

# The Impact and Value of School-Based Cadet Forces in the UK

Research Commissioned by the Ministry of Defence  
and the Combined Cadet Force Association



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# Acknowledgements.

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The authors are very grateful to the members of the Cadet Forces, Combined Cadet Force (CCF) staff and cadets, Head Teachers, School Governors, serving and retired members of the Armed Forces of the UK, officials from the Ministry of Defence, Department for Education and Department for Work and Pensions, and other expert sources that kindly provided information to enable this report to be produced. We are particularly grateful to the School Cadet Expansion Officers, who have been enormously supportive of the research.

# Foreword by the Minister for Veterans and People.

Every child deserves to succeed, and we want to ensure that they are prepared for the opportunities and the challenges of adult life. Breaking down barriers to opportunity is a core Government mission, and this report illustrates the positive impact that school-based Cadet Forces can have on the young people who join.

The Government believes every child should be able to take part in vital and enriching wider opportunities like cadets. The findings in this report show how participation in the many exciting, challenging and fun activities provided by Cadet Forces in schools can help develop self-confidence, teamwork, leadership and resilience in young people. All these attributes can only serve to help prepare young people for the many challenges that they face now and in their future, thereby setting them up to succeed.

There are many useful insights in the report for any school leader, regardless of their setting or location, that will be helpful in supporting their own effective engagement in seeking wider opportunities for all their pupils.

The number of cadets in schools has grown significantly since the joint Ministry of Defence and Department for Education Cadet Expansion Programme was launched in 2012. Nearly 60% of school cadet units are now in the state sector, often in disadvantaged areas of the UK, where previously the

majority were in independent schools. The report also demonstrates how cadet detachments in schools play a valuable supporting role to these very institutions that seek to prepare young people for adult life. Participation in cadets can motivate pupils and make them feel that they belong to both the school and their wider community.

School staff who took part in this research reported that Cadet Force units help to improve staff/pupil relationships. And furthermore, adult volunteers who deliver the cadet experience cite their own positive experiences, including how volunteering helps them to develop self-confidence, widens their skill set and enables them to further connect with the pupils they strive to develop.

For anyone who is interested in the development of young people, this report makes for compelling reading. I hope you agree that it deserves the widest possible attention – from headteachers through to the wider community that they and their schools serve, as we all seek to achieve the best for all our young people.



Alistair Carns DSO OBE MC MP

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# Executive summary.

## Research Overview

Between 2016 and 2020 the Institute for Social Innovation and Impact at the University of Northampton carried out research to identify the social impact and value of the Cadet Forces in the UK. This study covered both community cadet units and CCF contingents. The current research seeks to build upon this evidence base, to identify and describe the impact and value of the CCF and other school-based Cadet Force units to stakeholders within schools (and outside). This project was given the following seven research objectives by the Ministry of Defence Youth and Cadet Team and the Combined Cadet Force Association.

- To identify the impacts of school-based Cadet Forces on school outcomes as measured by Ofsted, Education Scotland, Estyn (Wales), the Education and Training Inspectorate (N. Ireland), and the Independent Schools Inspectorate (England only),
- To identify the impacts of school-based Cadet Forces on pupil attainment,
- To identify the impacts of school-based Cadet Forces on pupil participation and leadership in wider school activities,
- To identify the impacts of school-based Cadet Forces on the career aspirations and intentions of pupils,
- To identify the impacts of school-based Cadet Forces on teacher – student relations,
- To identify the impacts of school-based Cadet Forces on teacher confidence and competence,
- To identify the potential value for money of the impacts of school-based Cadet Forces.

## 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.

Primary qualitative data for the report was gained through interviews and surveys, which were carried out either in person or online/over the telephone. A total of 54 interviews were gathered from the following stakeholder groups:

- Head Teachers/Principals = 7
- Members of School Leadership Teams = 2
- CCF Contingent Commanders = 7
- CCF Adult Volunteers = 2
- School Staff Instructors = 5
- Department for Education officials = 3
- Ministry of Defence officials = 3
- Department of Work and Pensions officials = 3
- Senior Military Officers = 10
- School Cadet Expansion Officers = 4
- Combined Cadet Force Association managers = 2
- Cadet Vocational College managers = 2
- Careers Advice Professionals = 2
- Ofsted Inspector = 1
- Local Authority Education Department official = 1

Primary quantitative data were gathered through bespoke designed surveys targeted at cadets in CCF contingents, Contingent Commanders (CCs), contingent School Staff Instructors (SSIs), Head Teachers and School Governors. In total 274 respondents engaged with the surveys, as is outlined below, due to the low sample-size the data from the School Governors has not been included in this report:

- Head Teachers = 36
- School Governors = 5
- Contingent Commanders and SSIs = 79
- Cadets = 154





Summary of Findings

The key findings from the report are divided into two categories: Impact on the School and Impact on the Cadet. For the first area, the data gathered illustrates that the CCF creates positive impact for schools in a number of areas.

Impact on the School

- **Enrichment:** The CCF contingents provide enrichment activity within schools, helping to build character, resilience, practical skills, and camaraderie in staff and students.
- **Attendance:** The CCF was viewed positively by schools in terms of preventing absenteeism, with CEP schools participating in this research reporting that members of their CCF contingents had significantly lower levels of absence.
- **Exclusions:** The CCF contingents were integral to some schools in attempting to reduce exclusions. This is an area that more schools could utilise, given the costs to society of school exclusions and the long-term negative impacts on the young person excluded.
- **Creating positive relationships:** The CCF creates positive relationships in schools, with positive comments associated with maintaining eye contact with adults, responsible attitudes and being supportive.
- **Sense of belonging:** School leaders noted that the CCF contingents were instrumental in creating a sense of community and belonging for students.
- **Opportunities:** CCFs provide cadets with opportunities to engage in Duke of Edinburgh Awards, Vocational Qualifications, and First Aid programmes; qualifications that place cadets in a good position when applying for employment or further education.
- **Teacher confidence:** The CCF officer role increases the affiliation of the teacher to the school, helps their sense of belonging, and develops both their

competence and their understanding of pupils, resulting in better relations with them.

- **School Outcomes:** Schools reported positive outcomes associated with the CCF contingent, with all schools, whether independent or in the state sector, noting that their CCF was an excellent way of reinforcing the values and standards of the school. Additionally, cadet units contribute to positive school inspection outcomes.
- **Community Engagement:** Many CCF contingents take part in Remembrance Parades in their local community, which promotes community cohesion. This not only impacts on the cadet's engagement in the community, but also that of their parents.
- **Investment:** CCF contingents require a school to invest time and resources to establish them. Both CC/SSIs and Head Teachers viewed CCFs as a significant resource investment, but one that was a good investment for the school to make.
- **Turnover:** There are concerns about the turnover of CCF adult volunteers. In general, independent schools have less difficulty getting teaching staff to volunteer to be involved in the CCF, than state schools.

Impact on Cadets

- **Skills Development:** The CCF contingents provide cadets with a progressive syllabus that includes skill awards and promotions. The Cadets' peer-mentoring approach upsills and promotes social skills. This is bolstered through the access to qualifications gained through the Cadet Vocational College<sup>1</sup>.
- **Career Aspirations:** The CCF contingents encourage cadets to consider the future, with data on cadets' plans for their post-school lives showing that the majority of cadets planned to go to university.
- **Confidence and self-efficacy:** The CCF contingents create opportunities for cadets to develop confidence and self-efficacy. The data gathered shows that cadets on average rated their experience of developing skills/abilities through their contingents very positively.

- **Wellbeing:** The CCF contingents provide routine and standards for all cadets, promoting mental health and wellbeing. The data gathered revealed positive changes in cadets' wellbeing, with the most positive impacts being in relation to feeling closer to others, feeling useful and making up one's own mind.
- **Resilience:** The CCF contingents have a positive impact on the resilience of cadets, with both Head Teachers and CC/SSIs arguing that CCF contingents as having a very positive impact on pupil resilience.

Value for Money

Head Teachers and other school-based staff are clear that a cadet unit can deliver significant value in multiple ways. Indicative financial calculations, using Government-approved methods, support this view and it is concluded that school-based cadet units are delivering excellent value for money.

Limitations of the Report

This report, like all other social science reports, is based on data that is, inevitably, incomplete. As noted in Section Three, the number of survey responses from School Governors was too small for them to be utilised in the analysis and the number of Cadets was lower than expected (with only 154 responses from over 50,000 Cadets). Despite the limitations with the sample, the use of multi-methodologies has enabled triangulation of data to ensure the results are valid and reliable.

In terms of comparable samples, no attempt was made to gather data from schools without CCF contingents in order to compare them with schools with CCFs. In addition, the impact of CCF contingents was not compared with the impacts of other extra-curricular activities offered by schools with CCFs. Expanding on this research to compare CCF contingents with other schools without CCF contingent or other extra-curricular activities would be interesting.

The geographical reach of the survey and interviews covered all parts of the UK, although the majority of respondents to surveys and interviews were from England (the great majority of school-based cadet units are in England). The research team sought to overcome any single-country bias by conducting an extensive literature review and engaging with other stakeholders informally throughout the research.

Finally, the research team acknowledge the risks of bias associated with the interpretation of qualitative and quantitative data. To minimise the impact of any subjectivity bias, the research team have cross-checked the emergent themes with existing literature and other data sources.

1 CVQO was renamed the Cadet Vocational College in July 2023.

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# About The Authors.

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**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, 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. Richard 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).

Richard 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. Richard 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.

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# About The Authors cont.

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**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.

Claire 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). Claire is currently a Visiting Fellow at Binus University in Indonesia.





# 1. The Impact and Value of School-Based Cadet Forces in the UK

The Combined Cadet Force (CCF) consists of cadet contingents of one or more Service sections (RN, Army, RAF, RM) based in schools that form part of the Cadet Forces of the UK, sponsored by the Ministry of Defence. The CCF is a youth organization, which is tasked with providing "... young people with the life skills and self-confidence to take charge of their lives so they can reach their full potential at school and beyond, including in employment".<sup>2</sup> This study also includes five Linked Detachments in Scotland<sup>3</sup>.

Cadet units in UK schools date back to 1859 when the Secretary of State for War, Jonathan Peel, wrote to public schools and universities, inviting them to form units of the Volunteer Corps. Several schools took up the idea, and the first Cadet Corps in a school was formed in 1860 at Rossall School, in Lancashire. Other units formed soon after at Eton, Harrow, Rugby, Hurstpierpoint and Felsted School.<sup>4</sup>

These early, all male, units were exclusive to public schools and focused on Army activities. They were usually associated with Rifle Volunteer Battalions for Home Defence, with cadets wearing the uniforms of their parent volunteer battalions. The Corps evolved over time, focusing on Officer Training, and during the First and Second World Wars many of the young men who served in the units went on to serve the country in the Armed Forces.



Members of Glenalmond College Cadet Corps in 1887<sup>5</sup>

After World War 2, the structure of the Armed Forces changed, including the cadet units in schools. In 1948 the Combined Cadet Force (CCF) was created by the amalgamation of the, Army-based, Junior Training Corps (formerly the Junior Division of the Officers Training Corps) and the school contingents of the Sea Cadet Corps and Air Training Corps. CCFs are still occasionally referred to as "The Corps." A school contingent may have any combination of Royal Navy, Army, Royal Air Force and sometimes Royal Marines sections, the Army section is almost invariably the largest if there is more than one section. During the second half of the twentieth century the number of CCF contingents in state schools increased and, as more schools became co-educational, girls were able to join the CCF.

Modern CCF contingents are very different to their predecessors. Although they are still based on the ethos of the Armed Forces, their focus is on helping young people to develop and reach their full potential by providing challenging, active, adventurous and fun activities.<sup>6</sup> CCF contingents have syllabuses different to community cadet detachments (the Army Cadet Force, Air Training Corps, Sea Cadets and Volunteer

<sup>2</sup> Combined Cadet Force (CCF) Sections. Available online at <https://combinedcadetforce.org.uk/>

<sup>3</sup> Linked Detachments are cadet units in Scottish state schools linked to a local community cadet unit

<sup>4</sup> Interestingly Felsted School's armed drill contingent pre-dated the 1859 letter from the War Office.

<sup>5</sup> Photograph supplied by Lowland RFCA

<sup>6</sup> <https://combinedcadetforce.org.uk/about-the-ccf/history>



# The Impact and Value of School-Based Cadet Forces in the UK cont.

Cadet Corps) but aim to provide similar opportunities and achieve similar outcomes.

The CCF movement used to be dominated by the independent sector (c. 200 contingents being based in public schools and c. 60 contingents in state schools). However, the Cadet Expansion Programme has resulted in the state sector having more contingents than the independent sector (266 state and 198 independent as at Feb 25). Although there are many more state schools with CCF units than independent schools, the independent sector CCF contingents contain some two-thirds of cadets, although this is not surprising given their resources and how long some of them have been operating.

