



# **Supporting Resilience Processes for Children from Armed Forces Families**

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## **Dedication**

For my grandparents. Muriel, Harold and Elsie.

They taught me what it is to be kind and understanding.

## **Acknowledgements**

It sounds so cliché but it really has been a journey. I have so many people to thank for getting me through. First is to my parents, Gran and Glenn, for the love, faith and encouragement. To my Mam for always being there, especially when I needed her the most, and supporting my decisions. To my Dad for teaching me that there is no such word as “can’t.” To Glenn for the trips, feeding me, walking me and finding my hope. I’d like to thank Kate and Tina for helping to remind me of my strength and building my confidence to believe in myself. I’d like to thank my tutors for being patient, understanding and for their quick responses. I am also grateful for the mindfulness group on placement, as it helped keep me calm (well, more calm than usual) and view things in perspective.

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## Overarching Abstract

Children and young people from armed forces families (CYP-FAFF) often face multiple life changes and additional stressors but each child and family is unique in how they cope. This thesis is guided by theoretical perspectives on resilience which do not view it as an individual trait but as a dynamic developmental process which involves interactions, relationships and environment.

First, a systematic literature review was conducted which evaluated which interventions improve the resilience for CYP-FAFF. There were only a small number of studies addressing this area and therefore the findings are tentative but suggest that child-friendly media specific to CYP-FAFF, resiliency skills training, supportive adults and peer collaboration could produce increased resilience. Only one study evaluated an intervention which was conducted in the UK, or in a school, and therefore further research in this area is required.

Subsequently, using the ecological view of resilience, an empirical study was conducted which focuses on teacher-pupil relationships in a UK primary school. A qualitative survey of current and future practice in one context was conducted. It explored staff opinions in relation to the effective well-being support they provide for CYP-FAFF and how this can contribute to developing their practice. The participants were interviewed using principles from Appreciative Inquiry and then thematic analysis was utilised to generate themes. The findings created an understanding of the effective well-being support staff provide. The main themes include positive relationships and cultural responsiveness which are suggested to be central to well-being support and implementing change. Participants suggest that positive relationships are created through trust which requires adults to be responsive and authentic. In addition, change was mobilised through participants discussing strengths and possibilities. All themes were presented to a focus group to provide the opportunity to discuss together how the themes reflect the participants' school and which aspects of well-being support for CYP-FAFF can be further developed. The themes for developing practice are monitor actions to maintain values and enhance support through partnerships, particularly to increase parental engagement and provide direct support to CYP-FAFF.

Educational Psychology is well placed to support the implementation and review of a school action plan cycle by appreciating strengths, facilitating the problem-solving process and providing a reflective space for staff. This could include reviewing training outcomes, an exploration about how to engage parents, as well as consideration of the design and function of direct CYP-FAFF support.

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## **Chapter 1. Which interventions improve resilience for children from armed forces families?**

### **Abstract**

To deal with and adapt to additional challenges, children and young people from armed forces families (CYP-FAFF) utilise their skills and available support. This review employed a multi-dimensional, ecological perspective of resilience which argues that relationships and interactions with others are crucial. Therefore, it drew on interactionist theories of development and evaluated what interventions are available and effective to support resilience. This systematic review answers the question: which interventions improve resilience for children from armed forces families?

Petticrew and Roberts' (2006) systematic review structure was utilised, alongside the weight of evidence tool (EPPI-Centre, 2007) to assess quality and validity. The systematic search identified seven studies which met inclusion and exclusion criteria to answer the review question. The studies' focus, characteristics, design and analysis are described in detail before being synthesised and summarised. Although there are individual studies which may act as a promising start, there is not yet enough research to conclude with any confidence which interventions improve resilience for CYP-FAFF. This is due to the range of difference between the studies, the potential bias and confounding variables. Many of the interventions aimed to improve coping skills but they all did this with different approaches and used different measures. Attending interventions with peers increased bonding and social competence. There are mixed results on targeting emotional literacy skills and limited results on the use of relaxation or mindfulness. Interventions which utilised child-friendly multimedia materials or supportive adults appeared to improve the resilience aspect of CYP-FAFF's coping skills. It appears that CYP-FAFF who experience the most stress may derive more benefit from specific interventions. However, further research is required to support findings.

## **1.1 Introduction**

The armed forces are one of the largest employers in the UK and 1% of the school-aged population in England, 68,989 children or young people are from armed forces families (CYP-FAFF); also referred to as Service or military children (Education and Skills Funding Agency, 2016). Previous research has predominately focused on negative symptoms and outcomes for CYP-FAFF (see Alfano, Lau, Balderas, Bunnell, & Beidel, 2016; Lester et al., 2010; Rowe, Keeling, Wessely, & Fear, 2014; White, de Burgh, Fear, & Iversen, 2011). The focus of this review however is to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions which aimed to improve resilience for CYP-FAFF.

### ***1.1.1 Why research the support for children from armed forces families?***

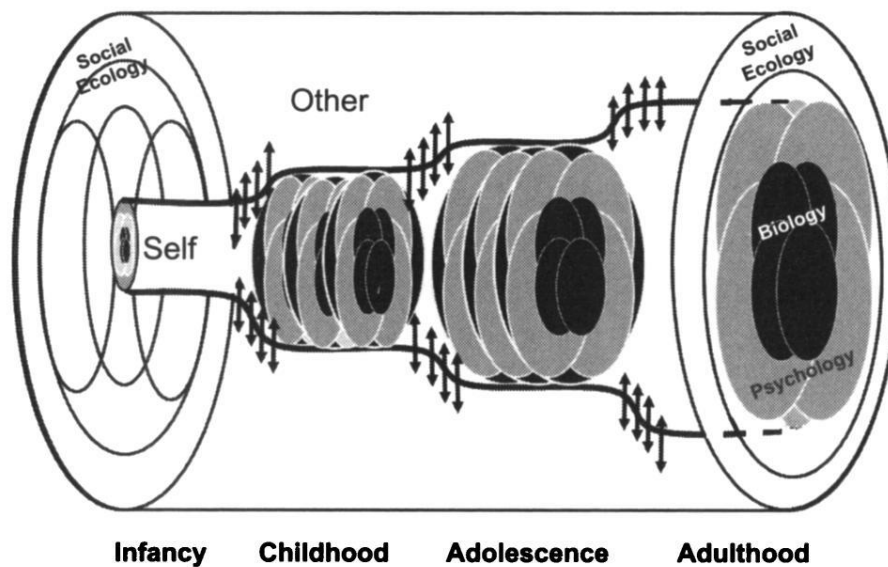
CYP-FAFF experience additional stressors in relation to parental deployment (Cozza, Chun, & Polo, 2005; Cozza, Lerner, & Haskins, 2014; Lester et al., 2012). Parents' departures and returns are often estimates and sometimes result in the goodbye routine being repeated, leading to emotional ambiguity (Huebner, Mancini, Wilcox, Grass, & Grass, 2007). Kaplow, Layne, Saltzman, Cozza, and Pynoos (2013) argue for the use of a multidimensional grief theory in the case of deployments and propose parallels to anticipatory grief; the knowledge that someone may not be safe which can produce separation distress. As well as separation and loss, these families also experience regular changes of countries, houses, family contact, family roles, schools, peer groups and teachers. These experiences can lead to emotional distress and decreased well-being for children (Friedberg & Brelsford, 2011; Gorman, Eide, & Hisle-Gorman, 2010; Johnson & Ling, 2013). CYP-FAFF have been found to report higher loneliness than their peers but this is reduced when they have resided at the same address for longer (Kelley, Finkel, & Ashby, 2003; Noret, Mayor, Al-Afaleq, Lingard, & Mair, 2013).

Many studies have found the parental deployment cycle (pre-deployment, deployment, post-deployment) and the impact of associated life changes on armed forces families relate to poorer academic, social and mental health outcomes for CYP-FAFF of all ages (see, Alfano et al., 2016; Chandra, Lara-Cinisomo, et al., 2010; Flake, Davis, Johnson, & Middleton, 2009; Lester et al., 2010; Mustillo,

MacDermid Wadsworth, & Lester, 2016; Rowe et al., 2014; White et al., 2011). For example, Mustillo et al. (2016) found that CYP-FAFF of primary school age scored higher for total problems, emotional distress and peer problems when compared to previous community records. However, not all CYP-FAFF experience difficulties.

### 1.1.2 Children from armed forces families are a heterogeneous group

The heterogeneity of CYP-FAFF and their families can be considered critically from an ecological perspective. Bronfenbrenner's (1979; 1994) ecological systems theory emphasises the interrelations between relationships, environment and context; naming five levels of systems around the individual which have multi-directional interactions between them. Cicchetti and Lynch (1993) also contend that there are multi-directional interactions and that these reciprocal processes can be detrimental or beneficial for children's development and adaptation. Similarly, Sameroff (2010) developed the dialectical perspective which integrates the aspects of nature and nurture into one unified explanation for development which takes into account the effects of combined connections (see Figure 1).



**Figure 1:** Unified Theory of Development (Sameroff, 2010, p. 18)

Figure 1 represents Sameroff's Unified Theory of Development which includes a combination of four models of human growth. Model One: the biopsychosocial

contextual model, based on the aforementioned ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bronfenbrenner, 1994), is represented by one circular disk. The overlapping black circles in the centre of the disk, represent interacting biological processes (e.g. genomics, neurophysiology, etc.); the overlapping grey circles represent interacting psychological processes (e.g. cognition, emotional interpretation, social understanding, etc.), which together create the biopsychological self-system. The surrounding white circles represent the many interacting social ecologies (e.g. family, school, community, etc.) as well as the wider geopolitical influences.

How these levels interact are influenced by Model Two: the regulation model. The self-regulation system is represented as the inner, horizontal tube and the other-regulation system sits around this. This model considers child development as an interaction between nature and nurture. The bi-directional arrows represent the interaction between the self and other regulation systems and are positioned around transition points. There are up-arrows from the self to other, which represent child advances but there may be more powerful influences in the direction of other to self, where society and/or culture places developmental pressure (for example, by requiring the child to spend most of the day in school rather than at home).

Model Three: the personal growth model reflects developmental change over time from infancy through to adulthood and hence the repetition in the contextual model disks and the widening of the self-regulation tube as we get older. During infancy and childhood, other-regulation is particularly important for developing crucial self-regulation skills and adaptive views of the world.

Model Four: the representation model is not specifically depicted in the diagram but it is involved in all aspects because it relates to how people view themselves, others and the world at the current time and how that influences interpretations of future experiences (e.g. sense of self, identity, beliefs, attitudes, attributions and organisational structures).

The aforementioned models and theories suggest that it is not helpful to assume that groups of children who have shared experiences are homogenous, as the factors

mediating these experiences will differ across individuals. For this reason, it is important to caution against assuming CYP-FAFF are a homogenous group. Cozza (2014) warns against stereotyping armed forces families. CYP-FAFF's reactions to parental deployment will vary significantly depending on their age, level of development, awareness of risk, temperament, family responses and the availability of wider support (Johnson & Ling, 2013; Kaplow et al., 2013). The level of the stress reaction can change for the same situation, depending on the wider context (Easterbrooks, Ginsburg, & Lerner, 2013). For example, deployment may be tolerable at one time, but might cause distress at another time.

Mustillo et al. (2016) found children's anxiety levels, as reported by parents, was correlated to the recency and number of parental deployments. However they report only a small subset of these children experienced elevated anxiety and that the majority were functioning well. Flake et al. (2009) deemed a third of their sample of CYP-FAFF were at "high risk" (p.272) of developing significant emotional or behavioural problems, using cut-off scores from the Paediatric Symptom Checklist, but this also means that two-thirds were not "at risk" (p.276). Although CYP-FAFF reported higher emotional difficulties than the national average, again this only accounted for a third of the sample in Chandra et al.'s (2011) study and there were no differences found between CYP-FAFF and other children of school-age in their low mood or behaviour in Lester et al.'s (2010) study. Much of the research originates from the USA and therefore caution must be exercised in considering the UK context.

### ***1.1.3 Shifting the focus from clinical symptoms to resilience***

The design features of the studies cited so far may have led to the focus on negative outcomes for CYP-FAFF. One example is Rowe et al.'s (2014) UK study which asked armed forces personnel to select if they thought their military career had a negative impact, no impact, or positive impact on their child/ren. Parents could only select one option and it is possible that these three responses are not mutually exclusive. Half of the parents selected that their career had a negative impact on their child/ren, however twenty percent of the sample reported that their career had a positive impact. The reasons for parents' responses were not explored and so it is not

possible to offer anything beyond speculation in attempting to explain these findings but it suggests some benefits and resilience in armed forces families which is consistent with other research (Card et al., 2011; Cozza, 2014). Conversely, Knobloch, Pusateri, Ebata, and McGlaughlin (2015) reported CYP-FAFF's opinions on both challenges and opportunities which led to interesting findings. For example, some young people reflected that deployment provided the development of closer family relationships, improved independence skills and improved psychological preparation as they habituated to change.

Resilience, defined by Easterbrooks et al. (2013, p. 100) as "sustained competence or positive adjustment in the face of adversity," is used to help maintain well-being. Resilience can be conceptualised as a personal characteristic (Block & Kremen, 1996; Letzring, Block, & Funder, 2005) or a dynamic developmental process (Easterbrooks et al., 2013; Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000; Masten, 2011, 2014; Rutter, 2012; Yates & Masten, 2004). As a process, resilience is not an individual, static trait but an interaction of adaptive mechanisms, which are developed within the self, through relationships and the environment (Roosa, 2000; Sameroff, 2010; Yates & Masten, 2004). These mechanisms work in synergy to provide the opportunity and ability to adapt and cope when faced with stress. Sameroff and Rosenblum (2006) conducted a longitudinal study and found that although child competence increased later functioning, multiple environmental / social risk factors were bigger predictors. Therefore, it is possible that resilience could be supported through interventions with individuals but environment and relationship change are likely to be more effective. This is supported by VicHealth's (2015) extensive literature review findings which suggested that family and child interventions (skills training, mentoring and environment interventions) were effective for the promotion of resilience. Supportive adults, positive relationships and access to resources have been found to be influential factors in developing resilience, even when facing multiple adversities and intense stress (Easterbrooks et al., 2013; Garmezy, 1991; Masten, 2011, 2013; Masten & Monn, 2015; Morrison & Allen, 2007; Rutter, 2013; Sameroff & Rosenblum, 2006; Ungar et al., 2007; Ungar & Herrenkohl, 2013; Werner, 1989).

Easterbrooks et al. (2013) suggested that resilience is multi-faceted and therefore people can have different degrees of resilience in different areas of functioning; for



example, higher resilience with academic attainment but lower with emotional well-being. I will be using the term resilience, as authors (Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000; Ungar & Herrenkohl, 2013; Yates & Masten, 2004) have recommended resilience should be used when referring to the dynamic process; whereas resiliency and resilient can produce connotations of an individual trait.

How families deal with the additional stressors of armed forces life will be dependent on their level of resilience (Cozza, 2014; Easterbrooks et al., 2013; Johnson & Ling, 2013; Kaplow et al., 2013). Boss (2007) suggests that the permanency of parents' physical or psychological absence fluctuates for all families, not just for those in the armed forces. The impact depends upon how the family perceive the loss, make meaning from it and how they cope. Therefore, I am not starting with the assumption that all CYP-FAFF have difficulties with their functioning. I acknowledge that having resilience in some instances or at one point in time does not make CYP-FAFF invulnerable to additional stressors (Cozza et al., 2005; Garmezy, 1991; Johnson & Ling, 2013; Lemmon & Stafford, 2014). Therefore, there is still a need to support CYP-FAFF but this should also appreciate their strengths, relationships and environments (Cozza et al., 2005; Johnson & Ling, 2013; Lemmon & Stafford, 2014).

#### ***1.1.4 Benefiting all children from armed forces families***

Some research has suggested that CYP-FAFF have more resilience than, and do not have any more difficulties than, their civilian counterparts (see, Card et al., 2011; Kaczmarek & Sibbel, 2008). Frequent moves have not always been found to be correlated to CYP-FAFF maladjustment (Kelley et al., 2003; Weber & Weber, 2005). Although Lucier-Greer et al. (2014) found that multiple armed forces factors (parent paygrade, parental absence – more than 6 months of the year, included training - and transitions) predicted adverse adolescent outcomes, but other factors (ethnicity, unmarried parents, social isolation) which all adolescents can experience were higher predictors of negative outcomes. Having a parent in the armed forces may create additional stressors but for some may not be the biggest source of stress and require similar support as their civilian peers (Easterbrooks et al., 2013). Card et al.'s (2011) meta-analytic review concluded that although deployment was associated with increased problems, the effect sizes were small and deployment only accounted for one percent of the variance.

The difficulties that some CYP-FAFF experience therefore may not be attributed to their armed forces connection. In addition, some CYP-FAFF may already be functioning well but interventions could further enhance their skills, relationships and sources of support. Therefore, I am interested in evaluating interventions which improve resilience for all CYP-FAFF. There are no previous systematic reviews which focus on improving resilience with this population; although Easterbrooks et al. (2013) discuss programs which support the development of resilience among CYP-FAFF, it is a narrative review and they do not evaluate program effectiveness.

### **1.1.5 Research Question**

The review question is: “Which interventions improve resilience for children from armed forces families?”

## **1.2 Method**

This systematic literature review employs the 7-stage model described by Petticrew and Roberts (2006).

### **Stage 1:** Define the research question

I originally wanted to focus on interventions with CYP-FAFF specifically in the school environment but initial searches did not yield enough papers to make this feasible. In 2014, Brendel, Maynard, Albright, & Bellomo only found 1 paper out of over 1, 400 which was eligible for their systematic review criteria of school interventions with CYP-FAFF. Therefore, I adjusted my question to include any interventions which have included CYP-FAFF.

### **Stages 2 and 3:** Determine the search terms that are consistent with the review question and conduct a comprehensive literature search

The following nine electronic databases were searched from October 2015 up to September 2016: Psych INFO (1987-2016), British Education Index, Child Development & Adolescent Studies, CINAHL, Education Abstracts, Educational Administration Abstracts, ERIC, MEDLINE, Teacher Reference Centre.

Various combinations and synonyms were tried. The final search terms are detailed in Table 1 below. This returned 96 papers but after removing duplicates left 50 papers for the next stage.

<b>Area</b>	<b>Search Terms</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<i>Target population</i>	child*, student*, youth and adolescen* each preceded with Service, army, armed forces, navy and air force, in addition to “parental deployment.”	I also tried using “service* child*” OR “service* school*” but this brought up hundreds of irrelevant papers so I excluded these terms in the searches.
<i>Outcome term</i>	outcome* OR result* OR intervention* OR effect* OR impact* OR quantitative OR therapy	I decided to add NOT review, NOT article to focus the searches on empirical studies and filter out the many narrative reviews.
<i>Measurement term</i>	resilien* OR wellbeing OR well-being OR “well being” OR protect* OR “emotional health” OR “psychological health” OR cop* OR “emotional adjustment” OR “psychological adjustment” OR happiness OR “positive development” OR self-worth OR “self esteem” OR self-esteem OR self-confidence	
<b>Limits</b>	English and in peer-reviewed journals	

**Table 1:** Search Terms

**Stage 4:** Use inclusion criteria to screen for relevant studies to be included in the in-depth review, then tabulate their characteristics

Table 2 details the specific inclusion and exclusion criteria, accompanied by the reason for these decisions. Ideally, I would have only included studies which used pre and post intervention data to keep a consistent approach however due to the lack of available research, studies which used correlational data have also been included. In addition, the quantitative sections from mixed method studies have been included. This is a limitation of this quantitative systematic literature review because it does not consider some studies in their entirety.

<b>Inclusion criteria</b>	<b>Rationale</b>	<b>Exclusion criteria</b>	<b>Rationale</b>
Evaluated the impact of an intervention with children and/or young people who have a close family member in the armed forces (CYP-FAFF)	I was interested to collate intervention outcomes as this has not been previously done for the target population (CYP-FAFF). The target population was chosen due to the reasons outlined in my introduction.	-	-
Uses quantitative data	To evaluate the statistical effectiveness of interventions. Using any form of numbers has been considered quantitative for this review which includes percentages (Treiman, 2014).	Articles which do not include quantitative data or empirical research / used only qualitative methods.	This was to keep my studies as comparable as possible and to filter out the many narrative reviews.
Includes at least one dependent variable measure connected to improving internal or external aspects of resilience (coping skills or supportive relationships) as defined by Easterbrooks et al. (2013).	I took a transactional viewpoint and considered the definition of resilience as a dynamic developmental process. Uniquely, I focused on studies which aimed to utilise CYP-FAFF's strengths and evaluate an improvement in functioning / enhancement of positive experience; rather than a reduction in negative / clinical symptoms.	Ratings which were not by or in connection to the child.	For example, staff evaluations of their training. This was to focus directly on interventions for CYP-FAFF and again keep the studies as similar as possible.

Inclusion criteria	Rationale	Exclusion criteria	Rationale
Published after 2002	<p>This was both a contextual and practical decision. The context of armed forces operations have changed since the 11th of September 2001; with deployments to Afghanistan and Iraq typically being longer in duration, higher in frequency and with shorter breaks at home (Chawla &amp; MacDermid Wadsworth, 2012; Cozza, 2014; White et al., 2011).</p> <p>Many authors have acknowledged that the research evidence for interventions with CYP-FAFF is thin (Brendel et al., 2014; Easterbrooks et al., 2013; Esposito-Smythers et al., 2011; Fossey, 2012; Guzman, 2014; Mustillo et al., 2016; Noret et al., 2013; White et al., 2011). Due to the limited number of intervention papers I did not want to narrow my search to only the most recent years.</p>	Studies which report on the same data as any other study already selected for this review.	This was to avoid duplication of data which may have created additional bias.

**Table 2:** Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

There were seven studies identified to be included in the systematic review (Table 3) which were all the studies which included interventions with CYP-FAFF since 2002. Appendix A provides a summary of the interventions and Appendix B provides detailed description of the intervention content.

