



RFCA

Reserve Forces' & Cadets' Association for Wales
Cymdeithas Lluoedd wrth Gefn a Chadetiaid dros Gymru

Getting an Edge

The Impact and Value of the Cadet Forces in Wales

A Research Report Commissioned by the
Reserve Forces' & Cadets' Association for Wales

June 2024



Simon Denny, Richard Hazenberg and
Claire Paterson-Young
The Institute for Social Innovation and Impact
The University of Northampton

UoN
University of
Northampton
Institute for Social
Innovation and Impact

Acknowledgements

The authors are indebted to the many people of Wales, both within the Cadet Forces and outside them, who kindly gave us their time and their information and views. Without their assistance it would not have been possible to produce this report.

We particularly wish to thank Stephen John, Schools Cadet Expansion Officer in Wales, whose work organizing meetings, suggesting interviewees, and providing information was invaluable.

Contents

Section	Page
Executive Summary	4
Introduction	6
About the Authors	8
Methodology	10
The Mission and Vision of the Cadet Forces	11
The Impact of the Cadet Forces in the UK	13
The Outputs and Outcomes Delivered by the Cadet Forces	16
The Cadet Forces in Wales	19
The Impact of the Cadet Forces on Education in Wales	22
The Impact of the Cadet Forces on Employability in Wales	32
How Do the Cadet Forces Achieve the Impact	39
The Need for the Cadet Force Adult Volunteer	41
The Cadet Forces and Welsh Government Policy	43
Conclusions	46
Recommendations	47
Limitations of the Report	48
References	50



Executive Summary

Young people that are or have been in the Cadet Forces for two years or more have developed attributes and gained skills, had experiences and gained qualifications, that give them a clear advantage - an *edge* - over their non-cadet peers in applications for further and higher education, and for employment. This *edge* is particularly important for those young people who are economically disadvantaged.

The Cadet Forces in Wales deliver more than their Mission and Vision requires. They are significantly increasing social mobility, improving educational outcomes, and enhancing employability. However, the number of secondary school-age children that are members of the Cadet Forces is lower than the UK average. There is an opportunity to enable more young people to gain the edge

Membership of the Cadet Forces is widely seen as excellent preparation for employment and is a clear differentiator when considering applications

that membership of the Cadet Forces provides.

The wide range of activities provided by the Cadet Forces in Wales make up an important part of a 'learning ecosystem' that cadets are part of. Being supported by such

an ecosystem is strongly associated with improved socio-economic development, better behaviour, self-confidence, improved attendance at school and increased educational attainment.

Given the negative impacts of the COVID pandemic upon young people in Wales,

the increased referrals to mental health services, the challenging behaviour and worse attendance at school; the discipline, certainty, and structured challenge provided by the Cadet Forces has become even more beneficial to individual participants. Teachers, police officers and social workers, all of whom work with young people, are unanimous in their certainty that the Cadet Forces develop behaviours and attitudes that are beneficial, and different to those of many non-cadets.

Young people with special educational needs and disabilities find the supportive, disciplined and inclusive ethos of the Cadet Forces appealing. The Cadet Forces supports and develops children that have special needs or disabilities in ways that mainstream schools struggle to do.

Like their counterparts in the rest of the UK, Welsh employers report difficulty in recruiting employees with the necessary skills and drive. Membership of the Cadet Forces is widely seen as excellent preparation for employment and is a clear differentiator when considering applications. Both public and private



sector employers agree that ex-cadets are very employable.

Members of the Cadet Forces, both adults and young people, are able to gain vocational qualifications. Vocational qualifications are positively correlated with progression to further or higher education, and employment and career progression. Vocational qualifications sharpen the edge that cadets have. However, the funding to enable cadets in Wales to gain these qualifications is provided by the Ministry of Defence, and is inevitably limited, whereas in England the Education Skills Funding Agency provides the money. A case can be made for local or national government bodies in Wales to fund more cadets to gain vocational qualifications.

Adult volunteers are critical to the Cadet Forces. There is a constant need to renew and refresh the volunteer cohort.

Adults who volunteer with the Cadet Forces are motivated by the desire to 'give something back' by enabling the development of young people. Importantly, adult volunteers gain experiences, opportunities, qualifications and networks that enhance their work and social lives. These benefits should be clearly and overtly articulated to existing and potential new volunteers.

The Cadet Forces in Wales provide outputs and outcomes that help achieve Welsh Government policy objectives in the areas of child poverty, education, preparation for employment, and health and wellbeing. The Cadet Forces are important for their members, and to the nation of Wales. It is important that the contribution of the Cadet Forces to Wales is clearly articulated and understood by policy makers, educational leaders, and employers.

Introduction

This report was commissioned by the Chief Executive of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association (RFCA) for Wales in October 2023. The terms of reference set for the report were to identify the impacts and outcomes of the operation of the Ministry of Defence (MOD) sponsored Cadet Forces to provide a document that could be used by the Cadet Forces in Wales to inform policy makers, educational leaders, employers, current and future adult volunteers, and parents/guardians of current and future cadets of these impacts and outcomes.

The report adds to the body of research already conducted into the impacts of the Cadet Forces in the UK carried out by the Institute for Social Innovation and Impact (ISII) at the University of Northampton. In 2021 ISII published its report 'What is the social impact and return on investment resulting from expenditure on the Cadet Forces in the UK?'¹ This report, the results of a four-year study, was added to in 2023 with the report, 'What is the impact of the Cadet Forces in Scotland?'² An additional report, 'The impact and value of school-based Cadet Force contingents in the UK' is due to be published in late 2024.

Additionally, in 2023 a report examining the impact and value of vocational qualifications provided by the Cadet Vocational College was produced.³ The 2021 and the 2024 Cadet Force reports, and the 2023 Cadet Vocational College report, include the findings of data gathered from respondents in Wales.

This, new, publication will refer to this data when relevant, but also include data gathered specifically for the 'Getting an Edge' report.

This report will examine the impacts of the Cadet Forces in Wales on both young people (the cadets) and the adult volunteers that enable the Cadet Forces to operate. It will particularly examine Cadet Force outcomes on education and employability in Wales. Welsh Government policies and strategies that are supported by the outcomes of the Cadet Forces will be identified.

The report is written by Professor Simon Denny, Professor Richard Hazenberg, and Dr Claire Paterson-Young of the Institute for Social Innovation and Impact⁴ at the University of Northampton.

(1) <https://www.northampton.ac.uk/research/research-institutes-and-centres/institute-for-social-innovation-and-impact/social-impact-resulting-from-expenditure-on-cadets/>

(2) <https://www.lowlandrfca.org.uk/denny-report-the-impact-of-the-cadet-forces-in-scotland/>

(3) <https://qr.cvcollege.org/g/3ZOYBXTTav>

(4) Professor Hazenberg is the leader of the Institute and Professor Denny, since he retired from the University of Northampton in 2018, is an external associate of the Institute.



About the Authors

Simon Denny BA, MA, PhD, Holder of The Queen's Award for Enterprise Promotion

After leaving school Simon Denny served in the British Army from 1976 – 1986. He then worked for a major UK retailer until 1992 when he moved into Higher Education. He worked at the University of Northampton (and its predecessor institutions) until 2018. At Northampton he initially specialized in designing bespoke development programmes for companies; three of these schemes won National Training Awards. He also designed, won funding for, and managed numerous large-scale projects aimed at helping disadvantaged people develop the confidence and skills necessary for employment, or self-employment. In 2006 Denny was awarded the University's Court Award for services to local enterprise.

He became Professor of Entrepreneurship in 2007. In 2010 he was granted The Queen's Award for Enterprise Promotion. He set up the Institute for Social Innovation and Impact, and from 2015 to 2018 was Executive Dean for Research, Impact and Innovation.

Since 2018 Denny has worked as an independent researcher and consultant. His clients have included the Ministry of Defence (MOD), the Defence Academy, the Royal College of Nursing, the Motivational Preparation College for Training, the Cadet Vocational College, the Uplands Partnership, and the Regional Moorlands Groups. He is an external associate of the Institute for Social Innovation and Impact at the University of Northampton.

Denny has published numerous academic articles.

Professor Richard Hazenberg BA, MA, PhD

Richard Hazenberg is Professor of Social Innovation and Director of the Institute for Social Innovation and Impact at the University of Northampton. He has research interests in the areas of social innovation, social finance, public service innovation and social impact measurement and has published research in numerous international, peer-reviewed academic journals. He has also presented research papers at conferences in Europe, Asia, and America and has contributed to international/national

government policy through papers and roundtable meetings (including for the European Commission; Cabinet Office; and HM Treasury).

Hazenberg has managed several international and national research projects for the University including projects funded by the European Social Fund, Horizon 2020, Big Lottery Fund and Big Issue. He has also conducted social impact measurement consultancy work with over 60 third sector organisations in the UK. He was one of the co-investigators on the study into the social impact and return on investment of the Cadet Forces in the UK, commissioned by the MOD. Professor Hazenberg is Associate Editor for the Social Enterprise Journal and the Journal of Social Entrepreneurship, and is a reviewer for a number of international peer-review journals including Policy and Politics, Public Management Review, Public Money and Management, and the Journal of Social Policy.