## 1.1 The Cadet Expansion Programme

The history of the Cadet Expansion Programme (CEP) reveals the desire of senior politicians and senior officers in HM Forces to create opportunities for pupils of schools in deprived areas. The origins of the CEP can authoritatively be traced back to 2008 when a meeting was held between the Assistant Chief of the Defence Staff and the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Schools and Learners to discuss how the CCF experience enjoyed by pupils in public and (a few) state grammar schools could be offered to schools in deprived areas. It was identified that, in some areas, public schools could provide a 'parenting' role to local state schools who wanted to set up a new CCF contingent.<sup>7</sup> However, the question of how CCFs in schools in deprived areas could be funded was not immediately resolved. Fortunately, the Assistant Chief of the Defence Staff was a member of the Honourable Artillery Company (HAC), a Reservist unit in the Army<sup>8</sup> with very close connections to the City of London. The HAC agreed to fund a CCF contingent in a local state school (the City of London Academy, Islington), with

a launch date in 2012. The HAC initiative was then subsumed by, and included in, the formal launch of the CEP on Armed Forces Day in June 2012 when the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister announced the aim of delivering 100 new cadet units in English state-funded schools by September 2015. Funding for the new, national, initiative came from the Department for Education supported by a significant commitment of resources by the Ministry of Defence.

The initial CEP target was reached six months early in March 2015 and following this achievement, the government committed an extra £50 million from LIBOR fines to further increase the number of cadet units in schools across the UK, bringing the total number of CCF contingents in all schools (independent and state) to 500<sup>9</sup> by 2020. This target was also achieved six months early when there were c. 45,000 cadets in CCF contingents. The aspiration for the third phase of the CEP was to increase the number of cadets to 60,000<sup>10</sup> by April 2024 but it was acknowledged that, largely due to the impact of Covid, it was not possible to reach this level in the anticipated timeframe. However, work is continuing to encourage sustainable growth up to 60,000 cadets in 500 schools. It is interesting to note that in April 2024 there were over 51,000 cadets, supported by more than 4,000 adult volunteers, in CCF contingents in the UK (85% of the aspirational target) and that this increase in the number of cadets since 2020 has been achieved with a relatively small additional cost averaging just under £2.5M per year. This is a remarkable achievement against the background of the Covid pandemic, the rise in the cost of living, and teachers' strikes. Moreover, as of February 2025, c.80 schools had applied to join the CEP scheme, although single Service capacity does not currently exist to permit a rapid expansion of the scheme to include all these extra schools.<sup>11</sup>

A few Scottish state schools offer pupils the opportunity to join a Linked Detachment as part

7 For example, Oundle School supported a new CCF in the Brooke Weston Academy in Corby <https://eastmidlandsrfa.co.uk/news/five-year-success-for-a-northamptonshire-ccf/>. Such partnerships have been found to be associated with increased social mobility (Chetty et al, 2022).  
8 <https://hac.org.uk/>  
9 There are over 6,000 secondary schools in the UK (including independent schools).  
10 This figure was proposed by the Rt Hon Gavin Williamson when he was Secretary of State for Defence.  
11 Now that LIBOR funding has been exhausted it is uncertain where the resource to meet this goal might come from.

# The Impact and Value of School-Based Cadet Forces in the UK cont.

of their subject choices from S3 onwards. Linked Detachment cadets are able to gain Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) awards at National Levels 4, 5 and 6.<sup>12</sup> The school's detachment is part of the local community cadet unit and is able to join their 'parent' unit for camps etc. As at February 2025, there were five Linked Detachments in schools in Scotland, four linked to local Army Cadet Force units, and one to its local Air Training Corps unit.<sup>13</sup> Independent schools in Scotland have CCF contingents in the same way as independent schools in the rest of the UK. A typical CEP CCF contingent involves between 30 and 70 cadets, although a CCF contingent in Essex has c. 235 cadets representing over 30% of the school roll.

As of February 2025, there were 445 CCF standalone schools, 97 junior partner schools (whose cadets are members of a CCF in a local standalone school), and 19 'non-CCF' schools (schools with cadet units that are not part of the CCF organization). Of these schools, 198 were in the independent sector and the rest were state schools. Some 68% of CCF cadets are Army, around 20% are RAF and 12% are Royal Navy. There are 408 schools with CCF contingents in England, 12 in Northern Ireland, 22 in Scotland (including the five Linked Detachments), and 10 in Wales.

CCF contingents are based within schools, and are funded by the school, the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and, to a very limited extent, by the Department for Education (DfE).<sup>14</sup> The MOD also provides uniforms, training for adult volunteers, training assistance, access to military facilities and transport (including aircraft and ships), loan of stores and equipment, and weapons and ammunitions. Schools are tasked with providing pupils that want to be cadets, time within the curriculum (or after school hours), accommodation and storage, adult volunteers and, essentially, commitment.<sup>15</sup>

12 At the school interviewed for the report, cadets in the Linked Detachment could gain National Level 4 Preparation of Uniformed and Emergency Services, National Level 5 qualifications in Leadership and Volunteering, and a National Level 6 SQA in Leadership. Additionally, the cadets could gain a Teamwork and Citizenship Award, First Aid qualifications, and Duke of Edinburgh awards.  
13 In this report, the five Linked Detachments are referred to under the blanket term 'CCF contingent', unless being specifically mentioned.  
14 The Department for Education provided funding to state schools in England to pay for a School Staff Instructor for one day a week. This funding (c. £1.1M p.a.) was provided from September 2021 to August 2024. Schools in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland do not receive funding from their devolved governments for their CCF contingents. The MOD currently spends more than £42M a year supporting CCF contingents in all parts of the UK.  
15 This list is adapted from Wood (2014)

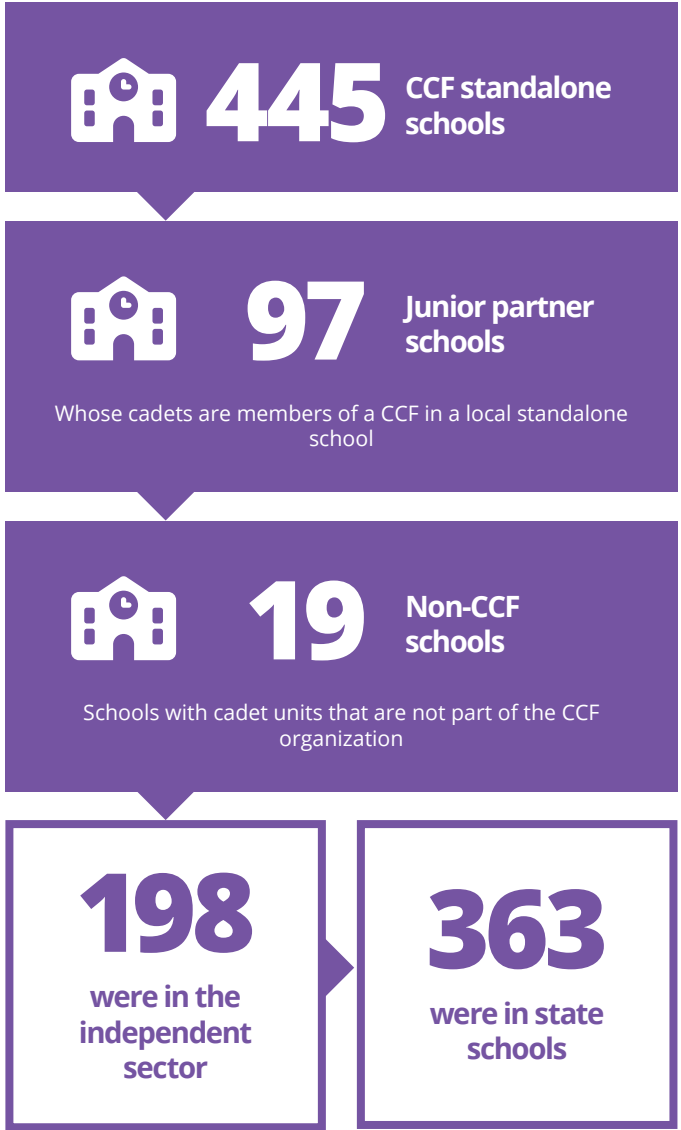


Figure 1.1 Schools with CCF units by school type





## 2. Introduction to the Research

Between 2016 and 2020 the Institute for Social Innovation and Impact at the University of Northampton carried out research to identify the social impact and value of the Cadet Forces in the UK. This study covered both community cadet units and CCF contingents. The study found that being part of the Cadet Forces offers a range of benefits to individuals involved, both children and adults, and the wider community.<sup>16</sup> This new research project coincides with the 75th anniversary of the CCF and goes beyond the terms of reference of the earlier study to identify and describe the impact and value of the CCF contingent and other school-based Cadet Force units to various audiences, both in schools and externally. The Institute for Social Innovation and Impact at the University of Northampton has been commissioned to carry out the research by the Youth and Cadets Branch of the Ministry of Defence and the Combined Cadet Force Association.<sup>17</sup>

pressure on the CCF contingent is particularly acute when a new headteacher, that does not understand the impacts that a CCF contingent can have, is appointed to a school. The standard 20% VAT rate was added to private school fees from 1 January 2025. From April 2025 private schools that are charities will lose charitable business rates relief.<sup>19</sup> These moves inevitably put pressure on the independent sector to reduce expenditure on ‘peripheral’ school activities. In addition, the growing workload placed upon teaching staff results in a disinclination of many to engage in additional extra-curricular activities. Furthermore, once established, it is tempting for senior leaders to assume that CCFs will maintain their own momentum, rather than provide ongoing and careful nurturing, particularly in ensuring that the correct level of staffing and other resourcing keeps up with the demands of the contingent.

School funding has been cut throughout the UK. In Northern Ireland school-age children have faced a combination of budgetary cuts, teacher union action, and political issues. For example, in May 2023, the Education Authority “reluctantly” agreed to £14 million in cuts and measures to reduce costs.<sup>20</sup> The cuts and measures to reduce costs led to the removal of funding for Breakfast Clubs and the ending of the Engage programme, the Holiday Hunger programme<sup>21</sup>, the Healthy Happy Minds pilot and all outdoor education. Additionally, teachers working to rule as part of their industrial dispute resulted in no after school clubs being run, with the notable exception of the CCF contingents. Further, Northern Ireland will see no new school building projects until 2025, at the earliest. Persistent truancy rates are now double those pre-Covid with c. 11% of secondary school age children now regularly not going to school. Although Scotland spent more per pupil in 2022 – 2023 than the rest of the UK (partly due to low growth in pupil numbers compared with more rapid increases elsewhere)<sup>22</sup>, the general

### 2.1 Research Context

There is a complex context to this new study. Increases in wage demands, rising utility costs, and other inflationary pressures have put significant pressure on school budgets.<sup>18</sup> The costs and benefits of school-based Cadet Forces, like all school-based curricular and extra-curricular activities, are facing careful scrutiny from schools’ senior leadership teams as they deal with these mounting pressures. As a result, some headteachers might be tempted to reduce expenditure on their CCF contingent. This

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.northampton.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/social-impact-cadet-forces-uk-2020.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> <https://combinedcadetforce.org.uk/>

<sup>18</sup> See, <https://epi.org.uk/publications-and-research/current-estimates-of-school-funding-pressure/>

<sup>19</sup> See, <https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2024/11/vat-private-schools-everything-you-need-to-know/>

<sup>20</sup> Source: <https://www.belfastlive.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/education-authority-reluctantly-agrees-14-26879849>


<sup>21</sup> Under the Holiday Hunger Grant scheme, parents in receipt of free school meals (affecting some 96,300 children or 30% of children in Northern Ireland) received a payment of £27 per child each fortnight to assist with food costs during school holidays, see: <https://www.belfastlive.co.uk/news/holiday-hunger-school-counselling-scheme-26592408>

<sup>22</sup> See, <https://ifs.org.uk/news/growing-gap-school-spending-pupil-between-scotland-and-rest-uk>



# Introduction to the Research cont.

secretary of School Leaders Scotland has pointed out that budgetary pressures are reducing the ability of schools to promote pupil aspirations and that class sizes would have to increase, and some subjects could be cut. In 2022 the acting Finance Secretary in Scotland accepted that spending plans set out in the draft Scottish Budget made a “pretty bleak picture.”<sup>23</sup> The picture in Wales is similar. Councils have reduced expenditure on schools<sup>24</sup>, while school governors have warned that school budgets are at crisis point. Governors have said that the lack of money for schools is having a “grave” impact on pupils with “poorer teaching and learning, poorer buildings, safety concerns and staff burnout.”<sup>25</sup>



Scan the QR code to download the 2021 Cadets report

The short- and medium-term impacts of the Covid pandemic upon schools are also an important element of the context for this study. In some areas the pandemic changed the nature of the relationship between schools and pupils, which became more impersonal and remote with the widespread introduction of online learning. Parents assumed more responsibility for their children’s learning and a surprisingly large number of them have decided that school is not the right environment for their children.<sup>26</sup> There have been reports of high levels of anxiety among children about having to return to mainstream schooling,<sup>27</sup> and recent research findings seem to confirm that many young people have experienced a deterioration in their mental health

(Samji et al. 2022) and are increasingly unhappy about their physical health. Rates of probable mental disorders and eating problems remain at higher levels than before the Covid-19 pandemic.<sup>28</sup> Additionally, the percentage of young people that are unhappy with their family and friends is also higher than before the pandemic.<sup>29</sup> Unsurprisingly, mental health problems are more common among disadvantaged children.<sup>30</sup> Consequently, levels of persistent absence from schools have risen, with some accounts suggesting as many as 20% of children are habitually not attending school, almost twice as many as was normal before the pandemic.<sup>31</sup> The House of Commons Public Accounts Committee produced a report suggesting that many disadvantaged pupils are facing a ‘lost decade’ if action is not taken to close the gap between them and others to what it was before Covid.<sup>32</sup> The Committee’s report also called for the DfE to do more to find out why disadvantaged pupils have higher absence rates. This context is particularly relevant to the schools in the CEP scheme given that it is targeted at schools in more deprived areas of the UK.

