



DANDELIN

PROJECT MORAY



Connecting
SCHOOLS,
Supporting
FAMILIES

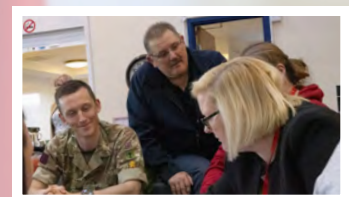
THE ARMED FORCES COVENANT

What does it mean to you?



NETWORKING EVENT

*Connecting Schools with
Local Support*



WELCOME

It's hard to believe the Dandelion Project's first year is coming to a close, and what a year it's been! I'm excited to share this winter edition with you, now in a fresh new magazine format. Inside, you'll find updates, ideas and stories designed for schools and families, all aimed at helping children and young people from Armed Forces families thrive in education.

This new look reflects the incredible growth and progress the project has made over the past year. It's been a journey of listening, learning and most importantly acting on what I've heard. I've focused on building meaningful support where it's needed most, and the seeds of that work are beginning to grow. The project will keep nurturing these connections and expanding support wherever it's needed, including for families moving to Moray from other nations and overseas.

This year was all about turning ideas into action. Highlights include launching the Armed Forces Advocate Network, connecting senior leaders through the Education Sub-Group and taking feedback to Moray's Armed Forces Covenant Partnership Group to drive meaningful change. The focus has been on co-designing resources with schools and connecting them to the right support. Good practices are being shared nationally and fresh insights are continually brought back to Moray.

As I reflect on this year's achievements, one question has kept me focused: *What will it look and feel like when the project is complete?* That sense of purpose has shaped milestones that bring the vision to life, such as the Month of the Military Child and the recent Coffee & Connect event. All of this work lays the groundwork for lasting change, the kind that helps children and young people thrive now and for years to come.

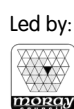
None of this would have been possible without you, the families, educators, advocates and partners who have supported the project's mission. Your contributions have helped shape this work, and there's so much more to look forward to in 2025.

I hope you enjoy this edition and find it inspiring as we continue this journey together. Wishing you a wonderful festive season and a bright beginning to the new year.

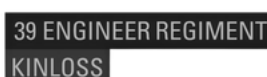


Priyanka Chard

Education Support Officer and Project Lead
Dandelion Project, Moray Council
Magazine Designer & Editor



Led by:



Supported by:



CONTENTS



04 Recent Events



05 Upcoming Events & News

06 New Resource Hub

08 Remembrance 2024

10 The Armed Forces Covenant

11 Coffee & Connect Event

12 Deployment Support

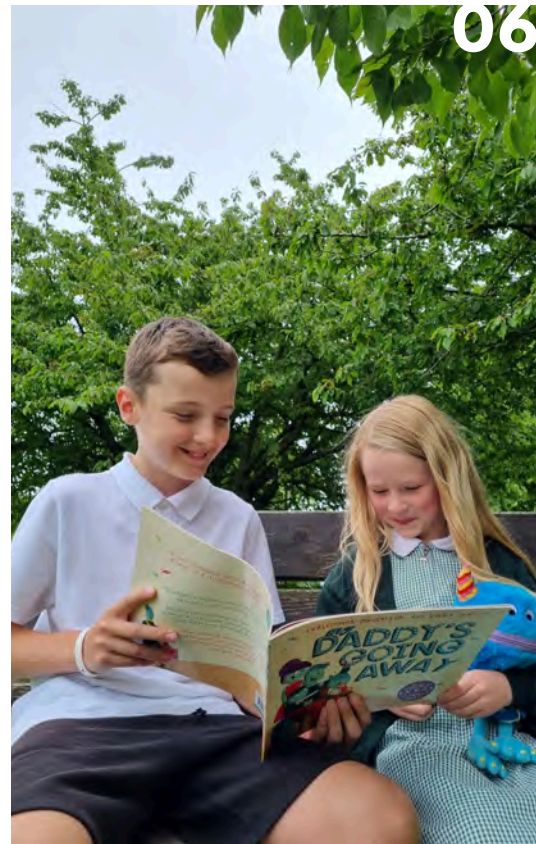
15 Reading Force in Moray

16 Month of the Military Child 2025

18 Connect with the Local Bases

19 Connect with Services & Support

20 Dandelion Teddy Trail



RECENT NEWS



FAMILIES DAY AT RAF LOSSIEMOUTH

The Dandelion Project stall at RAF Lossiemouth Families Day connected with families and local services supporting children and young people. Selfie frames and props added to the fun! Thanks to everyone who stopped by and joined in the activities.