Dr Claire Paterson-Young BA, MSc, PhD

Claire Paterson-Young is an Associate Professor at the Institute for Social Innovation and Impact. A key feature of her research is the development of social impact measurement frameworks that aid organisations to identify the positive and negative,

intended and unintended outcomes of interventions and activities. She is currently an Associate Editor for the Journal of Child and Family Studies, International Advisory Board member for the YOUNG journal, and Editorial Board Member for the Journal of Qualitative Criminal Justice and Criminology. She is an Expert Panel Member for the Work and Family Research Network and Chair for the Work and Family Research Network Cross-Comparison Research Group.

Paterson-Young has over 10 years practice and management experience in safeguarding, child sexual exploitation, trafficking, sexual violence, youth and restorative justice. She consults nationally with local authorities, police forces and national organisations to develop Child Sexual Exploitation services. Claire is a member of the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner Ethics Committee, NHS Research Ethics Committee and the University of Northampton's Research Ethics Committee. She is a trustee of the National Association for Youth Justice (NAYJ), Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (RSA) and Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (HEA). She is currently a Visiting Fellow at Binus University in Indonesia.

Methodology

Data for this report was gathered from multiple sources, both secondary and primary. Secondary data was gathered through a review of academic literature using, wherever possible, peer reviewed sources. In addition to a search of the academic literature, reports produced by UK organisations involved with the development of young people were examined. The websites of the UK national government and the devolved administrations were also studied, along with the websites of employers and youth organisations.



New primary qualitative data for this report was gained through interviews, which were carried out either in person or online/over the telephone. A total of 49 interviews⁵ were held with the following stakeholder groups:

- Head Teachers/Principals = 3
- Members of School Leadership Teams = 4
- CCF Contingent Commanders = 4
- Cadet Force Adult Volunteers (CFAVs) = 8
- School Staff Instructors = 3
- Ministry of Defence officials = 3
- Department of Work and Pensions officials = 2
- Senior Military Officers = 2
- School Cadet Expansion Officers = 1
- Combined Cadet Force Association managers = 1
- Careers Advice Professionals = 2
- Police Officers = 4
- Private Sector Employers = 5
- Public Sector Employers = 4
- Parents of cadets = 3

(5) This is a large number of interviews for a study of this type.

The Mission and Vision of the Cadet Forces

The Ministry of Defence sponsors and supports five Cadet Forces; the Sea Cadet Corps, the Volunteer Cadet Corps,⁶ the Army Cadet Force, the RAF Air Cadets, and the school-based Combined Cadet Force.

These voluntary, uniformed youth organisations offer challenging and enjoyable activities for young people, and prepare them to play an active part in the community while developing valuable life skills and gaining important and practical qualifications. The Cadet Forces are based on the traditions, values and standards of their parent Service but they are not part of the Armed Forces, rather they aim to provide structured, challenging and enjoyable activities for young people living in the UK and to better prepare them for their role in the community.⁷

Adults who volunteer to help with the cadets, known as Cadet Force Adult Volunteers (CFAVs) also have the opportunity to receive training and gain valuable recognised qualifications. The development CFAVs receive is recognized as helping them in their working and personal lives.

The Cadet Forces' Mission⁸ is 'To prepare Cadets for success in their chosen way of life, increasing their awareness and

understanding of the Armed Forces and their role in society by delivering enjoyable, well organised, military-themed activities in a challenging and safely-managed environment'. The Cadet Forces' Vision is 'Providing a challenging and stimulating contemporary cadet experience that develops and inspires young people within a safe environment.'⁹

It is interesting to note that the Mission and Vision of the Cadet Forces do not include enhancing social mobility, increasing educational achievement, or significantly increasing employability. This report will examine the evidence that indicates the Cadet Forces achieve all these things in Wales.

It is interesting to note that the Mission and Vision of the Cadet Forces do not include enhancing social mobility, increasing educational achievement, or significantly increasing employability

(6) The Volunteer Cadet Corps consists of around 460 cadets and 150 volunteers located in eight Naval Bases and Royal Navy establishments along the south coast of England and east Scotland. It is not covered in this report.

(7) Source: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-cadet-forces-and-mods-youth-work#>

(8) Source: Joint Service Publication 814 - Policy and Regulations for Ministry of Defence Sponsored Cadet Forces

(9) Ibid.

“ Being a cadet pushed me out of my comfort zone. There were structured challenges so I wanted to try. It was a safe environment so I could fail and do it again. I am an adult volunteer to have an impact on others that Cadets had for me. I want to be there for people. I want to become a teacher.”

Army Cadet Force Adult Volunteer, Cardiff



The Impact of the Cadet Forces in the UK

A key finding presented in the 2021 research report was that participation in the Cadet Forces has significant positive impacts on young people, increasing their performance at school and improving their employment and career prospects.

The impact was particularly strong for those cadets that suffer economic and other disadvantages.

This finding is based on quantitative data gathered from c. 5,500 cadets (253 of which were Welsh cadets, 4.6% of the respondents) on their level of self-efficacy as well as qualitative data. Self-efficacy is a concept that relates to an individual's confidence, motivation and self-esteem and their belief in their ability to exert control over their environment¹⁰. A high level of self-efficacy is significantly correlated with educational and employability performance and motivation¹¹. Throughout the UK, young people eligible for Free School Meals¹² (eFSM) score lower on measures of self-efficacy than other young people.

However, the report revealed that longitudinal data showed no statistically significant differences between eFSM cadets and non-eFSM cadets.

It was hypothesized that cadets that are eFSM have improved self-efficacy because of the activities they undertake in the Cadet Forces. The implications of this finding, which the 2021 study named 'The Cadet Force effect' (see Figure 1), are important for policy makers in all parts of the UK.



(10) Judge, T. A., Locke, E. A. and Durham, C. C. (1997). The dispositional causes of job satisfaction: a core evaluation approach. *Research in organisational behaviour*, 19: 151-188; Bandura, A. (1986) The explanatory and predictive scope of self-efficacy theory, *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 4:3, pp. 359 - 373.

(11) Zimmerman, B. (1995). Self-efficacy and educational development. In A. Bandura (Ed.), *Self-Efficacy in Changing Societies* (pp. 202-231). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Meyers, R. and Houssemand, C. (2010) Socio-professional and Psychological Variables that Predict Job Finding, *Revue Européenne de Psychologie Appliquée*, 60:201-219.

(12) In the 2021 study eligibility for Free School Meals was used as a proxy for economic disadvantage.

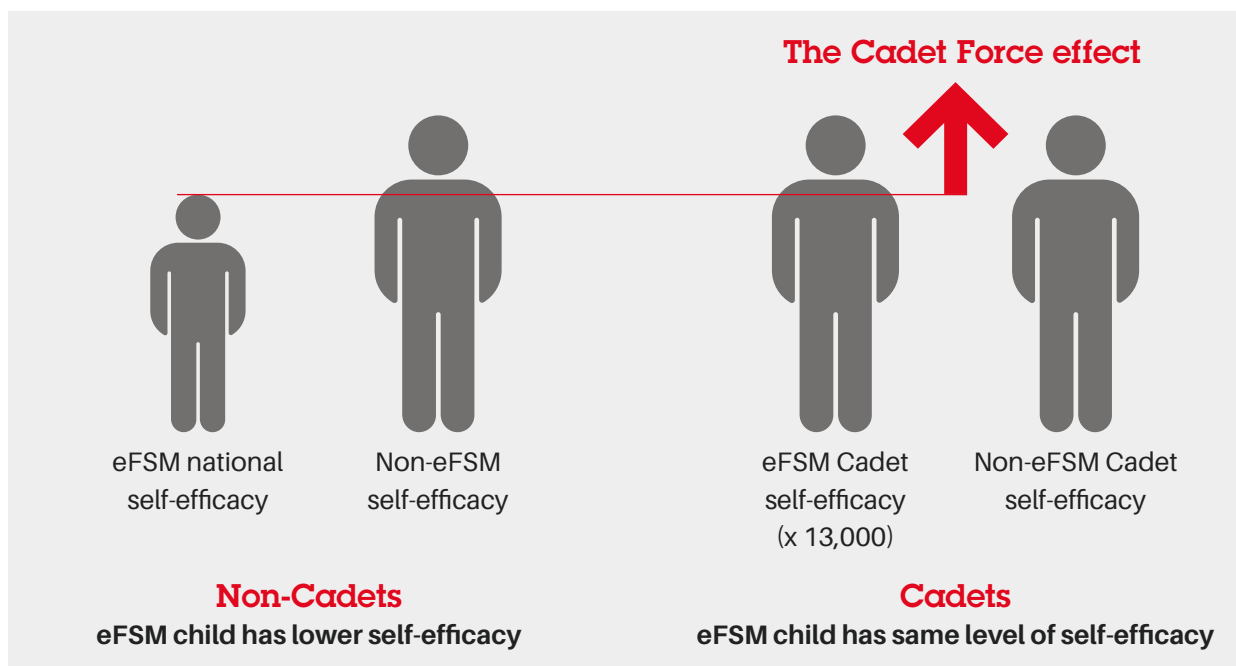


Figure 1: Diagram illustrating the Cadet Force effect

In Wales, 28% of children were living in relative income poverty in FYE 2020 to FYE 2022.¹³ Some of these children are members of the Cadet Forces and, as a result, will be benefitting from the ‘Cadet Force effect.’ Given that higher levels of self-efficacy are correlated with being more resilient, doing better at school and getting a job, it is very possible that being a cadet is, for a young person from an economically disadvantaged background, a key factor that helps them to achieve positive life outcomes. When policy makers and the Cadet Forces in Wales plan the allocation of scarce resources, investing in cadet detachments in areas and schools with higher levels of deprivation should, perhaps, be seriously considered. This observation is explored in more detail in the section on the impact

of the Cadet Forces on education in Wales.