Study	Participants		Focus/ Research Question	Intervention name, length and location	Design	Method/Source of evidence	General Intervention Outcomes	Effect Size
	N	Age						
1.  <b>Chawla &amp; MacDermid Wadsworth (2012)</b>	44 children with family member in military (mostly fathers).	9-12 and 13-15	Evaluation of pilot study for Operation Purple Camp	Operation Purple Camp (OPC).  USA - one week; 1st-7 <sup>th</sup> June, 2008 at Purdue University, Indiana.	Quasi- experimental one-group, pre- test/post-test  Paired t-tests and ANOVA.	Perceived competence/self- perception (social and global self- worth).	Global self-worth significantly increased for ages 9-12 years $t(27) = -2.36, p = .03$ .  Social competence $t(27) = -2.08, p = .05$ significantly increased for ages 13-15 years.	Not quoted and no correlation data for me to calculate paired t-test effect sizes

Study	Participants		Focus/ Research Question	Intervention name, length and location	Design	Method/Source of evidence	General Intervention Outcomes	Effect Size
	N	Age						
<p>2.</p> <p><b>Eodanable &amp; Lauchlan (2012)</b></p>	48 service children	9-11	<p>Promote emotional health in a small primary school with a highly transient pupil population of armed forces children</p>	<p>Two interventions.</p> <p>Creating Confident Kids (CCK) – n = 48</p> <p>and</p> <p>Seasons for Growth (SfG) – n = 4 for children who had recently experienced change and loss</p> <p>UK - 8 weeks in small Scottish primary school (P5 &amp; P6 classes)</p>	<p><i>Full study mixed methods.</i></p> <p>Quant section:</p> <p>CCK - Quasi-experimental one-group, pre-test/post-test</p> <p>SfG - Percentages of the nominal data – discrete data</p>	<p>CCK - Emotional literacy checklist and survey</p> <p>SfG - Answer 7 statements about their skills and learning: yes, no, don't know</p>	<p>CCK - Pupils' emotional literacy scores did not increase as a result of the intervention. All scores were below average for emotional literacy. Also report means for question ratings.</p> <p>SfG - Of the 28 responses, 21 statements (75%) were answered positively, three (11%) negatively and four (14%) as 'Don't Know'. Suggests a positive recognition of feelings and coping strategies as a result of the intervention.</p>	<p>Not quoted and no correlation data for me to calculate paired t-test effect sizes.</p>



Study	Participants		Focus/ Research Question	Intervention name, length and location	Design	Method/Source of evidence	General Intervention Outcomes	Effect Size
	N	Age						
3.  <i>Le (2014)</i>	70 military youth	11-19	Evaluate the feasibility of mindfulness based adventure camps	Mindfulness-Based Adventure Camp intervention.  USA – 4 days at YMCA camp in Hawaii.  <i>Also 219 youth at camp in Colorado but did not include rankings of activities in evaluation.</i>	<i>Full study mixed methods.</i>  Quant part:  Percentages of the ordinal data reported – discrete data.  Can identify mode.	Ranked which activities most helped them to develop skills to deal with stress, which helped them to make new friends and to form strong connections.	Mindfulness #1 rank (from about 50% of youth) for helping to develop skills to deal with stress. #2 surfing.  Free Time #1 rank (from about 60% of youth) for helping to make new friends and to form strong connections. #2 and #3 ranked were mindfulness and ropes course (about 33% of youth for each).	N/A

Study	Participants		Focus/ Research Question	Intervention name, length and location	Design	Method/Source of evidence	General Intervention Outcomes	Effect Size
	N	Age						
<p><b>4.</b></p> <p><b>Lester et al. (2016)</b></p>	<p>1,426 service member parents, 2,073 significant others, 3,810 children</p>	<p>Three age groups: 3-7, 8-10, 11-17</p>	<p>Examine whether the trajectory of improvements following the intervention (FOCUS) is consistent over time for all family members.</p>	<p>Families OverComing Under Stress (FOCUS).  USA &amp; Japan - 8 weekly sessions (5 sessions included children): Jul 08 &amp; Dec 13: 15 locations.</p>	<p>Longitudinal, quasi-experimental one-group, pre-test/post-test and two follow ups</p>	<p>Parent-rated child prosocial behaviours (SDQ).  Child-rated: coping skills (KidScope)</p>	<p>Significant improvements in children's prosocial behaviours at follow-ups (0.61+/-0.03, <math>p &lt; .0001</math>), (0.68+/-0.04, <math>p &lt; .0001</math>).</p> <p>A significant improvement in child-reported positive coping skills: cognitive restructuring (0.06+/-0.02, <math>p = .008</math>), emotional regulation (0.09+/-0.02, <math>p &lt; .0001</math>), and problem solving (0.04+/-0.02, <math>p = .016</math>).</p>	<p>Not quoted and no correlation data for me to calculate paired t-test effect sizes</p>

Study	Participants		Focus/ Research Question	Intervention name, length and location	Design	Method/Source of evidence	General Intervention Outcomes	Effect Size
	N	Age						
<p><b>5.</b></p> <p><b><i>Lucier-Greer et al. (2014)</i></b></p>	1086 youth with parents in the military.	11-18 11-14 and 15-18	<p>Uses Bronfenbrenner's Process-Person-Context-Time model to examine associations between adolescent's well-being in relation to parental work (stressors and resources, including youth military-sponsored activities)</p>	<p>Military-sponsored activities and events.</p> <p>USA and Europe – throughout the year provided by 4 military installations.</p>	<p>Within-group MANCOVA.</p> <p>Surveys in computer lab</p>	<p>Attendance at military-sponsored events</p> <p>Social connections (Affectional ties and Guidance)</p> <p>Coping (Family Connections, Self-reliance/Optimism)</p>	<p>If attended activities higher affectional ties (B=0.11, df=0.03, p&lt;.001) and guidance (B=0.09, df=0.03, p&lt;.01), more likely to use family to manage stress (family connection, B=0.21, df=0.05, p&lt;.001). Self-reliance/optimism was higher for early adolescents (B=0.16, df=0.06, p&lt;.01).</p>	No eta-squared or beta quoted.

Study	Participants		Focus/ Research Question	Intervention name, length and location	Design	Method/Source of evidence	General Intervention Outcomes	Effect Size
	N	Age						
<p><b>6.</b></p> <p><b><i>Flittner O'Grady et al. (2016)</i></b></p>	300 caregivers who are significant other of an enlisted service member	2-5	Evaluate the impact of Talk, Listen, Connect: Multiple Deployments (TLC-II MD)	<p>TLC-II MD is a multimedia home kit created by Sesame Street including DVD.</p> <p>USA - 4 weeks, included multiple States and locations.</p>	<p>Randomised Experimental pre-test/post-test (two groups with control)</p> <p>Control group used Sesame's Healthy Habits for Life (HHL) materials about nutrition and exercise</p>	<p>Telephone interviews for questionnaire</p> <p>2 child scales (1 with 3 subscales); plus 6 yes/no questions about materials impact.</p>	<p>No difference in child security or social competence.</p> <p>Impact: Significant main effect for group differences [F(2, 256) = 6.80, p&lt;.001] for 2 questions - greater comfort in being able to help their child cope with family member's deployments and more confidence that their child would now be better able to cope with the family member's deployments</p>	<p><i>Self-calculated</i> for ANOVAs: TLC-II more comfortable helping child cope (d = 0.43) and confident child will cope better (d = 0.34)</p>

Study	Participants		Focus/ Research Question	Intervention name, length and location	Design	Method/Source of evidence	General Intervention Outcomes	Effect Size
	N	Age						
7.  <i>Wilson et al. (2011)</i>	161 in total but 41 youth with a parent in the National Guard involved with the evaluation of impact section.	3-17 but only 9-17 for Part 3 impact section	<p>Part 3: evaluation of impact for adolescents</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Part 1: difficulties during deployment</p> <p>Part 2: researchers looking at the fidelity of program delivery</p>	<p>Passport Towards Success (PTS): part of an event for members of the National Guard and their families 90 days after they return from deployment which includes information and support.</p> <p>USA - 10 one day events in Indiana.</p>	<p>Quasi-experimental one-group, pre-test/post-test for RSE</p> <p>And</p> <p>Percentages - discrete data shows mode. Used yes = 2, sort of = 1 and no = 0 into 0-12 scale.</p> <p>Correlations between pre-program reports of difficulties and new ideas from the program.</p>	<p>Rosenberg Self-Esteem (RSE) – only 31 participants.</p> <p>Six-item measure evaluating the degree to which they learned new ideas about skills that promote resilience.</p>	<p>No change in self-esteem scores (0.01 difference pre-post).</p> <p>Adolescents who reported more stress, had a higher scale score for new ideas (r=0.46 and r=0.40) and therefore found PTS more helpful.</p> <p>85% 'sort of' or 'yes' for 5 questions. Overall, 75% rated higher than the mid-point for new skills. Modal score was "10" (12 highest).</p>	<p>Medium sized correlation between scale score for new ideas post-program and pre-program rated stress during parental deployment (r=0.46) and during parental return (r=0.40).</p>

**Table 3:** Mapping of Selected Papers (page 7 of 7)

**Stage 5:** Critically appraise the included studies for quality and relevance

The Weight of Evidence (WoE) tool (EPPI-Centre, 2007) was used as a framework to analyse each study. Each study's quality was appraised using twelve guiding questions (see Appendix C). The mapping table (Table 3), which details the characteristics of each selected study, helped to provide some of the answers to the WOE questions. The WOE tool helped to group the information and consider different research aspects. Three summary questions are used which focus on the trustworthiness of each study's findings, the appropriateness of the design for this review question and the relevance of the study's focus to this review question (see Table 4).

Although the answers to all twelve questions were used alongside the mapping table to answer the three summary questions (WOE A, B, C), some questions had more relevance and therefore more weight in my decision making. For example, WOE A (Can the study findings be trusted in answering the study question?) relates directly to questions eleven (differences between reviewer and authors over the findings or conclusions) and twelve (justification of conclusions); WOE B (Appropriateness of research design and analysis for addressing this systematic literature review's research question?) relates most closely to questions four to nine (includes: research design, reliability and validity of data collection and analysis); and for WOE C (Relevance of particular focus of the study for addressing this systematic literature review's research question?) question three (justification for study) and ten (generalisability) were most relevant alongside the mapping information. Finally, using the three summary questions as a guide, alongside my knowledge of the studies and current research question, an overall WoE rating was assigned, using a scale of low-medium-high (see Table 4). I will synthesis these findings and discuss them further within Stage 6.

	1. Chawla and MacDermid Wadsworth (2012)	2. Eodanable and Lauchlan (2012)	3. Le (2014)	4. Lester et al. (2016)	5. Lucier-Greer et al. (2014)	6. Flittner O'Grady et al. (2016)	7. Wilson et al. (2011)
<b>WOE - A: Can the study findings be trusted in answering the study question?</b>	Medium	Low-Medium	Low	High	High	High	Low-Medium
<b>WOE - B: Appropriateness of research design &amp; analysis for addressing the question of this specific systematic review?</b>	Medium-High	Low-Medium	Low	Medium-High	Low-Medium	High	Medium
<b>WOE - C: Relevance of particular focus of the study for addressing the question of this specific systematic review?</b>	Medium-High	High	Medium-High	Medium-High	Low	Medium-High	Medium
<b>Overall Weight of Evidence (WoE) rating</b>	<b>Medium-High</b>	<b>Low-Medium</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Medium-High</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Medium</b>

**Table 4:** Overall Weight of Evidence (WoE)

## **Stage 6:** Synthesise the studies

### **1.2.1 Weight of evidence (WoE)**

Table 4 above depicts the overall weight of evidence ratings. The three studies with the highest ratings (Chawla & MacDermid Wadsworth, 2012; Flittner O'Grady, Burton, Chawla, Topp, & Macdermid Wadsworth, 2016; Lester, Liang, et al., 2016) were rated between medium and high for all three questions which relate to answering their own study question as well as their study's relevance to this systematic review question. Le (2014) however, was deemed low for trustworthiness to answer their own research question and for the relevance of their design and analysis, due to design reasons discussed below. However, the study was rated

medium-high for the relevance of their focus because it was specifically about resilience factors; making friends and increased coping skills which included an element of mindfulness. Lucier-Greer et al. (2014) was rated low for the relevance of their focus as the intervention (military focused activities) was only one variable of many in the analysis, which primarily involved parental military work factors. In terms of ethicality, four of the eight studies explicitly mention gaining signed consent (Flittner O'Grady et al., 2016; Lester, Liang, et al., 2016), including two also gaining participant assent (Lucier-Greer et al., 2014; Wilson, Wilkum, Chernichky, Macdermid Wadsworth, & Broniarczyk, 2011). Another aspect I considered was researcher bias in relation to their investment in the intervention delivery, development and/or affiliations to the study's funding source. Although none of the authors directly delivered the interventions, some may have been involved in delivering training or supervision to the intervention facilitators. All of the studies, with the exception of Lucier-Greer et al. (2014), had authors which were either involved in the development of the intervention and/or were closely affiliated to the funding source. Flittner O'Grady et al. (2016) and Lester, Liang, et al. (2016) were particularly transparent about their conflicts of interest. There is a possibility that this could cause bias in the data collection, analysis and interpretations.

### **1.2.2 General characteristics of the studies**

Six of the seven studies were conducted primarily in the USA; the remaining study (Eodanable & Lauchlan, 2012) was conducted in Scotland, UK. In addition to the USA, one study also included an armed forces base in Europe (Lucier-Greer et al., 2014) and another also utilised bases in Japan (Lester, Liang, et al., 2016). Half of the studies included multiple armed forces installations (Flittner O'Grady et al., 2016; Lester, Liang, et al., 2016; Lucier-Greer et al., 2014). Two of the studies were conducted in the state of Indiana (Chawla & MacDermid Wadsworth, 2012; Wilson et al., 2011). The age of the participants ranged from 2 to 17 but the majority of the studies focused on CYP-FAFF aged nine and above (median = 12; mode = 11). The sample sizes ranged from 43 to 3,810 CYP-FAFF with three studies recruiting around 45 participants (Chawla & MacDermid Wadsworth, 2012; Eodanable & Lauchlan, 2012; Wilson et al., 2011) and two studies recruiting over 1000 CYP-FAFF (Lester, Liang, et al., 2016; Lucier-Greer et al., 2014).



### **1.2.3 Aims and interventions**

Six of the seven studies (excludes Lucier-Greer et al., 2014) evaluated specific intervention programs (Appendix A) which aimed to increase an aspect of resilience but the content of the intervention (Appendix B) and measures used (Table 3) were all different. Six studies (excludes Chawla & MacDermid Wadsworth, 2012) included an indication of whether participants had developed coping skills (Table 3) but again all measured this very differently. Chawla and MacDermid Wadsworth (2012) and Wilson et al. (2011) measured aspects of self-esteem, which is more related to an individual trait view of resilience (Block & Kremen, 1996; Letzring et al., 2005) but could still be influenced by relationships and environmental factors (Roosa, 2000; Yates & Masten, 2004). Four of the studies (Flittner O'Grady et al., 2016; Lester, Liang, et al., 2016; Lucier-Greer et al., 2014; Wilson et al., 2011) also included measures of clinical symptoms but I chose to exclude these due to the focus of this review on interventions which improve resilience processes.

The duration of interventions lasted from one day to a year. Two studies used eight week interventions (Eodanable & Lauchlan, 2012; Lester, Liang, et al., 2016) and two were approximately week-long, outdoor activities camps for CYP-FAFF (Chawla & MacDermid Wadsworth, 2012; Le, 2014). The environments and context of the interventions also differed. One focused on emotional literacy, change and loss in school (Eodanable & Lauchlan, 2012), one utilised multimedia resources in the home (Flittner O'Grady et al., 2016), one included military-organised events in the community (Lucier-Greer et al., 2014) and two were specific skill-building sessions which included parents in the wider intervention (Lester, Liang, et al., 2016; Wilson et al., 2011). Four of the interventions required professionals to be trained in that particular program, all of which included an element of improving coping skills (Eodanable & Lauchlan, 2012; Le, 2014; Lester, Liang, et al., 2016; Wilson et al., 2011).

### **1.2.4 Experimental designs of the studies**

Five of the studies included some form of pre-test and post-test intervention measure (Chawla & MacDermid Wadsworth, 2012; Eodanable & Lauchlan, 2012; Flittner

O'Grady et al., 2016; Lester, Liang, et al., 2016; Wilson et al., 2011); all, except one (Flittner O'Grady et al., 2016), were quasi-experimental one-group pre-test/post-test designs. Lester, Liang, et al. (2016) also included two follow-up data points which increases the reliability of the results (Elmes, Kantowitz, & Roediger, 2011) as it demonstrates sustained, longer-term effects. Flittner O'Grady et al. (2016) was the only study to use a randomised control group which is traditionally considered the gold standard for research purposes (Petticrew & Roberts, 2006), although not necessarily the most meaningful to the relevance for practical, everyday approaches and being inclusive of all data (Grossman & Mackenzie, 2005; Ogilvie, Egan, Hamilton, & Petticrew, 2005).

Two studies included statistical relationship data; regressions and correlations (Lucier-Greer et al., 2014; Wilson et al., 2011). Three studies included a section which counted responses and stated percentages as a quantitative descriptor (Eodanable & Lauchlan, 2012; Le, 2014; Wilson et al., 2011). This is the reason for their lower rating in the WOE table for design and analysis (Table 4 and Appendix C). Only Wilson et al. (2011) converted some of the categorical responses into numerical data using a scale and calculated correlations with pre-program responses. Le (2014) asked participants of the camp to rank the six activities in order of preference for three specific questions. The difficulty of ranking is that it does not have a meaningful scale because one person could be communicating they did not find any of the activities helpful for stress and another could be indicating they found them all helpful. In addition, Le (2014) and Lucier-Greer et al. (2014) only collected post-intervention data which means there are no direct comparisons available. Three of the studies included mixed methods (Eodanable & Lauchlan, 2012; Le, 2014; Wilson et al., 2011), although due to the limits of the scope of this review, I only included the quantitative aspects.

### **1.2.5 Outcomes and effectiveness**

Of the five studies which used pre-test/post-test measures, three demonstrated significant differences (Chawla & MacDermid Wadsworth, 2012; Flittner O'Grady et al., 2016; Lester, Liang, et al., 2016). For the two studies which resulted in non-significant outcomes; Wilson et al. (2011) demonstrated a significant correlation between reported pre-program difficulties and the helpfulness of the program and

Eodanable and Lauchlan (2012) demonstrated a majority of positive responses to a survey questionnaire, however from a quantitative perspective this is methodologically weak. Both studies also had a small sample size which could possibly contribute to the non-significant result.

The data required to calculate effect sizes is not reported in five of the studies and therefore their results must be interpreted cautiously. One reason for this may be because many of the studies used a quasi-experimental design (within-participant pre-test/post-test), rather than using an experimental design (between-groups including a control) which has higher validity to demonstrate the effect of an intervention (Mertens, 2014). Wilson et al. (2011) did not explicitly refer to effect sizes but state  $r$  values as associations (p.242) which can be used to describe effect sizes as correlation coefficients (Ellis, 2010). Flittner O'Grady et al. (2016) only stated an effect size for a reduction in clinical symptoms, however they used a control group so I could calculate Cohen's  $d$  for the ANOVA data. For two coping questions (p.65) there was a significant effect size for the intervention group (small approaching medium effect size,  $d = 0.43$ , for responses to "caregiver more comfortable helping child cope"; and small effect size,  $d = 0.34$ , for responses to "child will be able to cope a lot better").

### **Stage 7: Summarise the outcomes**

The following summaries and interpretation should be considered with caution as most of the studies were deemed to have between low and medium generalisability and did not include effect sizes.

#### **1.2.6 Individual skills**

In six of the studies either CYP-FAFF self-rated (Eodanable & Lauchlan, 2012; Le, 2014; Lester, Liang, et al., 2016; Lucier-Greer et al., 2014; Wilson et al., 2011) and/or parents rated (Flittner O'Grady et al., 2016; Lester, Liang, et al., 2016) that CYP-FAFF's coping skills improved following the intervention. Self-report scales can be at risk of under or over reporting (Leong & Austin, 2006). Self-worth significantly increased following a camp (Chawla & MacDermid Wadsworth, 2012) but self-esteem did not improve following a one day event (Wilson et al., 2011).

### **1.2.7 Multimedia resources**

The most promising finding appears to be the use of early years deployment materials (Sesame Street), which included a DVD (Flittner O'Grady et al., 2016). However, this was only one study. Parents who had utilised deployment materials responded that they were significantly more comfortable to support their child during deployment and more confident that their child would be better able to cope. This was compared to a control group who had utilised healthy lifestyle materials. However, this was predictive opinion rather than evidence that their child did cope better. Ninety-seven percent of parents watched the DVD with their child and sixty percent reported that they discussed the DVD with their child. The control group also reported discussing the DVD with their children which suggests discussion specifically related to deployment had an effect. The study did not however find any differences in parent-rated child social competence or security towards the adult. The use of educational videos for changing knowledge and attitudes is supported by other research which includes, bullying (Boulton & Flemington, 1996), a review of health promotion (Bieri, Gray, Raso, Li, & McManus, 2012) and sleep hygiene (Surani et al., 2015).

### **1.2.8 Supportive adults**

The findings by Lucier-Greer et al. (2014) suggested the importance of access to supportive others. Attending military sponsored activities was correlated with having higher affectional ties (this consists of three subscales which indicate the level of informal support linked to social integration and close personal relationships), higher guidance (someone to rely on in times of need) and higher family connection (turning to family for support) (Lucier-Greer et al., 2014). This is consistent with research by Mancini, Bowen, O'Neal, and Arnold (2015), who found that youth with more relationship provisions experienced less psychological vulnerability and more psychological and cognitive competency which was mediated by self-efficacy. One relationship provision could be the communication with a deployed parent (Houston, Pfefferbaum, Sherman, Melson, & Brand, 2013; Rodriguez & Margolin, 2015; Wilson, Chernichky, Wilkum, & Owlett, 2014). Having access to supportive adults is prominent in the wider resilience literature (Garmezy, 1991; Masten, 2014; Masten &

Monn, 2015; Rutter, 2013; Ungar et al., 2007; Ungar & Herrenkohl, 2013; Werner, 1989).

The FOCUS family intervention (Lester, Liang, et al., 2016) found significant improvements in child prosocial behaviours, as measured by the Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire, and in child coping skills, as measured by KidsCope. Both outcomes were sustained 6 months after the intervention was completed. This suggests that the involvement of parents could be an important aspect, however as there were no control groups there is no way of knowing if these improvements would have been present without parental involvement.

In Eodanable and Lauchlan's (2012) study, there was a family homework aspect to the Creating Confident Kids intervention. However, it was reported that there was poor parental involvement with this and there was poor turnout (3 of 46) for the parent information session. Passport Towards Success (Wilson et al., 2011) was integrated into a wider information and support day for parents but most of the parents were not directly involved with the intervention. There was no evaluation data for this aspect but parents were offered to stay and complete family programming with their children, however only 18 (of 88) families did so.

### **1.2.9 Peer interactions**

All the interventions involved interacting with others, with a minimum of two (parent and child) but most involved groups of CYP-FAFF. This could be consistent with the ecological perspective of resilience which argues that relationships and interactions with others are crucial (Luthar et al., 2000; Ungar & Herrenkohl, 2013; Yates & Masten, 2004). However, it will be important to consider whether CYP-FAFF merely learned alongside each other rather than in collaboration.

Interacting with peers was a factor in attending military sponsored activities (Lucier-Greer et al., 2014), attending camps (Chawla & MacDermid Wadsworth, 2012; Le, 2014), taking part in group tasks at school (Eodanable & Lauchlan, 2012) and during a one day skills building event (Wilson et al., 2011). As measured by Lucier-Greer et al. (2014), affectional ties (bonding and social integration) appear to increase by

partaking in interventions with peers. Partaking in activities with peers appears to increase social competence (Chawla & MacDermid Wadsworth, 2012), bonding and social integration (Le, 2014; Lucier-Greer et al., 2014) and coping skills (Le, 2014; Wilson et al., 2011). Although the Creating Confident Kids intervention (Eodanable & Lauchlan, 2012) did not find significant differences in emotional literacy scores, the children may have benefited in other ways, for example in relation to their peer relationships. This is suggested with the mean response in the survey for the question: 'I can say something or do something to let someone know I am still their friend even if we have had an argument' being 9.31 out of 10. However, there was no comparison group or control to assess the statistical significance or effect size of this rating.

In relation to the outdoor camps, Capaldi, Passmore, Nisbet, Zelenski, and Dopko (2015) and McArdle, Harrison, and Harrison (2013) argue that nature can facilitate positive social connections. In addition, access to nature has been linked to well-being and resilience (Humberstone & Stan, 2009; Ingulli & Lindbloom, 2013).

### **1.2.10 Targeted groups**

Fifty percent of CYP-FAFF in Le's (2014) study ranked mindfulness as the most helpful activity for developing coping skills. The four participants in Eodanable and Lauchlan's (2012) educational loss programme responded positively to survey questions about the coping skills learning objectives. Wilson et al. (2011) found medium-large significant correlations between stress experienced by youth during parental deployment / return and the degree to which they learned new coping skills at the Passport Towards Success event. This suggests interventions which target the development of coping skills may be more beneficial to CYP-FAFF who experience the most stress from their situation.

## **1.3 Limitations**

The lack of available research for CYP-FAFF interventions limited this review and the homogeneity of the studies. Some of the studies also lacked detail about the content of the interventions. It is difficult to compare interventions which include multiple aspects as it cannot be determined if the whole program or specific approaches or

topics produced the effect. Three of the studies included one or more of the same authors who were connected to Purdue University (Chawla & MacDermid Wadsworth, 2012; Flittner O'Grady et al., 2016; Wilson et al., 2011) and therefore limits the width of the review. In addition, Le's (2014) study was also funded by Purdue University.