NETWORK GROUPS

Moray's Armed Forces Education Sub-Group, a strategic group committed to strengthening support for children and young people, recently met to share good practices, challenges and opportunities for growth. Thanks to the recent Coffee & Connect event, the Advocates Network is in place, with meetings scheduled for 2025.



COLLABORATIVE WORKING

Educators from Moray attended the Forces Children's Education event in Aberdeen, sharing successes and gathering ideas. In 2024, the Dandelion Project has contributed to national events, helped to shape the SCiP Alliance Scotland Hub's future and has highlighted Moray's ongoing support for Armed Forces families.



SUPPORTING MORAY'S SCHOOLS

Engagement with Moray schools has focused on raising understanding about Moray's Armed Forces context and its influence on children's journeys in education. Discussions have included strategies and resources to enhance support. Co-design opportunities so far have led to the creation of resources planned for release next term.



SPECIAL CHRISTMAS INITIATIVE

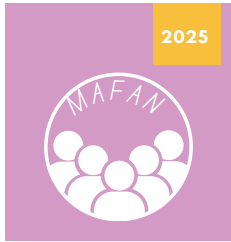
In collaboration with the MOD, seven Moray schools participated in a Christmas Postcard initiative. Nearly 300 postcards were sent to deployed parents and serving personnel overseas! Follow the journey on social media to see the outcome on Christmas Day. Thanks to everyone involved for the fantastic teamwork!



ADVENT CALENDAR DEBUT

The start of December saw the Dandelion Project's Advent Calendar launch with a daily Dandelion Countdown, offering seeds of support for children and young people from Armed Forces families. Each post provides helpful ways for schools to enhance support. Follow the daily updates on the project's [Facebook page](#).

UPCOMING EVENTS



Moray's Armed Forces Advocate Network (MAFAN)

Ongoing in 2025

Moray's Armed Forces Advocate Network was launched at the project's Coffee & Connect event. This network brings together school staff who are dedicated to supporting children and young people from Armed Forces families. Meeting dates for this session were shared in the latest Dandelion Drop Weekly Bulletin. If you work in a school and are interested in joining the network, please [get in touch](#) to find out more.



CLPL In-Person and Webinar Sessions

Monthly in 2025

In response to feedback for Moray-specific CLPL, monthly in-person and online sessions are being scheduled for 2025. Some of these sessions will feature co-delivery with local key partners. More information will be released in the New Year. If you have any specific requests or topics you'd like covered, please [get in touch](#) to discuss.



Month of the Military Child

April 2025

The Month of the Military Child is a time to celebrate and recognise the resilience of children and young people from Armed Forces families. This year's event will include activities, resources and opportunities for schools to get involved. More details on how to participate can be found [later](#) in this magazine and in future weekly bulletins. Start planning now to make this a memorable celebration with your school community!



CLPL For Primary and Secondary Schools

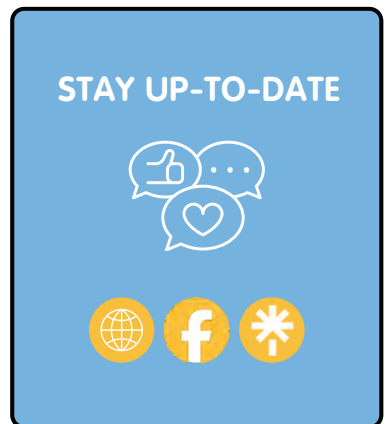
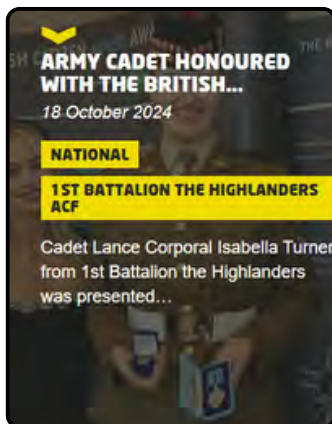
2024/2025

Tailored Career Long Professional Learning (CLPL) sessions are available for your school or setting. These sessions provide practical insights and explore ways to enhance support in your school community and can be tailored to meet your school's unique context.