This key finding strongly suggests that the Cadet Forces are making a significant contribution to the Child Poverty Strategy for Wales.¹⁴ The impact of the Cadet Forces in closing the self-efficacy gap between children from deprived areas and those that are more fortunate, directly addresses Objective 2 (Create new ways out of poverty) of the strategy. This is an important observation. As noted above, the National and Welsh data show that children who are eFSM score lower in measures of self-esteem and self-efficacy, which correlates to poorer academic performance¹⁵, with c. 70% of eFSM children not meeting expected standards at age 16. Moreover, children

(13) Source: [https://www.gov.wales/relative-income-poverty-april-2021-march-2022-html#:~:text=Between%20financial%20year%20ending%20\(FYE,Wales%20for%20over%2017%20years.](https://www.gov.wales/relative-income-poverty-april-2021-march-2022-html#:~:text=Between%20financial%20year%20ending%20(FYE,Wales%20for%20over%2017%20years.)

(14) <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/consultations/2023-06/draft-child-poverty-strategy-for-wales-easy-read-version.pdf>

(15) See, for example: Deputy Prime Minister’s Office (March 2015) Social Mobility Indicators <https://www.gov.uk/publications/social-mobility-indicators>



that are eFSM are four times more likely to be excluded from school than their non-eFSM peers and being excluded from school often leads to a young person failing to secure employment or enter further or higher education, or training.¹⁶ For example, in England the DfE (2017) stated that only 1% of young people who had been excluded achieved five good GCSEs, including English and Mathematics.¹⁷ The Institute of Public Policy Research estimated in 2017 that the lifetime cost of exclusion for UK children is around £392,000 per individual, adjusted to 2019 costs. Data from cadet detachments and the 2021 study showed that a significant minority (~10%) of cadets are eFSM.¹⁸ In the 2021 report it was noted that 97% of Cadet Force Adult Volunteers (CFAVs) that were teachers, social workers or members of the police force and who

responded to the study's survey believe that participation in the Cadet Forces is particularly beneficial for disadvantaged youngsters.

Interestingly, all the relevant respondents from Wales interviewed for this report said the same thing. It is clear that there is a widespread belief among CFAVs that are involved with children as part of their jobs that being a member of the Cadet Forces is valuable for a child that suffers from economic deprivation.

There is a widespread belief among CFAVs that are involved with children as part of their jobs that being a member of the Cadet Forces is valuable for a child that suffers from economic deprivation

(16) <https://www.jrf.org.uk/mpse-2015/free-school-meal-status-and-educational-attainment-age-16>

(17) Encouragingly the numbers of children being excluded from school in Scotland has declined recently, see <https://www.gov.scot/publications/summary-statistics-schools-scotland/pages/8/>. However, it is noted that exclusions are more common for children with an additional support need and those that live in a more deprived area.

(18) This figure is the UK average. Cadet detachments in some areas, e.g. parts of Glasgow, parts of Greater Manchester, parts of North Wales have more than 50% of their cadets classed as eFSM. In more affluent parts of the UK there are sometimes detachments with no cadets that are eFSM.

The Outputs and Outcomes Delivered by the Cadet Forces

Participation¹⁹ in the Cadet Forces results in young people achieving outputs in the form of enhanced attributes. The key attributes are:

- the ability to **communicate** clearly, to diverse audiences, through formal and informal presentations and in discussions and interviews,
- the ability to **lead** a group of people to achieve an objective. This key skill includes the ability to plan and to communicate that plan, as well as being able to control, motivate and drive a team to succeed,
- the **resilience** to keep going, even when things go wrong or the situation is challenging,
- the ability to work as a member of a **team**, sharing views and helping others, while being able to take instructions and orders from the team leader,
- the ability to use **social skills**, including different behaviours, to achieve positive outcomes,
- the understanding that people are not the same, and the ability to accept **diversity** and work with the different talents that people have,
- the personal **confidence** to utilize key skills in different situations and with different people.

As a result of these outputs, the development and deployment of these key attributes, young people and society experience positive outcomes, including:

- **Increased social mobility²⁰**
- **Improved educational outcomes** (as a direct consequence of improved attendance and behaviour)
- **Improved mental and physical wellbeing²¹**
- **Enhanced employability**
- Reduced vulnerability/increased resilience (to bullying and to criminal and extremist organisations)²²
- Inclusive community links across ethnic, religious and socio-economic dimensions.²³

(19) Participation being defined as those young people that spend at least 12 months in the Cadets.

(20) Those points in bold are those where the evidence was particularly strong.

(21) The study found that participation in the Cadet Forces improves the health and wellbeing of cadets which produces an annual return on investment in the region of £95 million for the UK.

(22) CFAVs share in some of these positive impacts. We explore this theme later in the report.

(23) Given the unique historical situation in Northern Ireland, the role of the Cadet Forces in supporting community cohesion is potentially important. Indeed, the data has shown that the Cadet Forces unique position as a uniformed youth group in Northern Ireland helps to integrate youngsters from Catholic and Protestant communities, who might otherwise not mix in the community.



Throughout the UK, Cadets and adult volunteers also benefited greatly from the opportunity to gain qualifications.

- The Cadet Vocational College (CVC)²⁴ offers vocational qualifications to the Cadet Forces that deliver an extremely positive return on investment and are, in many cases, potentially life-changing. The lifetime value of CVC vocational qualifications for just the 2018 – 2019 cohort of disadvantaged learners was in the region of £27.2 million for girls, and £81.7 million for boys, a total of £108.9 million. The value of CVC qualifications for all its learners cannot be calculated but is a very significant figure.
- In many cases, gaining a vocational qualification with CVC changed the

career prospects of CFAVs. Vocational qualifications were found to be particularly important for CFAVs with no, or very few, formal educational qualifications.

- The c. 29,000 CFAVs each provide c. 400 hours volunteering p.a., a total of 11.6 million hours per year. In addition to qualifications, CFAVs can gain other benefits from their volunteering such as improved career prospects and health benefits that can be calculated as being valued at c. £479 million p.a.

The research carried out for this new report had the aim of identifying whether the outputs and outcomes identified in the 2021 report were being enjoyed by cadets and CFAVs in Wales.

(24) At the time of the 2021 study, the Cadet Vocational College was known as CVQO.



The Cadet Forces in Wales

Wales has 235 Cadet Force 'units', as shown in Table 1.

Unit Type	Number
Army Cadet Force (ACF)	136 ²⁵
RAF Air Cadets	65
Sea Cadets	23
Combined Cadet Force (CCF)	11

Table 1: Number of Cadet Force units in Wales, November 2023

The Cadets in the CCF were spread among nine schools (four state secondary, and five private) and two Further Education Colleges.

As at 1 April 2022 the number of cadets and CFAVs in Wales is shown in Table 2:²⁶

Category	Number	% Female
Community Cadets	3,980	33%
CCF	650	43%
CFAV Community Cadets	1,260	32%
CFAV CCF	70	29%

Table 2: Number of Cadets and CFAVs in Wales, April 2022

To provide context, the number of cadets and CFAVs in the whole of the UK is shown in Table 3:²⁷

Category	Number	% Female
Community Cadets	83,800	33%
CCF Cadets	51,490	38%
CFAV Community Cadets	21,781	32%
CFAV CCF	4,170	36%

Table 3: Number of Cadets and CFAVs in the UK, April 2023

Therefore, in Wales there were 4,630 cadets, representing 4.7% of the Community Cadets, and 1.3% of the CCF Cadets in the UK. Approximately 54% of these cadets wore Army cadet uniform, 30% wore RAF Air Cadet uniform, and 16% wore Sea Cadet uniform. Wales has 4.6% of the total population of the UK,²⁸ thus the number of cadets in the Principality might seem representative. However, the number of cadets in CCF units is relatively low, reflecting the small number of schools that have taken up the opportunity of having a Combined Cadet Force. Moreover, the 4,360 cadets in Wales are nearly all pupils at secondary schools.²⁹

(25) Source <https://armycadets.com/county/>

(26) Data supplied by RFCA for Wales

(27) Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/mod-sponsored-cadet-forces-statistics-2023/mod-sponsored-cadet-forces-1-april-2023>

(28) On Census Day, 21 March 2021, the size of the usual resident population in Wales was 3,107,500, a total equivalent to c. 4.6% of the total UK population. Source: <https://www.gov.wales/ethnic-group-national-identity-language-and-religion-wales-census-2021-html#>:

(29) The RAF Air Cadets have a few senior cadets that are over 18 years-old so are not at school. The Sea Cadets includes some children that are still at primary school.

The number of secondary school children in Wales in April 2021 was c. 189,000,³⁰ of which c. 174,000 were at one of the 178 state secondary schools.³¹ Therefore, c. 2.4% of eligible children in Wales are members of the Cadet Forces.

These calculations indicate that Wales has fewer cadets than might be expected

For comparative purposes, there are c. 3.193 million children in secondary schools in the UK,³² and c. 4.2% of eligible UK secondary school children are cadets. These calculations indicate that Wales has fewer cadets than might be expected. Given the outputs and outcomes for children that the 2021 research study identified, the conclusion is that fewer children in Wales are benefiting from participation in the Cadet Forces than might be expected.

