



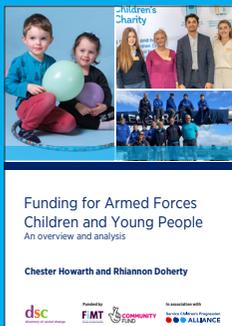
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Research Brief

Funding for Armed Forces children and young people

The Service Children's Progression (SCiP) Alliance defines an Armed Forces child or young person as 'a person whose parent, or carer, serves in the regular Armed Forces, or as a reservist, or has done at any point during the first 25 years of that person's life'. The Ministry of Defence has estimated that there are at least 123,240 Armed Forces children and young people in the UK.

Being a member of an Armed Forces family does not necessarily mean that children will experience problems outside the experiences of their civilian peers. In fact, a recent study by Godier-McBard et al. reported numerous positive aspects of Service life for children. But Armed Forces children and young people may face unique challenges or stressors which stem from their parents' Service. It is therefore important that support is available for those who need it.



The report accompanying this research brief, produced in association with the SCiP Alliance, aims to provide the first systematic and rigorous account of the landscape of funding for support for Armed Forces children and young people. It focuses on funding from charities but also encompasses support from other types of organisation and statutory funding streams. The analysis looks at both money given directly to Armed Forces children and young people (or to a parent or guardian on their behalf) and funding for other organisations to support Armed Forces children and young people through services or programmes.

Research methods

To identify organisations that actively fund support for Armed Forces children and young people, DSC's researchers carried out:

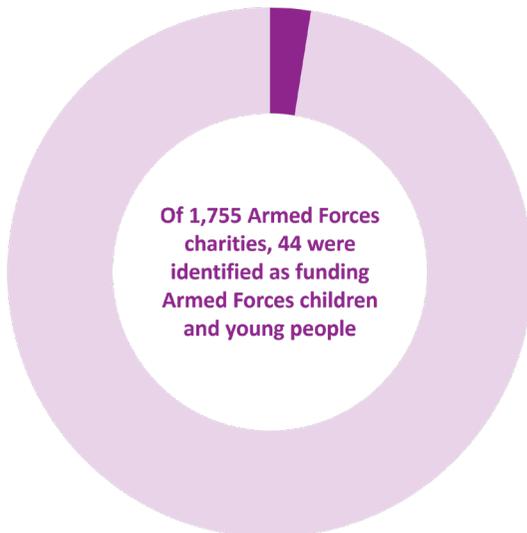
- desk research to investigate the grant-making organisations in DSC's databases, including systematic analysis of publicly available information (websites, annual reports and accounts);
- direct enquiry with organisations to establish evidence of relevant support to beneficiaries;
- interviews with funders – including charities and statutory bodies – to identify funders and funding streams that support Armed Forces children and young people.

To gain insights on the scope and nature of the funding for Armed Forces children and young people, DSC's researchers used a mixed methods approach. This involved:

- ten semi-structured interviews with charities and statutory bodies;
- a survey of 39 funders to provide qualitative and quantitative data;
- case studies of both funders and recipients of funding (schools and local authorities).

How many funders are there?

DSC identified 69 organisations that provided funding specifically intended to support Armed Forces children and young people in the UK. However, an additional 49 organisations showed evidence of funding at the level of the family but didn't engage further with DSC's researchers; therefore, we couldn't confirm whether they supported children and young people.



To understand whether this number is small or large, it is useful to draw comparison to the wider Armed Forces charity sector. Of the 69 funders identified, there were **44 Armed Forces charities identified as funding support for children and young people**: representing just 2.5% of all Armed Forces charities and 5.2% of all grant-making Armed Forces charities (identified through DSC's award-winning Armed Forces charities research).

The adequate number of funders ultimately depends on how far the funding provided meets Armed Forces children and young people's needs – and whether having more funders, rather than more funding, would better meet their needs.

DSC also found that, of the 69 funders identified in this research, only 10.1% (N=7) were defined as **specialist child-focused funders**. In other words, only a small minority of funders have a central focus on supporting Armed Forces children and young people (a full list of these funders can be found in DSC's full report).



How much funding is provided?

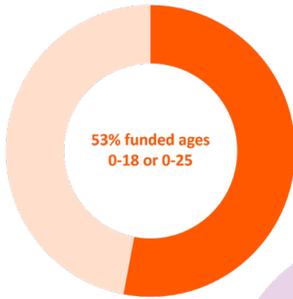


Overall, DSC found that funders provided **£3.1 million through funding to individuals** and **£5.5 million through funding for organisations**. In addition, **statutory funding streams** (not included in 69 funders outlined above) **provided £28 million**. It's important to note that this was based on limited available data: not all funders completed DSC's survey, and a significant proportion of the respondents were unable to provide a figure because they did not collect or publish data on the value of their funding for Armed Forces children and young people.