[Get in contact](#) to discuss options.

NEWS

Click a tile to read the full story:



NEW RESOURCE HUB FOR ARMED FORCES FAMILIES IN MORAY

A One-Stop Guide for Education, Support and Wellbeing

Moray Council's Dandelion Project has launched a dedicated online resource hub for Armed Forces families, offering easy access to information and support that truly make a difference. Whether you're new to Moray, already settled here, or preparing for the next chapter, this hub is designed to help families thrive.

Growing and Adapting with the Project

Throughout the Dandelion Project, the website will grow and adapt to meet the needs of Armed Forces families. The FAQs section will expand with new questions, grouping similar themes for easier navigation. This keeps the hub clear, organised, and responsive to evolving community needs and feedback.

What's Inside?

You'll find four sections filled with practical advice, resources and opportunities:

- *For Families:*
Clear guidance on navigating the Education system in Scotland and Moray, from understanding the Curriculum for Excellence to registration.
- *For Children and Young People:*
Wellbeing resources that ensure their perspectives are heard and provide access to support.
- *For Schools:*
Tools and advice to help educators provide the right support at the right time.
- *Dandelion Project Moray:*
Information about the project, key resources and communication channels.

Explore and share news about the new hub today and see how these resources can support Armed Forces families with their child's learning journey in Moray.



www.moray.gov.uk/ArmedForcesFamilies

LET YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL KNOW IF YOU'RE AN...

Armed Forces Family

Parents and carers in the Armed Forces (Regular, Reserve, and Veterans) are encouraged to inform their child's school of their service status. This ensures the school can collaborate effectively to provide informed support if and when it is needed.

Click [here](#) to find about how this information can help schools support your child in school.

Is there a deployment coming up soon? Click [here](#) to complete the form to let your child's school know.

INFORM

Update your school of your service status, at any time.

CONNECT

Keeping the school updated, ensures the right support is provided.

SUPPORT

Help your child get the best support at school.



REMEMBRANCE *with* poppy scotland

Poppyscotland's Bud Tours Through Moray: Bringing Remembrance to Life for School Communities

For four incredible days, Bud, Poppyscotland's unique mobile learning space, travelled through Moray, offering children and young people a chance to explore the meaning and importance of remembrance. Visiting Kinloss Primary School, Bishopmill Primary School, and Lossiemouth High School, as well as hosting Hythehill Primary School at St Gerardine's Primary School, Bud delivered an unforgettable experience that left a lasting impact on each school community.

More than just a vehicle, Bud is an interactive classroom on wheels. Inside, children discovered a mini poppy factory, a micro-museum, and hands-on exhibits that brought history to life. Through these immersive activities, they learned about the history of the poppy and the selfless contributions of those who served.

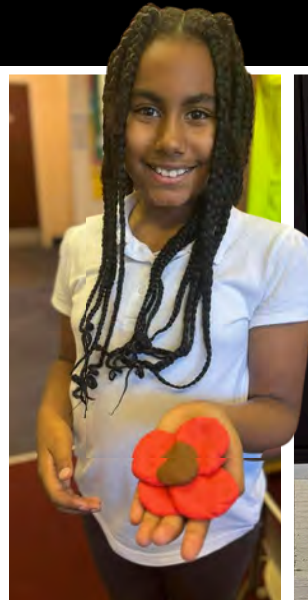
The visits, organised by the Dandelion Project, sparked curiosity, thoughtful reflections and powerful discussions. Pupils explored the values behind Remembrance Day in a way that felt personal and relevant. Teachers praised the experience for making the concept of Remembrance accessible and meaningful, with one young person commenting, "I never knew a poppy meant so much."

This unique opportunity received fantastic feedback, with school communities expressing gratitude for the chance to engage with history in such a dynamic way. The enthusiasm was contagious and the learning went far beyond the walls of Bud!