Cadet and CFAV Ethnicity

In the March 2021 Census, 93.8% of the residents of Wales identified as 'White'.³³ An initial view of the data on the ethnicity of cadets and CFAVs in Wales suggests that the Cadet Forces are more diverse than might be expected, see Table 4:

Category	% Defining themselves as 'White'
Community Cadets	89%
CCF Cadets	58%
CFAV Community Cadets	72%
CFAV CCF	86%

Table 4: Number of Cadets and CFAVs that defined themselves as 'White'

However, the figures shown in Table 4 must be treated with great caution due to the large number of cadets and CFAVs whose ethnicity is 'unknown.'

Cadet Units and Areas of Multiple Deprivation

As noted above, the key finding of the 2021 report was that participation in the Cadet Forces has significant positive impacts on young people, increasing their performance at school and improving their employment and career prospects. Importantly, this impact was particularly strong for those cadets that suffer



(30) <https://www.gov.wales/schools-census-results-april-2021-html>

(31) Approximately 5,200 children were at special schools c. 11,000 children were at independent schools. Source: <https://stats.wales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Education-and-Skills/Schools-and-Teachers/Schools-Census/Pupil-Level-Annual-School-Census/Schools/schools-by-localauthorityregion-type>

(32) Source: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/national-pupil-projections>

(33) Source: <https://www.gov.wales/ethnic-group-national-identity-language-and-religion-wales-census-2021-html#>:



economic and other disadvantages. Therefore, it is relevant to identify whether the Cadet Forces in Wales operate in areas of disadvantage.

The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) is the Welsh Government's official measure of relative deprivation for small areas in Wales.³⁴ It identifies areas with the highest concentrations of several different types of deprivation. WIMD ranks all small areas in Wales from 1 (most deprived) to 1,909 (least deprived). It is a National Statistic produced by statisticians at the Welsh Government. Small areas are Census geographies called Lower-layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs). The full index is updated every four to five years. The most recent index was published in 2019.

If the location of Cadet Force units are mapped against areas of multiple

deprivation, an interesting picture emerges. For example, the 2019 WIMD divides Rhyl into different zones. The West zones are ranked 1st, 2nd and 11th in the WIMD and the South West zones are ranked 19th and 57th. It is encouraging to note that there are ACF, Sea Cadet and RAF Air Cadet units operating in the town. Similarly, there are Cadet Force units in all the cities and major towns of Wales where they are areas of significant multiple deprivation. Although there is not an exact correlation between the location of Cadet Force units and areas of poverty, it can be concluded that the Army Cadet Force, the RAF Air Cadets and the Sea Cadets operate in many areas where they can have very significant, positive, impact.

It is relevant to identify whether the Cadet Forces in Wales operate in areas of disadvantage

(34) See: <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Community-Safety-and-Social-Inclusion/Welsh-Index-of-Multiple-Deprivation>

The Impact of the Cadet Forces on Education in Wales

Children nowadays have fewer sense of boundaries, and less respect for others. They are more aware of what they can get away with."

Teacher, Welsh Secondary School

The impact of the Cadet Forces on education in Wales should be seen in the context of the impacts of the COVID pandemic upon children, especially teenagers. Teachers, youth workers and police officers that were interviewed for this study confirmed the findings of Waite et al. (2021) and McKinlay et al. (2022) that the lack of socialization children experienced during lockdowns has negatively affected their communication and social skills. The lack of routine that many children had during lockdown had encouraged laziness and isolation and reduced confidence and motivation. The behaviour and attitude of many children was described by teachers, youth workers and police officers as having changed for the worse, with a reduced acceptance of authority and an increased sense of self-absorption. One youth worker said, *"it now seems to be all about 'me,' kids are less willing to accept that others have views and values that*

may be different." It is important to note that Jeremy Miles, Minister for Education and Welsh Language wrote, in an article for the Times Education Supplement, that *"too many teachers tell me they are seeing challenging behaviour, worse attendance and lower level of literacy and numeracy."*³⁵ A police officer who was interviewed said that, in his experience, young people were more nervous, timid, molly-coddled, and tied to the house than they were even 10 years ago.

Additionally, there has been a significant increase in referrals to mental health services for children that are feeling distressed,³⁶ while the pandemic negatively affected the academic performance of children. In November 2023 BBC News reported that reading standards of seven to 14-year-olds in Wales had fallen back, with performance the equivalent of 11 months behind results in 2020 – 2021.³⁷

A police officer who was interviewed said that, in his experience, young people were more nervous, timid, molly-coddled, and tied to the house than they were even 10 years ago

(35) <https://www.tes.com/magazine/analysis/general/jeremy-miles-wales-education-support-schools> 22 Nov 2023:

(36) See, for example, <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2023/jan/03/child-referrals-for-mental-health-care-in-england-up-39-in-a-year> and <https://healthnews.com/news/around-76-increase-in-referrals-to-youth-mental-health-services-since-2019/>

(37) [Pupil reading standards fall in Wales since Covid](https://www.bbc.com/news/health-67444444) - BBC News 24 Nov 2023

Given this depressing context, it is interesting to review the evidence on how participation in the Cadet Forces, either cadet units in the community, or CCF contingents, affects education in Wales. Qualitative and quantitative data gathered by the research team for the 2021 study shows that the impact of being a cadet in a Community detachment affects behaviour in school in several ways as a result of developing self-discipline and a sense of aspiration (associated with improved self-efficacy). Moreover, some community-based units take deliberate action to try and improve the educational outcomes of their cadets.

The STEM and cyber security activities³⁸ provided by the Cadet Forces are directly relevant to school work. Additionally, the Cadet Forces employ different and new learning methodologies from schools, enabling youngsters to develop new ways of assimilating knowledge. The self-discipline developed by the Cadet Forces gives many cadets more focus and more incentive to get school-work done.

“ Cadets showed me that if I do this work, I get rewarded, I think it’s that kind of reward system that’s made me think, ‘Well, if I put my head down in school and I actually do well, I’m going to get rewarded with good grades and good GCSEs.’ ”

Cadet

These activities are examined in more detail below in the section ‘How do the Cadet Forces Achieve Impact?’

“ Cadets has kind of put me in the situation where I’m like, it’s getting to the point where I need to make up my mind what I want to do with my life. This has shown me that if I put my head down, I can do whatever I want. So, it’s changed how I see school.”

Cadet



(36) Including CyberFirst <https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/cyberfirst/overview>

As noted above, only 14% of the cadets in Wales are members of a CCF, with 650 cadets in 11 CCF contingents. Research carried out in 2023 into the outputs and outcomes of the CCF (to be published in late 2024) gathered evidence from head teachers, teachers, CCF CFAVs, police officers, youth workers, employers and university admissions staff. Schools in all parts of the UK, including Wales, were visited to gather data.³⁹ The analysis of data on the impacts of CCF Contingents in Wales, and data gathered specifically for this study, identified seven headings which described ways in

which participation in the Cadet Forces benefitted cadets, and teachers who were CFAVs.

Head Teacher Views

As part of the research into the impact of CCF contingents carried out in 2023, a survey of UK head teachers with CCFs was conducted. Heads were asked then to respond⁴⁰ to 13 statements designed to identify whether they believed their CCF was delivering value to their school. Table 5 summarizes their responses.



(39) Personnel from five of the schools or FE Colleges with CCF Contingents were interviewed, meaning that Wales was slightly over-represented in the research sample.

(40) Using a Likert Scale with the options Completely Disagree, Disagree, Uncertain, Agree, and Completely Agree.

Value Statement - The School's CCF Contingent...	Percentage that Completely Agreed Or Agreed with Statement
has a positive impact on the resilience of pupils that are cadets	98.9
plays an important part in the enrichment activities the school provides	94.4
is a good investment for the school	91.6
has a positive impact on the wellbeing of pupils that are cadets	91.6
has a positive impact on the confidence and competence of those teachers that are adult volunteers	86.1
has a positive impact on the overall outcomes of the school	83.3
has a positive impact on the behaviour of pupils that are cadets	77.7
has a positive part to play when the school is inspected	77.7
has a positive impact on the career aspirations and ambitions of pupils that are cadets	75.0
has a positive impact on the attendance of pupils that are cadets	74.9
helps me and the senior management team to achieve set objectives	69.4
has a positive impact on the attainment of pupils that are cadets	66.6
has reduced the number of exclusions from school	19.5

Table 5: Summary of Head Teacher Responses to Value Statements Relating to Cadet Detachments

It is noticeable that, with the exception of the impact of the cadet detachment on exclusions, the great majority of Head Teachers completely agreed or agreed with all of the value statements.⁴¹ The responses to the value statements about whether the cadet detachment is a good investment for the school, and its impact on pupil enrichment, wellbeing and resilience are remarkably positive. The belief that teachers derive professional benefit from their involvement with the

cadet detachment is interesting, and could be of interest to those involved in teacher training and continuing professional development.

It is important to note that head teachers of schools in more deprived areas repeatedly observed that some pupils lack confidence, have limited aspirations and do not receive the support of their parents in their education, which is associated with lower aspirations (Frostick

(41) The response to the statement about exclusions can be explained by noting that some of the head teachers that responded to the survey were from independent schools (with very low rates of exclusion) and other schools did not use their CCF contingents or staff to deliberately re-engage disengaged students.



et al., 2016). Heads observed that some children do not travel beyond their local area, for example a CCF detachment from a school in South Wales took 30 cadets to London in March 2023; 11 of them had never been outside their local valley, and only five had been to London before. However, despite the comparatively disadvantaged profile of the cadets, this comprehensive school's CCF won the Cadet Cambrian Patrol competition, a challenging national event, in 2019. It has also had three cadets selected to tour Canada (only 10 cadets a year are selected for the trip from across the UK). The Head Teacher maintained that the CCF gave cadets the chance to change their aspirations and confidence while 'giving them great cultural capital,' enabling them to compete against cadets from public schools in activities and perform well.