Extra-curricular or enrichment activities are highly valued by pupils and their parents.<sup>33</sup> However, between 2020 and 2021 almost two-thirds of schools were not offering any extra-curricular opportunities. Further, some 30% of all school-aged children in England do not participate in enrichment activities, either inside or outside school, with the figure increasing for secondary age groups. The lack of extra-curricular activities in some schools may partly explain the post-pandemic levels of pupil absenteeism.

The Covid-19 pandemic also disrupted the support

23 See, <https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/education-cuts-in-scotland-will-see-class-sizes-increased-and-subjects-removed-3958078>  
24 See, <https://nation.cymru/opinion/stop-the-stealth-cuts-to-school-budgets/>  
25 See, <https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/education/people-responsible-schools-send-devastating-27297074>  
26 See, <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/home-education-soars-in-the-wake-of-the-pandemic/>  
27 See, for example, <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2023/apr/23/rise-in-school-absences-since-covid-driven-by-anxiety-and-lack-of-support-say-english-councils>  
28 [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1134596/State\\_of\\_the\\_nation\\_2022\\_-\\_children\\_and\\_young\\_people\\_s\\_wellbeing.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1134596/State_of_the_nation_2022_-_children_and_young_people_s_wellbeing.pdf)  
29 Ibid.  
30 See, <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/an-isolated-generation-the-impact-of--19-on-children-and-young-people>  
31 See ‘Empty chairs, quieter playgrounds’, in The Economist 22 April 2023, <https://www.economist.com/britain/2023/04/20/english-schoolchildren-are-still-missing-months-of-classes>  
32 BBC News, 7 June 2023, see <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-65814786>  
33 A DfE manager interviewed for this study said that regular surveys conducted by the Department highlight the importance of enrichment activities but that many schools were not providing extra-curricular activities.

# Introduction to the Research cont.

systems that many children rely on. The Resilience, Ethnicity, and Adolescent Mental Health (REACH)<sup>34</sup> study at the Centre for Society and Mental Health – a collaboration between the Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience (IoPPN) and the Faculty of Social Science and Public Policy at King’s College London pointed out that the closure of schools, which not only provided structure and routine and a safe environment, but also act as hubs for child protection and mental health referrals, meant that exposure to abuse and neglect increased as children from abusive households had to spend more time at home. An interviewee involved with a youth club in south Wales commented that children that used the club ‘had taken six months to get back to anything like normal.’<sup>35</sup> In addition to school closures during the Covid-19 pandemic, the UK has seen a significant cut in provision for young people over the last decade. The Local Government Association, which represents 350 councils in England and Wales, said in February 2022 that it was concerned that the Government had reduced the Youth Investment Fund from £500 million to £378 million. This move came when councils are already under significant financial constraints supporting children, with more than 8 in 10 councils forced to overspend their children’s social care budgets.<sup>36</sup> The National Youth Agency report, Better Together – Youth Work with Schools,<sup>37</sup> highlights the importance of youth provision; although it fails to mention CCF contingents in schools, an obvious example of youth work with schools. It is instructive to note that, as mentioned above, the CCF has increased the number of cadets it supports by over 6,000 between 2020 and 2024.

In 2023 the UK Government took some measures to improve youth provision through the National Youth Guarantee and the Youth Investment Fund.<sup>38</sup> In November 2024 the new Government unveiled plans for a new National Youth Strategy. The Strategy aims to prioritise delivering better coordinated youth services and policy at a local, regional and national level and help deliver on the government’s missions,

spreading opportunities, making streets safer and taking pressure off health services. It was announced that more than £85 million would be allocated in recognition of the urgent need for more youth facilities, including £26 million of new funding for youth clubs for new equipment and renovations.<sup>39</sup>

## 2.2 Research Objectives

Given the challenges of the post-pandemic context for the CCF contingents in schools, this project was given the following seven research objectives by the Ministry of Defence Youth and Cadet Team and the Combined Cadet Force Association.

1. To identify the impacts of school-based Cadet Forces on school outcomes as measured by Ofsted, Education Scotland, Estyn (Wales), the Education and Training Inspectorate (N. Ireland), and the Independent Schools Inspectorate (England only),
2. To identify the impacts of school-based Cadet Forces on pupil attainment,
3. To identify the impacts of school-based Cadet Forces on pupil participation and leadership in wider school activities,
4. To identify the impacts of school-based Cadet Forces on the career aspirations and intentions of pupils,
5. To identify the impacts of school-based Cadet Forces on teacher – student relations,
6. To identify the impacts of school-based Cadet Forces on teacher confidence and competence,
7. To identify the potential value for money of the impacts of school-based Cadet Forces.

34 <https://www.thereachstudy.com/>  
35 Interviewed in May 2023.  
36 <https://www.local.gov.uk/about/news/youth-services-funding-reduction-could-pay-over-1000-youth-workers-lga> 24 Feb 2022  
37 <https://www.nya.org.uk/youth-work-with-schools/>  
38 <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/major-boost-for-young-people-with-plans-to-transform-youth-centres>  
39 <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-national-youth-strategy-to-break-down-barriers-to-opportunity-for-young-people>





# 3. 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. The literature review as a research method has the advantage of enabling authors to be up-to-date with relevant knowledge, as well as enabling them to assess and compare different items of evidence. However, it is acknowledged that literature reviews often lack thoroughness and rigour, especially when they are conducted ad hoc and do not follow clear methods rather than following a specific methodology (Snyder, 2019). To attempt to guard against this weakness, all the peer-reviewed literature has been assessed by reviewing the methodologies described by the authors.

It is not assumed that, because an article appeared in a peer-reviewed journal, it met a ‘gold standard.’ Peer review has become an essential component of the academic writing process, helping to ensure that papers published in scientific journals answer meaningful research questions and draw accurate conclusions based on professionally executed experimentation. However, despite its wide-spread use by most journals, the peer-review system has also been widely criticised for the slowness of the process to publish new findings, the perceived bias shown by some editors and or reviewers (Kelly, Sadeghieh and Adeli, 2014), and the tendency for work by established figures to be published ahead of work by new researchers.<sup>40</sup> The increase in the number of online only or e-journals with little or no peer review may pose risk to the advance of knowledge. Articles in this type of publication have been avoided wherever possible.

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.

## 3.1 Qualitative Data

Primary qualitative data for the report was gained through interviews and surveys. Table 3.1 provides a summary of the interview participants (n = 54).<sup>41</sup> Interviews were conducted either in-person or using online conferencing or the telephone. All interviewees were sent a Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form in advance of their meeting with a member of the research team who conducted the interview. All interviewees were guaranteed that their responses would be anonymous. Notes were made during the interview. The interview material was then displayed in effects clusters, context charts, or event flow charts. These display methods enabled themes and patterns to be identified and relations between variables noted. A check was carried out for researcher effects by an independent academic carrying out a peer review of data gathering and analysis. The patterns and themes identified in the analysis of interview data informed the design of four surveys.

Interview Group	N
Head Teachers/Principals	7
Members of School Leadership Teams	2
CCF Contingent Commanders	7
CCF Adult Volunteers	2
School Staff Instructors	5
Department for Education officials	3
Ministry of Defence officials	3
Department of Work and Pensions officials	3
Senior Military Officers	10
School Cadet Expansion Officers	4

40 See <https://www.economist.com/science-and-technology/2022/09/14/an-influential-academic-safeguard-is-distorted-by-status-bias>  
41 54 interviews at the higher end of acceptable numbers for qualitative research according to Adler, P.A. and Adler, P. (1987) Membership Roles in Field Research. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.



Interview Group	N
Combined Cadet Force Association managers	2
Cadet Vocational College managers	2
Careers Advice Professionals <sup>42</sup>	2
Ofsted Inspector	1
Local Authority Education Department official	1

Table 3.1: Summary of people interviewed for the report.

3.2 Quantitative Data

Surveys were produced to gather data from cadets in CCF contingents, Contingent Commanders, School Staff Instructors (SSIs), Head Teachers and School Governors. Surveys were designed by the research team and trialled with samples of their target populations. Surveys contained a mixture of information on school type, position in CCF, age of CCF and experience in CCF. The experience of participants was captured using Likert-style responses which are highly reliable and easy for participants to complete (Bertram, 2007). To increase the likelihood of getting responses to the surveys, they were distributed by the School Cadet Expansion Officers. Table 3.2 shows the number of responses received from each of the target populations, with a total sample of 274 respondents.

Target population	N
Head Teachers	36
School Governors	5
Contingent Commanders and SSIs	79
Cadets	154

Table 3.2: Number of Survey Responses

The number of survey responses from School

42 One of the Careers Advice Professionals was an Enterprise Coordinator for the Careers and Enterprise Company, see <https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/>

43 Not all figures sum to 274 due to missing responses: Contingent Commanders/SSIs = 3; Cadets = 5.

Governors was too small for them to be utilised in the analysis within this report.

The responses to the surveys were further grouped under different headings to aid analysis. Table 3.3 shows the numbers of responses by type of school. The category ‘type of school’ was chosen in order to try and identify if there were any significant differences in the impacts of a CCF contingent between the independent, grammar and non-selective sectors.

Type of School	Respondent Group	N
Independent/Public	Head Teacher	18
	Contingent Commander & SSI	37
	Cadets	117
State Grammar	Head Teacher	5
	Contingent Commander & SSI	9
	Cadets	18
State Other	Head Teacher	13
	Contingent Commander & SSI	30
	Cadets	14

Table 3.3: Number of Survey Responses by Type of School<sup>43</sup>

As noted in the brief history of school-based cadet forces, independent schools have normally had CCFs for many decades while the CEP school CCFs are younger. Table 3.4 shows how long different types of school have had their CCF contingents.

Age of CCF	Independent School	State Grammar	State Other
Less than 3 years	2	0	6
4 – 5 years	4	1	11
6 – 8 years	0	2	6
9 – 10 years	0	0	1
More than 10 years	31	6	6
Totals	37	9	30

Table 3.4: Ages of CCF by Type of School

Responses were received from schools throughout the UK. Table 3.5 shows the number of schools that responded to the survey by location.

Age of CCF	Independent School	State Grammar	State Other
England	28	5	25
Scotland	5	0	0
Northern Ireland	3	4	3
Wales	1	0	1
Totals	37	9	29

Table 3.5: Number of School responses by UK Location<sup>44</sup>

We believe that the survey responses demonstrate a usable sample statistically, representing a total of 76 (17.2%) of the entire standalone CCF population in schools (N=443). Further, the sample represents a broad balance between Independent (48.7%) and State (51.3%) schools.

The use of secondary and primary methodologies enabled data to be triangulated to ensure that the results were as valid and reliable as possible in a social sciences study of this type.