Who can be funded?

Among the funders identified (N=69), around half (49.2%) only funded **organisations**, under one-third (30.4%) only funded **individuals** and the remaining 20.3% provided funding to **both**.





Among the survey respondents, eligibility for funding criteria were generally quite broad. The typical age range at which funders could offer support generally fell **between birth and 18 or 25 years of age**.

Most funders could fund support for **Armed Forces children and young people throughout the UK** and almost all funders could fund support for **Armed Forces children and young people from both Serving and ex-Service families**.

Aside from Armed Forces charities, most of which were affiliated with a particular service branch, almost all of the remaining funders could provide tri-Service support (i.e. to children and young people from any Service branch).

What can be funded?

	Individuals	75%
	Organisations	91%
	Individuals	71%
	Organisations	77%
	Individuals	58%
	Organisations	59%

Whether funding was to individuals or for organisations, funding was most commonly in the area of **wellbeing and social support**, followed by **educational support** and then **mental health support**.

The respondents also typically had a broad remit of support for Armed Forces children and young people that included educational support, wellbeing and social support, and mental health support: 37.5% provided all three types of support through funding for organisations and 45.5% provided all three types of support through funding to individuals.

Funders had different approaches to the nature of their funding for organisations. DSC's survey found that more than one-third (37.5%) of the respondents **did not provide funding that could cover core costs** (costs other than project delivery). This finding is particularly important, as DSC's *Cobseo Members' Survey: November 2022* shows Armed Forces charities are experiencing and responding to higher core costs in the current economic environment.



62.5% could fund core costs



37.5% could not fund core costs

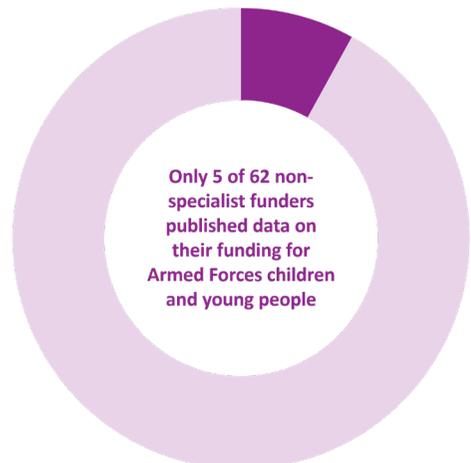
	Only single-year	29%
	Mostly single-year	29%
	Equal mix	33%
	Mostly multi-year	10%
	Only multi-year	0%

More than half of the respondents either mostly (28.6%) or only (28.6%) provided **single-year funding**. While respondents most commonly (33.3%) provided single-year and multi-year funding equally, only a small minority (9.5%) provided mostly **multi-year funding**.

As highlighted among the interviews and case studies, this can have implications for the longer-term sustainability of a project, staff retention and future planning.

What is the role of monitoring and evaluation?

Only a handful (N=5) of the non-specialist funders (N=62) **published information on the total number of organisations they funded to specifically support Armed Forces children and young people and/or the value of this funding** – and none published data on the number of individual Armed Forces children and young people they funded and/or the value of this funding. DSC's survey suggests that this may be because of a lack of internal data collection. This may make it difficult for funders to use data to inform their decision-making and evidence the impact of funding.





64.3% required an evaluation

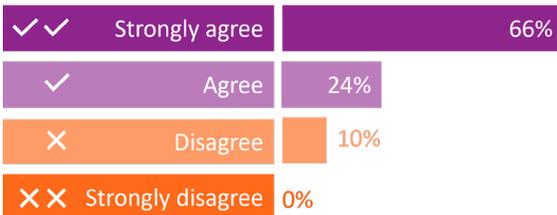


35.7% did not require evaluation

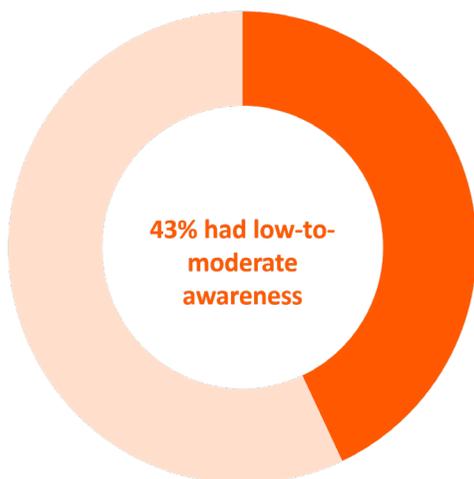
Over one-third (35.7%) of the respondents **did not require the organisations they funded to provide an evaluation** of the outcomes of that funding. Respondents and interviewees highlighted various barriers to evaluation, including limited capacity (time and resources), low participation from the organisations funded and a lack of knowledge of evaluation techniques. Overcoming these barriers could help provide more concrete evidence and understanding of what works when funding Armed Forces children and young people.