Only one of the studies used an experimental design and therefore it is difficult to draw any conclusions regarding the impact of the interventions using effect sizes. All the studies used different measures and the majority created their own questions or scales to assess learned coping skills and therefore these measures are not validated. There do not appear to be widely accepted measures for resilience which may be due to its multi-dimensional and ecological nature (Liu, Reed, & Girard, 2017; Roosa, 2000; Yates & Masten, 2004; Zolkoski & Bullock, 2012) and it has been debated if resilience can or should be measured in an objective way (Grossen, 2010; Luthar et al., 2000; Masten, 2014). Most of the evaluations focused on individual skills despite authors mentioning the importance of relationships and environment. Measurement difficulties have also been noted about the wider area of resilience interventions (Luthar, 1991; Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000; Luthar et al., 2000).

#### **1.4 Conclusions**

There were seven papers which were selected to answer the following systematic review question: Which interventions improve resilience for children from armed forces families? It is difficult to generate conclusions with any degree of confidence due to the range of difference between the studies, the potential bias and confounding variables. Many of the interventions aimed to improve coping skills but they all did this with different approaches and used different measures. Attending interventions with peers increased bonding and social competence. There are mixed results on targeting emotional literacy skills and limited results on the use of relaxation or mindfulness, therefore these areas require further research. Interventions which utilised child-friendly multimedia materials or supportive adults appeared to improve the resilience aspect of CYP-FAFF's coping skills. However, further research is required to support these findings. It appears that CYP-FAFF who experience the most stress may derive more benefit from specific interventions.

## **1.5 Recommendations for Future Research**

Only one of the selected studies included a control group and therefore studies which utilise a waitlist control may add to the evidence in this area. Also, using a battery of measures to address different resilience processes may be useful in future research. As the multimedia educational approach appears promising, the different aspects of this intervention could be explored further, for example why does it make the adult feel more confident to support the child. As the responses were about predictive outcomes, it would be helpful to check during or following a deployment if this continued to make a difference. It would be interesting to establish if using this DVD or a similar one with children beyond the age of five would also be effective. I am aware that there is now an online website with these materials, as well as a website for the FOCUS intervention and therefore the use of these online resources could be evaluated.

Another area to explore could be CYP-FAFF's sense of belonging and peer bonding to develop resilience due to several of the studies involving peer interactions. However, I recognise that measuring these areas quantitatively is conceptually challenging. It would be interesting to compare schools with a high proportion of CYP-FAFF with those who only have a few to ascertain if there are any differences.

The apparent lack of parental engagement in supporting interventions (Eodanable & Lauchlan, 2012; Wilson et al., 2011) would also be an area worthy of further study. Asking for parent views and understanding barriers to access support would be beneficial.

Peer relationships, supportive adults and parental engagement are areas which could be addressed in schools. Educational psychologists are well-placed to facilitate understanding and assist in the development of support for ecological resilience (Theron & Donald, 2013).

Although there are individual studies which may act as a promising start, there is not yet enough research to conclude with any confidence which interventions improve resilience for CYP-FAFF. However, the areas of peer interaction, supportive adults and use of multimedia resources could be further explored.



## **Chapter 2: Bridging Document**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This bridging document will discuss the links and development from the systematic literature review to the empirical research study. It will outline the personal and professional context of my thesis in relation to children and young people from armed forces families (CYP-FAFF) and my world view related to the theories, tools and methods employed. I will present resilience as an ecological process and how this relates to gathering school staff views about what works to support CYP-FAFF's well-being. I will also critique Appreciative Inquiry (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005) as an Action Research (Sagor, 2000) approach. I have utilised Groundwater-Smith and Mockler's (2007) framework which argues for ethicality as a quality marker for practitioner research to discuss my research decisions.

### **2.2 National, Professional and Personal Context**

I decided to focus on the well-being of children and young people from armed forces families (CYP-FAFF; also known as Service Children or Military Children) due to the professional and national relevance. The Service Pupil Premium (SPP) is additional money which is provided to schools to support children aged 5-18 with parent/s who work, or have worked, in the armed forces (Ministry of Defence, 2016). It is specified that this funding should be used for pastoral support considering the additional stress CYP-FAFF experience including frequent changes (for further details see Systemic Literature Review and Empirical Research). There is 1% of the school-aged population in England who are eligible for SPP (Education and Skills Funding Agency, 2016). The percentage of eligible children is four times higher in the local authority I work in and consists of over 3,000 pupils and rising due to the drawback of families from Germany to the UK. The number is higher than this when Early Years children are included.

I am currently working as a Trainee Educational Psychologist (TEP) with 10 schools, all of whom have Service children on roll. About 60% of these schools have a majority of Service children. The mobility rates are high and can significantly change the school population; for example, one school almost doubled in size with limited

forewarning. Children and young people who have parents deployed to a zone of conflict are considered vulnerable by the Local Authority and historically have been eligible for free core Educational Psychology involvement. Many of the children I have worked with have experienced social and emotional difficulties relating to parental separation, changes in parental roles, mobility, and building relationships with teachers and peers which is consistent with the literature (Alfano et al., 2016; Bradshaw, Figiel, & Deutsch, 2014; Chandra, Lara-Cinisomo, et al., 2010; Cozza, 2014; Easterbrooks et al., 2013; Esposito-Smythers et al., 2011; Kaplow et al., 2013; Lester, Aralis, et al., 2016).

As I extended my knowledge of the literature and discussed perceptions with colleagues from armed forces families, I became aware of the negative assumptions I had about CYP-FAFF experiences. There is a recognition in the literature that being in an armed forces family can also provide new opportunities and positive experiences (Cozza, 2014; Knobloch et al., 2015; Rowe et al., 2014). Many CYP-FAFF develop resilience but this does not automatically mean they are invulnerable.

The school staff I work with have reported that a source of stress is that parents have high expectations for the amount of one-to-one time provided to CYP-FAFF due to higher staffing levels provided in overseas British Service Schools. Many of the children had been receiving 1-1 support in Germany or Cyprus but did not have an Education, Health and Care Plan to access the same support in the UK. However, a positive is that some staff have transferred from these schools and therefore are familiar to the children. Although additional funding is provided, school staff (including those in this study) perceive that there is a lack of recognition at a Government level (Department for Education and OFSTED) of the significant effort made by some schools to support the well-being of CYP-FAFF and the impact this can have on their learning (Diamond, 2010) due to the national focus on academic achievement.

### **2.3 World View**

My world view is consistent with a social constructionist approach in that the language and interactions between people creates meaning (Bruner, 1996; Burr, 2003; Kelly, 2008). Both Appreciative Inquiry and Action Research can be argued to be underpinned by social constructionist assumptions which facilitate change (Grant

& Humphries, 2006). Both also have pragmatic elements using cycles of inquiry in which knowledge and practice are intertwined (Burnham, 2012; Cooperrider, Whitney, & Stavros, 2008; Sagor, 2000; Wellington, 2015). However, I also acknowledge the importance of context and the social realities of aspects like funding resources which may be more consistent with a critical realist approach (Kelly, 2008; Scott, 2005).

My personal values include providing help, having faith in others' growth, to appreciate what I have, that quality time is more valuable than money and that hope can be a powerful motivator. My background working in psychology within mental health services included a role to challenge medical model thinking and present alternative, more holistic explanations. I am attracted to focusing on strengths because I think acknowledging what people do, rather than focusing on what they are not doing, can help people to feel good about themselves and more confident in their abilities, which in turn can facilitate people to develop solutions (Berg & Shilts, 2005). This is consistent with principles from humanist psychology (Rogers, 1964), positive psychology (Seligman, Ernst, Gillham, Reivich, & Linkins, 2009) and the Working on What Works approach (Berg & Shilts, 2005) underpinned by solution-focused brief therapy. My empirical study will be discussed within an ethical framework for practitioner research at the end of this document.

#### **2.4 From Systematic Review to Empirical Research - Why focus on school staff? A theoretical perspective**

My systematic literature review was based on the ecological view of resilience and drew on interactionist theories of development (Cicchetti & Lynch, 1993; Sameroff, 2010) (see Introduction of Systematic Review). Resilience is a multi-dimensional construct which includes positive development despite adversity through interactions between the individual, others around them and the environment (Easterbrooks et al., 2013; Masten, 2011; Roosa, 2000; Ungar, 2015).

These complex interactional processes are difficult to define and quantify (Liu et al., 2017; Roosa, 2000; Yates & Masten, 2004; Zolkoski & Bullock, 2012) and more fundamentally due to the varied and unique nature of relationships, it is debated if

they can, and should, be measured in an objective way (Grossen, 2010; Luthar et al., 2000; Masten, 2014). Therefore, I decided that a subjective, qualitative approach would better capture dynamic relationships.

Another consideration is whether expecting someone to have or develop resilience might dismiss or minimise their difficult experiences, which may include a very usual reaction to negative events. It could set expectations about how quickly we expect someone to recover, what qualifies as competent functioning or how much distress should be expressed (Luthar et al., 2000; Masten, 2014). For example, someone who does not talk about a difficult event could be considered to have resilience but an alternative explanation may be that they are masking or avoiding their feelings, which may subsequently affect their well-being. I wanted to avoid narrowing definitions of resilience and well-being when investigating the perspectives of school staff about the pastoral support they provide.

## **2.5 Using an Appreciative Inquiry Framework**

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005) is based on the following principles; creating new possibilities for action through dialogue (constructionist), the questions we ask, influence actions (simultaneity), words create meaning (poetic), what we do today is guided by our image of the future (anticipatory) and sustainable change requires positive affect (positive). Table 5 below details the AI principles and the corresponding research approach. I chose to use this framework to conduct one-to-one interviews rather than focus groups as would be expected with this method. This allowed for in-depth exploration of support for CYP-FAFF, minimised the potential pressure of having management involved in a group for the initial data gathering and gave each staff member the opportunity to have an equal voice. The interviews provided staff with an opportunity to reflect on their positive relationships and validate their actions. A subsequent focus group was facilitated to discuss the generated themes and to identify areas for further development.

<b>Appreciative Inquiry Principle (Cooperrider &amp; Whitney, 2005)</b>	<b>Approach Utilised in this Research Study</b>
Constructionist	<p>Encouraging staff discussion outside the research protocol. Interviews, followed by a focus group. Not bottom-up or top-down process but focused on collective knowledge. This is why I invited senior management to be part of the research but recognised that this would be a delicate power balance and hence part of the reasoning for me to also include individual interviews. The focus group was also consistent with Wegerif 's (2011) idea of metaphorical "Dialogic Spaces" (p. 180), which interprets conversation as a joint interpretation of meaning by the speaker and listener.</p>
Simultaneity	<p>Carefully worded, exploratory, open-ended questions. Allow people to explore their own strengths and provide an opportunity to reflect and expand on how they might use their skills and support systems.</p>
Poetic	<p>The interview dialogues were thematically analysed to reflect meaning. I reflected on the focus group discussion and emphasised the salient themes.</p>
Anticipatory	<p>The questions include asking what would encompass ideal practice, thinking about future possibilities and then what small part can be implemented now.</p>
Positive	<p>The preface sets up the positive frame for the interview and wording of the questions are appreciative of strengths. Through the questions there is an assumption communicated that staff are already doing a good job.</p>

	<p>The preface below which I constructed using guidance from previous examples (Lee, 2010, September) was used to begin the interview. It involved positive affirmation (in bold below) and the use of “we” (in italics below) to communicate collaboration:</p> <p>Preface constructed for this study (see Appendix F):</p> <p>By <b>supporting</b> pupils at school, <b>you are helping</b> to create a <b>strong foundation</b> for them to continue being <b>successful</b> in life. <i>Our commitment</i> to and experience of working with forces families to provide wellbeing support is a source of <b>real learning</b> for <i>us</i>. This can help <i>us</i> reflect on feeling <b>pride</b> for what’s been <b>accomplished</b>, what’s <b>worked well</b> and with <i>our dedication</i>, <i>we</i> can brainstorm how <i>we</i> can build on <i>each other’s successes</i> to develop support even further.</p> <p>We can only do, what is able to be imagined and <b>therefore thinking of a positive future, inspires new ways of thinking</b>. I want to <b>listen and share</b> in your stories of what has been <b>possible and worthwhile</b>.</p>
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**Table 5:** Research Approach based on the Appreciative Inquiry Principles

### ***2.5.1 Critical Appreciative Process (CAP)***

Grant and Humphries (2006) discuss the need to critique and reflect on the use of Appreciative Inquiry (AI) in order to bring about change. Given the current culture of standardisation and high pressure on classroom staff which may feel criticising, I thought it was important to provide an opportunity to celebrate their strengths, which the AI principles offer. It can also provide agency by using solutions and

developments that the staff suggest, rather than prescriptive recommendations from an outsider. One critique of AI could be that there is not an established method of analysis which allows it to be flexible but also could be a limitation for using it as a research tool. However, AI can facilitate research to go beyond insight and critique and move into social action (Cooperrider et al., 2008).

Grant and Humphries (2006) critique of AI reflects on one their participant's frustrations of not enough problems being discussed. However, there is often a misconception that AI is exclusively focused on the positives and does not allow for participants to discuss difficulties or problems. Watkins and Mohr (2001) suggest how to address negative data during AI, emphasising that negatives should be acknowledged and can be valuable within the process as it indicates something that the participant wishes could happen better. Acknowledging difficulties is consistent with a solution-oriented approach (O'Hanlon & Weiner-Davis, 2003). The dream stage can indicate the organisation's weaknesses, however due to the focus of my research question and space limitations I used my reflexivity to focus on the other stages. Grant and Humphries (2006) also caution against the use of verbs such as 'should' which may imply a sense of failure or obligation.

## **2.6 Consideration of being a research-practitioner: an inside-outsider**

Assuming the role of a research-practitioner presented several dilemmas. Much consideration was given to the potential difficulties or strengths of conducting the research within a familiar school where I am also the identified educational psychologist. There were aspects which could be viewed as both a benefit and an interfering factor (Wellington, 2015). For example, having prior knowledge of the school could bias my interpretations but it could also lead to a richer understanding of the context. I was conscious of creating professional boundaries to maintain a focus on the research aims but there was some inevitable and necessary overlap with practice, particularly when supporting implications. I hoped that being a familiar person may make me more approachable but I was also conscious that some staff may be uncomfortable or feel pressurised and therefore voluntary participation was very important to me. I was also available during and after the research and therefore could provide additional support if needed.

My intention was to open participation up to all school staff (e.g. including playground supervisors, lunch staff, receptionists) to make it as inclusive and whole school as possible. However, it ended being steered towards classroom staff and senior leadership. This was in part due to recruitment opportunities in the form of meetings and the availability of staff for the interviews. There also seemed to be an opinion from senior leadership that these staff members would provide the most helpful information as they spend the most time with the children.

My reflection of the process is that I could have chosen a more specific aspect of well-being (e.g. relationship / interaction factors) to ask about in the interviews but I wanted information to be generated by participant's own understandings. Participant's reflected that they had enjoyed the process. When organising the focus group, real world practicalities were evident around the availability of staff and timing. The session had been planned for the participants and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator (SENDCo) to attend but the Head Teacher attended in place of the SENDCo, due to absence. This was positive to reiterate support from the Head Teacher for the generated ideas but due to their lack of preparation for the session, it seemed that the ethos and agenda slightly shifted. It would have been beneficial for this session to be longer. We discussed that as a continuing practitioner for the school with dedicated time for CYP-FAFF that these conversations and plans will continue to develop.

## **2.7 Ethical Framework**

Groundwater-Smith and Mockler (2007, pp. 205-206) suggest five guidelines to address ethicality for validation in practitioner research. They argue that ethical principles are necessary for quality and therefore go beyond a procedural purpose. Parker (2013) also argues for Educational Psychologists to consider ethics beyond the deontological, traditional professional code. I will now use Groundwater-Smith and Mockler's guidelines to critically discuss the ethicality of this research.



### ***2.7.1 Observe ethical protocols and processes***

It was important to me to ensure that participation was an independent, voluntary choice. I requested that interested staff contacted me through email as I wanted to avoid staff feeling pressured in school and I felt this would give them more of a free choice. Groundwater-Smith and Mockler (2007) agree that participation should not be directed from the top-down. I also suggested to the SENDCo that some consent forms and a post box could be positioned in the staff room to give people an additional option to email. However, the participants who took part approached me in person on the day of the staff meetings.

I provided information sheets and consent forms (Appendices D and E) to read and sign before the day of the interview to give potential participants time to read through the information and ask any questions in advance so that they were fully informed of the process. There were details provided relating to confidentiality, the right to withdraw and voluntary responding. The interview and subsequent focus group was designed to centre on positive aspects. However, the risks of participating in research on any topic has the potential for people to become upset by a particular question or topic (e.g. if a question reminds someone of a distressing personal experience). In this event, I would cease/pause the interview or group and discuss the options for support. One positive of being a practitioner researcher is that I was available for support after the study. My research was subject to the Newcastle University ethical approval process.

### ***2.7.2 Transparent in its process***

I attended staff meetings to talk through the Appreciative Inquiry approach and the research process, including their time commitment. The account of using Appreciative Inquiry from Grant and Humphries (2006) emphasises the need for the senior leadership and participants to be aware of the approach, its purpose and examples of how it can help. An information sheet (Appendix D) outlining the project and contact details for any further questions was provided. It included notifying staff that the interviews would be audio recorded and that a member of senior leadership would be present during the focus group stage. I was conscious that staff were already busy and dealing with lots of challenges. I wondered if they may think that

the Appreciative Inquiry approach would only focus on positives, and not address any concerns, so I provided some additional explanation following the staff meetings. All school staff were aware that the research would contribute to my doctoral thesis which was important for fully informed consent to detail what the information would be used for and to be transparent about part of the motivation.

The benefits and any potential difficulties were considered for providing the questions in advance of the interviews. I was conscious it may make the interviews less natural and participants may have assumed it meant they had to be fully prepared with exact answers. However, as recommended by Bell (2014) it made the process more transparent, would avoid putting them on the spot and in line with the AI principles could have facilitated discussions amongst staff outside of the research process. This may have led to strong characters dominating any pre-discussions but the individual interviews allowed each person to raise what was most relevant to them and may have reflected a constructed, collaborative view. The participants were alerted that as it was a semi-structured interview that not all questions would be asked and that there may be some questions which were not detailed. I provided the questions to be passed to participants in advance, however only one participant had received the interview schedule as planned. Participants were given an outline of the structure and questions on the day with time offered at the beginning to look through them. One participant commented after the interview, she was glad she had not had the questions in advance as it made it feel more natural and made her think of things she may not have otherwise.

### ***2.7.3 Collaborative in its nature***

Before commencing the study, I met with the Head Teacher and SENDCo to provide an outline, explain the Appreciative Inquiry approach to ensure senior leadership subscribed to the collaborative process of the change methods and negotiate the organisation. Practitioner research should empower staff agency (Groundwater-Smith & Mockler, 2007). The ethical principle of collaboration is consistent with the constructionist Appreciative Inquiry principle, creating meaning together and AI has a holistic ethos (Cooperrider et al., 2008). I was keen to agree that participants could be released within school time for interview, rather than in their own time, so that they

would know their participation was valued. The use of a semi-structured protocol allowed me to follow what was important to the participants. Many of the positive approaches also assume that the person is the expert in their own lives (Todd, 2007). I wanted to ensure I communicated that I was not looking for any particular or right answers, but rather that I was genuinely interested in their opinions and experiences. An open opportunity was provided at the end to add anything further. Through the interviews and the focus group, participant's views were utilised to highlight potential areas for change. I am aware however, that through the analysis process that the information with the most relevance to the research question was prioritised. I adapted the acronym I was using from CYP-AFF to CYP-FAFF because participants highlighted it was too similar to an existing organisation.

#### ***2.7.4 Transformative in its intent and action***

I was passionate that the purpose of my study would go beyond information collection. Using an Appreciative Inquiry framework allowed me to explore not only what could be developed but how. The purpose of bringing people together for the focus group was to allow for ongoing discussion as reflexive knowledge (Groundwater-Smith & Mockler, 2007) and to create an action plan which was meaningful for that school. Any ideas generated by the group were to be supported with management present which was intended to be affirming and powerful to drive agreed changes.

#### ***2.7.5 Justify itself to its community of practice***

This involves consideration of the cost-benefit balance. The Head Teacher viewed the project as mutually beneficial to myself as a researcher and to the school as it could act as an audit of needs and guide development.

### **2.8 Conclusion**

This bridging document, along with supporting information from the systematic literature review and empirical research study, addresses Groundwater-Smith and Mockler's (2007) characteristics for good qualitative research. Observe ethical processes, transparency, collaborative, transformative and justification to the

community of practice. My thesis has increased my awareness of working with the armed forces culture and the schools associated with them. It has also helped to remind me to focus on what is going well and how this can be used to develop support further. My increased awareness of resources has also enabled me to share this information with colleagues in the wider Local Authority team. The remainder of my thesis will present the empirical research study.

## **Chapter 3: What are the Perspectives of School Staff on Supporting the Well-Being of Students, from Armed Forces Families?**

### **Abstract**

There is limited research which focuses on the school experience of children and young people from armed forces families (CYP-FAFF). This population have been reported to have difficulties with the emotional aspect of transition however, akin to positive psychology, this study adopted the stance that anyone can increase well-being. This study takes a multi-dimensional, ecological view of well-being and therefore focused on staff. It is a qualitative survey of current and future practice in one context. Therefore, it explores the perspectives of school staff in one primary school on what works to support the well-being of children and young people from armed forces families (CYP-FAFF) and how staff practice could be developed further.

Three participants engaged with semi-structured interviews which were based on Appreciative Inquiry principles. Themes were created for two time points, current practice (to celebrate and build on what's going well) and future practice (to utilise strengths and identify areas for development). The main themes were Positive Relationships, Cultural Responsiveness (the armed forces being considered as a sub-culture), Monitor Actions to Maintain Values and Enhance Support through Partnerships, particularly with Parental Engagement and Direct Support for CYP-FAFF. Themes were then discussed with two of the participants and the Head Teacher during a focus group to facilitate collaborative dialogue and apply findings, to start the first steps in an action research cycle which will continue beyond this study. Positive relationships were viewed as central and were recognised as a foundation for supporting well-being in CYP-FAFF. Following this study, a school Parent Support Worker has been employed, the school have started an intensive nurture group and completed Emotion Coaching training. Educational Psychologists are well placed to support schools to develop support around well-being.

### **3.1 Introduction**

This study explores the perspectives of school staff on what works to support the well-being of children and young people from armed forces families (CYP-FAFF) and how staff practice could be developed further. An ecological conceptualisation of resilience (Masten, 2011; Ungar, 2015) is adopted, in addition to a multi-faceted notion of well-being (Seligman, 2012; Tennant et al., 2007), which both utilise interactionist theories (Cicchetti & Lynch, 1993; Sameroff, 2010).

#### ***3.1.1 Children and young people from armed forces families***

CYP-FAFF and their supporting adults have reported that deployments and frequent adaptation to new environments take an “emotional toll” (Bradshaw, Sudhinaraset, Mmari, & Blum, 2010, p. 100) but CYP-FAFF are considered to have difficulties expressing these emotions (Clifton, 2007). CYP-FAFF can experience a range of negative emotions which impacts upon their relationships and well-being (Chandra, Martin, Hawkins, & Richardson, 2010; Mmari, Bradshaw, Sudhinaraset, & Blum, 2010). School staff in Arnold et al.’s (2014) study stated that for many CYP-FAFF heightened emotional reactions are not the norm but occur on random days. The social-emotional challenges of transitions have been reported by CYP-FAFF as more difficult than the academic transition (Clifton, 2007; Keller & Decoteau, 2000). However, the opportunities of being a forces child have also been discussed (Knobloch et al., 2015; Masten, 2013). Having strong self-reliance can be a positive coping skill but can also create barriers to asking for help (Clifton, 2007). During this study, I was conscious not to assume that CYP-FAFF have negative well-being and aimed to focus on how well-being is supported and how it can be developed further. This standpoint is consistent with positive psychology; well-being can be improved regardless of an individual’s current level of functioning (Joseph & Linley, 2006).