3.3 Ethics

The research was approved by the University of Northampton Faculty Ethics Committee. Ethical considerations for the research are associated with confidentiality and anonymity; voluntary participation; informed consent; data protection and storage; and the safeguarding of participants. This includes:

- Informed consent – Participants received detailed information on the project, with a Participant Information Sheet outlining the purpose, benefits, risks, and funding behind the study before they agree or decline to join. Participants completed a consent form before completing the research.
- Voluntary participation – Participants received detailed information on the project (i.e., Participant Information Sheet) and information on the process for consenting and opting-in to the research.
- Anonymity – Participants anonymity was protected, and any identifiable information removed from the datasets before analysis.
- Confidentiality – Participant information was kept confidential (hidden). Anonymised data is used in the report but cannot be linked to participants directly.
- Data protection and storage – Information is stored securely on a SharePoint dedicated to the project, in line with the Data Protection Act and GDPR. Data security was maintained by having personal information accessible only to the research teams. Data will be stored on University of Northampton servers during this time and will be submitted to UK Data Archive. Subsequently, all data will be deleted and destroyed, based on JISC guidance on managing research records.
- Safeguarding of participants – Physical, social, psychological, and all other types of harm were not expected to occur as part of this research project. However, a distress protocol was detailed for the research to ensure relevant support, contact information and details on complaint procedure were available.

Interviews with participants are reported anonymously, with pseudonyms randomly assigned to case studies.

44 One country response was missing for State Other schools.





## 4.

## Key Findings.

The analysis of data gathered for this project enabled the research team to identify key findings covering three areas: how the Armed Forces view the CCF; the impacts of having a school-based Cadet Force unit on a school, including the impacts on teachers and other adults involved with the unit; and the impacts of being part of a school-based Cadet Force unit on pupils.

### 4.1 How the UK Armed Forces view the CCF

The senior military officers and School Cadet Expansion Officers (SCEOs) interviewed by the research team all commented that the CEP scheme was well managed and effective when the Head Teacher of a CEP school understands the impacts that the CCF can have. Many CEP schools clearly have senior leadership teams actively engaged with their CCF contingent. However, if a new Head who does not support the CCF is appointed, or if there are not enough high-quality adult volunteers, then the contingent can fail. Officials from both the MOD and the Department for Education observed that, for a CCF to be effective, it needs to be regarded as a mini-department, not just another extra-curricular activity, as emphasised by Wood (2014). There is a concern within the MOD that teachers in the state sector are increasingly unwilling to take on CCF roles (as well as take part in after-school clubs etc.) and some schools have found it hard to recruit a School Staff Instructor (SSI). It has been noted that some schools are using Teaching and Learning Responsibilities payments<sup>45</sup> to help pay for the SSI required to run their CCFs, topping up the funding received from the MOD and the DfE<sup>46</sup>.

The need for the Armed Forces to engage with Heads and the senior management teams of schools is recognized. CCF contingents are much more embedded, and resourced, in schools in the independent sector, and in 'legacy' state schools,<sup>47</sup> although CCF contingents in these types of school have failed in the past. Senior military officers accept that they have had to devote significant time and resource to the CEP schools and that the support they are able to provide to the 'legacy' school contingents has reduced. However, all senior officers interviewed believed that the CEP was having a very positive social impact, particularly on children from disadvantaged backgrounds; with one senior officer saying he thought the Armed Forces had a moral obligation to enable disadvantaged children to have the opportunities provided by the CCF.

CCF contingents, as well as cadet units in the community, are supported by Cadet Training Teams,<sup>48</sup> and many adult volunteers receive training, locally, regionally, and at national centres such as the Army's Frimley Park.<sup>49</sup> The Royal Navy, the Royal Air Force and the Army have teams of serving and Reservist staff responsible for providing training and support to CCF contingents. Despite the rapid growth in the number of CCF contingents over the last decade, schools are very positive about the support they receive. In addition, the 'tribal' nature of the UK's Armed Forces contributes to the success of CCF contingents. Cadets wear the cap badges of the Royal Navy, Royal Air Force, or of an Army Regiment or Corps. The Armed Forces are very keen that 'their' affiliated CCF contingents succeed, and the support they provide to schools, both during weekly parades, on camps, and opportunities for visits to Regular units,<sup>50</sup> can be substantial. The Armed Forces recognize that CCF contingents are under pressure to cope with the increased bureaucracy that has been imposed upon them, as previously highlighted by Wood (2014).

<sup>45</sup> <https://neu.org.uk/advice/your-rights-work/pay/teachers-pay-and-allowances/tlr-payments-and-other-allowances>

<sup>46</sup> DfE's remit meant that funding for SSIs was only provided to state schools in England. This funding ran from September 2021 to August 2024.

<sup>47</sup> For example, some grammar schools have had a CCF contingent for over a century.

<sup>48</sup> For an example job description of an Army Cadet Training Team member, see <https://www.findforcesjobs.mod.gov.uk/vx/mobile-0/appcentre-ext/brand-5/candidate/so/pm/1/pl/3/opp/2496-Cadet-Training-Team-Instructor/en-GB>

<sup>49</sup> <https://armycadets.com/who-we-are/national-cadet-training-centre/>

<sup>50</sup> For example, cadet contingents that wear the cap badge of the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers are often invited to visit Regimental Headquarters at the Tower of London.



# Key Findings cont.

CCF contingents also receive support and funding from the Combined Cadet Force Association (CCFA). The CCFA provides a national forum for CCF contingents, and liaises between the MOD and headteachers organisations. It also offers insurance and legal advice to CCF contingents and has a range of grant programmes that contingents can apply to for group and individual support. Additionally, the CCFA provides a single point of contact for the CCF with organisations including the Cadet Vocational College, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, St John Ambulance, and the Council for Cadet Rifle Shooting etc. Surprisingly, not all CCF contingents have joined the CCFA.

## 4.2 The Impact of School-Based Cadet Forces on Schools

Data was gathered through the interviews and the surveys to better understand schools' engagement with both 'legacy' CCF contingents and the CEP, including why schools had engaged with the CEP scheme. The interview data identified beliefs amongst Headteachers of CEP schools that CCF units were an integral part of their educational approach.

**"If you took the CCF out of our school it would leave a significant gap, even at this early stage."**  
**Head Teacher, CEP CCF School, Northern Ireland**

**"It is not a military movement, it is a social movement"**  
**Head Teacher, CEP CCF School, East Midlands**

### 4.2.1 Why schools took part in the CEP

All schools now have visions and value statements.<sup>51</sup> When interviewing Head Teachers and other school leaders the research team found that all respondents said, without being asked, that the culture of the CCF

was fully aligned with their school's values:

**"The culture of the CCF very much chimes with school values and 250 children promoting those values as cadets makes us a better school"**  
**Head Teacher, Grammar School, South East England**

Additionally, the CCF, as an overt demonstration of school values, was seen as important in reinforcing these values to all pupils and teachers, and was a unique selling point for the school, a finding noted by Wood (2014).

The CEP programme was targeted at schools in, or close to, areas of high deprivation where there was not already a local cadet unit (either the Army Cadet Force, Air Training Corps, or Sea Cadets). Consequently, some CEP CCF contingents have cadets from many different nationalities<sup>52</sup> and work with pupils whose area is not only deprived but plagued by multi-generational unemployment, drug gangs, knife crime and, in some areas, organized crime. These areas typically suffer from a culture of low, self-limiting, aspiration and ambition. The CEP was intended to provide pupils in these schools with new skills, experiences and opportunities, based on the standards and ethos of the CCF. The CEP scheme was described by five school leaders as 'levelling up in action' and part of a drive for equality, with one Head saying that she wanted the CCF to give her school's pupils extra skills so they could compete with children from public schools. Head Teachers described how they valued the discipline of the CCF, the social skills that it develops, and noted that the impacts of a CCF contingent were not confined to those pupils that were cadets, but extended throughout the whole school. Nearly all schools with a CCF mention it in their prospectus and on their website.<sup>53</sup> The data from the Head Teachers survey also offers some support here, detailing that 16.9% of pupils were eligible for Free School Meals; 17.2% were eligible

# Key Findings cont.

for Pupil Premium; and 31% had a SEND statement.<sup>54</sup> When considered against the wider school population surveyed, the 36 respondent schools accounted for 27,103 pupils.

The Head of a CEP school in Northern Ireland explained his reasons for taking part in the scheme. He saw a need to improve discipline and relationships between pupils and staff. The CCF was a 'no brainer,' it encouraged discipline in a good way and had a positive appeal providing new opportunities for both pupils and staff. Importantly, there was no opposition in the community to a CCF and many parents had commented that it was helping to rejuvenate the locality (through reducing anti-social behaviour etc.). The Head said that the CCF contingent was now integral to the mission of the school, overtly promoting learning and achievement. Other Head Teachers echoed this theme and said that there were obvious differences between cadets and non-cadets. The CCF was not just another school youth club but a group of people (adults and pupils) with a sense of mission and ownership, people that knew each other and related to each other in a very different way to the prevalent teacher – pupil model.<sup>55</sup> Another Head Teacher of a large Academy school in the East Midlands observed that the academic curriculum 'did not prepare pupils for life' and pointed out that apart from a catering course, the CCF was the only activity in the school that developed the skills, behaviours and attitudes associated with enjoying successful careers. The Head Teachers survey also supported this, with qualitative responses to their motivations for engaging pupils including the offer of extra opportunities and the ability to engage in leadership skills development:

**"Providing additional opportunities for our learners."**

**"A desire to enrich opportunities and skills as well as enable service to others gives pupils a group to identify with."**

**"To build leadership qualities in students and give them access to the activities available through the CCF."**

In all, 14 Head Teachers and Contingent Commanders were interviewed for this project. The research team heard all these interviewees list the opportunities their cadets had received over the previous 12 months. In addition to weekly parades and camps<sup>56</sup>, cadets from both independent and state schools had taken part in such value added activities as attending Beating Retreat ceremonies in London, having tours of the Houses of Parliament, taking part in the Nijmegen March<sup>57</sup>; taking part in the Cambrian Patrol competition<sup>58</sup>; attending advanced instructor courses; going on tours of the battlefields of WW1 or WW2; visiting military units;<sup>59</sup> meeting members of the Royal Family, or becoming a Lord Lieutenant's cadet.<sup>60</sup> A Head Teacher from the south west of England stressed the value of such opportunities, pointing out that, 'we are in a seaside town and we have cadets that have not visited the beach with their families, let alone left the town.' A Head Teacher of a school in Scotland highlighted that the activities and opportunities the CCF offers were not provided anywhere else in the school. School leaders also observed that CCF trips, which are subsidized by the MOD, are very much cheaper than other school trips, thus they are more accessible to children from poorer homes.

As noted earlier, there are c.80 schools on a waiting list to take part in the CEP, an indication that the scheme is seen as important for both schools and pupils. Head Teachers that have had experience of

51 See, for example, <https://nia.emat.uk/our-school/vision-and-ethos> and <https://kba.uk/secondary/information/core-ethos-and-values> and <https://www.theglasgowacademy.org.uk/about-us/our-values-and-code-final/>  
52 In one large Academy in the East Midlands over 20% of the cadets do not have English as their first language.  
53 See for example, <https://www.treorchycomp.org.uk/ccf-folder/> and <https://www.eastnorfolk.ac.uk/New-Applicants/Extra-Curricular>

54 It should be noted that many independent and grammar schools have pupils that are eligible for Free School Meal or attract the Pupil Premium, as well as being classified as SEND.  
55 Two Head Teachers described their CCF contingent as 'a family.'  
56 On camp RAF cadets get opportunities to fly, either in a glider or powered aeroplane; RN cadets can go to sea; and Army cadets can do a wide range of adventurous and military exercises.  
57 See, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International\\_Four\\_Days\\_Marches\\_Nijmegen](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Four_Days_Marches_Nijmegen)  
58 See, <https://armycadets.com/county-news/highlanders-get-gold-in-cambrian-patrol/>  
59 On school in Wales has organized visits to the Royal Military Police, the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, and the Royal Army Medical Corps since the summer of 2023.  
60 See, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lord-Lieutenant%27s\\_Cadet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lord-Lieutenant%27s_Cadet)



Key Findings cont.

the impacts of a CCF seem keen to establish one if they move to a school with no CCF contingent, e.g., the Head Teacher of a grammar school in Northern Ireland that had a CCF, moved to an Academy school and immediately (successfully) applied to be part of the CEP.

**“Our CCF gives something that money cannot buy”**  
**Head Teacher, CEP CCF School, East Anglia**

4.2.2 Investment required

CCF contingents require a school to invest time and resource to establish them. Interviewees in CEP schools commented that it normally takes four to six years to set up an effective and efficient CCF contingent from scratch. Head Teachers and school leaders all claimed that, to gain the maximum benefit from a CCF contingent, it must be a part of the school, a ‘mini-department’, not merely another extra-

curricular activity.<sup>61</sup>

**“The CCF is a big investment, but it is valued and respected for how good it is”**  
**Head Teacher, CEP School**

The survey data also explored questions of investment in CCFs within schools and the resources required for this to function properly, as well as a question related to the efficacy of CCFs for schools. The two questions asked were ‘The school’s cadet unit requires a significant investment of time and resources to function effectively’ and ‘The cadet unit is a good investment for the school,’ both of which were asked of Head Teachers and Contingent Commanders/SSIs. The data for these two questions is outlined below in Figure 4.1 and illustrates that both CC/SSIs and Head Teachers viewed CCFs as a significant resource investment, but one that was a well worth making.