Crucially, because CCF activities are either free or very heavily subsidized they are affordable to all.

Impacts on Teachers

Evidence from all the interviews with head teachers and teachers involved with the CCF is that being an adult volunteer with a CCF contingent increases the affiliation of the teacher to the school, helps their sense of belonging, and develops their understanding of pupils, resulting in better relations with them. Pupils have different and more positive relations with teachers who are in the CCF. It is claimed that wearing the same uniform as the cadets makes the teacher 'one of us,' part of the CCF family. In the CCF teachers and pupils have to look after each other, it is different from mainstream school. For teachers CCF training is often an 'eye-opener;' being around military people is different, they learn new skills and instructional techniques that they would not get anywhere else. In interviews, Head Teachers and adult volunteers that were teachers said that the training provided to teachers involved with the

(42) <https://armycadets.com/news/cambrian-patrol-whats-it-really-like/>

CCF gave new perspectives about activist learning and teaching, new behavioural models with groups of pupils, increased confidence and engendered a greater sense of responsibility within the school, attributes that are very similar to those enumerated by Eison (1990). Being in the CCF also enables teachers to meet staff from other departments and improve their social skills and networks. Becoming a CCF adult volunteer was claimed to be particularly important for those teachers that were not confident in the classroom. CCF leadership courses were also deemed to be valuable for teachers seeking promotion.

One head teacher pointed out that he had been so impressed by the self-assessment methods used by CCF instructors that the whole school was changing the system for teacher observation to include aspects of what CCF adult volunteers are taught. Importantly, all Head Teachers interviewed pointed out that the 'unique Cadet Forces development programme' provided to teachers involved with the CCF was not available elsewhere.

Impacts on Values and Standards

“The CCF gets involved with events such as community fairs and Remembrance Sunday. We get positive feedback from the community, people respect the values and standards developed by the CCF.”

Teacher, Welsh State School

For all schools, whether independent or in the state sector, head teachers and adult volunteers stressed that their CCF was an excellent way of reinforcing the values and standards of the school. The CCF was an excellent way of helping to achieve the school's mission and it helped achieve overall school outcomes.

“The CCF is huge, it is part of what enables us, it is bigger than us; it gives great cultural capital to young people.”

Head Teacher, South Wales State School

While all independent school staff valued their CCF detachments highly, for many CEP schools the CCF was described as a vehicle to transform the school and the life-chances of many of its pupils. The head teacher of a CEP school in Wales commented that, *“the CCF gives pupils in this school the chance to change and develop their lives, it has so much more to give cadets than a CCF in a public school,”* while another head said, *“the CCF is what the school is, it is not an add on, it is part of what we do.”*



Progression to Further and Higher Education

“Being in the CCF is good for the CV, it helps the student stand out, it is good for the interview as well as they have something apart from school work to talk about.”

Head Teacher, Independent School in Wales

Head teachers believe that being a cadet helps their pupils gain places in further education colleges and universities. For the CCF research project university and college admission websites were studied to assess whether this belief was valid. Unsurprisingly, the team found that higher and further education institutions encourage potential students to mention non-academic, extra-curricular activities and achievements in their personal statements. The UCAS website states that university applicants, *“need to write about your personal skills and achievements. Universities like to know the abilities you have that’ll help you on the course, or generally with life at university. Try to link any experience to skills or qualities that’ll make you successful.”*⁴³ Individual universities reinforce this message, *“extracurricular activities can be where you really set yourself apart from other applicants. So, if you have any interests, hobbies or experiences that relate to your subject of choice or showcase*

*your personal qualities, make room for them.”*⁴⁴ Moreover, some 73 per cent of university admissions officers have said they look for evidence of an ability to work well in groups.⁴⁵ Interviews with careers advice professionals confirmed that non-academic activities such as the CCF were important to mention as they show the applicant has advanced social skills.

Progression to Employment

All schools and colleges that provided information for this report said that they were certain that being in the CCF helped their students get jobs and have successful careers. This topic is explored in much greater depth in the section ‘The Impact of the Cadet Forces on Employability in Wales,’ below.

Engaging the Disengaged

A CCF contingent can provide a ‘sea change’ for disaffected pupils which often means they stay in education. The head teacher of a school in Wales related how some disruptive children have been sent to speak to the CCF School Staff Instructor (SSI) about standards and opportunities instead of attending lessons.

A CCF contingent can provide a ‘sea change’ for disaffected pupils which often means they stay in education

As a result, they had joined the CCF and re-engaged with the school in a very positive way. The role of the SSI was singled out by

(43) <https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-university/writing-personal-statement/how-write-personal-statement>

(44) <https://www.theuniguide.co.uk/advice/personal-statements/personal-statement-secrets-universities-reveal-all>

(45) <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/student/advice/top-7-qualities-universities-look-student-applicants>

some head teachers as being important in the battle to reduce exclusions because he or she provided a 'safe space' for pupils to talk about their problems. Some schools encourage all pupils, not just cadets, to talk with the SSI if they are feeling stressed. One SSI described how he came into the school one afternoon a week to mentor a young boy who was not a cadet, but benefited from the support he was given. However, while some schools use their CCF contingents and staff (especially the SSI) as part of a strategy to reduce disruption, truancy and exclusions, it is not a universally adopted tactic.

Supporting Children with Additional Learning Needs (ALN)

“I’m so chuffed she is a cadet. It makes my day to see her out of her shell and out of her room.”

Parent of Cadet with Tourettes

As part of this study, parents of children in Wales with physical or mental disabilities were interviewed about their experiences of them joining the Cadet Forces. A common theme was that their children had struggled with mainstream school and had had difficulty relating to their peers. However, the Cadet Forces had provided a very different, more structured and inclusive, environment which had developed the confidence of their children and, in many cases, as a result

they had become more at ease in school. A heartening case study on the ACF website gives a powerful example of how the Cadet Forces supports young people classified as ALN:

“Haydn (15) joined Porthmadog Cadets in February 2022 and it has completely changed his whole life and attitude. Haydn has just been diagnosed autistic not that it’s obvious to those who don’t know him. But it’s there and can be an issue. He very rarely smiles or gets excited and it’s very difficult to keep his interest in something other than X Box and the TV!!



From the very first phone call with the Detachment Commander Emma Page, I knew it was going to be perfect for him. Both the staff have been amazing with Haydn, they're nurturing and developing his skills alongside his autism and helping use it to his greatest advantage. IT'S NEVER BEEN AN ISSUE.

Haydn now is a completely different boy, happy, smiley, has friends, and has an interest. Something to talk about and above all he has a future. Not only is he literally living and loving the Cadets he's excited for his life with the Cadets. We can say Haydn is a different child. He has a passion and interest and a love. His uniform is everything to him always polishing, primping, and pressing to make sure he always looks his best. Emma and Brad could not have been more helpful or more accepting.”⁴⁶

CFAVs were also interviewed for the study. They highlighted that they had experienced many cadets with physical or learning disabilities. Interestingly, they all stressed that being classified as ALN was not a barrier to a youngster taking part in cadet activities as it was nearly always possible to accommodate an individual's needs, or adapt a topic. One CFAV with the ACF said she had two children with Tourettes, four with autism, three with ADHT, and one with Type-1 diabetes in her detachment of 25 cadets! She said: *“the ACF is amazing, the disabled get a*

real sense of involvement, often for the first time. It is a very positive experience for their parent, and it ensures ‘normal’ children meet and understand people with disabilities. They help them with their kit, do their shoelaces for them etc. The point about the ACF is that the disabled can do almost all the activities and gain the qualifications. It's incredible empowerment.”

The Cadet Forces provide a supportive but disciplined environment which seems to be particularly appealing to children classed as ALN. There is an order and structure that is often missing from their home and school lives, the importance of which has been established by previous research e.g. Hodgson et al. (2017). The Cadet Forces are able to support children that are ALN, or disabled, in ways that mainstream schools are unable to do⁴⁷ and this support helps the child in mainstream schooling.

Given the evidence for the positive impacts of being a cadet on the education of young people in Wales, especially those from deprived backgrounds, a case can be made for both targeting CCF Contingents at schools in some areas,⁴⁸ and for targeted investment (by RFCA Wales and Welsh Local and National Government) to support Cadet Force detachments in selected areas.

(46) See <https://armycadets.com/county-news/this-makes-it-all-worthwhile/> It is pleasing to note that Haydn is still a member of the Army Cadet Force in April 2024. He has been promoted to Lance Corporal and is about to finish his Gold Duke of Edinburgh's award. He intends to become an adult volunteer with the ACF.

(47) Largely due to resource issues in schools.

(48) There are no plans to increase the number of schools with CCF contingents at present. There is also a waiting list of c. 80 schools in the UK that are interested in having a CCF. However, the positive impacts of a CCF contingent are significant and the point about targeting new CCF contingents at certain areas is valid.



On 25th November 1942, the Obergruppenführer
Heinrich Himmler, in a move and usually the 2nd Battalion controlled
by the Hauptsturmführer Wilhelm KORNIG, had killed, in spite of the
7th Battalion, WYVA, WARRICKSHIRE REGIMENT, CHESHIRE
REGIMENT and Royal Artillery as well as a French soldier in
charge of a prison camp in a nearby farm.
When being made prisoners and brought to this retired cowshed
in 1942, these martyrs fought bravely against superior Nazi
troops, granting the peace of WORWICK and so helping the
evacuation of the Allied troops in DUNKIRK.
At the going down of the sun
And in the morning
We will remember them
R.I.P.