#### ***3.1.2 Ecological resilience and well-being***

Resilience is a multi-dimensional construct, whereby recovery and development from experiencing additional stress is dependent upon the availability of resources in an individual’s environment and relationships (Ungar & Herrenkohl, 2013). Ecological

resilience extends beyond an individual trait. The connection between resilience and well-being is discussed by Ungar's (2008, p. 22) definition of ecological resilience:

1. *Resilience is the capacity of individuals to navigate their way to resources that sustain well-being.*
2. *Resilience is the capacity of individuals' physical and social ecologies to provide these resources (in this study it refers to the school environment, relationships with staff and peers and the collaboration between all stakeholders).*
3. *Resilience is the capacity of individuals, their families and communities to negotiate culturally meaningful ways for resources to be shared.*

Ecological resilience refers not only to the ability but also to the opportunity to adapt. Wyman (2003) argues that children do not change merely as a result of what they do, but as a result of what is provided for them, which is why this study focuses on school support for CYP-FAFF. Roffey (2015, p. 24) states,

*"well-being focus is on universal and pro-active intervention to promote relationships and resilience."*

Uni-dimensional measures of well-being have been criticised as they do not capture the full human experience and subjective ratings can be influenced by current mood (Kern, Waters, Adler, & White, 2015). Therefore, it is recommended that well-being is recognised as a multi-dimensional construct (Huppert & So, 2013; Liddle & Carter, 2015). Tennant et al. (2007, p. 63) suggested three categories of well-being: positive emotion, interpersonal and optimum functioning. Similarly, Seligman (2012) developed the PERMA model of flourishing; (P)ositive emotions, (E)ngagement, (R)elationships, (M)eaning and (A)ccomplishment. The PERMA model encapsulates concepts such as interest and connection to activities, feeling included and cared for, having a sense of value and purpose, and progressing towards personal goals.

Even when CYP are experiencing multiple adversities, a positive school climate with supportive adults can support well-being and therefore develop resilience (Astor, De Pedro, Gilreath, Esqueda, & Benbenishty, 2013; Liebenberg et al., 2016; Luthar et al., 2000). The school environment naturally provides the opportunity to connect with others, access resources and develop skills.

### **3.1.3 School staff-student relationships**

The relationships between school staff and children is considered within the literature to support wellbeing. Children (and adults) can feel validated if they believe they are accepted and that others care about them (Roffey, 2015). Roorda, Koomen, Spilt, and Oort (2011) reported that teachers who demonstrated an interest in the children increased levels of engagement, however they do not specify what this involves. Brooks (2006) suggests that giving time, attention and listening are important features of staff-student relationships. Close staff-student relationships can predict better emotional adjustment (Breeman et al., 2015). Roorda et al. (2011, p. 496) use four components (affective, autonomy, structure and instruction) of staff-student relationships in their model. They argue that the affective component (caring for and expressing a genuine interest in the student with low conflict) is most influential on student engagement.

### **3.1.4 Relationship between school staff and children and young people from armed forces families**

Qualitative studies report that school staff identify building trust and confidence with CYP-FAFF as important to facilitate communication, and can be encouraged by adults showing that they care by responding with interest, empathy and compassion (Bradshaw et al., 2010; McCloud, 2011). Arnold et al. (2014) highlighted the importance of staff approachability, flexibility and attentiveness. Making the effort to get to know children individually, and not overgeneralising, was also considered as important to support CYP-FAFF's well-being. Staff discussed creating a sense of normalcy and safety for CYP-FAFF through a school climate which accepts diversity and establishes consistent routines. Bradshaw et al. (2010) reported opportunities to connect to peers was important for well-being which included transition initiatives to link students, and peer support groups particularly during parental absence or for CYP-FAFF who were experiencing difficulties. Students in their study had differing views about being identified as CYP-FAFF but all agreed that having access to an adult in school who would listen and be emotionally available was important to feel supported.



There is a need for more research which focuses on the school experience of CYP-FAFF (Astor et al., 2013; Brendel et al., 2014). There is evidence to suggest that staff-student relationships and supportive school systems enhance well-being and build resilience networks (Bradshaw et al., 2010; Roffey, 2015). Gaining staff perspectives is important because they provide the most frequent pastoral support.

### ***3.1.5 Unique contribution of this study***

This study explores the opinions of school staff working in a UK primary school. This age group has not been exclusively studied in relation to staff support for CYP-FAFF. Clifton's (2007) thesis was conducted in the UK but focused on secondary age CYP-FAFF. Eodanable and Lauchlan (2012) used a UK primary school but evaluated child interventions and policy, rather than focusing on the support that staff provide. To my knowledge, there are only three USA studies (producing six research papers) which include the views of school staff about support for CYP-FAFF (Arnold et al., 2014; Bradshaw et al., 2010; Chandra, Martin, et al., 2010; Garner, Arnold, & Nunnery, 2014; Mmari et al., 2010; Mmari, Roche, Sudhinaraset, & Blum, 2009).

Another aspect of this study which makes it unique is that not only did it gather views about what support works well but it also considered the context and culture (Luthar, Sawyer, & Brown, 2006; Ungar, 2011). This was done by facilitating the school staff to develop an action plan to mobilise change through what school staff thought was successful in their own school. Ungar (2011) suggested that focusing on what already works can support well-being which is consistent with using an Appreciative Inquiry (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005) framework. This also fits with my world view about the importance of inquiry in facilitating positive change and not using research to only generate knowledge.

### ***3.1.6 Research question:***

What are the perspectives of school staff on their contribution to the promotion of well-being, in students from armed forces families and what are the implications of this for future practice?

## 3.2 Methodology

### 3.2.1 Research design

A qualitative survey of current and future practice in one context was conducted (Figure 2). The survey explored staff perspectives in relation to the effective well-being support they provide for CYP-FAFF and how this can contribute to developing their practice. This is consistent with Ungar’s “cultural relativity, decentrality” (2011, pp. 4, 8) ecological resilience principle because it focuses on the social ecology and interactions, rather than within child. Semi-structured interviews which used principles from Appreciative Inquiry (Appendix F) were employed with the participants. Thematic analysis was utilised to generate themes. All themes were presented to the interview participants, along with the Head Teacher, in a focus group to provide the opportunity to discuss together how the themes reflect their school and which aspects of well-being support for CYP-FAFF could be further developed.

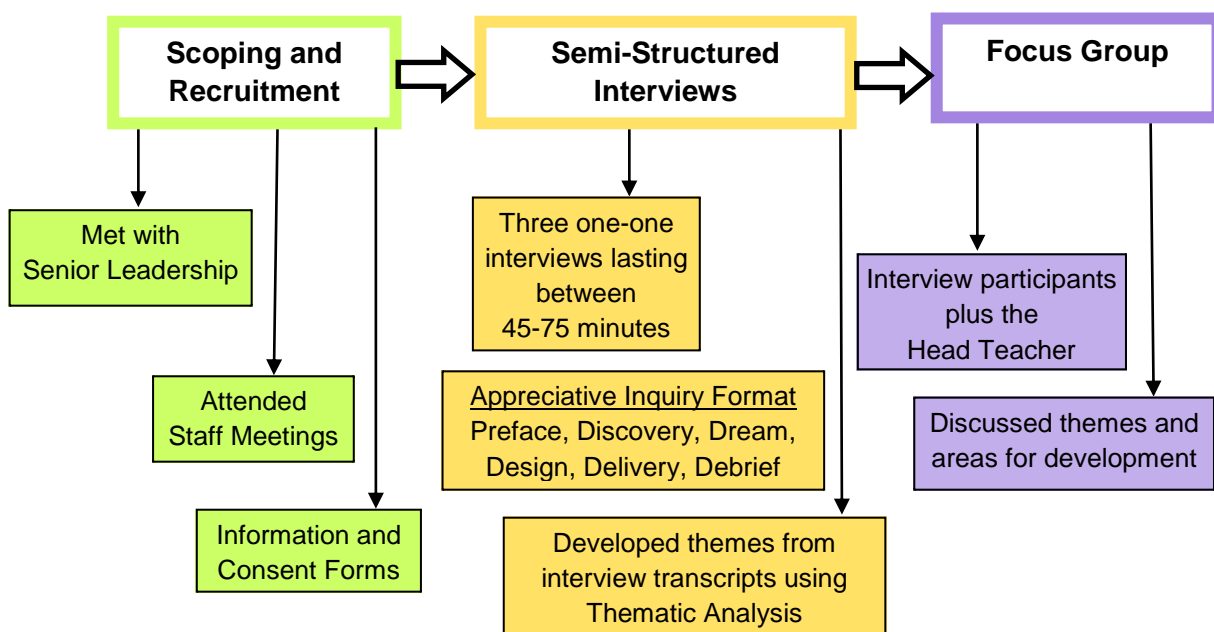


Figure 2: Research Design

### 3.2.2 Context of research-practitioner

I had ongoing discussions with supervisors about the benefits and challenges of being an insider-outsider (see Bridging Document). As a trainee I worked into 10 schools, all of which had CYP-FAFF in varying percentages. Due to the drawback

from Germany, many schools significantly increased in size (some almost doubling) with limited prior notice. For the financial year 2017-2018, funding from the Ministry of Defence was secured to deliver Educational Psychology input to 13 schools which included children of parents who serve in the army or air force. Using the research as a catalyst for change in practice was an important component for me.

### **3.2.3 Context of chosen school**

The sample was purposive because I emailed schools which have a high proportion of CYP-FAFF to ask for expressions of interest. I already had relationships with these schools as I had worked with them over the past year. The advantages and challenges of conducting research in a school where I was also the trainee were considered (see Bridging Document).

I had preliminary discussions with the three interested Head Teachers to outline the study and explain the Appreciative Inquiry principles to ensure senior leadership subscribed to the collaborative change process and had a willingness to act on the participants' perspectives. The chosen school was the most communicative with organisation and its commitment to follow the AI principles. A meeting was arranged with the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator (SENDCo) and Head Teacher of the selected school to provide further details. I was keen to agree that staff would participate in school time rather than their own time so that they would know the project was valued and assist with motivation to volunteer. The Head Teacher viewed the project as mutually beneficial as it could act as an audit of school needs and assist with development. As I continued to work with the other two schools, they had the opportunity to use the principles and ideas of my research in their schools.

In the selected school which is situated in the North of England, there are students from over 20 countries represented. About 70 percent of the school's students are CYP-FAFF. The school includes staff who are themselves members of an armed forces family. There is a high mobility rate; nearly one third of the students arrived in the last 18 months which significantly increased the total number of students on role at the school. The school's stated values are consistent with inclusion, well-being and

development. Having previously worked with this school, I was aware that many staff appeared to value psychology input and were keen to make changes where they could. The school generally has good staff retention. Three-quarters make up a core staff group who have been at the school for at least five years but an estimated average of ten years. However, mobility affects the other quarter, predominately non-teaching staff who are part of an armed forces family. The school access regular training and have been involved in development projects and therefore most staff are highly skilled.

### **3.2.4 Participants**

I attended one TA meeting and one teacher meeting to discuss the research and provided information forms (Appendix D). This gave staff the opportunity to be introduced to me if I had not previously worked with them and ask any questions. It also provided me with a further opportunity to develop an understanding of the rich context which increased the validity for interpreting the findings (Cho & Trent, 2006). I discussed that I wanted to avoid staff feeling pressurised by senior leadership to participate and therefore I requested staff contact me directly through email as I thought this might provide more free choice. I provided some additional explanation emphasising that AI does not prohibit discussion about difficulties. The SENDCo also reminded staff at future meetings.

I aimed for four to six participants who had worked with CYP-FAFF for at least a year, however only three volunteered and signed consent before the deadline to commence interviews. The three interview participants had diverse job roles, qualifications, work experiences and personal experiences. Collectively they had worked at the school for 32 years. No further detail can be shared due to the need to ensure anonymity (Bell, 2014).

### **3.2.5 Data collection**

Consistent with my subjectivist world view, the following Appreciative Inquiry principles (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005) were used as a guide for the interview questions; creating new possibilities for action through dialogue (constructionist), the questions we ask, influence actions (simultaneity), words create meaning (poetic),

what we do today is guided by our image of the future (anticipatory) and sustainable change requires positive affect (positive). Questions were related to two time points; current practice and future practice. The interview questions were reviewed by supervisors and colleagues then amended as required to ensure as much clarity as possible. I wanted to ensure that the participants and schools strengths were celebrated and that new ideas were formulated from this positive foundation. Difficulties discussed were used as an indication for change and facilitated further conversation.

I took an exploratory stance as there is a small research base in this area and so I had few preconceived notions of what staff might say. This meant that I was genuinely curious in the interviews which I hoped would reflect both mutual interests and interaddressivity (expecting to be surprised by the other) (Cooper, Chak, Cornish, & Gillespie, 2013; Kennedy, 2004; Matusov, 2011) and therefore that this would facilitate dialogue between myself and the participants. Feedback from the first interviewee resulted in adding further reasoning about why there was repetition in the questions.

### **3.2.6 Data analysis**

Inductive semantic thematic analysis (TA) (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was used to create themes from the interview transcripts (Appendices G and H). It was inductive as I used the data to derive themes, rather than any previous theoretical framework. It was semantic as I used what participants said directly to create codes and themes. However, this does not mean the process was free from interpretation because an active researcher selects data with prior knowledge, assumptions and their own meanings.

TA was selected because it can create a rich description and its flexibility allowed incorporation of an ethos and questions informed by Appreciative Inquiry. When feeding the themes back to participants, I wanted this to closely reflect what they had reported and therefore a highly interpretative approach like phenomenological analysis would have been less appropriate.

### *Focus group*

A subsequent focus group was arranged to validate the themes for triangulation and ensure that themes could be used to develop practice in the school. The focus group was comprised of the interview participants and the Head Teacher and was consistent with the Appreciative Inquiry principles of creating organisational change through dialogue and collaboration. I was aware that involving the Head Teacher would introduce power dynamics however the process of Appreciative Inquiry is intended to be collaborative and any ideas generated by the group could be supported with leadership present (MacCoy, 2014; Roffey, 2015; Waters & White, 2015). I hoped this would enable agreed changes to happen. Having initial individual interviews was intended to minimise the potential pressure of having leadership involved in a group for the initial data gathering and to give each staff member the opportunity to have an equal voice.

The focus group enabled the first step of an action research cycle (Sagor, 2000) to be initiated for sustainable, ongoing practice. The plan was for the school to use the themes and AI principles as a structure to regularly review, adapt and continue with the development of support, facilitated by an educational psychologist where agreed as part of the dedicated funding for CYP-FAFF.

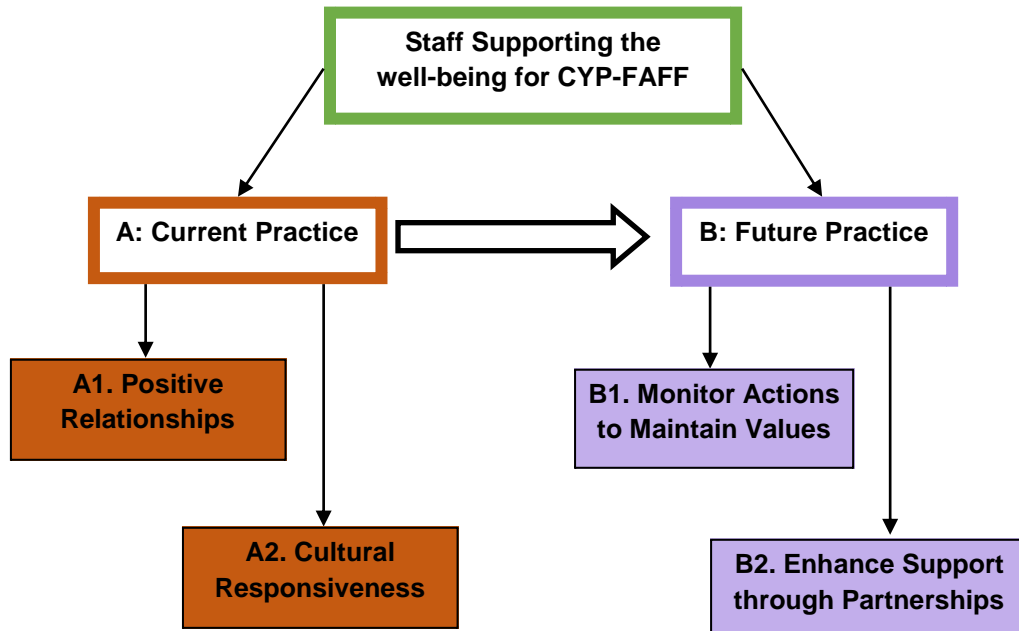
### **3.2.7 Ethics**

This study was approved by the Newcastle University Ethics Committee and participants were made fully aware of the process and the right to withdraw (see Appendices for Information Sheet (D) and Consent Form (E)). It was also discussed again at the start of interviews. I was available during and after the research as a research-practitioner and therefore could provide additional support if needed.

## **3.3 Findings and Discussion**

This section will outline the findings from the individual interviews conducted and integrate the discussion in relation to current practice and future practice for staff supporting the well-being of CYP-FAFF (Figure 3; full thematic map Appendix H). Following the focus group, themes were unchanged but positive relationships was emphasised as most important. The sub-themes which have the most relevance to

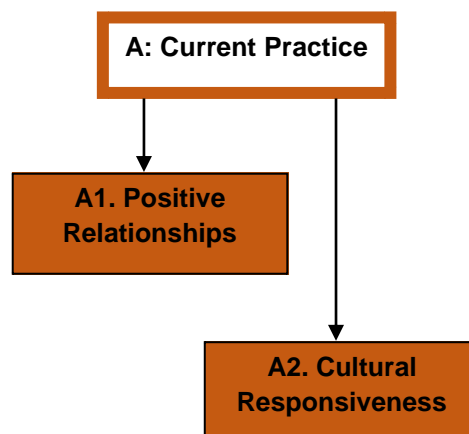
the aims and research questions (staff-student relationships, CYP-FAFF and developing practice) and had the most prominence during the interviews and focus group will be discussed in more detail. Further information about the other sub-themes can be found in Appendix G.



**Figure 3:** Thematic Map for Main Themes

### 3.3.1 A. Current Practice:

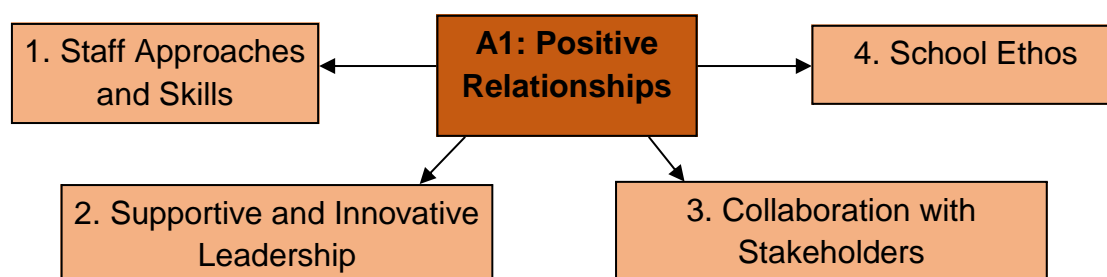
Current Practice (Figure 4) comprises two main themes; Positive Relationships and Cultural Responsiveness. However, these themes are inter-related and connect to Future Practice.



**Figure 4:** A. Current Practice - Theme A1 and A2

## **Theme A1: Positive Relationships**

Positive relationships involves trust, respect and intersubjectivity (Trevarthen & Aitken, 2001) which will be discussed further within the subthemes. The Positive Relationship subthemes reflect different ecological levels (see Figure 5). A1.1 focuses on staff-student relationships, then A1.2 relates to the school leadership level which supports the staff, A1.3 includes collaboration between staff within school but also extends out to include parents and external agencies, and finally A1.4 relates to the wider school ethos which provides the foundation for support and possibilities for change.



**Figure 5:** Current Practice - Theme A1 with subthemes 1 - 4

### **A1.1: Staff Approaches and Skills**

This sub-theme includes the availability of listening, empathetic adults, building trust through staff authenticity and staff having a personalised approach, by getting to know and interact with the children as unique individuals.

Being available (both physically and emotionally) and having the flexibility to respond to CYP-FAFF was considered important by participants in this study:

*“...knows that if she wants me she can come and find me”  
(participant 2).*

It was viewed that for some children and parents, having a key person for daily greetings and “*check-ins*” (participants 2 & 3) or to approach when needed, was beneficial. This is consistent with Bradshaw et al. (2010) who suggested the importance of an emotionally available, listening adult. Staff providing time to



communicate understanding is highlighted within the wider well-being literature (Johnson, 2008; Masten, 2009; Roffey, 2015). Participants talked about providing informal support as the quote below details and includes “*continual talking*” (participant 2).

*“...approach that child and just spend some time with them... listening...mentoring them through those problems”* (participant 1)

Although unplanned intervention may be more “*reactive*” (participant 1), it demonstrates the adult’s attunement (Stern, 1985). This involves the adult, “*gauging where the children are at*” (participant 1); responding to the child’s need in that moment, with shared verbal and non-verbal interactions.

Many staff qualities were discussed by the participants in this study to support CYP-FAFF well-being but the key characteristics were being passionate and empathetic, as highlighted in the following quote:

*“It’s being able to empathise with the child how they’re really feeling, what impact any situation might have on them, because it’s massive.”* (participant 3)

Intersubjectivity (Trevarthen & Aitken, 2001) relates to empathy mechanisms because it argues that by observing behaviour someone can assume what that person might think and feel, and subsequently share that experience. Having a personalised approach has been suggested to help the development of trust which might then lead CYP-FAFF to be more comfortable to discuss their parents serving in the armed forces (Bradshaw et al., 2010). One participant in this study provided an example of getting to know each child and showing a genuine interest in them:

*“...I knew the names of all the children and I knew...little things [likes and dislikes] that actually matter to a child”* (participant 2).

The same participant discussed that utilising environments outside of the classroom (Forest Schools and E-Bluey Club) helped to get to know the children further and develop staff-student relationships:

*“[referring to Forest Schools] you’ll be walking along having a conversation with a group of children about all sorts of things that you just wouldn’t have time to have a conversation about in a maths lesson or a literacy lesson”* (participant 2).

Outdoor learning (Forest Schools) was mentioned by all the participants as facilitating staff to be learner-centred with new opportunities which enhanced staff-student relationships (Cornelius-White, 2007) and CYP-FAFF well-being. Participants identified the role of staff in initiating change with the children through self-awareness:

*“a lot of our staff have recently...started looking at changing how they interact” (participant 3)*

*“It’s the language and the approach of staff” (participant 1)*

Children receiving meaningful, genuine acknowledgement was viewed as crucial to well-being. Participants suggested that positive relationships are created through trust, which requires adults to be responsive and authentic as Liebenberg et al. (2016) also highlight. Many of the children were viewed as having a need to be recognised and valued:

*“...You don’t get away with it [not being genuine]... You have to very much get on a level with those children as one person to another ...they need to see respect from the adults before you will get anything from them” (participant 1)*

More than one participant, implied mutual respect by suggesting CYP-FAFF, “*could teach so many adults*” (participant 3). Staff willingness to learn from the children’s individual and collective experiences was also reported by Arnold et al. (2014). Trevarthen (2009) argued that intersubjective interactions develop trust as communication partners are equally important. Staff in this study viewed it important for all children to know they have a network of trustworthy, safe adults available to them:

*“I think they know that they live in an environment of trust...” (participant 2).*

Communicating care and tenacity may be more important for CYP-FAFF who are likely to experience the loss of relationships more frequently through mobility (Bradshaw et al., 2010). The following quote powerfully demonstrates the staff desire to support CYP-FAFF:

*“The children know we will never give up on them” (participant 3)*

It would be interesting to explore the children’s perception of this.

Clifton (2007) suggested that although it may be unhelpful at times, some CYP-FAFF do not build close relationships with teachers or peers because this is how they have learned to cope with frequent relocations. It is important to be aware that building close relationships within a highly mobile context is likely to have the potential for loss and how this is approached and managed can be crucial. Preparation, reflection on the relationship, creative tasks to say goodbye and continuing to value that relationship could decrease the sense of loss (Cochran & Cochran, 2015; Vickio, 1990). However, within the armed forces context this may be more challenging as sometimes relocations can happen at short notice (Office for Standards in Education, 2011). Therefore, it is beneficial for staff to have an awareness of the armed forces culture which will be discussed in theme A2. A source of support to help staff develop their approaches and skills is the senior leadership team.