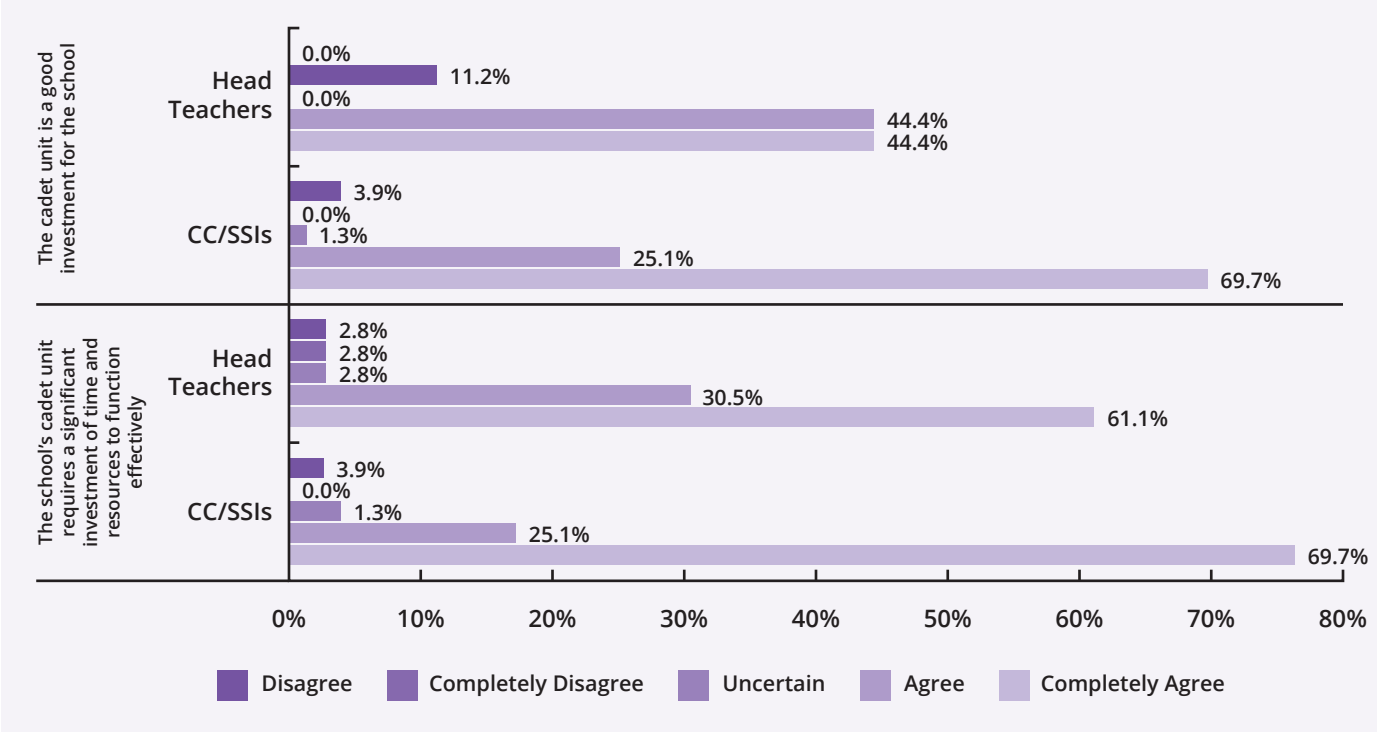


Figure 4.1 CCF Investments in Schools

61 These statements by Head Teachers echo the findings of Wood (2014).





# Key Findings cont.

Contingent Commanders and School Staff Instructors (SSIs) are critical to the success of a CCF contingent. Head Teachers that were interviewed all said that the ideal Contingent Commander is a senior teacher at the school as they understand how school and CCF activities can complement each other. However, getting teachers to volunteer to take part in a CEP school's CCF is not always possible and many contingents have non-teaching staff, or people external to the school, involved in running the CCF.<sup>62</sup> Figure 4.2 below provides a breakdown of the staff type for Contingent Commanders and their length of service, showing that the majority (56.6%) are teachers whilst many have considerable lengths of service (77.7% have 3 years or more).

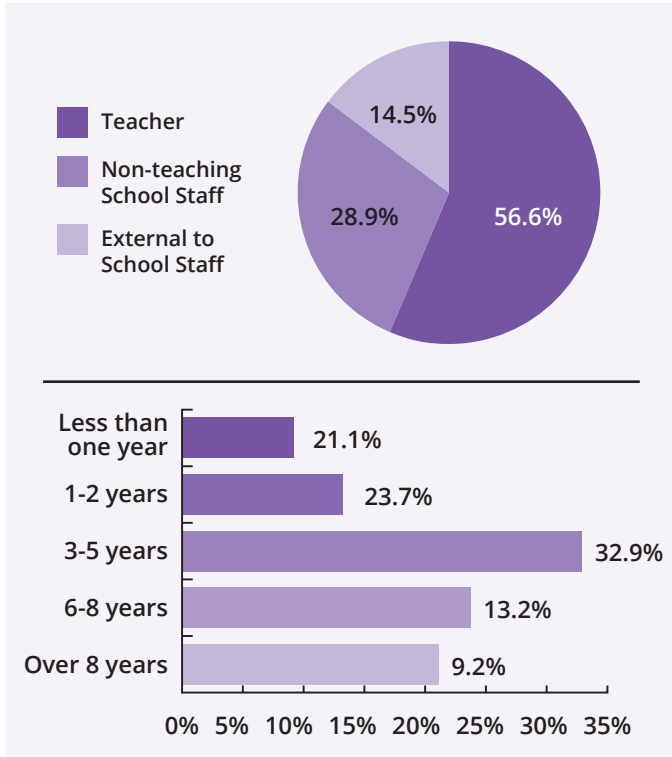


Figure 4.2 Contingent Commander Staff Type and Length of Service

There are concerns about the turnover of adult volunteers. Independent schools have less difficulty

62 For example, there are 12 schools with CCF contingents in Northamptonshire; 11 of them have Contingent Commanders that are teachers at the school, but one is external to the school.  
63 This SSI is also mentioned later in the report.

getting teaching staff to volunteer to be involved in the CCF. SSIs have often served in the UK Armed Forces, although there are notable exceptions such as the former head of the English department in a school in the East Midlands who decided she could have more positive impact with pupils as a SSI.<sup>63</sup> Figure 4.3 details the analysis of the data on whether SSIs previously served in the Armed Forces, and whether they were part-time or full-time. The data illustrates that nearly three-quarters have previously served in HM Forces and that the split between part and full-time roles is very even.

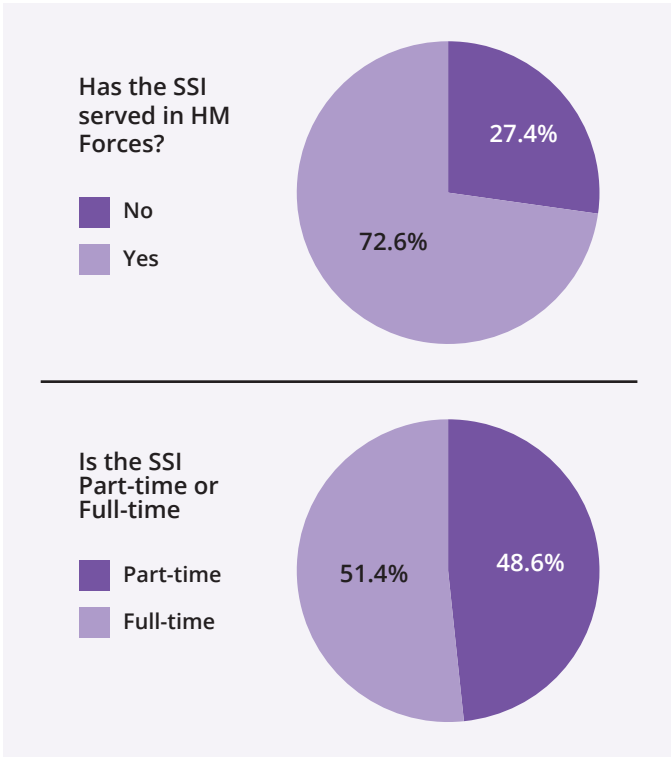


Figure 4.3 SSI Veterans and Working Hours

Further, SSIs typically have responsibilities in their school that go beyond the CCF contingent. The types of activities they are involved in are described below, drawn from the CC/SSI survey, and show the varied extra duties that SSIs have within the CCFs/Schools.

# Key Findings cont.

- “Supports outdoor education programme e.g., DofE.”
- “Safeguarding, Transport, Sport.”
- “Classroom Assistant.”
- “Responsibility for the roadworthiness of the school minibus fleet.”
- “Admin and expedition support to separate Duke of Edinburgh Scheme. Has also previously been the school EVC for 13 years and the transport manager.”

As noted earlier in this report, not all CCF contingents are members of the Combined Cadet Force Association (CCFA). Those contingents that are members are able to access additional funding to support CCF activities, as well as insurance cover above and beyond that provided by their school or Academy Trust. As CCFA funding does not always cover the full cost of CCF initiatives, schools sometimes make up any shortfall in costs.<sup>64</sup> Many state schools in England use the Pupil Premium<sup>65</sup> grant to enable disadvantaged pupils to take full advantage of participation in CCF activities, albeit the survey data revealed that only 27.3% of schools had used Pupil Premium for this purpose and all of these had done so for only one year to cover specific shortfalls. The below quotes from the Head Teacher’s survey illustrate the reasons that Pupil Premium funding was used.

- “Help fund any personal equipment for cadets or support any trip or activity.”
- “Subsidising any costs that arise to ensure there are no financial barriers to

- participation.”
- “Camp and equipment payment and costs of permanent staffing.”
- “Funding for expeditions.”

## 4.2.3 Enrichment

CCF contingents are regarded as an enrichment activity within a school, both by school leaders and officials in the DfE. It is accepted that to maximise impact they need to be integrated within the school as much as possible (Wood, 2014).

**“Being part of the Combined Cadet Force community and giving our students experiences beyond their expectations has been a dream come true for us. We absolutely believe that what we do with the cadets is life-changing and I am so proud of what has been achieved already, but also very excited about the future.”**  
**Principal, Sixth Form College, East Anglia**

The CCF adds enrichment, it helps build character, resilience, practical skills, camaraderie; it adds to the educational experience. Importantly, every member of school staff that was interviewed made the point that the CCF is accessible to all – the non-sporting, the non-musical – anyone can join, and it is all-encompassing with intellectual, physical and social content.<sup>66</sup> Importantly, the CCF is also new to every pupil when he or she joins. The SSI of a CEP school in the East Midlands (who taught English from 2000 – 2015 and gave up teaching to become a SSI because she believed she would make more of a difference to pupils) commented that, “the CCF is here to help pupils between the ages of 12 and 18 to develop both personally and physically by providing

64 For example, Larne High School in Northern Ireland contributed £840 in 2020 to refurbish derelict space to be used as a central location for CCF activities. The CCFA contributed £9000 to this project. Larne is an area of significant socio-economic deprivation. School leaders regard the CCF as a safe haven that provides a structured, self-improvement opportunity as an alternative to negative influences in the local community.  
65 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-premium/pupil-premium>  
66 The research team was given examples in two schools of pupils that were barred from taking part in school sports because they have type 1 diabetes. However, these cadets have joined their school’s CCF and taken part in all activities, including camps.



# Key Findings cont.

a large range of fun, exciting, challenging and adventurous opportunities.”<sup>67</sup> For this school, in an old mining area with many areas of great deprivation, the CCF provided pupils with “fantastic enrichment opportunities, 100% it is an amazing opportunity.”

**“The CCF is very strong offer, it is a myth that it is kids with guns. It is a high-quality enrichment programme that is well thought-out, planned, and supported by large numbers of volunteers as well as the Ministry of Defence.” Team Leader – Pupil Enrichment, Mental Health and Wellbeing, DfE**

This was further supported by the Head Teacher and CC/SSI surveys, with the data revealing that both groups viewed the enrichment activities of the CCF units as very effective, as Figure 4.4 below illustrates.