You can read the full Moray Council press release [here](#). If you would like to bring Bud's powerful learning experience to your school, click [here](#) to book a visit.



Schools remembered in many creative and meaningful ways



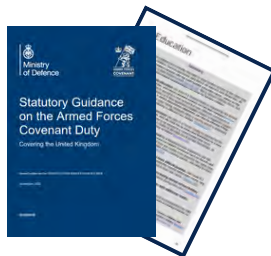


THE ARMED FORCES COVENANT

What Does the Legal Duty Mean to You?

Whether you're part of the Armed Forces community, work with Armed Forces families, or are a member of the public, do you know about the Armed Forces Covenant Legal Duty?

"The Covenant Legal Duty is a legal obligation on certain public bodies to have due regard to the Covenant principles when carrying out certain functions in healthcare, education, and housing." -Armed Forces Covenant



In line with the Armed Forces Covenant Legal Duty, the Dandelion Project is collaborating with families, schools and partners to co-design a user-friendly, one-page poster. This resource aims to raise awareness and highlight the importance of providing meaningful support for children and young people from the Armed Forces community in Moray's schools.

Many children and young people from Armed Forces families thrive in education. However, increased awareness and support can help ensure they all have equitable opportunities. The Dandelion Project is creating a resource to help educators understand the Armed Forces Covenant and how to integrate it into existing school frameworks.

 **Academic Continuity and Attainment**

 **Social and Emotional Wellbeing**

 **Additional Support Needs**

 **Identification of Service Children**

 **Resources to support in school**

 **Transportation and Attendance**

 **School Mobility and Transitions**

Looking to deepen your understanding about the Armed Forces Covenant?

Explore the e-learning options by clicking below!

→ **Armed Forces Community and the Armed Forces Covenant**

A 15-20 minute 'e-learning' training module designed to raise awareness of the Armed Forces community and the Armed Forces Covenant.

→ **Supporting Your Armed Forces Community**

In this short course, you'll learn how to recognise members of the Armed Forces community, explore the challenges they experience and reflect on the impact you can have in your role.

COFFEE & CONNECT

Empowering Armed Forces Advocates in Moray's Schools

On 18th November 2024, the Dandelion Project hosted *Coffee & Connect* at RAF Lossiemouth, bringing together educators from across Moray and representatives from RAF Lossiemouth and 39 Engineer Regiment. The event was all about building stronger connections between schools and military bases, creating sustainable partnerships to better support Armed Forces families. Military Commanding Officers, community support and welfare teams shared insights into their current priorities and the support available for families. Schools gained a clearer understanding of how to access these resources, empowering them to address challenges such as deployment with more confidence.

Attendees valued the chance to connect with others, share ideas and take practical knowledge back to their schools:

“

The event helped build relationships between schools and our local bases.

It was great to meet others and hear how different schools support during deployments

Seeing so many schools represented was brilliant.

I now understand more about how to tap into support from the bases when needed.

”



This collaborative approach is key to ensuring the right supports are in place for Armed Forces families, creating a lasting impact across Moray's schools. To keep in the know about future opportunities like this one, [stay connected](#) with the project's communication channels.



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Thank you

to everyone who presented, attended and supported the event- to Team Lossie for hosting, the media team and IX (B) Squadron for the brilliant tour.



DEPLOYMENT SUPPORT:

Helping Schools Support

Children Through

Deployment and Separation

When a parent in the Armed Forces is deployed or away for work, children and young people can experience a range of emotions. Schools can play a key role in helping them feel understood, supported and connected during these times.

What is a Deployment?

A deployment is when a serving parent is sent away for military duties, often for weeks or months at a time. This can include overseas missions, training exercises, or other work-related separations. Sometimes, these separations are planned in advance, but they can also happen with very little notice.

Why Informing the School Matters

Informing the school about an upcoming deployment or period of separation helps ensure timely and tailored support. Teachers and staff can check in regularly, offer extra emotional support, and make adjustments if needed. Whether the deployment is known months in advance or just days before, sharing this information ensures a child does not experience these changes alone at school.

