



**University Students from Military Families:
the same, but different**

Brunel University London
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Recommendations

- The University should review its commitment to this group of students at the start of each academic year to ensure that policies and procedures continue to support them as an underrepresented and unseen group in Higher Education (HE). Information should then be collected to ensure the University stays up to date with the issues that the students may be facing and take steps to support them.
- Ensure all staff, including Senior Tutors, Personal Tutors, Academic and Student Welfare services are made aware of the combination of experiences that this group of students face, with a specific emphasis on the uniqueness, thus the lack of homogeneity.
- The University to involve the Union of Brunel Students in discussions relating to students from military families, and the contribution they may make to the University community as well as the support they may require.
- Given that this research could only investigate the experiences of the students

Introduction

Background to the Research

or as a Reservist, or has done at any point during the first 25 years of that pers
(SCiP, 2017). It has also been acknowledged that the significance of having
been a child from a military family does not end when the serving parent(s) leave(s)
active service (McCullouch & Hall, 2016).

Previous research has found that three quarters (76%) of undergraduates from
military families surveyed agreed that their experiences had an impact on their
education in ways that were
opport (Rose & Rose, 2018, p. 4). However,
one of the risks, particularly with small groups such as this, is that they are
understood as homogenous, with similar experiences and needs. Given the focus
of the Office for Students (OfS) on the specific and complex barriers faced by these
students in both accessing and succeeding in higher education, (OfS, 2020, p. 5)
this research sought to explore this further.

The Ministry of Defence (MoD) recognise that family members being deployed can
significantly impact upon a child, and that mobility within the services can result in
children changing schools more frequently and from an early age. (Ministry of
Defence, 2019, p. i). The latter of these is considered in the provision of service
family accommodation, and the MoD has spoken about how stability in education
can help children and young people through these times, from early years through
to higher education (Ministry of Defence, 2019, p. 5).

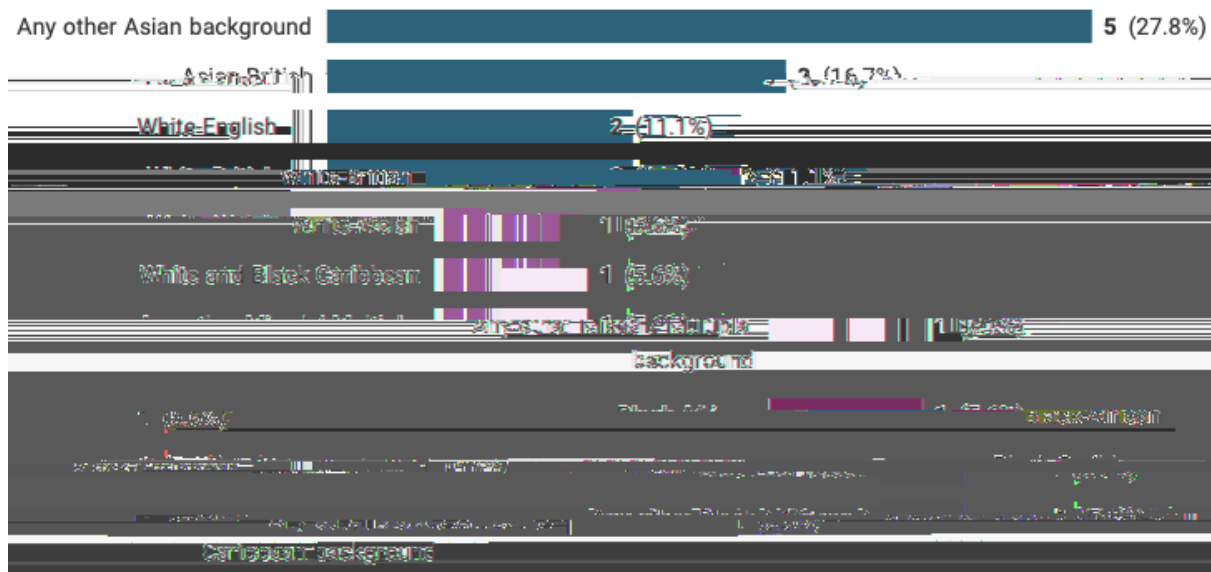
Brunel University London

Brunel is a university with the mission to bring benefit to society through excellence
in education, research and knowledge transfer. Part of its 2030 mission is to
celebrate diversity and further strengthen our culture of mutual respect and
equality of opportunity (Brunel University London, 2019, p. 9), and to ensure that
everyone has th8(n)-18(d)-18()-281(f)-21(u)-18(r)-21(t)-21(h)-18(e)-23(r)-21()-28(t)-3(e)-23(x 72 2