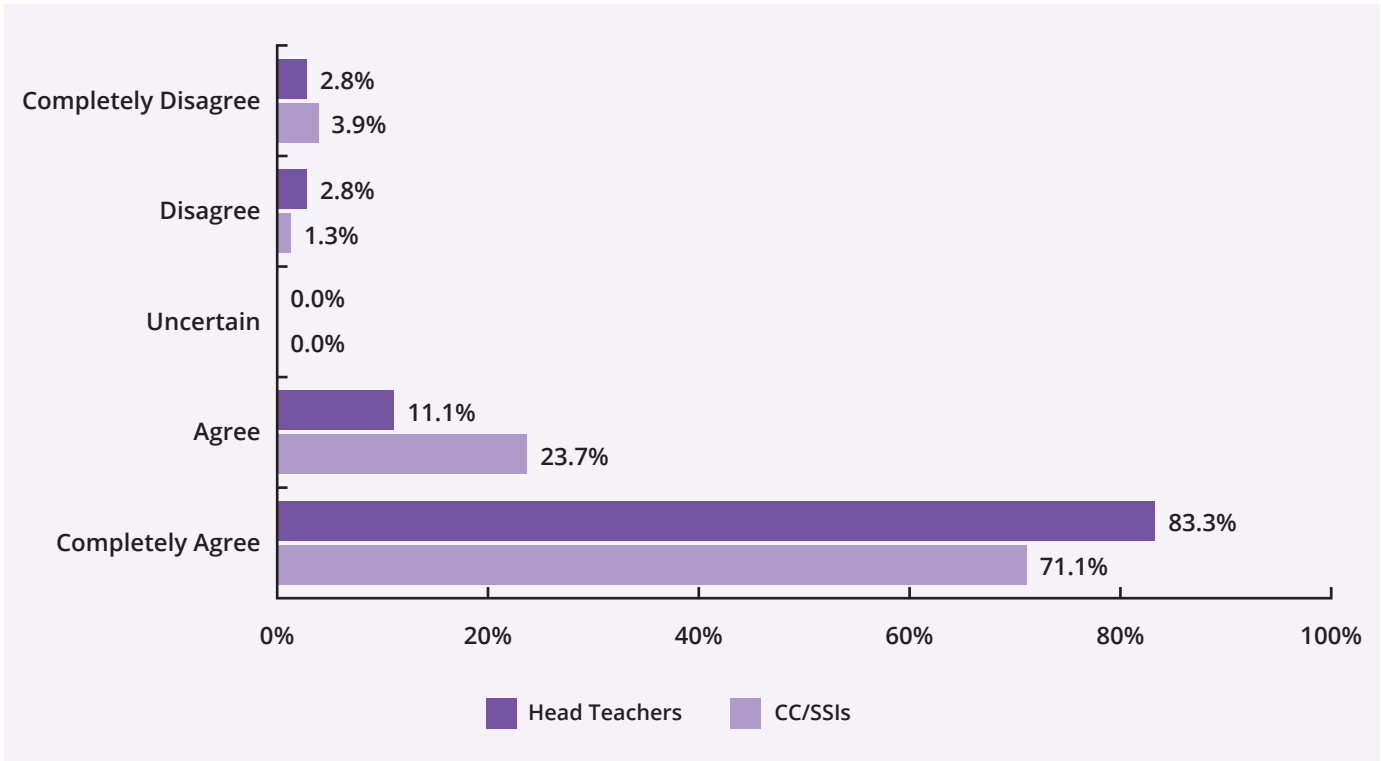


Figure 4.4 The school's CCF plays an important part in the enrichment activities the school provides

67 Interview with the research team May 2023.

# Key Findings cont.

## 4.2.4 Attendance

Although the CEP schools that were visited for interviews had different levels of pupil absenteeism, they all observed that members of their CCF had significantly lower levels of absence. Pupils that are members of their school's CCF clearly enjoy cadet activities and value the opportunities they have for expeditions and adventures. Some schools link regular attendance at school to being able to take part in the CCF, a tactic which is claimed to help reduce absence rates.

The Head Teacher and CC/SSI survey data also explored the issue of attendance, demonstrating that both Head Teachers and CC/SSIs viewed the impact of CCFs as very positive on pupil attendance (for those pupils that were cadets). Figure 4.5 outlines this data, illustrating that both Head Teachers and CC/SSIs view the impact of CCFs on attendance in a very positive manner.

**“Attendance has been terrible since Covid, we rarely get 90% of the pupils in school, often only about 80%, but the cadets attend regularly.” SSI CEP CCF School, East Midlands**

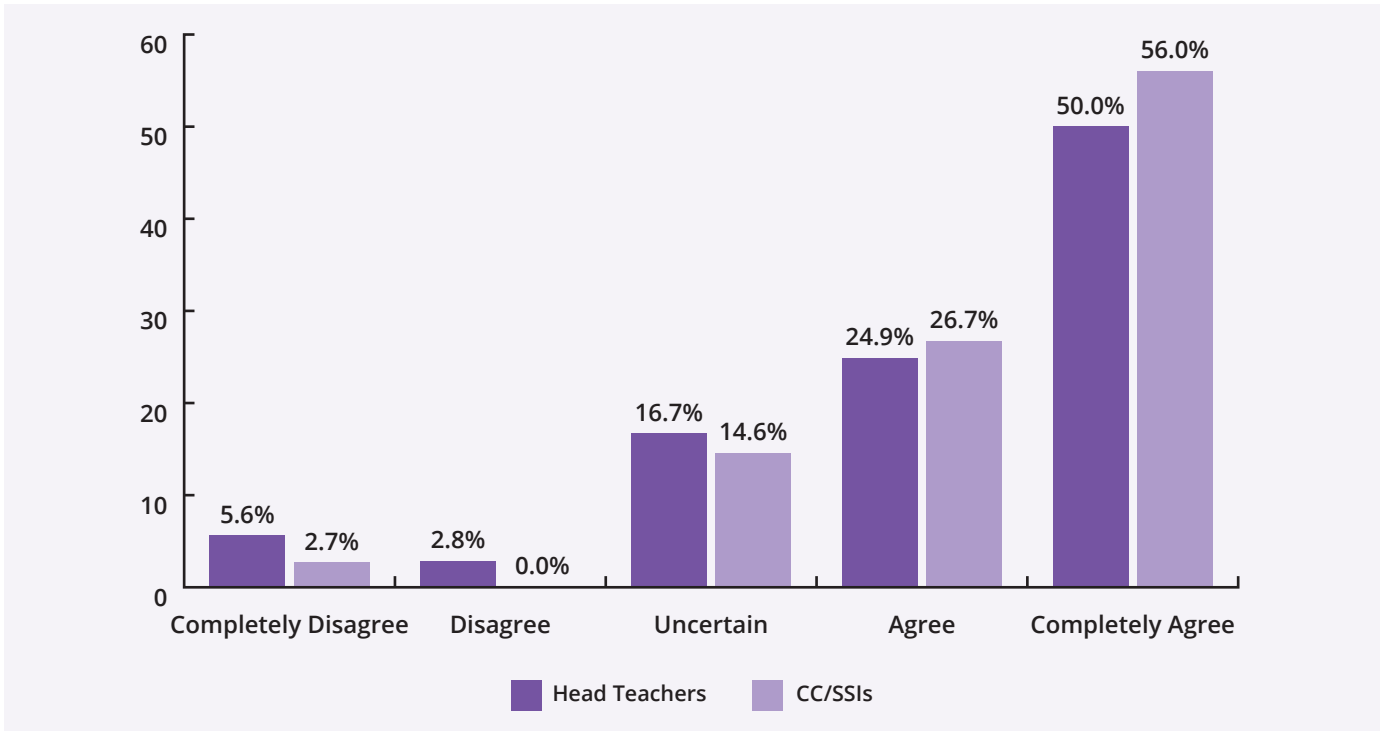


Figure 4.5 The school's CCF has a positive impact on the attendance of pupils that are cadets



# Key Findings cont.

## 4.2.5 Exclusions

Some schools that are part of the CEP involve their CCF as part of their strategy to reduce exclusions. In a CEP school in Northern Ireland, pupils that are about to be excluded are given a choice of being expelled or joining the CCF for a month. This school, which typically excludes between eight and ten pupils a term, has seen a 25% fall in the number of exclusions as some pupils decide to stay in school so they can be in the CCF.<sup>68</sup>

**“Leadership is huge in the CCF, pupils at risk of exclusion are developed into young leaders”**  
**Head Teacher, CEP School, Northern Ireland**

The Head Teacher of a CEP school in the Midlands pointed out that the CCF provided a ‘sea change’ for disaffected pupils that often meant they stayed in education. He saw his CCF contingent as a ‘family looking after individuals,’ many of which suffered from poverty, mental health issues and had learning

difficulties. The role of the School Staff Instructor was repeatedly singled out by 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, when the impact of a CCF contingent on exclusions was explored in the Head Teacher and CC/SSI surveys a more complex picture emerged with the data revealing that there were more discrepancies in opinions with regards to exclusions than elsewhere (see Figure 4.6). Indeed, very few of the Head Teachers (19.5%) agreed/ completely agreed that the CCF contingents reduced exclusions,<sup>69</sup> whilst the equivalent figure for CC/SSIs was 21.6%. Head Teachers were also more likely to disagree/completely disagree that CCF contingents reduced exclusions (36.1%) compared with CC/SSIs (14.9%). The distribution in the data here across both samples demonstrated uncertainty as to the impact.

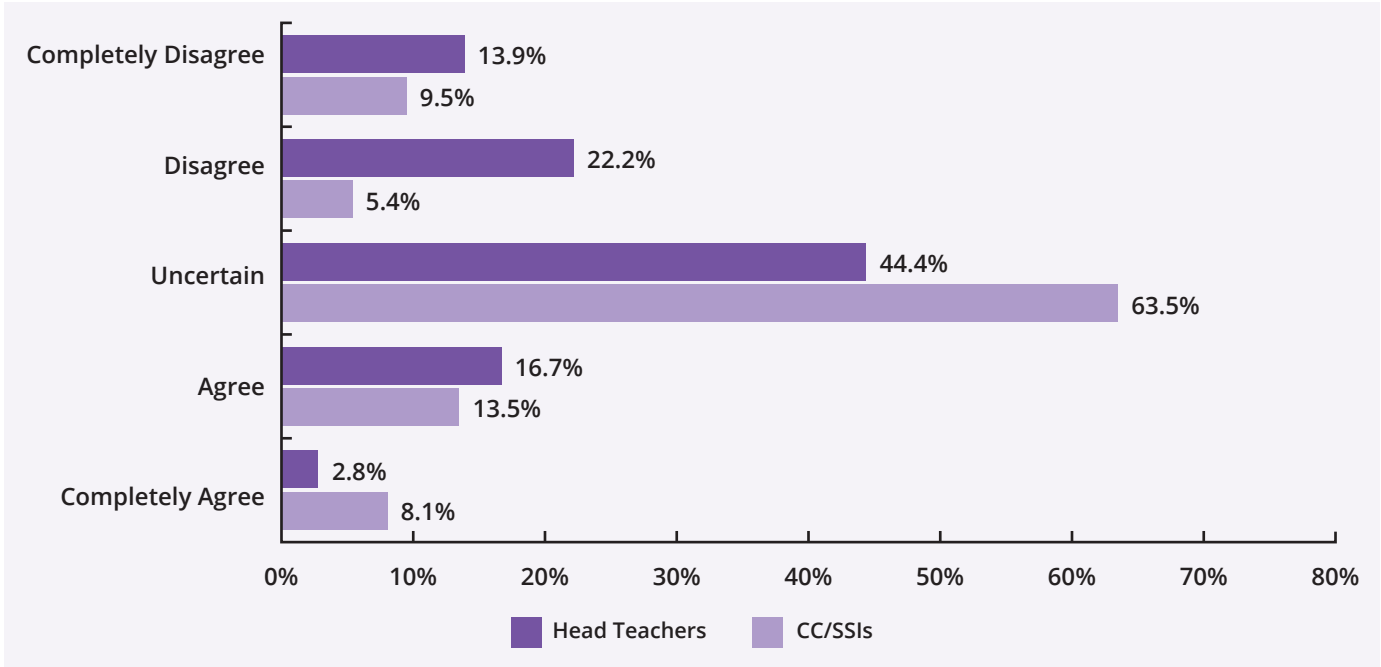


Figure 4.6 The school's CCF has reduced the number of exclusions from school

68 Interview with Contingent Commander June 2023.  
69 No Head Teacher from an independent school agreed that their CCF helped to reduce exclusions.

# Key Findings cont.

It seems that some schools, especially those that are part of the CEP, are using their CCF contingents as part of their strategy to reduce exclusions, but it is not a widely adopted tactic.

## 4.2.6 Behaviour

The School and College Panel Research Report, March 2023,<sup>70</sup> published by the DfE in July 2023 pointed out that only around six-in-ten teachers reported that pupils had been respectful to each other every day or most days (63%), and that their school had been calm and orderly every day or most days (57%).<sup>71</sup> Moreover, teachers in schools with higher proportions of pupils eligible for Free School Meals (eFSM) were more likely to report poor pupil behaviour than teachers in schools with fewer deprived children.