What is the role of collaboration?

Three in every five (61.5%) of the survey respondents **collaborated with one or more other organisation to provide funding** for Armed Forces children and young people. Survey respondents most commonly partnered with Armed Forces charities, followed by other registered charities.



The survey respondents overwhelmingly either **strongly agreed** (65.5%) or **agreed** (24.1%) that collaboration enabled their organisation to achieve things that it would not achieve alone. Interviewees mentioned various benefits of collaboration, including using resources more efficiently and limiting duplication, sharing skills and expertise, and making access to support easier for beneficiaries.



There remains considerable scope to grow funders' awareness of potential collaborators and foster future collaboration – just over two-fifths (43.4%) had a **low-to-moderate awareness of potential collaborators**, on a scale from zero (no knowledge) to ten (complete knowledge). Based on most funders' own positive perceptions, making collaboration easier could help organisations achieve more with their money.

Recommendations

DSC makes the following recommendations for umbrella organisations, forums and networks, such as the SCIP Alliance:

1. Encourage and support funders to collect more specific data on their funding practices and to share information using a centralised resource. This would help to overcome current limitations on the availability of information and inform policy, strategy and campaigns.
2. Capitalise on positive perceptions of collaboration by advancing the related infrastructure so that funders of Armed Forces children and young people can work together more efficiently and effectively.
3. Encourage funders to set aside funding for evaluation and generate resources to help funding recipients evaluate the success of their projects or programmes.
4. Continue to collect and share data on how the continually evolving socio-economic environment is affecting funders, as well as the individuals and organisations they fund.
5. Fund and undertake further research that can draw on the experiences of Armed Forces children and young people – and their families – as recipients or potential beneficiaries of funding to deepen knowledge and inform funding strategies.

About DSC

DSC's award-winning research on Armed Forces charities continues to be generously funded by Forces in Mind Trust. For the latest analysis on Armed Forces charities, visit us online at www.dsc.org.uk/research, to download *Funding for Armed Forces Children and Young People: An overview and analysis*.



Follow us on twitter: [@dsc_charity](https://twitter.com/dsc_charity)
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DSC's researchers are experts in undertaking charity sector research to inform policy and practice. Our bespoke and commissioned research is led by the needs of our clients, and our policy work supports the wider voluntary sector. To find out more about how DSC's research can help you and your organisation, get in touch with us via research@dsc.org.uk.

About Forces in Mind Trust (FiMT)

Forces in Mind Trust was founded in 2011 with a £35 million endowment from the National Lottery Community Fund to improve transition to civilian life for Service leavers and their families. FiMT's mission is to enable successful and sustainable transition to civilian life, and the Trust's strategy is to provide an evidence base that will influence and underpin effective policy making and practice. By funding high quality, credible research where there is an identified gap in relevant understanding, and by then exploiting the findings, FiMT aims to effect positive change.

To find out more about FiMT visit www.fim-trust.org or find them on Twitter: @FiMTrust.

About the Service Children's Progression Alliance

The SCiP Alliance works for a vision of thriving lives for Service children. It brings together key allies (practitioners, researchers, policymakers and funders) to build a stronger evidence base, better policy, and enhanced support for Service children's education and progression, placing their voices at the heart of all they do.

The SCiP Alliance now includes a UK-wide Hub Network of 12 Hubs, which are hosted by 21 partners and connect over 800 allies. This large and diverse community has enabled the SCiP Alliance's allies to enhance their support for Service children through almost 200 network events; a resource bank accessed by 23,750 users; training for over 600 professionals on the Thriving Lives Toolkit; and 1,800 documents downloaded from their online research repository.

About the SCiP Alliance Funders' Forum

While the SCiP Alliance continues to further its research, practice and policy work, its underpinning approach aims to bring together the community of stakeholders to draw on their diverse strengths, perspectives and contributions. One aspect of this is the Funders' Forum, which was established to improve the impact and efficiency of funding that supports thriving lives for Service children.

The Funders' Forum is a funder-led approach to driving progress on three key priorities:

1. Evidence-based funding

Draw on a rigorous and balanced account of the priorities for Service children's support through the SCiP Alliance Community, so that funders' strategies and activities respond to the best available evidence.

2. Enhanced collaboration

Support enhanced collaboration between funders to reduce duplication and aid the development of complementary approaches and a more coherent sector-wide package of funding support for Service children.

3. Equitable access

Support funders to enhance relationships with other SCiP Alliance partners and provide routes to enhance promotion of funding and support opportunities to Service children and their supporters.