The Impact of the Cadet Forces on Employability in Wales

“The skills that the Cadet Forces offer young people are second to none, and are skills that no school can offer.”

Richard Selby, Managing Director, Prosteel Engineering, Pontypool⁴⁹

There is a huge skills gap in the UK⁵⁰ and businesses are reporting having difficulty recruiting employees with the relevant skills. In August 2022 the Federation of Small Businesses found that 80% of small firms faced difficulties recruiting applicants with suitable skills in the previous 12 months.⁵¹ Worryingly, 50% of all UK businesses have a basic cyber security skills gap, while 33% have an advanced cyber security skills gap.⁵²

For over a decade, Barclays has been running its Life Skills initiative.⁵³ As part of this scheme it has surveyed employers to understand what skills are demanded of people entering the job market. The most recent survey identified seven key skills for the evolving job market: proactivity, adaptability, leadership, creativity, resilience, communication and problem-solving.⁵⁴ The skill most

desired by UK employers was the ability to solve problems, followed by creativity, leadership and adaptability. The importance of adaptability has increased over the last decade. However, employers report that too many applicants (of all ages) lack these core, transferable skills. The survey reported that over half of job applicants had failed to correctly answer competency questions for all seven key skills. Moreover, employers said that 30% of applicants could not demonstrate leadership.

Interviews with employers in Wales confirmed the gloomy picture painted by the Barclay’s survey. A senior executive in a manufacturing company said, *“society has shifted and too many people are just ‘wet,’ they spend too much time on online games and get distracted too easily.”*

With this context in mind, the research team interviewed 11 respondents in Wales to identify whether the range of skills and attributes developed by the CCF were valued by employers.

Interestingly, web and literature review reveal that employers in the UK look for a range of attributes in a new, young

(49) Name and position cited with permission

(50) <https://www.edge.co.uk/research/projects/skills-shortages-uk-economy/Skills-Shortages-Bulletin-Summary/>

(51) <https://www.fsb.org.uk/resource-report/scaling-up-skills.html>

(52) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cyber-security-skills-in-the-uk-labour-market-2023>

(53) See <https://barclayslifeskills.com/>

(54) See https://www.barclays.co.uk/content/dam/documents/business/business-insight/Barclays_Lifeskills_report_v10.pdf



employee or apprentice, importantly these attributes include that they have been committed to a non-academic activity. Long-term commitment to extra-curricular activity by teenagers correlates positively to employability outcomes by building social and human capital and allowing employers to distinguish candidates (Clegg et al., 2009; Ng and Feldman, 2014). This level of long-term commitment has been described as grit, a *“perseverance and passion for long-term goals”* (Duckworth et al., 2007). Many employers are now introducing grit into assessment processes to attract candidates able to weather the vagaries of the workplace (Butz et al., 2019). It is suggested that being a cadet for two or (ideally) more years demonstrates the perseverance and passion for long-term goals that employers want to see.

“ I interview applicants for my company. The cadet qualifications such as first aid, Duke of Edinburgh’s etc. show a level of commitment that is much better than non-cadets have.”

Training Manager, Care Home Company

School-based staff and careers advice professionals believe that being part of the CCF is good for a pupil’s CV and it is important for their personal statement on the UCAS form as it helps them stand out from non-cadet peers. The references provided by head teachers invariably mention if a pupil was a member of the CCF detachment and describes the skill sets developed. Head teachers and other school leaders all pointed out that membership of the CCF was a great differentiator that gave cadets an edge compared with non-cadet peer groups in applications for apprenticeships and employment. Survey data gathered from Head Teachers and Contingent Commanders for the study into the impacts of the CCF also suggests that CCF detachments have a positive impact on pupils’ career aspirations, with 75% of head teachers and 92% of Contingent Commanders responding to this question with an ‘Agree/Completely Agree’ response. The views of school and career-based staff is logical, given the overlap between the key skills employers want, and the key attributes developed by the Cadet Forces; communication, leadership, resilience, team working, social skills, confidence and an acceptance of diversity.

CFAVs whose 'civilian' jobs involved them in recruitment and managing people were also very positive about the employability of cadets. A recently retired senior police officer said, *"being in the cadets is excellent preparation for adult life. The rank structure means cadets gain responsibility, develop their communication skills and get used to leading. They also meet senior officers and VIPs e.g. members of the Royal Family. They gain a sense of the real world and what the opportunities are. They understand what rules are and what becoming an adult involves. They become very employable."* The training manager of an organization with a Job Centre Plus contract put it more simply, *"there is no comparison between cadets and non-cadets. Most employers will take somebody who turns up, speaks up, communicates, interacts with others, can dress, and can take orders. Ex-cadets will get a job."*



Members of the Cadet Forces, both cadets and CFAVs, are able to gain vocational qualifications through the Cadet Vocational College (CVC). CVC qualifications are open to all, are inclusive and equality of access is ensured.⁵⁵

The vocational qualifications offered by CVC identify and accredit crucial life skills that, too often, go unrewarded and unrecognised - attributes such as teamwork, communication, leadership, and resilience.

“ Vocational Qualifications are invaluable, too many people have degrees but no useful skills. Employers want practical, personal skills.”

Career Advice Professional

Although only a minority of cadets and CFAVs in Wales take on the opportunity of gaining vocational qualifications, it is notable how closely the qualities and traits specified by employers match those developed by Cadet Vocational College BTEC and ILM qualifications at levels 1, 2 and 3. This observation is confirmed by the literature (Branine, 2008). In 2019 the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) published its report reviewing the value of vocational qualifications (Pember et al. 2019).⁵⁶ Among the key findings of the NFER report were that:

- The successful completion of vocational and technical qualifications (VTOs) is seen by learners and

(55) The equality of access is especially important for people that have ALN issues.



employers alike as positive in terms of skills acquisition and the development of workforce behaviours.

- There is a positive correlation between successful completion of a VTQ and the likelihood of employment. The likelihood of employment generally increases with the highest level of vocational qualification achieved
- VTQs are used extensively as a benchmark for recruitment at both managerial/supervisory and skilled/professional levels.

The third finding is particularly interesting for the adult learners that Cadet Vocational College works with.

The 2023 research project into the impact and value of vocational qualifications, described above, interviewed 10 ex-cadet learners, all now employed or at university, and 10 CFAVs, all of whom had gained qualifications with the CVC. Table 6 summarizes the themes that emerged from an analysis of the data gathered from these 20 respondents.

(56) <https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/JCQV-Report.pdf>

Interviewees	Themes emerging
Ex-cadets	<p>Vocational qualifications show that cadets are not just 'academic', but practical;</p> <p>Vocational qualifications make cadets 'special', giving them an advantage over their peers with similar academic qualifications;</p> <p>Vocational qualifications are a very important addition to a CV, for further and higher education, for apprenticeships, and employment;</p> <p>The skills learned by doing vocational qualifications are very helpful in the workplace</p>
CFAVs	<p>Vocational qualifications give highly academic students an important advantage over their peers with similar academic qualifications;</p> <p>Vocational qualifications are very important for cadets that are disadvantaged or less academic;</p> <p>Gaining a vocational qualification demonstrates an individual's worth to employers;</p> <p>Vocational qualifications are accessible and very important to cadets and adults with ALN issues e.g., dyslexia, ADHT;</p> <p>Vocational qualifications are accessible and very important to cadets that have been excluded from school, are in the care system, and whose first language is not English;</p> <p>Gaining a BTEC 1 or 2 qualification increases the chance of disadvantaged and/or less academic cadets gaining GCSEs;</p> <p>Adult volunteers that do the City and Guilds Level 3 in Education and Training become better instructors, in their jobs and in cadets;⁵⁷</p> <p>Everybody goes to school, not many young people have vocational qualifications.</p>

Table 6: Interview themes on the value of Cadet Vocational College vocational qualifications

Table 6 highlights the importance of taking the opportunity to gain vocational qualifications while in the Cadet Forces. These qualifications, additional to those gained in mainstream education, give a significant advantage, an 'edge,' to those cadets and CFAVs that have them. This conclusion is supported by interview data gathered from two managers from the Department of Work and Pensions (one a Deputy Director) and two career advice professionals. All four interviewees said that vocational qualifications were

important indicators of employability and career progression. Interestingly, the Deputy Director DWP pointed out that vocational qualifications were, *"looking after the hidden agenda, helping those that don't 'do' school,"* reinforcing one of the key themes identified by adult volunteers in interview.

It is important to note that the CVC receives funds from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (EFSA) to enable it to provide vocational qualifications to

(57) Including cadets that meet at least one of the following criteria: eligible for free school meals, classified as ALN, in the care system, first language is not English, excluded from school.



cadets in England at no cost. However, the Welsh Government makes no such provision, and it is the Cadet Forces (using the MOD budget) that provide funds to enable cadets in Wales to

Being a member of the Cadet Forces provides a young person with the essential skills and attitudes they need to have successful jobs and careers

gain vocational qualifications. Given the evidence for the positive impacts of gaining vocational qualifications on school work, progression to further or higher education, and employment, a case

could be made for the Welsh Government to review its current position.