**“Children nowadays have fewer sense of boundaries and less respect for others, they are more aware of what they can get away with.”**  
**Teacher, Wales**

All Heads and school leaders interviewed said that there have been changes in pupil behaviour following the Covid pandemic with one Head saying, “there is less acceptance of authority and less willingness to take other people into account, it now seems to be more about ‘me.’” Moreover, they were seeing increased mental health issues, a teacher in Wales claiming that welfare units in Wales have seen a 30% increase in referrals as a result of pupils feeling ‘distressed’ since 2020.

It should be stressed that Head Teachers pointed out that most of the pupils in their schools had supportive parents or guardians, and were generally well-behaved. However, it is universally acknowledged that a significant minority of children do not have a homelife that imposes standards and discipline, or positive role models.<sup>72</sup> For these children, being a member of a CCF contingent may be the first time they have been told that they cannot do something, but must behave in certain ways. For such children,

the social impact of the CCF cannot be overstated. All school-based staff interviewed claimed that pupils, especially those young people with some form of learning difficulty, welcomed the discipline and certainty about standards that CCF contingents impose. It was emphasized that discipline and structure gave the CCF its strength, through enabling pupils to learn about standards of behaviour and about thinking about and helping others. The importance of the CCF in generating a sense of belonging and community, which affects behaviour for the better, was repeatedly mentioned. The survey data also explored impacts on behaviour of CCF engagement, with both Head Teachers (77.7%) and CC/SSIs (94.8%) being very positive (Agree/Completely Agree) about the impact of CCF contingents on pupil behaviour (albeit Head Teachers marginally less so). Figure 4.7 outlines this data.

70 School and College panel: March 2023 (assets.publishing.service.gov.uk)  
71 Interestingly, school leaders reported lower rates of poor behaviour than their teachers.  
72 Cited by several CEP school staff, including Contingent Commanders and School Staff Instructors.



# Key Findings cont.

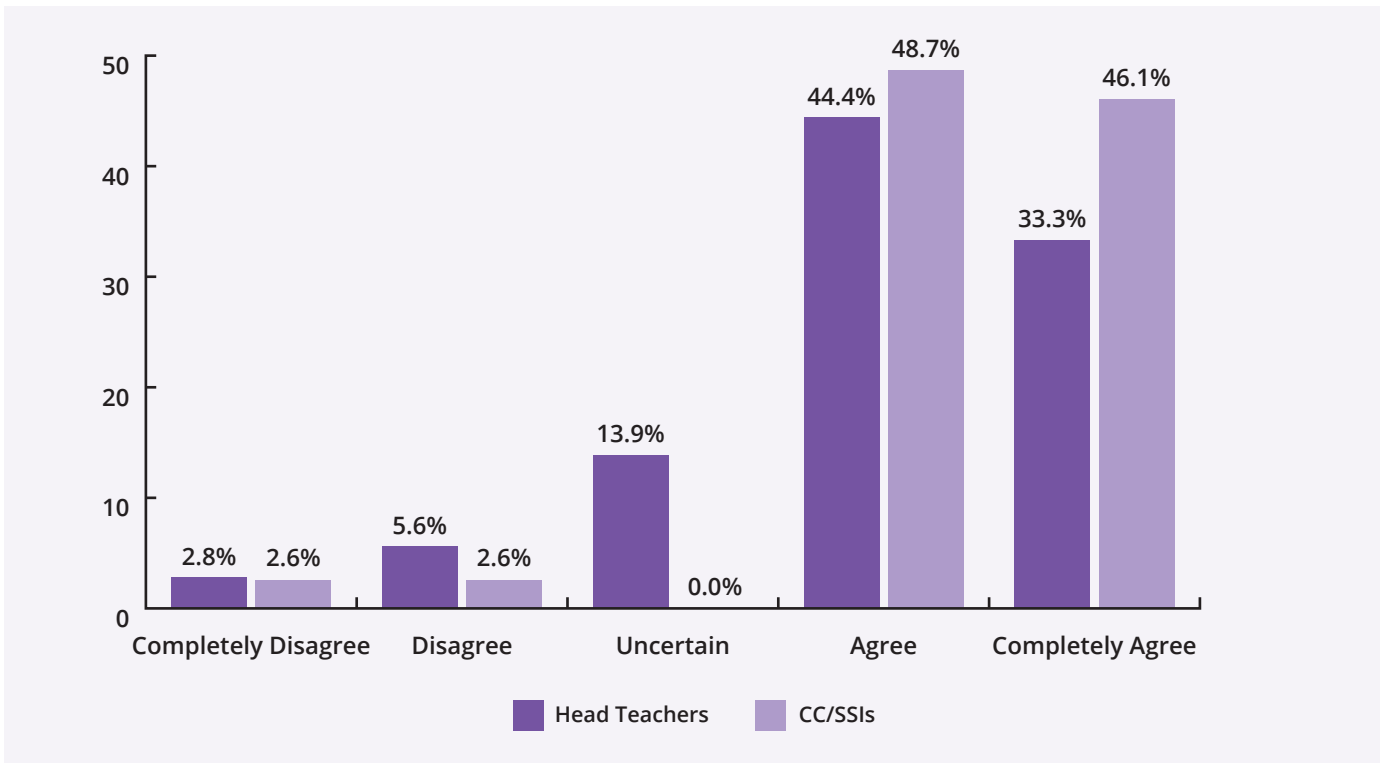


Figure 4.7 The school's CCF has a positive impact on the behaviour of pupils that are cadets

Additionally, all school-based interview respondents in CEP schools commented that their cadets behaved differently to non-cadets, they were clearly more comfortable with adults, they looked adults in the eye and were more responsible and supportive (both of teachers and other pupils). These interviewees also pointed out that the more relaxed relationships between teachers and pupils that were in the CCF contingent had some positive impact on the behaviour of other, non-cadet, pupils. The networks and relationships developed by the CCF were described as having a beneficial impact. Some schools also described how more senior cadets had taken (appropriate) action to prevent the bullying of younger cadets.

In interviews, the research team heard numerous examples of how being a member of a CCF had transformed pupil's behaviour. A typical case cited was that of a girl at a school in the south west of

England whose two older brothers were described as 'out of control' both by their school and by their mother. The girl was frequently absent from school and disruptive when she did attend. However, she joined the CCF contingent, which she greatly enjoyed. Within two years her attendance and behaviour were transformed, for the better, and she was completing her homework. Her mother had said to the Contingent Commander, "in 18 months the CCF has done what I have been unable to do all her life." It is stressed that the research team were told of similar cases in every state school they visited, and in some schools in the independent sector. Head Teachers and school leaders are certain that being a member of the CCF contingent transforms, for the better, the behaviour of very many pupils at schools throughout the UK.<sup>73</sup>

73 Wood (2014) found that cases where the CCF had kept pupils in school were rare. This project found that such cases were very common, and affected significant numbers of pupils.

# Key Findings cont.

## 4.2.7 Wellbeing

Interviews with CCF adult volunteers, from all types of school, revealed the welfare role played by CCF contingents, especially for those pupils that struggled with mainstream schooling or faced significant challenges in their lives.<sup>74</sup> The routine and standards expected of cadets was claimed to be very helpful for cadets with mental health issues. The research team was provided with examples of how becoming a member of the CCF contingent had greatly helped pupils who were not able, or willing, to engage with school life.

**"Looking after cadets is a massive thing for us"**  
**School Staff Instructor, CEP School**

The following case study is just one of many that school-based staff related to the research team:

### Case study – Jamie (not his real name)

In October 2023 Jamie was a Year 10 pupil at a secondary school in Northern Ireland. Jamie has been diagnosed with ADHT and learning difficulties. He has a very short attention span, loses focus easily and can be disruptive in lessons and sports. In Years 8 and 9 he tried numerous sports and extra-curricular activities, but his behaviours meant that he was continually excluded, or 'encouraged not to come back', from them. In October 2022, he joined the school's CCF.

Jamie had no friends, or any members of his peer group, in the CCF. After some initial behavioural issues, he quickly understood the 'rules' of the CCF and became compliant. He gets no preferential treatment and it has not been possible for adult volunteers to provide one-to-one mentoring to him in the time available. However, Jamie has responded incredibly well to the CCF environment; he has gone through the CCF syllabus, taking part in all activities and has hit lots of the little milestones the contingent has. He has completed his air rifle training and passed his weapon handling test. He also successfully passed the qualifying shoot and was awarded his CCF Air Rifle badge. For Jamie this was a massive achievement, the first tests he has ever passed.

Jamie is not treated as a 'kid with a label' in the CCF. He now behaves well, stands still, listens and follows instructions. His attention span has greatly increased and he acts like a normal member of the contingent. The CCF has given him boundaries, opportunities for achievement, and a journey of progress. The CCF has changed Jamie's experience of school, reintegrated him into the school, and given him new hope for the future.

74 The Head of a school in Scotland said that of the 55 cadets in the Linked Detachment, 3 were autistic, 12 had ADHT, 5 were looked after, 3 are full time carers, and at least 30% were dyslexic. These rates were double those of pupils in the school.





## Key Findings cont.

The survey data (see Figure 4.8) reveals that again, both Head Teachers (91.6%) and CC/SSIs (97.8%) were extremely positive (Agree/Completely Agree) about the impact of CCF contingents on pupil wellbeing, offering support to the interview data presented here.

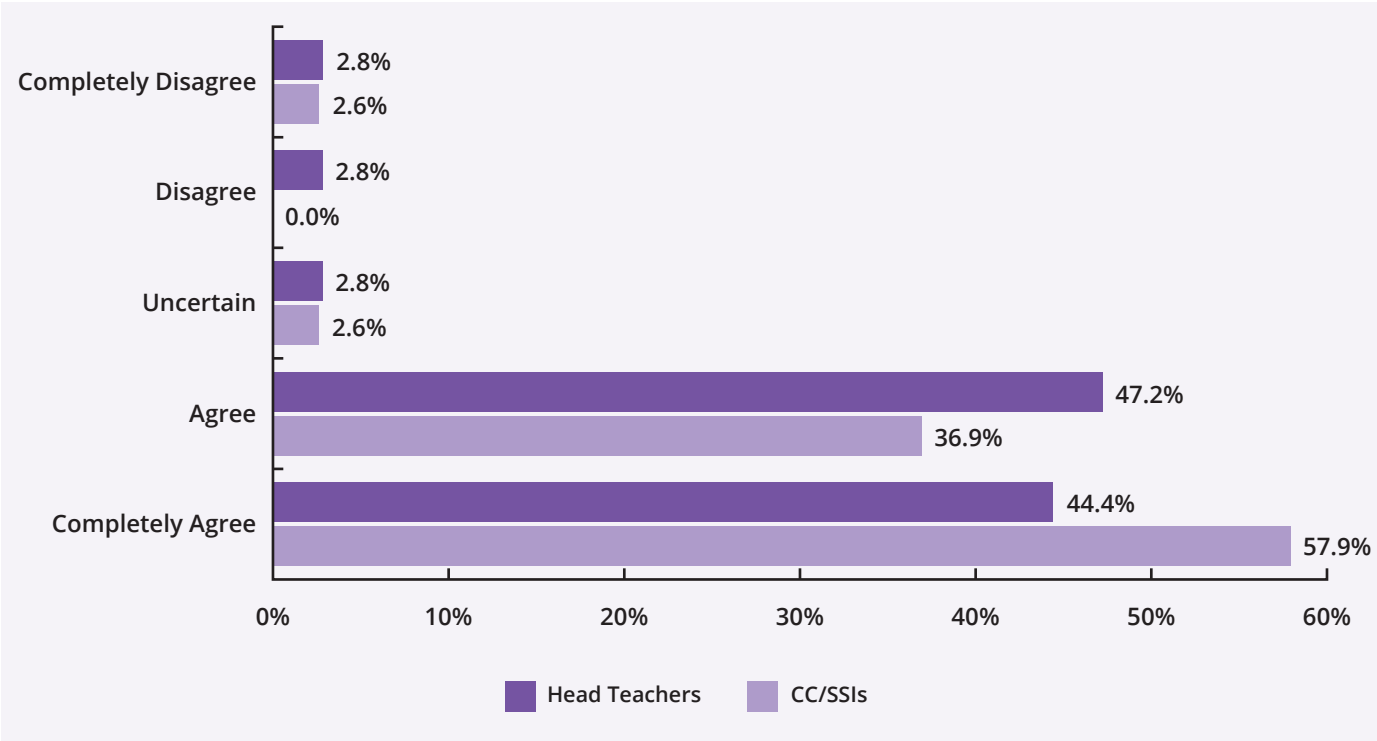


Figure 4.8 The school's CCF has a positive impact on the wellbeing of pupils that are cadets

### 4.2.8 Resilience

Resilience is seen as an increasingly important attribute for young people to have (Beale, 2020). It was noticeable that all Head Teachers and school leaders interviewed claimed that their CCF contingents were good at enabling cadets to be more resilient. The Head Teacher of a CEP school in Northamptonshire pointed out that the cadets in the CCF had more resilience than their non-cadet peers. He pointed out that ‘cadets will try, fail, and try again; they will not give up easily.’ Another Head Teacher said that the CCF was ‘about belief,’ cadets realise they can achieve things, see possibilities, and are willing to have a go.

