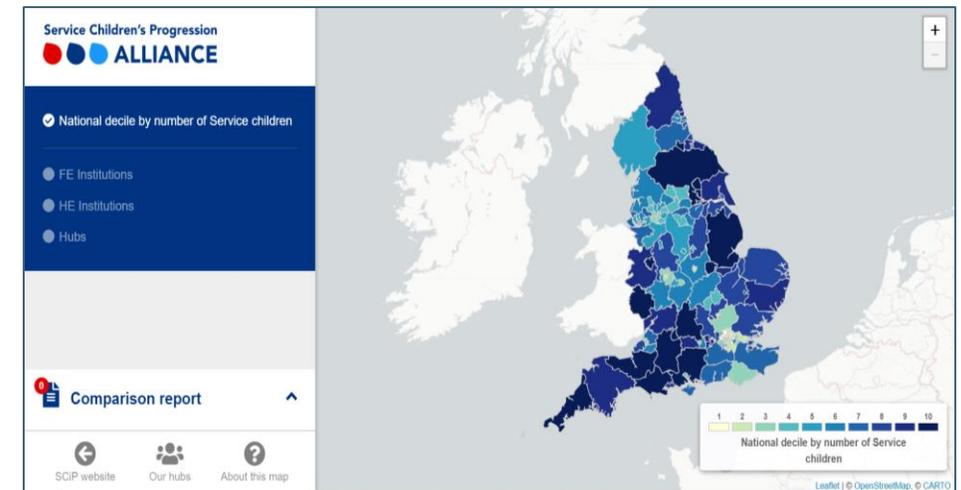
There are excellent resources and support networks freely available to schools to help with supporting Service children:

- [Service Pupil Premium](#)-state schools in England
- [Websites specific to families in Wales -SSCE Cymru :: Supporting Service Children in Education Wales website](#)
- [Websites specific to families in Scotland - Forces Children's Education \(forceschildrenseducation.org.uk\)](#)
- [MOD funding streams - The Service Pupil Support programme \(covenantfund.org.uk\)](#)
- [SCIP Alliance](#) – Thriving Lives Toolkit
- [SCISS - Service Children in State Schools \(SCISS\)](#)
- [Wrap around childcare](#)
- [Charities](#)

(Armed Forces Families & Safeguarding (AFFS) - [People-AFFS-Mailbox@mod.gov.uk](mailto:People-AFFS-Mailbox@mod.gov.uk).)



	Principle	Vision
The 7 principles of effective support	1 Our approach is clear	Leaders' understanding and approach ensure resources and policies improve Service children's outcomes.
	2 Wellbeing is supported	Tailored pastoral provision supports Service children's mental health and wellbeing.
	3 Achievement is maximised	Teaching, assessment and support ensure the continuity of Service children's learning and progression.
	4 Transition is effective	Systems and support ensure seamless transitions for Service children arriving at and leaving school.
	5 Children are heard	Service children's diverse voices are heard and inform the support they receive.
	6 Parents are engaged	Strong home-school partnerships help Service families feel valued as part of the school community.
	7 Staff are well-informed	Supportive training and networks ensure all staff understand and support each Service child.



## Contact Us

Families posted overseas to non-DCS school locations (excluding USA, Australia and New Zealand)

In the first instance, contact the MOD Virtual School Headteacher:

[RC-DCS-HQ-MODVS@mod.gov.uk](mailto:RC-DCS-HQ-MODVS@mod.gov.uk)

Families posted overseas to DCS school locations and all schools in USA, Australia and New Zealand.

Contact: [RC-DCS-HQ-OES@mod.gov.uk](mailto:RC-DCS-HQ-OES@mod.gov.uk)

Service Personnel requiring general advice with the educational supportability assessment for overseas postings.

Contact: [RC-DCS-HQ-OES@mod.gov.uk](mailto:RC-DCS-HQ-OES@mod.gov.uk)

Service Personnel and Entitled Civilians requiring advice or guidance with Elective Home Education.

Contact: [RC-DCS-HQ-EHE@mod.gov.uk](mailto:RC-DCS-HQ-EHE@mod.gov.uk)

Service Personnel requiring advice or guidance with UK schooling.

Contact: [RC-DCS-HQ-EAT@mod.gov.uk](mailto:RC-DCS-HQ-EAT@mod.gov.uk)



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Contact details for all schools and settings: [www.dcs.school](http://www.dcs.school)

# Any questions?