The evidence gathered in Wales about the impact of the Cadet Forces on employability is consistent. Public and private sector managers, teachers, career advice professionals and Ministry of Defence staff all believe that being a member of the Cadet Forces provides a young person with the essential skills and

attitudes they need to have successful jobs and careers. Their belief is supported by the literature on the importance of long-term commitment to extra-curricular activities. Overall, it is concluded that there is very robust evidence to show that tens of thousands of people have had their life-chances significantly improved as a result of gaining their vocational qualifications while being members of uniformed youth groups, perhaps especially if they are classified as disadvantaged or ALN in any way.

“ An 18 year-old senior cadet has proven themselves, they have done interviews, tests and qualifications while in the Cadets, they have got promotions and had real responsibility for others. They have essential skills that employers need.”

*Regional Employment Engagement Assistant,
Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association for Wales*



How Do the Cadet Forces Achieve Impact?

“The key input of the Sea Cadets is discipline and the uniform. Cadets have a sense of pride, or camaraderie, they know where they are, and they can see how to progress, they can get promotions. Cadets do things that most children don’t do.”

Sea Cadet CFAV/Police Sergeant

The Cadet Forces achieve a range of very positive outcomes for its participants, both children and adults. Therefore, it is relevant to examine how they are able to make such a difference to personal development, social mobility, education and employment. Most cadet units based in the community have one or two evening meetings, known as ‘parade nights,’ a week, while CCF contingents typically parade after school hours in the afternoon. During these parades cadets will work through a syllabus specific to either the ACF, RAF Air Cadets, Sea Cadets or CCF.⁵⁸ New cadets can join at almost anytime of the year, so there is always a need to have multiple activities in place. Cadet units also hold weekend camps, normally at nearby locations, and typically offer an annual summer camp. Cadets do not have to attend weekend or summer camps,

although they are generally highly valued by those that do.

In addition to the standard detachment parades, weekend and summer camps, the Cadet Forces provide a very wide range of ‘added value’ activities, including:

- Duke of Edinburgh Award, to Gold Level
- Vocational Qualifications, through the Cadet Vocational Company
- Duke of Westminster Award, through the Cadet Vocational Company
- Adventurous training, including the opportunity of gaining qualifications
- STEM and Cyber courses, including Cyber First
- Advanced Leadership courses, for senior cadets
- Overseas Exchanges
- Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force visits and courses, often run by the Regular Forces, including opportunities to go to sea and fly etc.⁵⁹
- First Aid courses and qualifications

A particularly good example of adventurous training offered to cadets in Wales was the 2023 trip to South Africa. The trip involved 72 ACF cadets from across Wales, selected by their ACF County organisations. The adventure was

(58) The CCF syllabus for Army, RAF and Royal Navy sections is slightly different from the syllabi followed by units in the community.

(59) Members of RAF CCF sections are eligible to apply for a Flying Scholarship from the RAF Association. The RAF Air Cadets aim to give all Air Cadets a chance to fly at least once a year. The Welsh Guards visit their affiliated CCF contingents and ACF detachments and cadets are able to visit the Regiment when it is in London.

part-funded by the ACF so that the cost to cadets (or their parents) was less than the price of the return flight. Moreover, cadets from less-affluent homes paid very much less or, in some cases, nothing.⁶⁰ The cadets were involved in adventure training, worked on conservation projects,

Gets youngsters away from their phones and IT screens

went on patrols with Game Park Rangers, and visited Rourke's Drift.⁶¹ Of the 72 cadets involved, a third of them had never flown before

and many had not been abroad. As Prince (2021) suggests, the CFAVs involved in this unique experience confirmed that it had developed the confidence, self-reliance and independence, and communication skills of the cadets, as well as increasing their understanding of different cultures.

By providing this rich range of extra-curricular activities, the Cadet Forces form part of a 'learning ecosystem' in which school is important, but is only one of the influences on the cadet (Krishnamurthi et al. 2014). Being supported by such an ecosystem is strongly associated with improved socio-emotional development, better behaviour, improved academic self-confidence, improved attendance at school, and increased educational achievement (Craft 2012, Abruzzo et al. 2016, Collings 2020). Additionally, as already noted, vocational qualifications, such as those provided by the Cadet Vocational College are valued by employers, and help gain access to further and higher education. Compared with other youth groups, the Cadet Forces have a more formal syllabus,

provide more certainty about activities, and (due to their funding system and support from the Regular Forces) provide more challenges and opportunities. The funding regime means that the Cadet Forces can enable those children from less-affluent homes to join in all activities and, as one RAF Air Cadet CFAV put it, *"realise there is a way of life outside their experience that they can be part of, it raises aspirations."* The uniform makes all cadets the same, it removes barriers of class, income, race etc. By creating a cadet 'family' and a strong sense of belonging, resilience is increased. A very common theme emerging in interviews with CFAVs was that many youngsters need and welcome the structure and discipline offered by the Cadet Forces. Parents and schools may do a good job, but the Cadet Forces give different and welcome boundaries and direction. It provides new people to associate with, and gets youngsters away from their phones and IT screens. It was noted that all CFAVs interviewed for this study said that the structured discipline and challenge offered by the Cadet Forces meant that cadets in Wales behaved differently to the vast majority of their non-cadet peers.



(60) It is common for cadet units to raise money to enable youngsters from less affluent homes to take part in activities.

(61) Obviously a visit of particular relevance to cadets from Wales.

The Need for the Cadet Force Adult Volunteer

The positive outcomes for young people that are cadets in Wales depends on c. 1,330 adults who voluntarily give up their time to run the Cadet Forces. Without these CFAVs the Cadet Forces in Wales cannot operate. Therefore, it is appropriate to ask what these essential adults are getting from their Cadet Force experience.

In the research study published in 2021, the results of two surveys of CFAVs throughout the UK, including Wales, were reported.⁶² Table 7 lists some of the key characteristics of the UK CFAV. The key findings of these surveys were that the overwhelming majority of CFAVs surveyed (96%) felt that volunteering had a positive impact on their lives. The majority of CFAVs surveyed also said that volunteering had improved their mental wellbeing and leadership skills. CFAV views on the extent to which volunteering improved their physical wellbeing were more mixed. The majority of CFAVs reported that they would recommend being a CFAV. Those CFAVs who worked in schools as teachers say that their work in the CCF helps build secure relationships with students, which benefited both them and their pupils back in the classroom.

The findings on leadership abilities were positive with the majority of CFAVs responding that their abilities had improved because of their volunteering. Leading people and projects are valuable skills which can be rewarded

in the workplace and help with career progression, for some CFAVs their volunteering had improved their self-development in this area.



(62) In 2018 data was gathered from 104 CFAVs and in 2019 data was gathered from 353 CFAVs. These sample sizes gave results at the 90% confidence level $p < 0.1$

Characteristic of CFAV	Percentage
Employed	91%
Employers know about Cadet Force role	81%
Employers actively support CFAV role	67%
Teachers/Social Workers/Police Officers who believe being a cadet is particularly beneficial for disadvantaged youngsters	97%

Table 7: Key Characteristics of CFAVs in the UK

The surveys also revealed that the average time that a CFAV spends on Cadet Force activities was over 10 hours a week, over at least 40 weeks a year. It

The surveys also revealed that the average time that a CFAV spends on Cadet Force activities was over 10 hours a week, over at least 40 weeks a year

should be noted that this figure does not include time spent on weekend or summer camps, or adventure training etc. It is a very conservative figure. Given that there are c. 1,330 CFAVs in Wales the amount of time voluntarily devoted to the Cadet Forces is at least 532,000 hours p.a., equivalent

to at least 71,000 working days p.a. This is a very impressive figure showing the commitment of adults in Wales to the Cadet Forces.

For this new study eight CFAVs in Wales were interviewed. All of them claimed that their voluntary role had developed their confidence, self-reliance, and

career aspirations. They had valued the opportunities to gain qualifications in subjects such as leadership and management, and first aid. The ‘family’ nature of the Cadet Forces was also important to them, especially the opportunity to work with people from many different backgrounds and with many different skills. Respondents said that being a CFAV had helped them in their job and career; their people management skills had improved, they were more aware of people, had more empathy and were able to work really hard. CFAVs in Wales are from all backgrounds and work in the public or private sectors. What they all have in common is a desire to ‘give something back.’ They say they get great satisfaction in helping to create good citizens.

There is a constant need to renew and refresh the CFAV cohort. The evidence shows that adults are motivated by the desire to ‘give something back’ by enabling the development of young people (the Give). It is suggested that the benefits adults gain from being a CFAV (the Gain) are more clearly and overtly articulated to existing and potential new CFAVs.

“ My Cadet role is very relevant to my job. I have to train people, know about first aid, safeguarding and so on. My CFAV and job roles are very complementary.”

CFAV/Training Manager for Care Home Company

The Cadet Forces and Government Policy

The Welsh Government has policies and strategies that the Cadet Forces directly and overtly contribute important outcomes.

As noted above the Cadet Forces, by closing the self-efficacy gap between children from deprived area and those that are more fortunate, is directly addressing Objective 2 of the **Child Poverty Strategy for Wales**.

The **Youth Work Strategy for Wales**⁶³ states a desire to integrate formal education, informal education and informal learning. It seeks to develop and realise the potential of young people and is committed to equality and inclusion. The research into the social impact of the Cadet Forces clearly demonstrates that participation of young people in cadet units helps to enable them to realise their potential through the development of key skills. Moreover, the integration of formal (school-based) learning and informal (cadet-based outdoor) learning is strong through the development of a learning ecosystem, with many cadets gaining new enthusiasm for formal learning as a result of their cadet experiences, as well as earning important additional qualifications.