### ***A1.2 Supportive and Innovative Leadership***

The participants discussed the welcoming, approachable and encouraging nature of the senior leadership team (SLT). Their “*open-door policy*” (participant 3) helps staff to support the children’s well-being.

*“I know that I’m trusted. I know that I could go to any of the senior leadership team with any queries or any questions” (participant 2).*

There was also reference to the SLT being innovators for change.

*“[the Head Teacher’s] always got new ideas and...always searching for ways to improve on what we do. Is it enough? Can we do more? What can we do if we can do more? We rely on [Head Teacher] for that really” (participant 3).*

The SLT was viewed as having an appreciation for self-development and considering change as a multi-directional process. The SLT communicate that success requires effort from all stakeholders and they lead by example,

*“always got to be the role model as leaders and certainly our SLT team are pretty good at that, I think, because they’re all on board....it’s having the passion and it’s got to be genuine. People don’t believe it if it’s not...so it’s got to be real. So, you’ve got to really have integrity and believe in it and [SLT] do.” (participant 1).*

Participants discussed SLT are willing to be responsive to others' suggestions. They were discussed as a source of support to guide reflection on practice; to discuss situations and identify what went well and what could be improved. Aspects like the organisation of staff, which were said to often be overlooked, were considered crucial in creating successful support. There was a strong sense of respect and teamwork conveyed, in addition to a coordination role which also links to the next sub-theme of collaboration.

### **A1.3: Collaboration with Stakeholders**

Collaboration is characterised by working together with shared responsibility and mutual respect (Bruner, 1996) which is exemplified in the following quote:

*"It's working as a team and it's knowing that you're listened to, it's knowing that you're supported, it's knowing that you are making a difference every single day to the lives of children and supporting each other." (participant 3)*

Working collaboratively was a key aspect which all participants mentioned several times and was discussed as the core of the success for the school's ethos, approaches, interventions and skills.

*"I think when it works at its very best and it goes back to this collaborative approach, it's when we get all stakeholders on board." (participant 1)*

Participants reported that quality collaboration relied on effective communication exchange. Collaboration can be communicated by language content, tone of voice and participation (Bae, 2012; Stone, Underwood, & Hotchkiss, 2012). This subtheme extends beyond the staff-student relationship (discussed in A1.1) to include the wider network of people working together. This includes working together within-school, working together between-schools and working with external agencies.

Within-school collaboration included between the teacher and children (covered in sub-theme A1.1), between the children, between teachers and between teachers and senior leadership (covered in sub-theme A1.2). The following quote is an example of the whole school working together:

*"we're all going through this growth mindset thing and learning it together and developing it together so I think that's really good" (participant 2).*

Children doing projects together and developing the “*ability to work in a team*” (*participant 1*) was viewed as valuable. There were examples of creative, group learning projects, such as a Fair Trade event including setting up a café, as well as the involvement in Forest Schools. Another child-to-child collaboration which was discussed as effective was adults facilitating them to support each other with difficulties:

*“...we’re quite good at getting the children to help the other children to share their coping experiences and their knowledge and how they deal with things, so it is just a community of support really....It impacts, you can see that it impacts.” (participant 3).*

Collaboration between-schools has included music, food and festive events, supporting transition to Secondary and exchanging knowledge about programs such as the e-blue club (see A2.2 subtheme for details). The quote below provides an example of working together on a festival:

*“...the international festival where, you know, all schools got on board with that and we started planning that months in advance” (participant 1).*

Parent participation was considered an important collaboration (discussed further in subtheme B2.1 below which relates to developing future practice) and alongside external agencies has brought about positive change. There is a family and friends network who help to organise events like the Christmas Fair and the army provide some resources. Liaison, support and joint goals with external agencies were considered crucial. This included, various teams within the wider local authority (e.g. Educational Psychology, Specialist Teachers, Prevention Teams, Social Workers, etc.), charity organisations (e.g. NSPCC, Young Carers, Forget Me Not) as well as the army (e.g. welfare officers).

#### **A1.4: School Ethos**

The ethos discussed reflected a “*family*” (*participant 3*) environment where staff are welcoming, supportive and respectful. Participant 2 stated that, “the ethos runs from seven forty-five when we open the door right until six o’clock,” extending beyond the

traditional hours of school. There was an opinion that providing care, support and guidance was part of everyone's role. An overarching aspect of the ethos was being authentic and that genuine passion and genuine feedback was important. There was a recognition that change is an ongoing, *"drip feed"* (participant 1) process which requires dedication, perseverance and positivity. There was a clear acknowledgement of the diversity of cultures (over 22 countries represented), religions, situations and needs, with daily education, celebration events and festivals to enact inclusivity. An acceptance of difference was also communicated during the interviews.

The openness and encouragement between staff was also valued. For ecological resilience, Ungar (2011) considers the school ethos and the well-being of staff to have as much importance as the children's well-being. Participants discussed *"get[ting] things off your chest"* (participant 3) with colleagues and receiving encouragement and support to persevere, which is demonstrated with this collective affirmation:

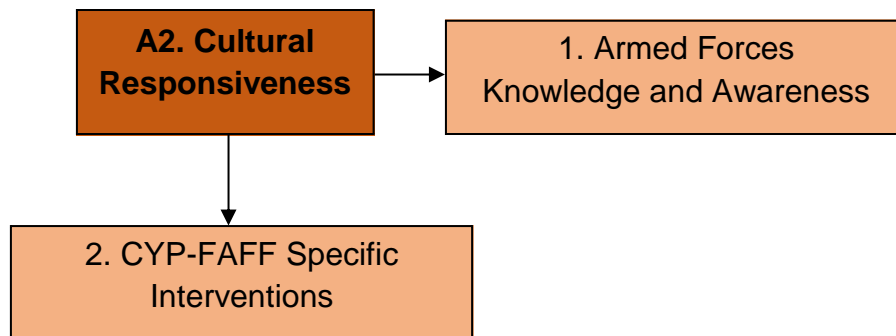
[an example of talking to colleagues] *"...and we'll do it all again tomorrow because we care..."* (participant 3).

## **A1 summary**

Being available, responsive, personal and empathetic was considered to build trust which was viewed as important to supporting well-being. Although Positive Relationships is a distinct theme, it also connects to the other themes. The success of the next theme, Cultural Responsiveness is dependent upon the foundation of positive relationships.

## **Theme A2: Cultural Responsiveness**

Cultural responsiveness (Figure 6) involves staff having an awareness of the challenges CYP-FAFF face, as well as their strengths and providing specific interventions to address these.



**Figure 6:** Current Practice - Theme A2 with subthemes 1 and 2

### **A2.1: Armed Forces Knowledge and Awareness**

This sub-theme pertains to “culturally relevant pedagogy” (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011, p. 72) which is when schools utilise their knowledge and awareness of a particular population. Participants reported the benefits of having an awareness of the challenges for armed forces families to provide well-being support:

*“we’re really good at identifying the need and the emotional challenges that dad being away in a warzone brings.” (participant 3)*

Other research has found that an awareness of the armed forces culture and lifestyle is beneficial for providing compassion and building home-school connections, particularly during transitions, deployments and celebrations (Arnold et al., 2014; Bradshaw et al., 2010). Challenges include the frequent changes and uncertainty in CYP-FAFF lives which involves moving, loss of peers and parental deployment, as the following quote highlights:

*“child arrives, they may have had three or four moves within a couple of years...perhaps decided that you know making friendships is a bit futile...” (participant 1).*

Challenges which are not exclusive to armed forces families were also acknowledged; for example, having “*difficult family lives*” (participant 2) or for children

with special educational needs (SEN) or diagnosis of Autism or ADHD. Lucier-Greer et al. (2014) noted that an interaction effect between risk factors may result in more difficulties for CYP-FAFF. Researchers have reported on difficulties of accessing enhanced provision and support for CYP-FAFF with SEN (Jagger & Lederer, 2014; Lewis-Fleming, 2014).

Clifton (2007) reported that there appears to be “clash of cultures” (p.194) between the “brave” (p.134) characteristic of the armed forces and talking about emotions, which leads to a mismatch between the willingness of schools to help and the independent nature of CYP-FAFF, which potentially masks difficulties. The staff in this study described children as having some difficulties but also resilient traits; coping well with challenging situations and being self-reliant. Staff considered how to respond to this dilemma as demonstrated in the following quote:

*“We will support them, but then how much support do we give them and take away from that ‘get on with it’ resilience. So, it’s finding that right balance” (participant 3).*

Some staff stated that school cannot change just because parents are away and emphasised the importance of a consistent, “*business as usual*” (participant 2) routine. However, they also described a flexible approach to needs when required. Other researchers have also reported on the need for a balance between continuing normalcy with clear expectations and access to enhanced support (Arnold et al., 2014; Mmari et al., 2009). There was also a recognition not to overgeneralise armed forces families, as demonstrated in the following quote, which was also reported by Arnold et al. (2014).

*“...not making assumptions...Not to be judgemental about situations...because no situation...no one family is the same, no one child is the same” (participant 1)*

This links to the personalised approach discussed in the Positive Relationships theme. Not only do staff have an awareness and knowledge about CYP-FAFF, there are also specific interventions offered.



## **A2.2: CYP-FAFF Specific Interventions**

This sub-theme is about current interventions with CYP-FAFF. Preparation for children arriving and leaving was viewed as supporting their integration and reducing any anxieties:

*“I think that [knowing which peers and staff were at their previous schools] is really, really important... We get things ready for them...So it's not like they're the new person for any more than five minutes really...” (participant 2).*

Inclusion in the school family despite the child's entry or exit time is reiterated by Garner et al. (2014). Facilitating supportive conversations was considered central to supporting well-being:

*“...when one of the autistic children's dad was sent to Afghanistan we had emoji cards...and once you've got that understanding and you've calmed their emotional stress and anxiety you can then pull them back into focus...” (participant 3).*

Whole class approaches reported by staff in this study included using visual countdowns and approaches such as mindfulness. The participants described an E-Bluey Club where children type emails to a deployed parent which are then “*printed out as a letter in an operational area*” (participant 2).

Access to external agencies was also viewed as essential. This included various teams within the wider local authority (e.g. Educational Psychology, Specialist Teachers, Prevention Teams, Social Workers, etc.), charity organisations (e.g. NSPCC, Young Carers, Forget Me Not) as well as the army (e.g. Welfare Officers, Service Pupil Champions).

*“...Service Pupil Champion... will approach those families...and the schools...to try and get that transition as smooth as possible” (participant 1).*

## **A2. summary**

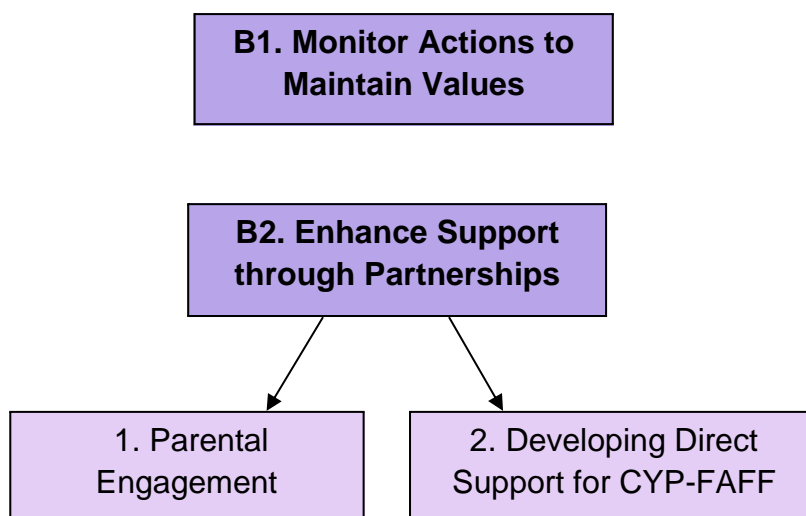
Cultural responsiveness involves staff having an awareness of the challenges CYP-FAFF face, as well as their strengths and providing specific interventions to address these. Providing a consistent but flexible approach for each unique individual was considered important to promote well-being in CYP-FAFF.

### **Current Practice summary**

The Current Practice area has identified positive relationships and cultural responsiveness as themes. Both themes involve staff being self-aware and sensitive to needs to promote well-being in CYP-FAFF.

### **3.4 B. Future Practice**

Future Practice (Figure 7) comprises two main themes; Monitor Actions to Maintain Values, and Enhance Support through Partnerships, particularly Parental Engagement and Developing Direct Support for CYP-FAFF.



**Figure 7:** B. Future Practice - Theme B1, and B2 with subtheme 1 and 2

#### ***Theme B1: Monitor Action to Maintain Values***

The values staff discussed in Current Practice were passion, honesty, respect, attunement, empathy and perseverance. This theme was about continuing to put these values into action and monitoring that action. This was viewed as important to ensure staff are not just “*paying lip service*” (participant 1) but actively considering how they demonstrate values and how they support children to enact values. One example of putting recent training into action, which all the participants mentioned, was the Growth Mindset approach:

*“...growth mindset is promoting you know our values of the school...resilience, perseverance, respect...we’ve got to make sure that the teachers and the TAs take that [values] back into the classroom and... playground...to promote that positivity” (participant 3.)*

This theme also included having the time to review initiatives and re-visit training to evaluate and reflect on what is happening in practice, as suggested in the quote below:

*“...It’s following the decisions through and maintaining it, that’s the challenging bit but it’s also the most necessary part” (participant 1)*

The following quote refers to children taking the lead on initiatives, which was discussed as being consistent with school values.

*“it’s [child-focused mentor meeting] done through the child and it’s very much a dialogue between the teacher and child” but “giving children a bit more of a role to play in that” (participant 1)*

Peer mentors was another example and as it is a new initiative at the school, more promotion and monitoring of this was identified.

### ***B1 summary***

Ensuring that staff are acting upon values as good role models and reflecting on their practice to further staff development was viewed as important in promoting the well-being of CYP-FAFF.

### ***Theme B2: Enhance Support through Partnerships***

This theme pertains to working in partnership, firstly with parents but also directly with CYP-FAFF to enhance support.

#### ***B2.1: Parental Engagement***

This sub-theme is about increasing parental involvement. Staff considered the Positive Relationships and Cultural Responsiveness themes were important when working with parents. A large part of the focus group discussion focused on parental engagement. Parental participation was viewed as important but staff have found this challenging. There has been a low turnout for a variety of sessions. Parents own perceptions of school, challenges in the community and reluctance to seek support were viewed as barriers to working collaboratively as the following quote suggests:

*“I think sometimes it’s felt that you know, ‘we don’t want to be showing that we’re not managing’, and that sort of thing. So, I think there’s sometimes a little bit of a stigma...” (participant 1).*

One participant considered amending aspects to increase accessibility and motivation:

*“We did have a parent’s afternoon and only three came, I was gutted... Maybe I need to try it at a different time or a different place, I don’t know” (participant 2).*

There was also some recognition that parental participation was not always directly with teachers. The same participant gave an example that one father had built a rope swing and then all the children played on it during Forest School and talked about spending time with their fathers. One idea to increase engagement may be to distribute a survey to ask parents about what, when and how they would like support.

Research has reported mixed findings for CYP-FAFF parental involvement. Eodanable and Lauchlan (2012), a UK study and Wilson et al. (2011) both reported poor parental involvement with their interventions. However, school staff in Bradshaw et al.’s (2010) and Arnold et al.’s (2014) studies reported the parents from armed forces families can be more involved than civilian parents and this was attributed to their culture of volunteerism. Challenges were attributed to differing expectations between home and school, which could be influenced by families experiencing many different school systems (Arnold et al., 2014), and poor parental well-being (Chandra, Martin, et al., 2010).

Mmari et al. (2009) reported that a good opportunity for engagement was through parent support groups on “their turf” (p.362). Utilising a community venue may help to reduce the power imbalance and stigma. The issue of creating a sense of “value” and purpose for parents was discussed:

*“It’s somehow to give them [parents] the confidence to feel that it’s okay to come and, do you know what, if they crochet, well let’s all crochet blankets today and if it’s a dad, and he wants to do some woodwork, well do you know what, we’ll do some woodwork, whatever” (participant 2).*

Optimal Distinctiveness Theory (Brewer, 1991) argues that someone has to feel included and distinctive to be an effective group member. Providing an opportunity for parents to help others could help to position them in a role of power and demonstrate competence (Ryan & Deci, 2000) which may increase self-efficacy (Hoover-Dempsey, Walker, Sandler, & Whetsel, 2005). This could avoid the possibility that parents might think they are judged as not good enough and therefore always in need of help.

In the focus group, staff considered that parents attending training would be ideal. I reflected, that similar to what staff identified for CYP-FAFF, that implementing lower level, informal interactions could build a foundation of trust before offering higher level, formal interventions (Walker, Shenker, & Hoover-Dempsey, 2010). Staff had also considered this:

*“...looking at the moment at setting up some drop-in sessions for parents because we think there’s some further mileage in that just as a sounding board, nothing formal...and building their own networks so...we’re a forum...” (participant 1).*

Staff also discussed the possibility of employing a school-based parent support worker who has the capacity to visit in the home to strengthen links. Staff expressed that the school’s collaboration with the armed forces could be developed further to encourage and support parental involvement.

High mobility is a contextual challenge for building trust and supporting the development of school values with armed forces families. Staff reflected that they start to build up trust but then families move and they have to start again with new families. This process was reported as emotional and exhausting for all involved, which Arnold et al. (2014) also recognised. Staff utilise the support of colleagues, leadership and outside agencies to cope with the exhaustion experienced in relation to the high turnover of families. This support is something which could be developed further alongside the Educational Psychology team.

Perhaps, similar to their children as mentioned previously, parents are also reluctant to build close, trusting relationships for the fear of experiencing a stronger loss when they move and have come to view this as *“futile” (participant 1)*. It will be important to

empower parents to utilise their own strengths and identify a source of support to contact at their next location if required. Establishing shared goals and communicating respect and value, by listening to viewpoints and appreciating feedback with a kind, friendly nature will help to further develop relationships with parents (De Cremer, 2002; Wenger, 2009).

## ***B2.2: Developing Direct Support for CYP-FAFF***

This sub-theme is about interventions for CYP-FAFF. Staff viewed that more could be done with The Military Kids Club (formerly known as the HMS Heroes) and that it required development:

*“I think that’s maybe something we could inject a bit more into...[could include] the different geography of it you know where in the world are all of our dads” (participant 2).*

*“...maybe a nurture group for children that aren’t coping with peers and discuss more about coping strategies and then specifically set up groups...for when the parents are away on tours of duty that they [children] can come to give them that little bit extra” (participant 3).*

Staff thought a group could provide containment for difficult feelings, as well as knowledge to help the children feel more connected to parents and similar to their peers, for example, depicting on a map where their parents are working. There was also a suggestion about providing children with specific support during deployments *“together as a collective school”* rather than on an individual or class basis as then *“older children...[could be] role models” (participant 3).*

The aims for the Military Kids Club (MKC) are currently unclear. There is a limited evidence-base for interventions with CYP-FAFF, particularly in the school environment (Brendel et al., 2014; Guzman, 2014) despite groups being recommended by staff and CYP-FAFF (Garner et al., 2014; McCloud, 2011). Formats and topics could be guided by evaluated interventions such as FOCUS-schools (Families OverComing Under Stress) (Garcia, De Pedro, Astor, Lester, & Benbenishty, 2015). However, much of the content is focused on individual skills rather than connections with others. The group could be beneficial as a safe space where children can openly discuss feelings, positive and negative, if they wish. A visual check-in for well-being can be a helpful way for children to initiate a

conversation about feelings without having to verbally express themselves (McCloud, 2011). A group might offer a good opportunity for peers to connect but also for key adults at the school to actively collaborate with the children.

### ***B2 summary***

This theme pertains to working in partnership, firstly with parents but also directly with CYP-FAFF to enhance support. Overcoming barriers and expanding the options for involvement were viewed as ways to develop parental engagement. Findings suggest that facilitating staff to consider their perceptions around what engagement means may also be helpful. A group for CYP-FAFF requires further planning and development but could provide containment as well as an opportunity for adults and peers to connect and collaborate.

### ***Future Practice summary***

Staff ensuring that they put values into action, get parents more involved and offer direct support to CYP-FAFF through groups were the themes in the Future Practice area. Therefore, staff perspectives were that they could support the well-being of CYP-FAFF by self-monitoring, working with parents and facilitating groups. This study was the first step in an action research cycle but development is ongoing and will continue beyond this study. Following this study, the school appointed a parent support worker, started an intensive nurture group and attended Emotion Coaching (Gus, Rose, & Gilbert, 2015) training.

## **3.5 Limitations**

There was low participation which makes me wonder about the possible reasons for this and how I could have approached it differently. The motivation and passion of those who did volunteer was evident and therefore the views may only reflect people who already have a positive work experience and good relationships with senior leadership.

A particular challenge of being an insider-outsider was to remain in the researcher role, rather than my usual practitioner role. I was conscious not to lead or be

suggestive during the interviews and focus group but also not to sit in silence as if it was a formal one-way interview. I aimed to have a conversation which demonstrated genuine curiosity and respect. I had an urge to communicate psychological knowledge and resources which connected to their examples but I waited until the interviews had finished.

### **3.6 Implications for School Contexts**

The systematic review findings in this thesis suggested that partaking in activities with peers appeared to increase social competence (Chawla & MacDermid Wadsworth, 2012), bonding and social integration (Le, 2014; Lucier-Greer et al., 2014) and coping skills (Le, 2014; Wilson et al., 2011). Interventions which utilised child-friendly multimedia materials (Flittner O'Grady et al., 2016) or supportive adults (Lester, Liang, et al., 2016; Lucier-Greer et al., 2014) appeared to improve the resilience aspect of CYP-FAFF's coping skills.

As the findings of this study are idiosyncratic to the setting, caution must be exercised when discussing the applicability to other schools but general themes could be considered alongside differing contexts. For example, in a school which has a small number of CYP-FAFF, cultural responsiveness may be even more important to focus on if staff are less familiar of the daily implications, challenges and opportunities of being in an armed forces family. There is more potential for CYP-FAFF to feel misunderstood, isolated or different. A key staff member for CYP-FAFF to approach could help create understanding and continuity. Peer buddy systems and advanced preparation was mentioned by participants in this study to help with inclusion into the school. For targeted support groups, local schools could join together if there are not enough CYP-FAFF at one school to make this feasible or meaningful.

For schools with a majority percent of CYP-FAFF, like the one in this study, creating groups and systems may be easier. Ensuring that there are interactions and collaboration with both other CYP-FAFF but also other students could help to create a richer experience and increase understanding between groups. A consideration for



non-CYP-FAFF (known as civilians) is that mobility is likely to also impact upon them as they make and lose friends and children could be supported with this together.

### **3.7 Implications for Educational Psychology**

*“It’s great to have somebody like yourself who wants to understand how different our service children are and look at what they go through and how can we best help..” (participant 3)*

Educational Psychologists (EPs) are well placed to facilitate understanding and assist in the development of support for well-being (Roffey, 2015) through consultation. This can be underpinned by dialogical approaches and theoretical knowledge of well-being. Support could be provided to embed well-being as a whole school ethos, implement and review a school action plan cycle by appreciating strengths, facilitating the problem-solving process and providing a reflective space for staff. This could include reviewing training outcomes, an exploration about how to engage parents, as well as consideration of the design and function of direct CYP-FAFF support (Bradshaw et al., 2010; Garner et al., 2014; McCloud, 2011). Another role is for EPs to ensure effective coordination and involvement of the wider systems. There are regional conferences which are focused on understanding and supporting CYP-FAFF and this is a good forum for EPs who are working with this population to attend. Other local authority staff could also attend these events. CYP-FAFF and their schools would benefit from local authorities considering the speed of access to funding for highly mobile students and supporting the development of staff who work in this specific area.

EPs can offer training to enhance relationships, such as Emotion Coaching (Gus et al., 2015) or Video Interaction Guidance (Kennedy, Landor, & Todd, 2011). They can provide signposting to culturally relevant materials and resources (Bradshaw et al., 2010). Within my local authority, an EP currently attends a regular multi-agency group for CYP-FAFF and the development of this will continue. It may be interesting to introduce an Appreciative Inquiry element to these meetings to celebrate positives and utilise these as a basis for further development. Supporting the development of positive relationships and considering wider cultural contexts is central to EP practice.

