



The Garrison ASSIST Project EMBED

November 2025

Service children with SEND: Research, Good Practice and the Need for Systemic Change

An invitation to attend a **free event at York St John University, 0930-1600 5th February 2026**
Book by the end of December to secure your place!

Dear colleague,

We are delighted to invite you to this important, regional dissemination event in the North of England. The main target audience is school headteachers / SENCOs of schools that educate sizeable Service children cohorts, but we are also inviting national specialists, subject matter experts, and those involved in policymaking. We hope to be joined by policy leads from the MOD and DfE. The draft agenda is provided under this letter, for your information.

The aims of the event are three-fold:

1. **Research:** To provide an overview of some recent research undertaken by Oxford Brookes University which looked at the lived experiences of Armed Forces families with children with additional needs (*'Supporting All To Thrive'*).
2. **Practice:** To promote good practice by sharing the key messages, and some of the learning, from the SEND Garrison ASSIST Project (GAP) which has taken place over the past 3 years, involving 8 schools that serve Catterick Garrison (with over 350 Service children with SEND between them).
3. **Policy:** To learn about the newly created *Theory of Change* developed by the Confederation of Service Charities' Children & Young People's Cluster, an important call for action led by the Royal British Legion. <https://www.cobseo.org.uk/>

By attending, you will not only gain invaluable insights into this potentially vulnerable group of Service children, along with examples of effective provision, but you will also be part of the important discussions currently ongoing over how policy changes could better support them in order that the Armed Forces Covenant's 'duty of due regard' is met.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/armed-forces-covenant-duty-statutory-guidance>

The event is being funded by the GAP and through the generosity of York St John University. Places are likely to be limited to 100 and we expect there to be high demand – please complete the online form located at <https://forms.gle/jVvVuKj2msruki837> **by the end of December.**

Places will be allocated on a first-come-first-served basis.

If you have any questions, please email mattblytoneducation@outlook.com.

Kind regards,

Matt Blyton, Garrison ASSIST Project Lead & SciP Alliance Management Group member
Dr Claire Lee, Research Fellow, Centre for Psychological Research, Oxford Brookes University
Julie Lowe, Policy Officer (Families, Homes and Communities), Royal British Legion
Louisa Dobson, Head of Inspiring Choices (Uni Connect York & North Yorkshire)



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Draft agenda for the day

Timing	Description	Lead
0930-1000	Registration / refreshments	
1000-1015	Welcome	
Part 1: Being informed by the research (RESEARCH)		
1015-1100	The <i>Supporting All To Thrive</i> research project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview • Recommendations • Table-top discussion 	Oxford Brookes University researchers
1100-1115	SCISS's Voice of Schools survey: key findings	SCISS
1115-1135	<i>Refreshment break</i>	
Part 2: Learning from best practice: GAP (PROVISION)		
1135-1215	The Catterick <i>Garrison ASSIST Project (2022-2025)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need for change across Catterick's 8 schools • Project overview • The GAP Model of effective practice • Table-top discussion 	GAP Steering Group members
1215-1230	North Yorkshire's Service Families Autism Project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview and promoting good practice 	Project lead
1230-1245	Overview of afternoon workshops Morning reflection & evaluation	
1245-1330	<i>Lunch break</i>	
1330-1420	Breakout session: delegates to choose one <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Nurture principles in practice 2. Effective provision for neurodiverse children 3. Using in-house school-based alternative provision 4. Staff learning from Armed Forces parents (TBC) 5. <u>Discussion (Aimed at policymakers / subject experts)</u> How can we affect positive changes to additional needs systems across the UK? 	GAP SENCO GAP SENCO GAP SENCO GAP Lead Garrison Commander
1420-1430	Comfort break / transition time	
Part 3: Moving forwards - a blueprint for change (POLICY)		
1430-1515	COBSEO's Children & Young People's Cluster (2025-) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service children with special or additional education needs or disabilities group & Theory of Change • Table-top discussion 	The Royal British Legion
1515-1545	National policy updates	DfE / MOD
1545-1600	Q&A / final reflection & evaluation	
1600	Close	