Participation in the Cadet Forces is not a guarantee of educational progress or

improvement. However, the evidence gathered by the research team for this study highlights the value of being a cadet on the educational outcomes of many young people, particularly the more disadvantaged. This evidence indicates that activities and outcomes of the Cadet Forces in Wales strongly support the four purposes of the **Curriculum for Wales 2022**.⁶⁴ The many outdoor activities that members of the Cadet Forces take part in are directly relevant to the guidance provided by the Welsh Government on curriculum design, which states that particular attention should be paid to 'being outdoors, observation and authentic and purposeful learning.'⁶⁵



(63) <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-06/youth-work-strategy-for-wales.pdf>

(64) <https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales>

(65) <https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/designing-your-curriculum/enabling-learning/>



In addition, Cadet units support their participants to become ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the World through a range of experiences, including opportunities to:

- make positive choices, and to learn how these affect their own and others' health and well-being
- interact with others within different social situations
- engage with different social influences and to appreciate the importance of respecting others
- consider the social and ethical issues that impact on the health and well-being of others

Cadet units are thus directly supporting the **Health and Wellbeing strategy**⁶⁶ that supports the Curriculum for Wales.

The outcomes of the Cadet Forces in increasing the employability of young people makes a significant contribution to the Government's **Employability and**

Skills strategy,⁶⁷ particularly the priority helping young people realise their potential.

Crucially, the operation of the Cadet Forces in Wales directly supports the **Youth Engagement and Progression Framework**.⁶⁸ The Framework is designed to help young people fulfil their potential by helping them engage in education, employment or training and preventing them from becoming homeless. The impact of the Cadet Forces upon youngsters from economically disadvantaged homes is undoubtedly helping to tackle the impact of poverty on educational attainment.

As well as being directly relevant to the achievement of Welsh Government policies it is worth noting that while youth work does not have the same formality as the Cadet Forces, the aims of both are the same. The document **Youth Work in Wales: Principles and Purposes**⁶⁹ has been produced by representatives of

(66) <https://hwb.gov.wales/draft-curriculum-for-wales-2022/health-and-well-being>

(67) <https://www.gov.wales/stronger-fairer-greener-wales-plan-employability-and-skills-summary-html>

(68) <https://www.gov.wales/youth-engagement-and-progression-framework-overview>

(69) <https://www.cwvys.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/YOUTH-WORK-IN-WALES-PRINCIPLES-AND-PURPOSES.pdf>

the voluntary and local authority youth work sectors in Wales. The main objective of the document is to set out the key principles which underpin youth work and to provide an overview of its nature, purposes and delivery.

Youth work in Wales aims to:

- promote and actively encourage opportunities for all young people in order that they may fulfil their potential as empowered individuals and as members of groups and communities;
- support young people through significant changes in their lives and assist them to understand their responsibilities;
- support young people to be able to understand and exercise their rights;
- encourage young people to gain and develop knowledge, understanding, attitudes and values and to make constructive use of their skills, resources and time;
- promote opportunities and access for all young people whatever their race, gender, sexual identity, language, religion, disability, age, background or personal circumstances;
- challenge oppression and inequality;
- support and enable young people in keeping themselves safe.

There is a very strong overlap between the outputs and outcomes of the Cadet Forces and these aims.

It can safely be concluded that cadets and CFAVs in Wales gain both personal benefits and provide positive outcomes for the Welsh Government. The Cadet Forces deliver outcomes and impacts that are important to the specific contexts

and political priorities in Wales, as well as delivering the national outcomes and impacts already

described. The Cadet Forces are important to the individuals that are members, and also to the nation of Wales. It is important that the contribution of the Cadet Forces to Wales is clearly articulated and understood by policy makers, educational leaders, and employers.

Cadets and CFAVs in Wales gain both personal benefits and provide positive outcomes for the Welsh Government



Conclusions

The Cadet Forces in Wales are delivering very positive social mobility, education, and employability outcomes to young people. Adult volunteers gain benefits from the skills and qualifications they gain, and these often lead to enhanced career opportunities. Both adults and young people derive benefits (such as new friends) from the ‘family’ nature of the Cadet Forces and can have their aspirations and ambitions raised.



However, the number of cadets in Wales is lower than might be expected with only 2.4% of eligible children being in the Cadet Forces, compared with a UK-wide figure of 4.2%. There is scope to increase the number of children that are members of the Cadet Forces to address this relative under-representation. The more children that are cadets, the more children will gain the significant benefits provided.

The number of cadets in Wales that gain vocational qualifications is limited by the amount of funding the Cadet Forces can provide. Given the significant benefits that are gained by young people with these qualifications, and the position of the Cadet Forces as part of a Welsh learning ecosystem, there is a case for investment (should resources permit) by non-MOD budget holders.

The importance of the CFAV to the Cadet Forces in Wales cannot be over-stated. It is their time and effort that leads to the outputs and outcomes that contribute so effectively to the achievement of Welsh Government policies, and the development of first-class future citizens of Wales.

Recommendations

Four recommendations follow from this report.

- 1.** The Cadet Forces, policy makers and educational leaders should develop and implement an agreed plan to increase the number of young people in the Cadet Forces in Wales;⁷⁰
- 2.** The benefits that adult volunteers gain from being a CFAV should be clearly and consistently explained, both to help retain existing CFAVs and to attract new ones;
- 3.** If resources permit, more cadets should gain vocational qualifications as part of their Cadet Force service;
- 4.** The contribution the Cadet Forces in Wales make to achieving the objectives of Welsh Government policies should be clearly explained to policy makers, educational leaders and employers.



(70) Such a plan will involve considering the location of Cadet Force units and, when resources permit, additional investment.

Limitations of the Report

This report, like all other social science reports, is based on primary and secondary data that is, inevitably, incomplete. Additionally, it is important to note that the timescales and budget for the research did not allow primary data to be gathered from control groups, young people and adults that are not members of the Cadet Forces. To try and overcome these limitations, an extensive review of relevant literature was carried out to enable the research team to identify consistencies and discrepancies between their findings and previous research.

We can report that there were many encouraging consistencies. The research team also acknowledges the risks of bias associated with the interpretation of qualitative and quantitative data. To minimise the impact of any subjectivity bias, the research team cross-checked the themes that emerged from the Welsh data with existing literature and other data sources. Additionally, the report was subjected to internal peer-review within the University of Northampton.



References

1. Abruzzo, K.J., Lenis, C., Romero, Y.V., Maser, K.J. and Morote, E.S., 2016. Does Participation in Extracurricular Activities Impact Student Achievement?. *Journal for Leadership and Instruction*, 15(1), pp.21-26.
2. Branine, M. 2008 Graduate recruitment and selection in the UK: A study of the recent changes in methods and expectations. *Career development international*.
3. Butz, N.T., Stratton, R., Trzebiatowski, M.E. and Hillery, T.P. (2019), "Inside the hiring process: how managers assess employability based on grit, the big five, and other factors", *International Journal of Business Environment*, 10(4), pp. 306-328.
4. Clegg, S., Stevenson, J. and Willott, J. (2009), "Extending conceptualisations of the diversity and value of extracurricular activities: a cultural capital approach to graduate outcomes", Project Report, Higher Education Academy.
5. Collings, L.K., 2020. The Impact of Extracurricular Activities and High School Students.
6. Craft, S.W., 2012. *The impact of extracurricular activities on student achievement at the high school level*. The University of Southern Mississippi.
7. Duckworth, A.L., Peterson, C., Matthews, M.D. and Kelly, D.R. (2007), "Grit: perseverance and passion for long-term goals", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 92(6), p. 1087.
8. Eison, J., (1990). Confidence in the classroom: Ten maxims for new teachers. *College Teaching*, 38(1), pp. 21-25.
9. Hodgson, A.R., Freeston, M.H., Honey, E. and Rodgers, J., 2017. Facing the unknown: Intolerance of uncertainty in children with autism spectrum disorder. *Journal of applied research in intellectual disabilities*, 30(2), pp.336-344.
10. Krishnamurthi, A., Ballard, M. and Noam, G.G., 2014. Examining the Impact of Afterschool STEM Programs. *Afterschool Alliance*.
11. McKinlay, A.R., May, T., Dawes, J., Fancourt, D. and Burton, A., 2022. 'You're just there, alone in your room with your thoughts': a qualitative study about the psychosocial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic among young people living in the UK. *BMJ open*, 12(2), p.e053676.
12. Ng, T.W.H. and Feldman, D.C. (2014), "Subjective career success: a meta-analytic review", *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 85(2), pp. 169-179, doi: 10.1016/J.JVB.2014.06.001
13. Pember, A., Bolton, C., Sims, D., Straw, S. and Taylor, A. (2019). 2019 Review of the Value of Vocational Qualifications. Slough: NFER.
14. Prince, H.E., 2021. The lasting impacts of outdoor adventure residential experiences on young people. *Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning*, 21(3), pp.261-276.
15. Waite, P., Pearcey, S., Shum, A., Raw, J.A., Patalay, P. and Creswell, C., 2021. How did the mental health symptoms of children and adolescents change over early lockdown during the COVID-19 pandemic in the UK? *JCPP advances*, 1(1), p.e12009.



RFCA

Reserve Forces' & Cadets' Association for Wales
Cymdeithas Lluoedd wrth Gefn a Chadetiadaid dros Gymru



University of
Northampton
Institute for Social
Innovation and Impact