### **3.8 Conclusions**

This study explored staff perspectives on how they could promote well-being in CYP-FAFF. They reported the need to be self-aware of their own approaches and sensitive to families' needs. Building positive relationships was an overarching theme to facilitate further development, including parental engagement, but the contextual challenges were also recognised. Further planning and development is required to clarify future aims and broaden perspectives to promote well-being in CYP-FAFF.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Intervention Summaries for the Seven Selected Studies

Paper	Intervention Summary <i>(name, author, duration, age range, target area, measures used by the study and excluded measures for this review)</i>
1. Chawla and Wadsworth (2012)	<p><b>Operation Purple Camp (OPC)</b> (National Military Family Association, 2004)</p> <p>Duration: One week nature activities camp. Ages: 9-15.</p> <p>Targeted: Facilitating relationships between CYP-FAFF</p> <p>Study measured: Global self-worth and social competence (Excluded: athletic competence)</p>
2. Eodanable and Lauchlan (2012)	<p><b>Creating Confident Kids (CCK)</b> (City of Edinburgh Council, 2009) <b>and Seasons for Growth (SfG)</b> (Graham, 2002)</p> <p>Duration: Eight week programs. Ages: 9-11, included family homework.</p> <p>Targeted: (CCK) - Emotional literacy; (SfG) - grief, loss and change;</p> <p>Measured: Emotional literacy checklist, pupil surveys/questionnaires</p> <p>(Excluded: observations, focus groups, teacher surveys)</p>
3. Le (2014)	<p><b>Mindfulness-Based Adventure Camp</b> Adapted from (MBA; Himelstein, Hastings, Shapiro, &amp; Heery, 2011)</p> <p>Duration: Four day camp. Ages: 11-19</p> <p>Targeted: Mental fitness and personal leadership</p> <p>Measured: CYP ranked in order which activities helped them to develop skills to deal with stress and which helped them to form strong peer connections</p> <p>(Excluded: which activities they enjoyed, camp satisfaction, qualitative comments and counsellor feedback)</p>

<p>4. Lester et al. (2016)</p>	<p><b>Families OverComing Under Stress (FOCUS)</b> (2nd Edition - Saltzman, Lester, Pynoos et al., 2009)  Duration: Eight weekly family sessions (only four include the CYP). Ages: 3-17 but also parents.  Targeted: Enhance resilience in families  Measured: Child prosocial behaviour and coping skills  (Excluded: clinical symptoms and negative behaviours)</p>
<p>5. Lucier-Greer et al. (2014)</p>	<p><b>Military-sponsored activities and events</b> (US military installations)  Duration: Throughout a year (2011-2012). Ages: 11-18.  Targeted: Building social relationships and supporting family relationships  Measured: Regressions between attendance at activities with social connections and coping skills  (Excluded: clinical symptoms, parental work, mobility)</p>
<p>6. Flittner O'Grady et al. (2016)</p>	<p><b>Talk, Listen, Connect: Multiple Deployments (TLC-II MD)</b> (Sesame Workshop, 2008)  Duration: Four week period. Ages: 2-5 alongside parents.  Targeted: Supporting caregiver to communicate with children about feelings and stress to enhance coping  Measured: Parent sensitivity, child security, social competence, utilisation and perceived impact of materials  (Excluded: clinical symptoms, negative behaviours and quality of materials)</p>
<p>7. Wilson et al. (2011)</p>	<p><b>Passport Toward Success (PTS) Program</b> (Yellow Ribbon, Department of Defence, 2009)  Duration: One day event. Ages 9-17 (<i>but 3-17 included, part of a wider parent information and support day</i>).  Targeted: Resilience processes, included skills for feelings, relaxation and communication  Measured: Self-esteem and what extent learned new coping skills; correlation with pre-rated difficulties  (Excluded: clinical symptoms, observations, program fidelity)</p>

## Appendix B: Detailed Descriptions of the Intervention Contents

Paper	Intervention Name and Author	Intervention Description - extracts from the research papers: Aims, Objectives and Content as described by the authors
1. Chawla and Wadsworth (2012)	Operation Purple Camp - OPC (National Military Family Association, 2004)	The OPC curriculum consists of activities to facilitate relationships among military children encourage camaraderie among children at the camp by providing outdoor activities and games for participants to develop an understanding of the local fauna and wildlife that surrounds them, as well as experience a personal connection with nature through hands-on activities.
2. Eodanable and Lauchlan (2012) - Intervention 1  2. Eodanable and Lauchlan (2012) - Intervention 2	Creating Confident Kids - CCK (City of Edinburgh Council, 2009)  Seasons for Growth - SfG (Graham, 2002)	Emotional literacy curriculum in P5 and P6 classes. Sessions delivered by the class teachers on themes of 'Feelings' and 'Moving On.'  An educational programme to support children by addressing the concepts of grief, loss, and change.
3. Le (2014)	Mindfulness-Based Adventure Camp - Adapted by the researchers from the Mind Body Awareness Program (MBA; Himelstein, Hastings, Shapiro, & Heery, 2011) for the military context	Core principles of adventure-based programming: challenge by choice, unfamiliar environment, a climate of change, small group format, solutions, and successful behaviour. All physical and teambuilding activities, including the mindfulness sessions, incorporated these principles. There were three major themes: physical fitness (low/high/ropes course, paddle boarding, surfing, and hiking), mental fitness (mindfulness), and personal leadership (mindfulness).  Mindfulness sessions were conducted by one counsellor in groups of no more than 12 youth maximum. For each day, there was at least 1 hour of a mindfulness session, either in the morning or in the evening, or both times. The counsellors were trained in the mindfulness curriculum over 1 full day by MBA trained facilitators. Five modules: introduction to mindfulness; mindfulness of the body; emotional awareness and empathy building; choicefulness; and change & interconnectedness. The topics were designed to illustrate how present moment awareness can affect different aspects of life. Because many youth struggle with impulse control, interpersonal relationships, and self-worth, the counsellors used various techniques including games, metaphors, stories, and analogies, to illustrate how mindfulness can be used to transform negative ideas and beliefs. Mindfulness was embedded in the camp activities to help youth develop stronger, stable minds. Like physical mental fitness, mindfulness was aimed at developing youth's mental fitness.

<p><b>4. Lester et al. (2016)</b></p>	<p>Families OverComing Under Stress - FOCUS (1st Edition - Saltzman, Lester, Beardslee &amp; Pynoos, 2007. 2nd Edition - Saltzman, Lester, Pynoos et al., 2009)</p>	<p>Designed to enhance resilience in military families who have high levels of stress related to parental military service. The core intervention elements include the following: 1) Family Resilience Check-in: a Web-based standardised psychological health and family assessment 2) family psychoeducation and developmental guidance with an emphasis on strengthening parenting, and information on the impact of military-related stressors on children, parents, and family (such as deployment cycle/separation stressors, posttraumatic stress, traumatic brain injury, and physical injuries); 3) narrative timelines: structured, graphic narratives of the experiences of individual family members surrounding key family transitions to enhance perspective taking, reflection, communication, and understanding, and to promote the construction of a shared family narrative; and 4) resilience skill building: learning and practicing key skills, including communication, problem solving, goal setting, emotional regulation, and the management of reminders of separation, trauma, and loss.</p> <p>Structured, manualised, psychoeducational, and skill-building intervention, but with the flexibility to be customized to fit each family's unique goals and challenges. The intervention was delivered via in-person, provider-led sessions for individual families. Intervention modules included 8 sessions, with parent-only sessions (sessions 1 and 2), child-only (sessions 3 and 4), parent-only (session 5), and family sessions (sessions 6–8).</p>
<p><b>5. Lucier-Greer et al. (2014)</b></p>	<p>Military-sponsored activities and events (US military installations)</p>	<p>Basis for initiating and maintaining social relationships with others, as well as supporting relationships within families. Included picnics, game nights, movie nights, performances/concerts and celebrations.</p>
<p><b>6. Flittner O'Grady et al. (2016)</b></p>	<p>Talk, Listen, Connect: Multiple Deployments - TLC-II MD (Sesame Workshop, 2008) - but evaluation from 2006?</p>	<p>Designed to support and equip families with young children with skills to address challenges associated with multiple deployments. Multimedia home kit, emphasizes communication strategies for caregivers of children experiencing multiple cycles of parental deployment. Includes print materials (e.g., magazine, posters, and postcards) and a DVD starring the widely known Sesame Street characters Elmo and Rosita. TLC-II MD prompts children to talk about their feelings and explains strategies and activities for families to communicate with their children about feelings and the stress related to deployment.</p>
<p><b>7. Wilson et al. (2011)</b></p>	<p>Passport Toward Success (PTS) Program (Yellow Ribbon, Department of Defence, 2009)</p>	<p>Offered as part of the Yellow Ribbon reintegration program for National Guard and Reserve members and their families. Service members were required to attend the 90-day event following deployment, which in part consisted of an information fair where service organizations (e.g., health care, employment, and education) provided materials and resources to assist reunited military families.</p> <p>The PTS youth program was designed for service members' children. Models of family resilience informed the content of PTS, such that each station in a rotation focused on a specific family process and related skills crucial for resilience. PTS was based on an "island" theme, where children were given a "passport" and travelled from</p>

“island” to “island,” receiving a stamp after completing each station. Each island lasted 45-75 minutes depending on the overall length of PTS youth program, and the three age groups (3-6 years, 7-11 years, 12-17 years) rotated so that each age group experienced all three islands.

Social-cognitive models of skill acquisition (Choi & Kim, 2003) informed the structure of PTS, such that three steps occurred on each island: (a) a related set of skills was introduced and defined, (b) children and adolescents participated in a variety of enjoyable activities that allowed them to rehearse the skills, and (c) brief debriefing discussions occurred about what was learned and how that could be generalized or translated to situations at home.

Three stations called: “Feelings Island,” “Relaxation Island,” and “Communication Island.”

Feelings Island focused on increasing children’s and adolescents’ capacity to share emotions (anger, sadness, confusion, pride) associated with their military parent’s deployment and reunion and thereby foster closer ties with family and friends. This involved creating a reunion poster.

Relaxation Island taught strategies to help children and adolescents attend to their physical, mental, and emotional needs. One activity on Relaxation Island was the “strength box” which involved writing coping strategies to out in the box and decorating the box.

Communication Island focused on the importance of listening and providing feedback, owning problems by using “I” language, and brainstorming/coordinating with others in the face of obstacles or difficulties. This involved the use of barrier and cooperation games.

### Appendix C: Weight of Evidence

Weight of Evidence Criteria	1. Chawla & MacDermid Wadsworth (2012)	2. Eodanable & Lauchlan (2012)	3. Le (2014)	4. Lester et al. (2016)	5. Lucier-Greer et al. (2014)	6. Flittner O'Grady et al. (2016)	8. Wilson et al. (2011)
1. Are there ethical concerns about the way the study was done?	<b>Yes</b> - Does not mention recruitment or consent. Surveys were "self-administered" so perhaps assumed consent by completion? The intervention was designed for ages 7-17 but this study only allowed children 9-15 to participate in the camp.	<b>Yes</b> - Does not mention recruitment or consent or any withdrawal options. However, positive that every child in the class had the opportunity to be involved.	<b>Some</b> - Positive that obtained ethical approval and details wide advertising for recruitment on first booking basis. Does not specifically mention consent but participants completed a registration packet so this may have included consent. Some evaluation had to be completed as a "funder's requirement."	<b>No</b> - Ethical approval obtained. Voluntary enrolment and wide advertising. Families completed and signed a service agreement. Signposting and referrals were provided for any risk but excluded from study. Ongoing contact was provided for support.	<b>Some</b> - Positive that obtained ethical approval and conducted wide advertising. Very positive that participant assent and parental consent were obtained. Does not mention any signposting to support if completion via a computer if raised difficult feelings or indicated depressive symptoms.	<b>Some</b> - Positive that obtained ethical approval and gained full consent. Two languages available. Does not mention any signposting to additional or ongoing support.	<b>No</b> - Ethical approval obtained. Families could still take part in the intervention without having to complete the evaluation. Parental consent and adolescent assent gained.
2. Were students and/or parents appropriately involved in the design or conduct of the study?	<b>Some</b> - Not in the design. Adolescent self-rating scales were used.	<b>Yes</b> - Extensive needs analysis prior to study with school staff and focus groups with pupils. Gained pupils and staff views.	<b>Reasonable</b> - Not in the design. Adolescents asked to rank activities for several factors and asked for their views, feedback and suggestions.	<b>Yes</b> - Flexibility to be customized to fit each family's unique goals and challenges. Included self-rated scales for children 6+	<b>Some</b> - Not in the design. Adolescent self-rating scales were used.	<b>Yes</b> - Design chosen due to previous feedback regarding access. Carers encouraged to engage with materials alongside the children. Carers asked for their views and feedback.	<b>Reasonable</b> - Not in the design. Children 9+ completed self-rating scales and views analysed but not if younger. Every age: brief debriefing discussions occurred about what was learned and how it could be used. Encouraged feedback to parents and invited families to stay after.

EPPI Weight of Evidence Questions	1. Chawla & MacDermid Wadsworth (2012)	2. Eodanable & Lauchlan (2012)	3. Le (2014)	4. Lester et al. (2016)	5. Lucier-Greer et al. (2014)	6. Flittner O'Grady et al. (2016)	7. Wilson et al. (2011)
3. Is there sufficient justification for why the study was done the way it was?	<b>Some</b> - Good research background and rationale for chosen measures. However, then in the discussion they state they assessed coping behaviours by measuring self-worth which is a leap without explanation. Addressing a gap in the research.	<b>Yes</b> - Thorough research background and links to government initiatives. Needs analysis undertaken. Clear study aims. Addressing a gap in the research.	<b>Some</b> - Key research background and make links between topics. Didn't gather information in relation to youth's perception about helpfulness and enjoyment but adjusted the questions asked for the second group.	<b>Yes</b> - Thorough background about research and intervention. Clear study aim to examine longitudinal data.	<b>Yes</b> - Key research background and theory-related. Gives clear explanation for why they use within groups design rather than comparison to 'civilian' adolescents.	<b>Yes</b> - Excellent introduction. Clear rationale due to previous research and lack of accessible support. Linked to theory.	<b>Some</b> - Lots of details about the intervention and background research. Some evaluation elements due to practicalities. There could have been more coherent rating scale topics, e.g. peer connections/ collaboration skills.
4. Was the choice of research design appropriate for addressing the research question(s) posed?	<b>Yes but could be improved</b> - Pre and post intervention measures. No control or comparison group.	<b>Yes but could be improved</b> - Needs analysis then used pre and post measures. Whole class approach and looked at policies. No further analyses was done with the percentages gathered. No control group.	<b>Some</b> - Mixed methods. Only percentages quoted, no further analysis was done to establish if the results were significant.	<b>Yes</b> - Regression model used including two follow-up data points. No control group.	<b>Yes</b> - Three one-way MANCOVA for investigating associations	<b>Yes</b> - Gold standard RCT	<b>Yes but could be improved</b> - Has three research questions. Didn't capture younger children's views but positive that included observations. No further analyses was done with percentages gathered.
5. Have sufficient attempts been made to establish the repeatability or reliability of data collection methods or tools?	<b>Some, towards sufficient</b> - Used pre and post scales with reported internal consistency. Checked Cronbach's alpha for current sample, a couple of aspects had a poor reliability at pre-test. Some details of the camp content but no information about number of adults or their training.	<b>Some, towards not sufficient</b> - Used pre and post ELC measure with reported internal consistency. Also used own survey for CCK but details all questions. Does not detail all questions asked in SfG feedback. Sparse details about interventions but available to purchase.	<b>Some, towards not sufficient</b> - Used own survey to rank activities so reliability not established. Good details about camp, content and trainers.	<b>Yes</b> - Longitudinal data used. Pre, post and two follow-ups. Many well-established measures used with good internal consistency. Detailed descriptions of intervention and procedures.	<b>Some, towards sufficient</b> - Only one time point; retrospective evaluation. Well-established scales used with good internal consistency. Clear procedure.	<b>Some, towards sufficient</b> - Pre and post data collected with established measures used; tested Cronbach's alpha and most acceptable but few lower, all above .6. Also used own post survey. Clear procedure. Intervention free to access.	<b>Some, towards sufficient</b> - Used established and their own scales, both with good internal consistency. Good audit-trail with detailed step-by-step process explained, including facilitator expertise and training.



EPPI Weight of Evidence Questions	1. Chawla & MacDermid Wadsworth (2012)	2. Eodanable & Lauchlan (2012)	3. Le (2014)	4. Lester et al. (2016)	5. Lucier-Greer et al. (2014)	6. Flittner O'Grady et al. (2016)	8. Wilson et al. (2011)
6. Have sufficient attempts been made to establish the validity or trustworthiness of data collection tools and methods?	<b>Some</b> - Structured, field intervention. Rationale given for chosen scales but were not completely consistent with aims of the intervention. No control groups. Self-reports, no triangulation.	<b>Some</b> - Little information on validity of the ELC. Naturalistic in classroom. Observations, teacher survey and focus groups also conducted for triangulation.	<b>Little</b> - Getting youth opinions. Field intervention. Ranks may not be equal and highest may not equate to positive or lowest to negative. Also qual data to triangulate.	<b>Yes, sufficient</b> - Longitudinal data to evaluate sustainability of results. Field intervention. Multiple measures used. Some triangulation. No control groups.	<b>Some</b> - Multiple measures used. No control groups. Self-reports, no triangulation.	<b>Yes, sufficient</b> - Multiple measures used. Control group with similar but alternative intervention used for comparison. No triangulation.	<b>Yes, sufficient</b> - checked new measures against existing measures with correlations. Field intervention. Used triangulation. No control group.
7. Have sufficient attempts been made to establish the repeatability or reliability of data analysis?	<b>Yes, sufficient:</b> Used SPSS for t-tests and ANOVA.	<b>Some</b> - Paired t-tests used.	<b>No</b> - Only ranking percentages reported	<b>Yes, sufficient</b> - Clear, detailed descriptions and rationales for data analyses.	<b>Yes, sufficient</b> - Clear, detailed descriptions and rationales for data analyses. Three MANCOVA models used.	<b>Yes, sufficient</b> - Clear, detailed descriptions and rationales for data analyses. Used SPSS for several data analyses.	<b>Yes, sufficient</b> - Detailed descriptions and rationales for several data analyses.
8. Have sufficient attempts been made to establish the validity or trustworthiness of data analysis?	<b>Yes, sufficient</b> - Checked for normal distributions, p-level .05. No triangulation. Acknowledges some limitations.	<b>Some</b> - Only mean responses or percentages given for the surveys, no further analysis for significance but indicates potential trends. Triangulation with observations and teacher survey. Acknowledges some limitations.	<b>No</b> - Only ranking percentages reported. Limitations not acknowledged.	<b>Yes, sufficient</b> - Used adjusted analyses based on data. P-level .0001. Compared non-completers. Longitudinal to evaluate sustainability over time. Limitations acknowledged and discussed in detail.	<b>Yes, sufficient</b> - Five aspects of well-being were used. Used adjusted analyses based on data. Detailed 4 different p-levels. Limitations acknowledged and discussed in detail.	<b>Yes, sufficient</b> - Multiple analyses performed including on own survey data. Detailed 3 different p-levels. Effect sizes reported. Limitations acknowledged and discussed in detail.	<b>Yes, sufficient</b> - Compared own scale results to differences in pre intervention scales and demographics. Detailed 3 different p-levels. Triangulation from five sources so thorough. Some limitations acknowledged and discussed.

EPPI Weight of Evidence Questions	1. Chawla & MacDermid Wadsworth (2012)	2. Eodanable & Lauchlan (2012)	3. Le (2014)	4. Lester et al. (2016)	5. Lucier-Greer et al. (2014)	6. Flittner O'Grady et al. (2016)	8. Wilson et al. (2011)
9. To what extent are the research design and methods employed able to rule out any other sources of error/bias which would lead to alternative explanations for the findings of the study?	<b>Some</b> - Used ANOVAs to check group differences for four confounding aspects. No control groups.	<b>Little</b> - Analysed gender differences for ELC. No control groups.	<b>Little</b> - Only post evaluation and ranking so causes not clear. No control groups.	<b>Some</b> - Longitudinal so assessing stability of results over time. Compared sex differences. No control groups.	<b>Medium</b> - Within-participants design. Six military factors and five well-being factors were used, and within this age and sex differences were compared to identify any interactions.	<b>High</b> - Control group with similar but alternative intervention used for comparison. Checked distribution of demographics and used chi-squared. No non-intervention or waitlist control.	<b>Medium</b> - Triangulation from five sources qual ad quant. Analysed gender, age, self-esteem and family income differences. No controls.
10. How generalisable are the study results?	<b>Low</b> - Small sample size, did not collect ethnicity or clinical data. No follow-up.	<b>Low</b> - Specific age groups in school, small sample size for SfG, used whole classes for CCK.	<b>Very low</b> - Small sample size. No statistical analysis. Little demographic information. No follow-up.	<b>Medium</b> - Longitudinal but no other control groups. Large sample size (3810 children). Conducted in USA and Japan.	<b>Medium</b> - Correlations, not causation. Medium sample size (1036). Conducted in USA.	<b>Medium/High</b> - Strong RCT design. Some selection bias. Medium sample size (282 carers). Conducted in USA. No follow-up.	<b>Low</b> - Small sample size for evaluations. Unsure if representative of specific population. No follow-up.
11. In light of the above, do the reviewers differ from the authors over the findings or conclusions of the study?	Some	Some	Some	No	No	No	Some
12. Have sufficient attempts been made to justify the conclusions drawn from the findings, so that the conclusions are trustworthy?	Medium-High	Medium – make some strong claims	Low-Medium	High	High	High	Medium

<b>EPPI Weight of Evidence Questions</b>	<b>1. Chawla &amp; MacDermid Wadsworth (2012)</b>	<b>2. Eodanable &amp; Lauchlan (2012)</b>	<b>3. Le (2014)</b>	<b>4. Lester et al. (2016)</b>	<b>5. Lucier-Greer et al. (2014)</b>	<b>6. Flittner O'Grady et al. (2016)</b>	<b>7. Wilson et al. (2011)</b>
13. Weight of evidence A: Can the study findings be trusted in answering the study question?	Medium	Low-Medium	Low	High	High	High	Low-Medium
14. Weight of evidence B: Appropriateness of research design & analysis for addressing the question of this specific systematic review?	Medium-High	Low-Medium	Low Medium-High	Medium-High Medium-High	Low-Medium Low	High Medium-High	Medium Medium
15. Weight of evidence C: Relevance of particular focus of the study for addressing the question of this specific systematic review?	Medium-High	Medium	Low	Medium-High	Medium	High	Medium
<b>Overall Weight of Evidence rating (WoE)</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Low-Medium</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Low-Medium</b>

## **Appendix D: Participant Information Sheet**



### **What are the Perspectives of School Staff on Supporting the Well-Being of Students, from Armed Forces Families?**

#### **Participant Information Sheet**

##### **Who is the researcher and what is the research about?**

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet. I am Connie MacFarlane and I am a Year 3 Trainee Educational Psychologist at Newcastle University. I am on placement with [name of local authority]. I have chosen to research the support provided for students from armed forces families (Service pupils) for my doctorate thesis.

Previous research has had mixed conclusions in regards to the outcomes for Service children; some have suggested that Service children are more resilient and do not have any more difficulties than their civilian counterparts (see Card et al., 2011; Kaczmarek & Sibbel, 2008), whereas others have found that Service children have poorer academic, social and mental health outcomes (see White et al., 2011; Flake et al., 2009; Lester et al., 2010; Rowe et al., 2014). Service pupils often face multiple life changes and additional stressors. My study aims to focus on well-being and teacher-pupil relationships. I would like to explore staff perspectives on what has worked best when supporting the well-being of Service pupils in school.