How School Can Help

When the school is aware of a deployment, they can:

- Offer emotional check-ins to help children and young people process their feelings, supporting their mental health and emotional wellbeing.
- Provide a supportive environment where children feel nurtured and respected.
- Make adjustments as necessary to ensure they feel included and supported.

How to Inform the School

Families are encouraged to complete the form linked below. The form can be:

- Filled out online and emailed directly to the school.
- Printed and dropped off at the school office.
- Collected in hard copy from local schools, St Aidan's Centre at RAF Lossiemouth, or from the Unit Welfare Office and Army Welfare Service at Kinloss Barracks.

The second page of the form includes helpful guidance explaining how this information supports a child's development and learning.

By keeping schools informed, families help create a network of care and understanding, ensuring a child's needs are met and that they can continue to thrive during these times of change.

The image shows a digital form titled 'NOTIFICATION OF ARMED FORCES PARENTAL ABSENCE FROM HOME'. The form is from 'DANDELION' and 'ARMED FORCES LOSSIEMOUTH'. It includes sections for 'Personal Information', 'Reason for absence', 'Who's away?', 'Length', 'Date/s of RRB', and 'Additional Guidance for Parents'. A hand icon points to the 'Download the form here' button.

[Download the form here](#)

When a parent is deployed, families experience separation in different ways. This page offers guidance and resources to help families and schools navigate this time, providing tailored support to meet unique needs. Whether a loved one is currently deployed or preparing for it in the future, these resources can help ensure the right support is in place.

Inform your child's school



Let the school know your family's Armed Forces status so they can better understand your child's needs. This allows tailored support during separations, such as emotional check-ins, flexible communication with the deployed parent, or additional pastoral care. Let the school know of any deployments as early as possible by completing [this form](#).

Stay connected with the unit



Staying in touch with your parent unit keeps you informed and supported. Many units have community support or welfare teams and a HIVE officer ready to help. Joining social media groups or [mailing lists](#) for local Community Support/Welfare Teams can help you feel connected.

Activities to support separation



Plan activities that keep children close to their deployed parent: countdown calendars, letters, care packages, or video messages. Comforting routines provide security during this time. For more ideas, visit Moray Council's [Armed Forces families section](#) under the 'Deployments' drop-down tab.

Connect with organisations



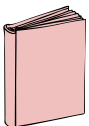
There are organisations ready to help during separations. The Families Federations have provided a list of support organisations for easy access, click [here](#). These offer valuable connections and practical help.

Support for young carers



If your child takes on extra responsibilities when a parent is away, they might be a young carer. Letting the school know can open doors to helpful support. [Quarriers](#) in Moray, [Forces Children Scotland](#), [Carers Trust](#) and [Young Carers Scotland](#) all offer guidance and resources to help young carers feel supported and understood.

Books for comfort



Stories can be a comforting way for children to explore and understand their feelings during separation. They can offer reassurance, spark conversations, and help children feel less alone. For book lists, visit Moray Council's [Armed Forces families section](#) under the 'Deployments' drop-down tab.

Need someone to talk to?



Confidential support is available, for details visit these links for support specific to families connected to the [RAF](#), [Army](#) and [Navy](#). [The Exchange](#) (parents and young people), [D-EXY](#) (online platform), and [Kooth](#) (for young people). Locally, schools, your parent unit and [SSAFA's Service Community Team](#) are also there to listen, support and signpost you to other local resources, including [Discover Pathways Moray](#).



Introducing

The Dandelion Drop

WEEKLY UPDATE

• S E E D S O F S U P P O R T •

The Dandelion Project's weekly
email bulletin for schools!

Get in touch to join the mailing list.

“

Knowledge grows when shared- what you embrace today could be the seed that helps your school bloom.

-Dandelion Project Moray

”



READING FORCE *in Moray*

BUILDING CONNECTIONS AND INSPIRING YOUNG READERS IN MORAY SCHOOLS

Books have a unique way of connecting people and Reading Force helps make that connection possible.

The charity uses shared reading to bring families closer together, especially during deployments, turning stories into a bridge between loved ones.

It's always a delight to welcome Fiona Maxwell, the Reading Force Ambassador for Scotland, back to Moray. With her strong connections to military bases and schools, each visit introduces more families, children and schools to the benefits of shared reading.