- people estranged from their families
- people from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities
- refugees
- children from military families

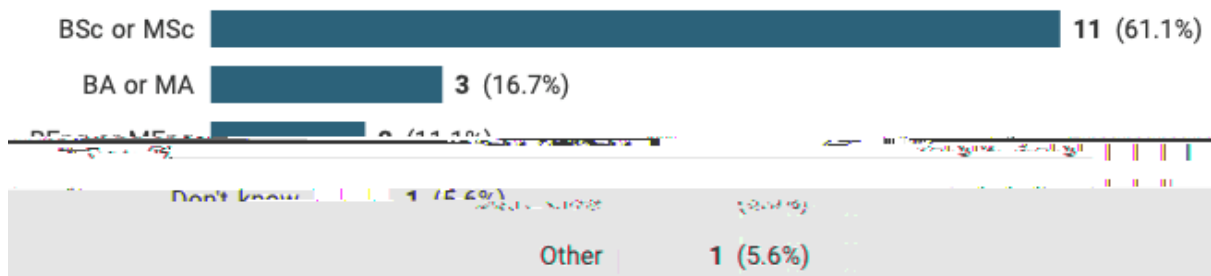
The University is a signatory to the Armed Forces Covenant

Figure 3: Ethnicity of students from military families



The majority of the students were studying on BSc programmes, but came from across a wide variety of backgrounds, which can be seen in figure 5 below:

Figure 4: Degree courses



This interview took place in July 2020. The online interview lasted forty-nine minutes and was audio-recorded, transcribed and analysed.

Research Ethics

Participation in the research was entirely voluntary and the informed consent of all participants was sought prior to participation. All participants who took part in the research were assured that their comments would be treated in confidence and their data would be anonymised. The study received approval from the Research Ethics Committee of the College of Business, Arts and Social Sciences, Brunel University London.

Findings

Figure 7: Type of School and Further Education establishment attended

One of the students described being home-schooled for a period of time, and several had attended schools in other countries, primarily those where the British military were based. The breadth of the schooling and experiences on an individual level was also significant, as one respondent described:

While this group of students do not explicitly report being unduly affected at Brunel by being a student from a military family, there are more subtle ways in which care and support may be needed or warranted based on the examples above. Indeed, this point came up during the interview:

timeline. (Interview 1)

e

Conclusion

Woven through these findings is evidence of the complexity and variability in the lives of these students. Literature and policy refer to these students as a group, and rarely as individuals. However, the stories shared as part of this research illustrate the uniqueness of their individual experiences and lives, and how they need to be understood as distinct from their peers.

With this in mind, the University community needs to work with these students to understand, support, and remain to the

Appendix 2: Interview Guide

The questions and responses will be used as topic guide: participants will be asked to tell us more about their questionnaire responses in order to elaborate on what they have said.

Additional questions:

- If you had a non-serving parent what was their role (if there was a non-serving parent)?
- How do you feel about having been a part of the military community? Have your feelings about this changed over time?
- How do you think your educational experience was shaped/impacted by your life in a military family?

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

There are no benefits for individuals taking part in the research but the findings will generate recommendations and future research that will have benefit for students more broadly.

What if something goes wrong?

The person to be contacted is the Chair of the CBASS Research Ethics Committee (see details at the end of this document).

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

Pseudonyms will be adopted and you will remain anonymous in data presentation. Any data that may identify o
omitted.

and may be used as the basis to plan future research, in line with University policy.

If during the course of the research evidence of harm or misconduct come to light it may be necessary to break confidentiality. We will tell you at the time if we think

Appendix 4: Consent Form

Students from Military Families project - Participant Consent Form (Post-Questionnaire)

Approval has been granted for this study to be carried out between 01/05/2020 and 30/09/2020

The participant (or their legal representative) should complete the whole of this sheet.

YES

I probably should have a few more friends from before un

So you mentioned that in ?? sixth form you didn't really stay in touch with friends going into university, you kind of like ...

No.

Yeah, mm mm. So you ...

I had everyone added on Facebook and everything, but just no one ever messaged anyone and thus the friendship dies.

And do you ... would you say that your status as being part of a military family has affected your pre-university experiences positively or negatively? Do you think that status has had an impact?

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