##### **What kind of research is being done?**

I am asking school staff, who have *worked with Service pupils for over a year*, if they are interested in taking part in an interview which will allow exploration of support approaches which have led to positive outcomes for pupils. I am using principles from an approach called Appreciative Inquiry to create my questions based on positive experiences and imagining what could be done in the future. I

will then analyse the data generated from the interviews and construct the themes. Following this, I will arrange a group session with all the participants, which will include members of Senior Management, where I will feedback the responses. We will then have an opportunity to discuss the findings together to think about how this fits into your school and how we can further develop support for Service pupils.

**What will be involved with the interviews?**

The interview will be one-to-one with me and last approximately 40-60 minutes. I will try to arrange the interview at a time which suits you as far as possible. I will audio record the interviews so that I can analyse your responses alongside the other participants. I have guiding questions to prompt the conversation but it will be up to you what information you provide. I will not use your name during the interview to increase anonymity. I will ask you not to use names if talking about any specific pupils or staff.

**How will the data be used?**

The audio from the taped interviews will be transcribed (typed up), anonymised (anything that could identify you or others removed) and analysed for the research. The audio will only be heard by the researcher and the person transcribing. The transcripts may also be viewed by my supervisor and examiners. Extracts from the interview may be written up in publications that arise from the research. General information about you (for example, your job title) will be anonymised so that no one will be able to identify you, colleagues or any pupils from the research write up or any publications based on the research.

**What are the benefits of taking part?**

You will get the opportunity to participate in a research project that will give you the opportunity to reflect upon your positive practice. The feedback from the group can be used to further develop support within your school. The information you provide will be used to make suggestions for how the Service Pupil Premium

may be best used. It will also provide information about successful practices that other schools may wish to consider implementing.

### **How do I withdraw from the research?**

Participation is completely voluntary and you can withdraw from the research at any time and extract any unanalysed data. I will provide information about the study and give an opportunity for questions at the beginning of the interview, and I will check that you are comfortable to continue. You can exit from the interview at any time with no explanation, or you can ask me to temporarily stop the interview if you wish to stop participating. If you retrospectively decide you want to withdraw from the research please contact me via email

<c.macfarlane@ncl.ac.uk> Please note that there are certain points beyond which it will be impossible to withdraw from the research – for instance, once I have written the results of the research. You will need to contact me within a month of participation if you wish to withdraw your data.

If you have any questions about this research please feel free to contact me:

#### **Connie MacFarlane**

Email: c.macfarlane@newcastle.ac.uk

#### **Supervised by:**

#### **Wilma Barrow**

Email: w.barrow@newcastle.ac.uk

*This research project has been approved by the School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences, Research Ethics Committee, Newcastle University.*

## Appendix E: Participant Consent Form

What are the Perspectives of School Staff on Supporting the Well-Being of Students, from  
Armed Forces Families?

### INFORMED CONSENT

I agree to participate in this interview and a follow-up group discussion:

I can confirm that (please initial each box):

- I have read and understood the information sheet.
- I understand I can ask questions at any point during the interview / group discussion about any aspect of the research.
- I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary.
- I understand that the interview will be audio recorded.
- I understand that the audio will be transcribed (typed up) and all potentially identifying information will be removed in the write up and any subsequent publications.
- I understand that the data collected for this study will be securely stored.
- I understand that the information collected for this study will be used for research purposes and school development.
- I understand that I can leave the study at any time without explanation and extract any unanalysed data.

Name (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_

Signed

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

If you have any questions about this research please feel free to contact the researcher or the supervisor:

Connie MacFarlane Email: [c.macfarlane@newcastle.ac.uk](mailto:c.macfarlane@newcastle.ac.uk)

Wilma Barrow Email: [w.barrow@newcastle.ac.uk](mailto:w.barrow@newcastle.ac.uk)

## **Appendix F: Interview Schedules**

### **Interviewer's Full Schedule**

*(Timings are approximate)*

#### **5 mins: Preface** *(Given to participants on introduction and debrief sheet)*

Positive wellbeing leads to positive life outcomes. Psychological wellbeing refers to how you are feeling and how well you can cope with day-to-day life. Resiliency refers to the opportunity and ability to adapting when faced with stress. When our social and emotional needs are met, we can be content, grow and thrive. Pupils' wellbeing can be supported through their schools and relationships with others. By supporting pupils at school, you are helping to create a strong foundation for them to continue being successful in life. Our commitment to and experience of working with forces families to provide wellbeing support is a source of real learning for us. This can help us reflect on feeling pride for what's been accomplished, what's worked well and with our dedication, we can brainstorm how we can build on each other's successes to develop support even further.

Therefore, the purpose of this research is to explore what is being done well. This will help us to explore how we can do more of what works to develop future support at [school name]. We can only do, what is able to be imagined and therefore thinking of a positive future, inspires new ways of thinking. I want to listen and share in your stories of what has been possible and worthwhile. If you don't want to answer any questions then that is fine, just ask me to move on. You are free to withdraw from the interview at any time you wish. If you would like me to stop for a break then please let me know. Have you got any questions before we begin?

<b>Possible questions to use throughout the interview to explore further:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Tell me more.</li><li>- Was/Is that the same/effective for all service/forces pupils?</li><li>- Why was that important to you?</li><li>- How did that affect you?</li><li>- What was your contribution?</li><li>- What supported you and how?</li><li>- How has it changed you?</li></ul>



## 10 mins: Discovery

- As a motivated, proactive teacher/TA, there are likely to be high points and low points, successes and frustrations. Thinking back on your years, what stands out for you as a high point/best experience when you were contributing to an excellent source of support for service/forces pupils?
  - *Please describe what happened and who was involved.*
  - *What difference were you able to make working together?*
  - *Which of your strengths and talents were called upon?*
  - *How did you learn to do such a good job?*
  - *What contributed in an important way to enabling you to do your best work here?*  
(e.g. management, co-workers, professional development opportunities, school development plans , pupils, other context and structures)
  - *What contributed most to the success of the effort? What most helped when there were improvements?*
  - *What did you learn about school change?*
- What first drew you here to [school name] and what has most encouraged you to stay?
  - *What about this school makes you especially glad to work here?*
  - *What do you love most about this school?*
  - *How can we support and learn from [school name] and its community?*
- What has inspired you to get engaged in supporting service/forces pupils?
- What do you think is most helpful to support service/forces pupils wellbeing and develop their resiliency?
  - *And specifically in school?*
  - *What do you value most about working with service/forces pupils?*
  - *What do you value most about yourself?*

## Extra

- In your work as a member of the school, what achievements, accomplishments, or activities have you especially valued in regards to support for service/forces pupils?
  - *How have you been able to share what you learned with others?*

## 10 mins: Dream

- Imagine some time in the future, there is a special edition of a local paper that reports on the significant changes for supporting the wellbeing of service/forces pupils at [school name], and you're thrilled to be part of a school that is making such an important difference. You and your colleagues are working together as a team at its very best. It is flourishing in so many ways.
  - *What do you imagine the three most significant articles are about? - What would be turning point or 'ping' moment that motivates the changes?*

- *What is happening that builds on previous successes?*
  - *What are people doing? What part do you play in these stories?*
  - *What has changed that has improved the group's effectiveness?*
  - *How did you get to this stage? What did it take?*
  - *In this exciting future, how are pupils and teachers supported to gain the best outcomes for student wellbeing?*
  - *How do the Governors/Senior Leadership Team support? What is sustaining their dedication?*
  - *What kinds of systems and structures are most encouraging staff and pupil engagement?*
  - *What are you most proud of having helped the school accomplish?*
- What could happen that would enable people involved with [school name] to feel fully engaged and energised about supporting the wellbeing of service/forces pupils?
  - What do you most hope will happen moving forward?

*Prompt if struggling to answer: Can you think of a time in your life when you had a bold vision or image of the future and lived into it? How did you make that happen and what supported it to fruition?*

### **10 mins: Design**

*Three aspects to consider: Relational (internal and external), Formal (structures, role, tools) and Conversational/Organisational/Forces Community Context*

- As you reflect on successful ways service/forces pupils are currently supported, what initiatives stand out as being exceptionally promising in expanding and why?
- What would it take to create change with supporting the wellbeing of service/forces pupils? What's possible here and who cares?
- What is contributing most to your own willingness to make a difference in your school now?
  - *What are the most important factors likely to sustain your involvement?*
  - *What additional skills or support do you need to enable you to meet these objectives?*
  - What do you most hope to contribute?

### Extras

- What impact would increasing staff and pupil engagement have on the quality and inclusivity of support?

- What do you consider some of the most exciting trends, events, and developments that could positively impact the future of the support for service/forces children?

### **10 mins: Delivery/Destiny**

- What recommendations do you have for how to strengthen the support for the wellbeing of service/forces pupils?
- What small changes could we make right now that would really encourage improvement in supporting service/forces pupils' wellbeing? How can we get this done now and how can I help?
- How would you personally like to be involved in expanding support here? What can you do to make a difference?
- What next steps do you plan to take this year to encourage your friends and colleagues into getting involved?
  - Anything else you would like to add or revisit?

### **5 mins: Conclusion** *(Given to participants on introduction and debrief sheet)*

I'd like to thank you for your participation, it's been invaluable. My next steps are that I will get all of the interviews transcribed and then look for themes. This is a way to organise the experiences and topics that have been shared. I will then arrange a suitable date and invite you to join the rest of the staff who have been interviewed to discuss the themes and your views on how our information can be useful for helping to develop the support for service/forces pupils' wellbeing at [school name].

**Appendix G: Theme Development**

<b>Thematic Analysis (using guidance from Braun &amp; Clarke, 2013)</b>	
<b>Stage</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Transcription</b>	Audio interviews transcribed. Transcripts then checked against audio recordings and amendments made.
<b>Familiarisation with data</b>	<p>Each transcript was read and listened to again, alongside taking notes to gather early impressions of the data as a whole. I made notes of the relevance to the research, the tone of voice for emphasis and any salient topics. I also read my own reflections of the interview experience.</p> <p>Example of an extract from one of my reflections:</p> <p><i>...I was surprised about the apparent breadth and depth of the responses as my worst fear was that participants would not understand my questions or not know what to say. I was fascinated by the responses and topics brought which covered a wide range of levels. There was an overall viewpoint about being proud of what is already being provided but always room for improvements. Participant stated that could see from my expressions when they were “on the right tracks.” I was providing non-verbal feedback, such as nodding and hmm, to indicate I was listening and encourage engagement but it was helpful to be aware that it was perceived in this way.”</i></p>
<b>Generate initial codes</b>	Semantic codes were formed from more focused re-reading and highlighting words and phrases with a pen, with a note of the extract. Focused on elements of the data which would answer my research question. (see Themes, Codes and Quotes below)

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Searching for themes</b>	<p>I used an inductive, semantic Thematic Analysis approach.</p> <p>Themed in three separate areas related to Appreciative Inquiry (Current Practice, Ideal Future Practice and Future Practice). Codes were organised into general areas and then more finely linked to create initial themes. Themes were then refined by re-organisation. Sub-themes were then created and checked against each theme. Some themes were then collapsed into the sub-themes (see Development of Themes below)</p>
<b>Reviewing potential themes</b>	<p>Checked that themes relate to the research question and overall dataset.</p>
<b>Defining and naming</b>	<p>Synthesised themes. Created definitions of each theme, which captured its shape and texture and how it related to other themes which clearly addressed the research question. Selected the data extracts for the final report.</p>
<b>Producing the report</b>	<p>Themes further analysed through the process of writing, creating the final written document. Order of presentation and integration of literature.</p>

<b>Development of Themes</b>	
<b>Four revisions</b>	<b>Themes for Current Practice, Ideal Future Practice and Future Practice</b>
<b>Initial Themes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Staff characteristics and skills, Approach/Teaching, Motivating Forces, Collaboration, Values, Ethos, Management Team, Relationships, Individualised, Resources, Interventions, Outdoor learning - Forrest Schools, Deployment Intervention, Transition, Challenges for Forces Families, Child Well-being indicators.</b></li> <li>• <b>Community, Well-being, Resources</b></li> <li>• <b>Collaboration, Parental Collaboration, CYP-AFF Groups, Army Collaboration, Maintaining Practice, Child-led Initiatives</b></li> </ul>
<b>Adapted Themes 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>CYP-AFF</b> (<u>sub-themes</u>: Challenges, Resilient, Well-being), <b>Relationships</b> (<u>sub-themes</u>: School Ethos, Staff Characteristics, Staff Approaches and Skills, Supportive and Innovative Leadership), <b>Interventions</b> (<u>sub-themes</u>: Relationships, Outdoor Learning, Deployment, Transition)</li> <li>• <b>Community</b> (<u>sub-themes</u>: Cohesive, Parental Engagement / Collaboration, AFF Specialist Training for all Agencies), <b>Education systems</b> (<u>sub-themes</u>: National Recognition for SEMH Support, Counselling Skills for TAs), <b>Resources</b> (<u>sub-themes</u>: Increased staff and school money, increased planning time)</li> <li>• <b>Enhancing Support through Partnerships</b> (<u>sub-themes</u>: Parental Engagement, CYP-AFF Groups, Army Collaboration), <b>Monitor Practice, Child-led Initiatives</b> (<u>sub-themes</u>: Further Develop Mentor Meetings, Promote the Peer Mentors)</li> </ul>

<p><b>Four revisions</b></p>	<p><b>Themes for Current Practice, Ideal Future Practice and Future Practice</b></p>
<p><b>Adapted Themes 2</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Knowledge and Awareness of CYP-AFF</b> (<u>sub-themes</u>: Challenges, Resilient, Well-being indicators), <b>Positive Relationships</b> (<u>sub-themes</u>: School Ethos, Characteristics of Determined Staff, Approaches and Skills, Supportive and Innovative Leadership, Collaboration), <b>Interventions</b> (<u>sub-themes</u>: Informal, Formal, Outdoor Learning, CYP-AFF Specific)</li> <li>• <b>Community</b> (<u>sub-themes</u>: Cohesive, Parental Engagement, AFF Specialist Training for all Agencies), <b>Education systems</b> (<u>sub-themes</u>: National Recognition for SEMH Support, Counselling Skills for TAs), <b>Resources</b> (<u>sub-themes</u>: Increased staff and school money, increased planning time)</li> <li>• <b>Monitor Practice, Enhancing Support through Partnerships</b> (<u>sub-themes</u>: Parental Engagement, CYP-AFF Groups, Child-led Initiatives, Army Collaboration)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Final Themes</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Positive Relationships</b> (<u>sub-themes</u>: Staff Approaches and Skills, Supportive and Innovative Leadership, Collaboration with Stakeholders, School Ethos), <b>Cultural Responsiveness</b> (<u>sub-themes</u>: Knowledge and Awareness of CYP-FAFF, CYP-FAFF Specific Interventions)</li> <li>• <b>Community, School Development, Resources</b></li> <li>• <b>Monitor Actions to Maintain Values, Enhancing Support through Partnerships</b> (<u>sub-themes</u>: Parental Engagement, Direct Support for CYP-FAFF)</li> </ul>

## Final Themes, Codes and Quotes

<b>Current Practice</b>		
<b>Theme and Sub-theme</b>	<b>Codes</b>	<b>Quotes (P = participant number)</b>
<p><b><u>Theme: Positive Relationships</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Sub-theme:</u></b></p> <p><b>Staff Approaches and Skills</b></p> <p><b>(pg.110-115)</b></p>	<p>Passionate</p> <p>Perseverance</p> <p>Resilience</p> <p>Empathetic</p> <p>Approachable</p> <p>Available</p> <p>Individualised</p> <p>Child-led</p>	<p>“having that passion and that drive to want to get the children to achieve their best potential that they can.” (P3)</p> <p>“I think the patience and open-mindedness are two very key things.” (P1)</p> <p>“I feel that I’ve learned a lot from working with the children. They surprise me and what I think sometimes they may do doesn’t [sic] and so I think it’s being prepared to learn from them and then also being willing to let them take leads on things and give them that sense of control.” (P1)</p> <p>“if you can understand and connect with that child on a communication level and an empathetic level then you can make a difference.” (P3)</p> <p>“They could teach so many adults so much.” (P3)</p> <p>“You don’t get away with it [not being genuine]. They can see through you and it’s no good, they’re not going to be pacified by, ‘you do this because you have to get on with it.’ That isn’t going to work. You have to very much get on a level with those children as one person to another, within the boundaries of what you can as an adult to a child, but they need to see respect from the adults before you will get anything from them...”(P1)</p> <p>“It’s celebrating that each child is unique and that they have to celebrate their uniqueness, that everybody is different so we respect each other and their different opinions.” (P3)</p>



	Consistency	“you put in lots of support and things don’t appear to be working well at first, <i>although</i> with perseverance things do turn around but it’s sort of, sometimes takes a bit longer.” (P1)
	Flexibility to needs	“It’s the children isn’t it. If you don’t want to be helping children, you wouldn’t be here. You become inspired by their story because each one of them has got a story, every single one of them.” (P3)
	Guidance	“I think we’re placing a great deal of trust in them and they like the fact that we trust them and they like the fact that we give them a bit of freedom” (P2)
	Respect	“the emphasis is on the child” (P2) “committed to go that extra mile for them” (P1)
	Genuine/Honest	“I did it on a voluntary basis but it was... it’s something that I think an awful lot of us do in this school to support the children is we all do things if we’ve got a skill or we’ve got an interest or experience we just use it to support the children.” (P2)
	Caring communication	“My life is about children, everything is child centred, everything that I do is for the child.” (P2)
	Listening	“tomorrow is a new day and we’ll come in and we’ll do it all again because we care” (P3) “we’re resilient” (P1)
	Understanding	“It’s the resilience you know you do take some but we don’t ever give up. The children know we will never give up on them. They can push the boundaries but we’re never going to give up on you and actually that can make a massive change to them” (P3)
	Language	

	Encouragement	<p>“The other sort of support is perhaps a little bit more reactive so gaging where the children are at...just spend some time with them and sometimes it is just about listening, giving them an opportunity to offload” (P1)</p>
	Reassurance	<p>“So, it’s giving them opportunities to empower them really.” (P1)</p>
	Positive	<p>“And just to be there.” (P2)</p> <p>“it’s very, very important for a lot of these children that we acknowledge them first thing in the morning.” (P2)</p>
	Reframe challenge	<p>“mentoring them through those problems” (P1)</p> <p>“encourage building their self-esteem and that should be a big part of what we do.” (P3)</p>
	Own actions	<p>“It’s the continual talking isn’t it” (P2)</p>
	Outside of class	<p>“...knows that if she wants me she can come and find me and she knows she can say anything to me and I’m very honest with her...but I will also...do a bit of investigating of the other side of the story...” (P2)</p>
	Opportunities	<p>“I am a very open and a very honest person and I know that I sometimes don’t get things right or I sometimes don’t do things the way somebody else would have done them.” (P2)</p> <p>“they know they can pretty much say anything they want to me and it’s okay... They know that I’ll help them. They know that they could come and ask me something and I would do my very best to get it sorted.” (P2)</p> <p>“...it’s not the end of the world, but it is to her” (P2)</p> <p>“being able to nurture is really important.” (P3)</p> <p>“somebody who’s not always got the answers” (P1)</p>

		<p>“comfortable with me” (P2)</p> <p>“I think they know that they live in an environment of trust...they know that I’ll probably say it to somebody else but they know that that’s a safe person to say it to and they know that that person will treat them in same way” (P2).</p> <p>“there are a couple of children who struggle with their maths and it’s very easy to give up but I say to them can you remember the time you were on that tree and you wanted to jump down and you were frightened of jumping down and you sat there for ten minutes but eventually you made the effort and you had the courage to actually take that step or take that leap and jump off the tree and everything was okay when you landed on your bottom on the floor wasn’t it. It’s just the same thing saying you know have a go at the maths. You might get it wrong, you might end up on your bottom on the floor but does it matter? You’ll have done it and you’ll have another go and next time it might be a bit easier and that’s what it’s all about.” (P2)</p> <p>“emotional check-ins” (P2 &amp; P3)</p> <p>“It’s being able to empathise with the child how they’re really feeling, what impact any situation might have on them because it’s massive.” (P3)</p> <p>“...I knew the names of all the children and I knew...little things [likes and dislikes] that actually matter to a child” (P2).</p> <p>“you might feel it a bit different doing this because it’s something new” (P1)</p> <p>“it’s the little things. You know, I doesn’t have to be a big fancy worded intervention” (P3)</p> <p>“simple things like actually meeting him outside on the playground” (P2)</p> <p>“You kind of become the nurturer, the counsellor, the befriender, you’re not just a [staff member]” (P3)</p>
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		<p>“liked to have his back rubbed” (P2)</p> <p>“a lot of it is the language that staff are using. It’s the language and the approach of staff” (P1)</p> <p>“a lot of our staff have recently...started looking at changing how they interact” (P3)</p> <p>“Most of the training has been actually about the staff’s own growth mindset...I think the way you are yourself you know in your own mindset has a huge impact” (P1)</p> <p>“it’s [growth mindset training] made me think about the way I say things sometimes” (P2)</p> <p>“...opportunity to build some confidence around friendships. So, for example we might ask one of our learning mentors to do a little bit of one to one support. We might set up a small group, a friendship group. We might engage them at lunch times, we have lunch time clubs that we can include them in” (P1)</p> <p>“Some are more formal programmes...such as forest of feelings or the talk and draw which is like a form of art therapy. We’ve drawn on play therapists...and our learning mentors...I suppose that’s what I would call proactive interventions where we’ve planned it and we’ve said this is a set programme that this child needs for a certain length of time.” (P1)</p> <p>“[referring to Forest Schools] you’ll be walking along having a conversation with a group of children about all sorts of things that you just wouldn’t have time to have a conversation about in a...lesson” (P2).</p> <p>“getting to just know the children so much better and they wanted to tell daddy that their cat had had scrambled egg for breakfast or whatever. That’s a conversation that you would probably never have with the child because you just wouldn’t but to get to</p>
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		<p>know them so much better and to be able to continue those conversations with them.” (P2)</p> <p>“our forest schools programme has had a significant impact in children’s wellbeing for example their confidence levels...within a remit...they’re learning to be safe, they’re learning some boundaries” (P1)</p> <p>“It’s giving them opportunities I think that they wouldn’t normally have” (P2)</p> <p>“You have to reflect on your practice sometimes don’t you.” (P2)</p> <p>“if a child came up with an idea we’d give it a try.” (P2)</p> <p>“challenging as it can be you know there’s also great rewards.” (P1)</p>
<p><b><u>Theme: Positive Relationships</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Sub-theme: Supportive and Innovative Leadership</u></b> <b>(pg. 115-116)</b></p>	<p><b><u>Codes</u></b></p> <p>Organisation</p> <p>Coordinating</p> <p>Mentoring</p> <p>Visible</p> <p>Collaborative</p>	<p><b><u>Quotes:</u></b></p> <p>“source of support...advice, ideas, sometimes [help with] a problem” (P1)</p> <p>“kind of holistic role, the umbrella role” (P1)</p> <p>“it’s the confidence in knowing that I’m completely trusted...I know that I could go to any of the senior leadership team with any queries or any questions.” (P2)</p> <p>“I think the boss cares...he’s really passionate... that’s where our change comes from but he’s also open to new ideas.. he’s always searching for ways to improve on what we do. Is it enough? Can we do more? What can we do if we can do more? We rely on him for that really.” (P3)</p> <p>“I know that there’s an open-door policy. So if I’m concerned I can just go straight to senior leadership and we’ve got strong links with our governors. We know that if there’s something we feel that we want to change we can approach them” (P3)</p>

	Responsive	“They get it...and they’ve got such a bank of knowledge” (P3)
	Trust	“it’s knowing that you’ve listened to, it’s knowing that you’re supported” (P3) “just kept telling me that I was doing a good job and that I was making a difference to the life of this child even though I didn’t feel as though I was” (P2) “they come into the classes most days just to say hello” (P3)
	Supportive	“who is doing what when” (P1)
	Feedback	“...and it’s having the passion and it’s got to be genuine. People don’t believe it if it’s not. It’s got to be you know plausible...it’s got to be real...have integrity” (P1) “you’ve got to start somewhere” (P1)
	Reflecting	“I think by supporting her in that role that helps her to feel engaged and energised about supporting the children and so it goes around. It’s a two-way street.” (P1)
	Planning	“don’t stop thinking of different ways to do things” (P1)
	Proactive	“we need to improve this, what are we going to do about it... the minute those discussions stop there’s a danger of becoming complacent and you know a bit lacklustre.” (P1)
	Problem Solve	“don’t stand still” (P1) “problem solve” (P1)
	Approachable	
	Role Models	