During her most recent visit, Fiona visited Linkwood Primary School and Bishopmill Primary School, where nearly 100 books were gifted to eager pupils.

A highlight was when a pupil found the Michael Morpurgo book they were searching for, their face lighting up with excitement.

Reading Force supports the establishment of book clubs by providing each member with three free books to help get started.

At St Gerardine Primary School, the Forces Book Club has been thriving, offering children a space to connect through reading. By running the club after school on Fridays, the sessions have become an opportunity for children to choose reading for pleasure, confidence and build friendships.

“As a reluctant reader, it's been great for my child. She was really under-confident reading in front of others, but I've noticed a huge shift since she started book club.

- Parent of a child at St Gerardine Primary

Reading Force does more than promote reading for pleasure. Through their scrapbooks, children and families can share thoughts, draw pictures and stay connected through stories. This simple yet powerful tool helps bridge the gap during times of separation, making reading a shared experience even when miles apart. The Dandelion Project is already booking dates for Fiona's return to Moray in 2025! If you'd like to host a Reading Force visit at your school, [get in touch](#). To find out more about Reading Force, click [here](#). Let's continue to spread the joy of reading and build those important connections.

“I had such fun visiting both Linkwood and Bishopmill Primary Schools. It was wonderful to see the children choosing their books and engaging with them. We would love to see their finished scrapbooks! A big thank you to Mrs Bury (Linkwood) and Mrs Bokor (Bishopmill) for all their help on the day.

- Ambassador for Scotland, Fiona Maxwell
Reading Force

The book club has created a close-knit group where children feel connected and supported. It offers a smaller setting where they can enjoy reading, share ideas and build confidence by choice, not just circumstance.

-Pupil Support Worker, Mrs Bromham
St Gerardine Primary School

“The children had a fantastic time and were hugely excited about choosing their own books. We are now thinking about establishing a military book club with the support from Reading Force.”

- Depute Head Teacher, Mrs Bokor
Bishopmill Primary School



MORAY'S MONTH OF THE MILITARY CHILD

Celebrating Strength, Resilience and Community

Did you know?

Every April, we celebrate the Month of the Military Child to recognise the significant contributions of children and young people from Armed Forces families. These children show remarkable resilience, adaptability and courage as they navigate the challenges and experiences of military life.

Why the Dandelion?

The dandelion symbolises military children because it can thrive anywhere, just like them! Its seeds travel far, taking root and blooming wherever they land; a perfect reflection of the strength and flexibility of Armed Forces families.

Why Purple?

Purple represents the blending of all service branches. It's a unifying colour, celebrating the shared experiences of Armed Forces families.

CONNECT.SUPPORT.CELEBRATE

MotMC is more than a celebration. It's a reminder to connect with, support and recognise the resilience of military children every day of the year, not just in April. By championing them year-round, we help ensure they thrive now and in the future.

connect: Build meaningful connections between families, schools and communities. Create a sense of inclusion and understanding that lasts all year.

support: Provide ongoing practical help and emotional encouragement. Ensure military children and their families have the resources and understanding they need.

celebrate: Recognise the resilience, experiences and achievements of military children. Share their stories and let them know they are understood, included and respected.

#MOTMC

SAVE THE DATES 2025



Funded by the Dandelion Project, Never Such Innocence will be delivering poetry and art workshops to primary and secondary schools over three days. To register your interest, click [here](#).



Month of the Military Child Celebration Event!
More information to follow, save the date!



Purple Up! Day
A day to spread some purple cheer across Moray to celebrate MotMC!

HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED:

- **Purple Up! Day**
Encourage children, young people and staff to wear purple to show support for Armed Forces-connected pupils.
- **Creative Competitions**
Host art, poetry, or writing contests where children and young people can share their experiences or support for military families.
- **Educational Assemblies**
Hold assemblies to raise awareness of the unique experiences faced by Armed Forces-connected pupils and celebrate their resilience.
- **Story Sharing Projects**
Inspire Armed Forces-connected pupils to share their stories or create displays of their experiences. This can help them connect with others who may share similar journeys, building understanding and community.
- **Dandelion-Themed Activities**
Use dandelion crafts or lessons to highlight the resilience and adaptability of children and young people from Armed Forces families.
- **Mindfulness and Wellbeing Exercises**
Offer activities like mindfulness sessions or journaling to support mental health and wellbeing during deployments and other experiences of change.
- **Singing and Competitions**
Sing Never Such Innocence's *Dandelion* song as part of your celebrations. Get involved in Never Such Innocence's MotMC competition to further highlight the voices and talents of children and young people.