<p><b><u>Theme: Positive Relationships</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Sub-theme: Collaboration with Stakeholders</u></b> <b>(pg. 117-118)</b></p>	<p><b><u>Codes</u></b></p> <p>Working together</p> <p>Connecting to others</p> <p>Cultural connections</p> <p>Sharing</p> <p>Events</p>	<p><b><u>Quotes:</u></b></p> <p>“they’ve arrived and things haven’t gone as smoothly as you’d hoped and because of the collaborative approach with parents and outside agencies you’ve been able to change or turn that around.” (P1)</p> <p>“including people’s experiences, drawing on people’s skills” (P1)</p> <p>“I think when it works at its very best and it goes back to this collaborative approach, it’s when we get all stakeholders on board.” (P1)</p> <p>“It’s working as a team and it’s knowing that you’re listened to, it’s knowing that you’re supported, it’s knowing that you are making a difference every single day to the lives of children and supporting each other.” (P3)</p> <p>“I think here we’re really good at working as a team” (P3) “talk as a team” (P3)</p> <p>“[particular cultural] community [member of staff]. She’s based in our school but she doesn’t just liaise in language, it’s much bigger than that you know we draw on lots of her skills and attributes so she holds dancing groups, she does cooking, she holds services so she’s quite a key person in terms of that community cohesion.” (P1)</p> <p>“we can target the children’s needs from every angle so that’s important. Obviously making sure that all the other people who are working around the child are well informed about what the needs of the child are” (P1)</p> <p>“the collaborative approach is something that we aim to have, well we do have. I don’t think it would work if we didn’t so it’s about drawing on different people’s skills and different resources in order to get the best outcomes.” (P1)</p> <p>“we did actually offer to allow parents to come in between half past three and four o clock on occasions as well. So if they didn’t have the ICT skills or they didn’t actually have internet access or whatever it was we let them do that as well” (P2)</p>
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		<p>“[about internet] so if the person is on the other side of the world and they want to ask a question they can ask a question.” (P2)</p> <p>“There is the Almond Tree project, we’ve got the NSPCC, they run different support sessions [for children] like if one adult in the family is suffering from mental health difficulties...We’ve got links with young carers, IDAS...Home Start...Forget Me Not organisation for children who are undergoing bereavement...preventions service...healthy child team...service pupil champion” (P1)</p> <p>“we’ve had things like the international festival where you know all schools got on board with that and we started planning that months in advance.” (P1)</p> <p>“Certainly, our forest schools programme has had a significant impact in children’s wellbeing for example their confidence levels, their ability to work in a team...it’s the collaborative work that they do, often it’s together” (P1)</p> <p>“we’re quite good at getting the children to help the other children to share their coping experiences and their knowledge and how they deal with things so it is just a community of support really....It impacts, you can see that it impacts. Once they’ve got that support and they’ve had somebody else to talk to you can see that it does fall into their learning, positive child, a coping child will achieve.” (P3)</p> <p>“we also used it as an opportunity to work with one of the other local primary schools to support them as well was where we ran an e-bluey club” (P2)</p> <p>“we have a [specific culture] teaching assistant and she goes with these children and does this little road show in different schools” (P2)</p> <p>“we’re working as a school very hard with the community” (P2)</p>
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<b><u>Theme: Positive Relationships</u></b>	<b><u>Codes</u></b>	<b><u>Quotes:</u></b>
<b><u>Sub-theme:</u></b> <b>School Ethos</b> <b>(pg. 119-121)</b>	All times	“the ethos runs from seven forty-five when we open the door right until six o’clock, the child gets that level of care and guidance and support all the way through which I think is important.” (P2)
	Change is gradual and ongoing	“I liked the ethos of it, I just felt comfortable when I came here.” (P2) “It’s the positivity, it’s the understanding, it’s the acceptance” (P2) “we’ll do it all again tomorrow” (P3) “everybody cares” (P2)
	Values	“We are part of one big family, we are equally important and we are equally different.” (P3)
	Welcoming	“I think a vast majority of staff, particularly those that are on the inclusion team and those that are doing that sort of more pastoral work, I think they have a genuine desire to want to make a difference.” (P1)
	Inclusive	“What we do for these children and we don’t give up on any child, we just keep plugging away. We’ve got that resilience where it doesn’t matter what the child might be throwing at us, we look for that understanding behind why are they throwing that at us and how can we manage that and how can we support them to be the best that they can be.” (P3)
	Belonging	
	Supportive	“we’ve got over twenty-two nationalities in the school they tend to be from the common wealth but not always” (P1)  “we build in special religious festivals so we’ll have a special Diwali service and we’ll invite the pundit to come in and lead that, any other particular festivals or days that are from different cultures we celebrate. If we’re having a special event that’s a generic one within school, we always try and touch on include you know different

		<p>nationalities and cultures. So we had a food festival not so long back and within that we touched on all the different nationalities that we have.” (P1)</p> <p>“We’ve had a big [specific culture] day, we’ve had a big international day so we do celebrate hugely all the different cultures that we have.” (P2)</p> <p>“child-led...creative approach to learning” (P1)</p> <p>“encouraging that integration and recognising the differences as well...we feel strongly about that. We feel that you know we embrace the diversity of the community that we’re in.” (P1)</p> <p>“at the end of the day one of the children will go home with the class mascot and a diary. So they’re getting parent child links with school but also it’s that sense of belonging and building it up through things like that.” (P1)</p> <p>“Number one priority is always to be the emotional wellbeing of our children because a happy, stable child will achieve their best potential.” (P3)</p> <p>“I think they need to be happy with their learning and they need to have a certain degree of wellbeing to be comfortable....There needs to be comfort level there, in order then to be willing to engage because without that you know it’s very difficult to expect a child to apply themselves, particularly with challenging work” (P1)</p> <p>“very rare that you will have a success without some effort” (P1)</p> <p>“when you’re dealing with a child who may lack confidence, has apathy and is not particularly engaged with learning, doesn’t see the value of it, to turn that around is... it’s not something that happens straight away and it’s a drip feed” (P1)</p> <p>“We could do more. There’s always room for improvement.” (P3)</p> <p>“growth mindset for staff and children; always room for improvement”</p>
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		<p>“I think here as well we’re really good at looking after each other as well and being a support between the staff. If you’re having a bad day you can say I’m having a really bad day and you can just get it off your chest” (P3)</p> <p>“always make sure that we include all children in everything we do wherever we possibly can” (P2)</p> <p>“it’s having that passion and that drive to want to get the children to achieve their best potential that they can. That’s I think something because that’s the common purpose of everybody who works in this school that’s what makes you want to stay because you’re a team.” (P3)</p> <p><i><b>Note:</b> Positive Relationships theme reflects different levels; from ethos to collaboration with stakeholders, to leadership to staff.</i></p>
<p><b><u>Theme</u></b></p> <p><b>Cultural Responsiveness</b></p> <p><b><u>Sub-Theme</u></b></p> <p><b>Armed Forces Knowledge and Awareness</b></p> <p><b>(pg. 121-125)</b></p>	<p><b><u>Codes</u></b></p> <p>Challenges</p> <p>Well-being indicators</p> <p>Finding a balance</p> <p>Diversity</p>	<p><b><u>Quotes:</u></b></p> <p>“So, a child arrives, they may have had three or four moves within a couple of years so they’ve had lots of change and uncertainty. They’ve perhaps decided that you know making friendships is a bit futile because they know they’re going to get another change or they anticipate change. So, they’ve come to our school, they’re a bit disengaged socially.” (P1)</p> <p>“we’re really good at identifying the need and the emotional challenges that dad being away in a warzone brings.” (P3)</p> <p>“There’s so much mobility and it’s not just with the parents, their friends move around all the time.” (P3)</p> <p>“it’s particularly difficult for any service child, but for a child with autism it’s even harder. So, it’s making that transition and change and helping them to cope with those changes” (P3)</p>

	<p>Consistent routines and approaches</p> <p>Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)</p> <p>Flexibility to needs</p> <p>Transitions</p> <p>Liaison with families</p> <p>External agencies</p>	<p>“not making assumptions...Not to be judgemental about situations and to be able to take every situation and every child as a unique one because no situation... there are parallels obviously and there are common issues but actually, no one family is the same, no one child is the same so having that individual approach.” (P1)</p> <p>“The biggest thing for us I think is when the dads go away it just has to be business as usual for us and we’ve always said that, always said that. Yes, they might come in a little bit upset one day but okay, we’ll have a quick talk about it but do you know what, it’s a maths lesson now let’s get on with it and that’s how we always try to operate. It doesn’t change in school just because somebody is not here in your life...we just treat them all the same. We don’t actually differentiate particularly between well your parents are in the forces and yours aren’t, you’re just a special child in our school and we’re going to look after you in the way you need looking after.” (P2)</p> <p>“Most of us would do that on an individual basis with the child, particularly maybe in the first week or two when dad has just gone and that’s sort of a bit of a hurdle that they need to get over.” (P2)</p> <p>“Well there’s always a teacher in the classroom and there’s always a TA in the classroom so there is always an opportunity for the TA to support children if need be.” (P2)</p> <p>“I think some children in certain catchments are very accepting of what adults say. Whereas I don’t know, maybe it’s because they’ve had to be resilient and they’ve had to question things themselves and their independence. Some of our children have had to be the carers in their families so they’ve had to be the grown-ups so you have to acknowledge that I think and work with that...but at the same time recognising that that does put them in a vulnerable position. You know when we’ve</p>
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		<p>got a nine year old who's responsible for four siblings, quite a large part of the time for example, where does that child's time come in?" (P1)</p> <p>"Because very often they feel out of control or they perceive that their lives are sometimes lacking in control." (P1)</p> <p>"we have had a family in school where dad didn't come back and it was very, very sad. The children actually coped incredibly well, just unbelievably well, it was us that didn't cope as well...The children are still coping remarkably well" (P2)</p> <p>"Some of our service children have low self-esteem and have those difficulties you know. I'd say they're the minority but then just because they're the minority doesn't mean to say they should be ignored." (P3)</p> <p>"we've got so many nationalities, we've got so many different speaking languages, it's amazing and the kids just accept each other." (P3)</p> <p>"we've got more and more children coming through with additional needs" (P3)</p> <p>"It is knowing about the family background and it is about knowing where they've come from, quite often as well it's where they're going. Because when you know obviously if dad is going away or mum is going away that is one thing but these children move themselves" (P2)</p> <p>"certainly is a need for additional care, support and guidance because there are additional challenges." (P1)</p> <p>"they're still working hard in spite of maybe some of the challenges that they've faced." (P1)</p> <p>"difficult family lives" (P2)</p> <p>"bereavement – children coped remarkably well, staff found it more difficult"</p>
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		<p>“we might see a change in a child’s behaviour and sometimes it’s not even dad, it’s mum and dad.” (P3)</p> <p>“their resilient attitude...it’s their norm. So they just have this instinct to just get on and cope.” (P3)</p> <p>“We will support them, but then how much support do we give them and take away from that ‘get on with it’ resilience. So, it’s finding that right balance” (P3).</p> <p>“they’re enthusiastic...they want to know...it’s that hunger, that excitement, it doesn’t take much” (P1)</p> <p>“... when parent actually tells us that they’re going away and tells us where they’re going and then we can support that child.” (P2)</p> <p>“If it’s [parent is away] communicated to us, we can pre-empt, anticipate, talk as a team, decide what the best strategies might be and know resources we’ve got out there to pool into for that child.” (P3)</p> <p>“We had a big thing with making poppies during remembrance” (P2)</p> <p>“remembrance service and to celebrate the children of those service families. Some of the children read out their stories and you think these children are extra special in extra special circumstances and they’ve got extra pressure that people don’t take into account” (P3)</p> <p>“The difficulty with those people [armed forces support] is they change every eighteen months or so..you build up a relationship with the particular [armed forces] welfare officer and then as part of his career generally speaking he moves on to another job and then you get a new one.” (P2)</p> <p>“A lot of [staff are] forces families so have a good understanding of what it’s like” (P1)</p>
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		<p>“we have our service pupil champion and she’s employed by the army welfare to coordinate this sort of thing but she’ll work closely with schools so for example any new children coming into the catchment she will approach those families individually and once they’ve been allocated a school she’ll go out to the schools and be a little bit of an advocate if you like. She’ll liaise to try and get that transition as smooth as possible” (P1)</p>
<p><b><u>Theme</u></b></p> <p><b>Cultural Responsiveness</b></p> <p><b><u>Sub-Theme</u></b></p> <p><b>CYP-FAFF Specific Interventions</b></p> <p><b>(pg. 125-126)</b></p>	<p><b><u>Codes</u></b></p> <p>Supportive conversations</p> <p>Communication with deployed parent</p> <p>Groups</p> <p>Whole class</p> <p>Access to external agencies</p>	<p><b><u>Quotes:</u></b></p> <p>“So if we know where the dads are going we can support the children and we can take them to one side and do a bit of research on the internet and show them where they are in the world and find out a little bit about that country and that kind of thing.” (P2)</p> <p>“used interventions to look at feelings, we’ve set up the e-bluey system so that the children could email to make sure that we try and keep that as positive as possible. We’ve also worked together to sort of do countdown which we incorporate into the classroom because a lot of the children all of their parents are away at a similar time.” (P3)</p> <p>“...and knowing where they’re going to go and being able to say to them actually so and so has gone there as well so you’ll see them when you get there or we’ll have a look at the school on the internet have a look at some pictures about what they do.” (P2)</p> <p>“every lunch time for half an hour I used to keep the ICT suite open and I would be in there and the children could just drop in whenever they wanted to, even if they just wanted to send a one line thing to mum or dad” (P2)</p>

		<p>“when one of the autistic children that I was supporting’s dad was sent to Afghanistan we had emoji cards so that he could come in on a morning and just show the card this is how I feel and then we would use pictures, story board for him to express his feelings and he would say things like I am sad because I didn’t hear from dad, he hasn’t replied to my email. So, we would talk then about what might be going on and how busy he is and once you’ve got that understanding and you’ve calmed their emotional stress and anxiety you can then pull them back into focus on actually the lesson that they need to do.” (P3)</p> <p>“In class now we do mindfulness so on a morning...relaxation with them and...write down or give their worries to whatever object...They’ve all said that they feel more positive. So, it’s had a massive impact and people are commenting on how calm our learning environment is. The majority of our students in our class are service children. It’s just helping them to cope.” (P3)</p> <p>“Military Kids Club (formally HMS Heroes)” “It’s the drop-in club at lunch times that a lot of them really like just to be able to go and play a game with their friend if they wanted to and talk about where dad was or what dad was doing and that kind of thing so that’s nice as well” (P2).</p> <p>“e-blueys are where the children actually type the information into a computer and then that is actually printed out as a letter in an operational area.” (P2)</p>
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<b>Ideal Future Practice</b>		
<b>Theme</b>	<b>Codes</b>	<b>Quotes</b>
<b>Community (pg. 127)</b>	Cohesion	<p>“good place for things to be hosted and we do do things like committees come and sometimes use our hall but I think it’s almost bigger than that like we have a hub for community groups for example...it would be lovely if we had you know a base where parents, carers and other members of the community use our school whether that be for advice or support or you know hosting social events that’s not always directly led by us but we’re hosting that and we’re part of it.” (P1)</p> <p>“the community of people isn’t it to come together to you know see value in change.” (P1)</p> <p>“whole cohesive community feel.” (P1)</p> <p>“So maybe in an ideal world we’d have training for our health professionals and our external agencies to understand the mobility and the absence of what our children go through.” (P3)</p>
	Parental Engagement	
	CYP-FAFF specialist training	
<b>School Development (pg. 127-128)</b>	Whole school approaches	<p>“I’m being really idealistic but it would be nice to think that who we’re accountable to which I totally fully acknowledge we should be accountable like any other institution that’s owned by the people. But it would be nice to think those powers that are holding us to account that there’s a bit more recognition of what we do and that they’re a bit more supportive rather than interrogative and that perhaps they’re a bit more accepting of the realities...there’s a sense of undervalue...The care, support and guidance is not something that is always put on the same agenda as the standards and I think it’s very difficult to separate those two, particularly when you’re in a situation, when you’re in a context like ours where there are real challenges. Clearly, it’s recognised because we get</p>
	Training	
	Recognition from government	

		<p>pupil premium but it's really having an understanding... you can go into a situation and know about it but really to understand it" (P1)</p> <p>"Maybe all TAs in an ideal world would be given the opportunity to have basic counselling skills qualification." (P3)</p> <p>"I think if we keep working on our growth mindset, promoting that in every single child...growth mindset is the way forward. It's what we should expand on." (P3)</p>
<p><b>Resources</b></p>	<p>More time</p> <p>More staff</p> <p>More money</p>	<p>"It would be nice to have a bit more time to do the strategic level stuff, planning ahead and doing the succession planning to think how can we improve this but it's just time we lack unfortunately." (P1)</p> <p>"Requires resources, staff and time for organisation" (P1)</p> <p>"I suppose it's staffing, resources...it's all the organisation" (P2)</p> <p>"as long as we've got the staff to do it then that's probably the only thing that would be limiting" (P2)</p> <p>"There's never enough hours in the day...if we had more funding, resources, more people, more staff, more time in the perfect world then they would get more individualised, personalised support and care wouldn't they...what about the others (not SEN) you know and they still have as much need sometimes, if not more." (P3)</p> <p>"So, you know in an ideal perfect world if we had two TAs per class I think that would make a massive impact because you've then got a TA, two TAs on the ground in each class to really get to know those children. I like what they've done in foundation stage where each TA is assigned a key worker so they are responsible for those children and...we can have an in-depth handover when they move on." (P3)</p>

<b>Future Practice</b>		
<b>Theme</b>	<b>Codes</b>	<b>Quotes</b>
<b>Monitor Actions to Maintain Values</b> <b>(pg. 129-130)</b>	Enact	“It’s okay paying lip service and you can put all these things this is what we do on the form but actually what are we really doing and how are we acting on it. It’s following the decisions through and maintaining it, that’s the hard... the challenging bit but it’s also the most necessary part.” (P1)
	Follow-up	
	Values	“I think the growth mindset is promoting you know our values of the school as well; cooperation, team work, resilience, perseverance, respect. I think the more we keep working on those you can see it starting to happen ...we’ve got to make sure that the teachers and the TAs take that [values] back into the classroom and... playground...to promote that positivity” (P3)
	Child-led	“I think it’s about being a role model as well...Keep being positive, keep enjoying it, keep setting an example and hopefully even just a little bit will rub off on other people sometimes.” (P2)
		“as long as we’re still getting that input [training] and how to move it forward” (P3)
	“it’s [child-focused mentor meeting] done through the child and it’s very much a dialogue between the teacher and child...I think it is giving children a bit more of a role to play in that. So, we’ve been talking about rather than just the teacher talking to the child with the parent there about oh you know this is what you’ve done well, this is what you need to work on, to actually get the child to come in to that meeting and start with them so they... and we were talking about maybe do they do a PowerPoint or do they come ready to share some work... self-talk things it becomes more meaningful I think. I think there’s something quite powerful in that...” (P1)	
	“...they’re [children] very good at telling us what they want...We have our school council which are very proactive and there’s been a lot of work done with one of the HLAs who	

		<p>leads the group. They meet each week and they've got some really good ideas about how to move the school on. We've also just set up the peer mentors which are separate from the play buddies. We've got some play buddies who basically are there to help play with the other children but the peer mentors have had some specific training from the PSHE...We feel that sometimes certain children will respond better to other children than they would an adult...I think there's a bit more work to do on promoting it as well, advertising them a little bit more with the other children" (P1)</p>
<p><b><u>Theme</u></b></p> <p><b>Enhancing Support through Partnerships</b></p> <p><b><u>Sub-theme</u></b></p> <p><b>Parental Engagement (pg. 130-132)</b></p>	<p><b><u>Codes</u></b></p> <p>Barriers</p> <p>Informal</p> <p>Confidence</p> <p>Options</p> <p>Valued</p>	<p><b><u>Quotes:</u></b></p> <p>"a large part of that is ensuring that we're getting family support and families on board and that without a doubt is a challenge...that is an area that our school is trying to develop all the time " (P1)</p> <p>"I think sometimes it's felt that you know, 'we don't want to be showing that we're not managing', and that sort of thing. So, I think there's sometimes a little bit of a stigma..." (P1).</p> <p>"parents are now engaging online but I think it's good to keep that direct communication up as well." (P1)</p> <p>"I would just love parents to get more involved with us. I would just love some of these parents to come into school when we do things in school...quite often have open afternoons..e-safety...teaching maths the new way...and we get ten parents and if they would just come into school and access that I think that would really help the children as well....They support things like the Christmas fair...so they come to social kind of things." (P2)</p> <p>"to get more people onto the PTA would be good" (P2)</p>

		<p>“the kids had actually been into the woods themselves with their dads and we’d walk in and there’d be a den already built and they’d be like that’s mine, my dad helped me with that or we went one time and there was a big rope fastened around a tree. I would never have been able to get this rope up this tree and they’d make a woods swing and all the kids had a go on this swing that one child’s dad had made.” (P2)</p> <p>“for us to get to know the parents a bit better on a personal level as well. Just so that we can help support them more, help support the children more...” (P2)</p> <p>“When the soldiers are not here, I think that’s a time we could do more in school. More coffee mornings and more parent networking kind of things.” (P2)</p> <p>“we could have some sort of a drop in or mums with the younger children that will ultimately come to this school get more involved with them and support them in different ways you know maybe even themed coffee mornings or if the mums have got particular, I shouldn’t keep saying mums, the parent that’s left behind have particular skills to use that... They’re valued” (P2)</p> <p>“It’s somehow to give them the confidence to feel that it’s okay to come and do you know what if they crochet, well let’s all crochet blankets today and if it’s a dad and he wants to do some woodwork well do you know what, we’ll do some woodwork, whatever.” (P2)</p> <p>“We did have a parent’s afternoon and only three came, I was gutted...Maybe I need to try it at a different time or a different place, I don’t know” (participant 2).</p> <p>“It’s somehow to give them [parents] the confidence to feel that it’s okay to come and do you know what if they crochet, well let’s all crochet blankets today and if it’s a dad and he wants to do some woodwork well do you know what, we’ll do some woodwork, whatever” (P2).</p>
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		<p>“...looking at the moment at setting up some drop-in sessions for parents because we think there’s some further mileage in that just as a sounding board, nothing formal...and building their own networks so...we’re a forum...” (P1).</p> <p>“the army themselves. I think they’ve got a part to play...there needs to be that sense of responsibility which I think is there, I’m not saying it isn’t but it’s to what extent and what role they play. As I’ve said before they do support...but I wonder if there’s more work there to be done.” (P1)</p> <p>“even more links to the army as a whole by perhaps working alongside them” (P3)</p>
<p><b><u>Theme</u></b></p> <p><b>Enhancing Support through Partnerships</b></p> <p><b><u>Sub-theme</u></b></p> <p><b>Direct Support for CYP-FAFF (pg. 132)</b></p>	<p><b><u>Codes</u></b></p> <p>Groups</p> <p>Whole School</p>	<p><b><u>Quotes:</u></b></p> <p>“I think that’s [Military Kids Club] maybe something we could inject a bit more into...[could include] the different geography of it you know where in the world are all of our dads” (P2).</p> <p>“...maybe a nurture group for children that aren’t coping with peers and discuss more about coping strategies and then specifically set up groups...for when the parents are away on tours of duty that they [children] can come to give them that little bit extra” (P3).</p> <p>“weekly meeting where they could all feel safe to express how they were feeling and pull them together, regardless of age or what class they’re in. Make it more of a whole school thing.” (P3)</p> <p>“together as a collective school...older children...[could be] role models” (P3).</p>

**Appendix H: Overall Thematic Map**

(dotted line = connection, outline of arrow = order of area)