GET

CONNECTED WITH

MORAY'S local military bases

Discover ways for Armed Forces families to connect with Moray's local military bases, services, and supports. Schools can use this information to signpost families to relevant resources, while families can engage directly with what's on offer.

RAF Lossiemouth

Visit [MyLossie website](#) for information about RAF Community Support in Moray, including the most recent welcome booklet. Contact the HIVE to find out what is available for families to access when a serving parent is deployed. The Community Support Team, HIVE, Padres and SSAFA are based at St Aidan's Centre, RAF Lossiemouth.

Kinloss Barracks

Visit 39 Engineer Regiment's [Linktree](#) for information and useful links, including their latest welcome booklet. On the domestic side of Kinloss Barracks, you can find [Unit Welfare](#), [Army Welfare Service \(AWS\)](#) & 39 Regiment Community Centre (formerly known as the HIVE). The Community Centre and Cumming Hall offer activities run by the Welfare Teams and the 39 Engr Communities Committee.



Join the **MAILING LIST**

[AWS mailing list click here](#)



Fancy a **CHAT & BREW?**



Nearest **HIVE**



→ local and national services and support.

FREE Support for Parents & Carers
of children aged 4-18 living in Moray

Exchange Families
Supporting Children, Young People & Families

Wellbeing Support for Parents, Carers & Families

- Workshops
- Wellbeing Discussions
- 1-to-1 Support

03302 020 283
admin@exchange-counselling.co.uk

MENTAL HEALTH AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

D=EXY

kooth

Missing your friends and need to talk?

Discover Kooth's supportive space

- Supportive online community
- Helpful articles
- Free chat counselling
- Self-help tools

Sign up for free at kooth.com/mod

ssafa The Armed Forces Charity

SSAFA
Soldiers', Sailors' & Airwomen's Families Association

We support the armed forces community in a number of ways, though our focus is on providing direct support to individuals in need of physical or emotional care.

Our support covers both regulars and reserves in the Royal Navy, the Royal Marines, the British Army and the Royal Air Force and their families, including anyone who has completed National Service.

Reach out to your local SSAFA branch for trusted support in your time of need!

SSAFA Service Community Team - Moray
ssafa_lossie

FORCES CHILDREN SCOTLAND

Forces Children Scotland have various funding opportunities available, from financial support to grants from their aspirational fund. Click here to find out more and to apply.

AIRPLAY CONNECT

Airplay's secure **digital information hub** for all RAF children & young people aged 5-18, their parents and carers as well as an online platform for Airplay **digital activities**. You can access the site on a web browser or add the Airplay Connect icon to your mobile home screen and even set up push notifications for your Airplay Project.

SIGN UP*
GET INVOLVED
BE IN THE KNOW

*Sign up and add the Airplay Connect icon to your mobile home screen from an Airplay Connect app on your mobile phone.

airplayconnect.org

YMCA

airplay

DISCOVER MORAY with #DandelionTeddyTrail

Join our community adventure and create magical memories with your family!



The Dandelion Teddy Trail is a family-friendly journey through Moray's scenic landscapes, cultural landmarks and hidden treasures!

Perfect for newcomers and long-time residents; this trail invites families to join our teddy bear's adventures and explore some of Moray's most interesting spots. Each location offers a chance to experience the area, connect with the community and create lasting memories together while discovering places that are free to visit.

HOW IT WORKS

Follow the hashtag #DandelionTeddyTrail on social media to see where teddy has been exploring.

FIND THE LOCATIONS

Head to the featured spots around Moray and capture your own family moments there.

SHARE YOUR ADVENTURES

Post your photos with the hashtag #DandelionTeddyTrail, and see them featured in our community scrapbook—through social media, newsletters and online!

 **Dandelion Project Moray**
follow for updates

#DandelionTeddyTrail