**“I was really impressed and could see the young people were developing by working in teams and taking leadership roles. They were building resilience, good communication skills and were co-operating with each other and the staff.”**  
**Local Authority Outdoor Education Adviser, report on visit to CEP CCF camp June 2023**

The Outdoor Education Adviser of a Local Authority in the North of England was interviewed about his visit to a CEP school's CCF camp in summer 2023. The research team was also provided with the written report he had produced on his visit. He was very enthusiastic about the impacts of the camp upon the cadets, writing that it had been “an excellent opportunity at a very low cost. Development of wide range of personal and social skills and qualities



# Key Findings cont.

inc. teamwork, initiative, confidence, leadership, resilience, respect and more.” The survey data also offered credence to these findings, demonstrating that both Head Teachers and CC/SSIs congruently viewed CCF contingents as having a very positive

impact on pupil resilience, with both Head Teachers (94.4%) and CC/SSIs (94.8%) selecting (Agree/ Completely Agree) for the relevant survey questions (see Figure 4.9).

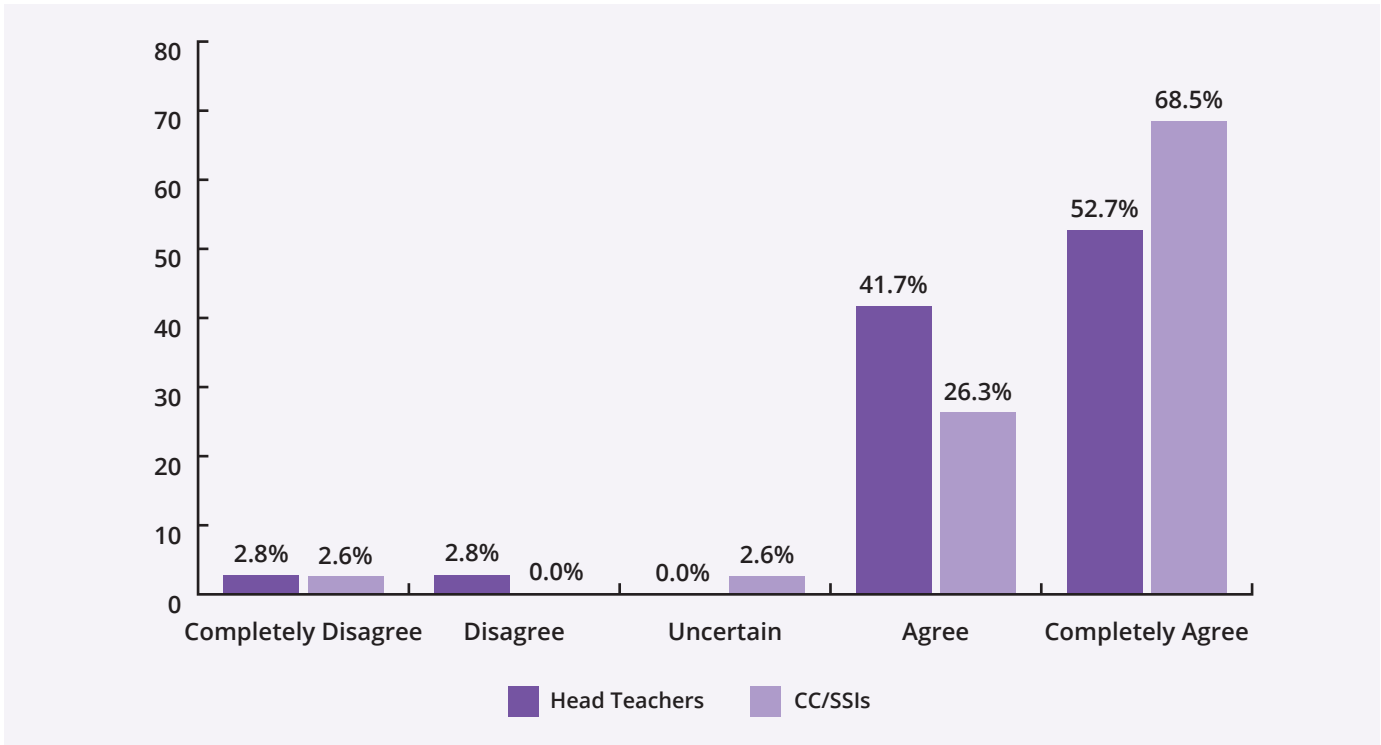


Figure 4.9 The school's CCF has a positive impact on the resilience of pupils that are cadets

## 4.2.9 Attainment

In interviews, school leaders in every school visited claimed that CCF contingents were important in increasing a sense of belonging, an important factor for academic achievement, completing homework, attendance, and participation in wider school activities (Akar-Vural et al. 2013, St-Amand et al. 2017). Interestingly, pupils' self-esteem has been identified as the single most important predictor of their sense of belonging (Ma, 2003) and, as the 2016 – 2020 study into the impacts and value of the Cadet Forces<sup>75</sup> mentioned above demonstrated, cadets have significantly higher levels of self-esteem (and self-efficacy) than many of their non-cadet peers.

The 2021 report into the social impact and return on investment of the Cadet Forces in the UK<sup>76</sup> included an analysis of data gathered from cadets in CCF contingents in CEP schools. The analysis showed that firstly, the cadets emphasized that the importance of self-discipline and effort that they had gained from the CCF was different from anything they had learned in mainstream education, and that this self-discipline and effort was very applicable to their wider school work. Secondly, they stressed that the CCF was the only forum for mixing with children in other school year groups: younger students had role models; older students had people to instruct, develop and mentor. Thirdly, cadets mentioned the potentially

<sup>75</sup> <https://www.northampton.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/social-impact-cadet-forces-uk-2020.pdf>  
<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

# Key Findings cont.

transformative impact of the CCF. In this, new, project the research team wanted to investigate whether participation in a CCF contingent had any impacts on pupils that, for whatever reason, were deemed to be disengaged from mainstream school life.

The evidence, from both interviews and the surveys, is that many children that are not engaged in mainstream school education find participation in a CCF contingent provides an opportunity for them to be part of something where they want to, and can, succeed. The opportunities provided by a CCF contingent are particularly important in areas of higher deprivation, although there are many instances of children from more affluent backgrounds that are not engaged with school but enjoy their CCF experiences. As the Chief Executive of the Ulysses Trust commented, “CCFs are a fantastic opportunity for people from all walks of life. It offers everyone a role, even if they don't do well in school. Cadets

learn in a different way to how they do in school.” CCF is a very effective tool at raising the attainment of disadvantaged youngsters.<sup>77</sup> A Head Teacher of a CEP school in East Anglia<sup>78</sup> cited the case of an ex-cadet that had gained a place at Cambridge University in 2022. However, until he had joined the CCF contingent, ‘he could have gone either way, he used the CCF to push himself, he developed cultural capital and a sense of boundaries.’

The survey data gathered from Head Teachers and CC/SSIs also illustrated a belief that attainment is linked with engagement with CCF contingents, albeit there is more uncertainty here (particularly from Head Teachers) as to the strength of this relationship. Indeed, only 8.3% of Head Teachers completely agreed with this statement (versus nearly one-third of CC/SSIs), but very few of either stakeholder group disagreed/completely disagreed with this statement . Figure 4.10 below illustrates this data.

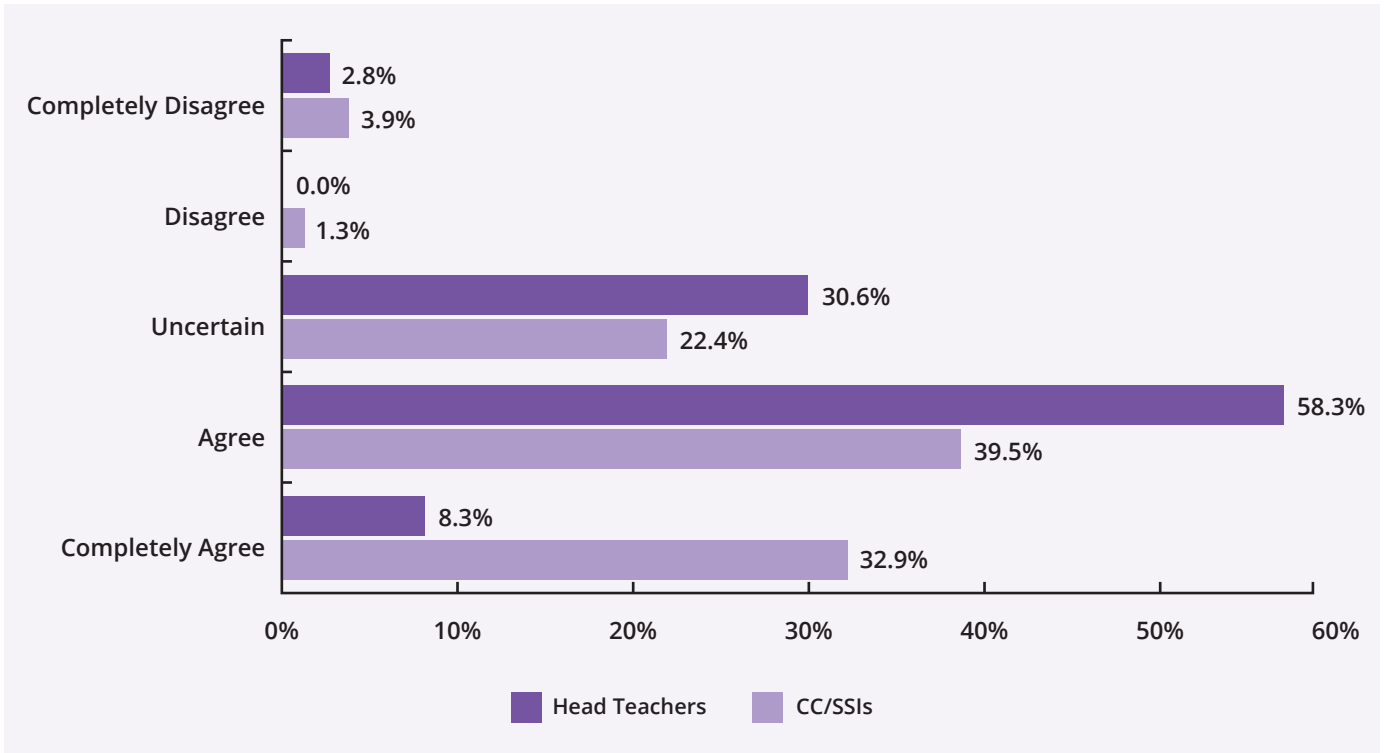


Figure 4.10 The school's CCF has a positive impact on the attainment of pupils that are cadets

<sup>77</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/473974/DFE-RR411\\_Supporting\\_the\\_attainment\\_of\\_disadvantaged\\_pupils.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/473974/DFE-RR411_Supporting_the_attainment_of_disadvantaged_pupils.pdf)  
<sup>78</sup> Interviewed in May 2023.



Key Findings cont.

Heads, and other teachers, mentioned that it was only the CCF contingent that provided the in-depth and personal mentoring that pupils classed as SEND required. The pastoral care provided by CCF adult volunteers was frequently cited as ‘extraordinary.’ The phrase ‘cadets don’t have labels’, was repeatedly used to stress the point that all cadets are treated the same, regardless of their circumstances.

A few school-based staff also described how their CCF contingents had helped children of refugee families to rapidly assimilate into schooling in the UK. One school provided the example of two pupils whose families were refugees (from Yemen and Iraq). They joined the CCF contingent at CEP school in the West Midlands and had gone on to gain fully funded boarding places at different public schools. The boy at one public

school became the Cadet Regimental Sergeant Major, the most senior cadet in the school. The boy at the other school became second in command of the Royal Navy section of the CCF, and also Deputy Head Boy of the school.<sup>79</sup>

Contingent Commanders and SSIs also provided data on the types of qualifications that cadets could engage in through the CCF contingents in schools, with information gathered in relation to Duke of Edinburgh Awards, BTECs, First Aid programmes to name a few. The data is outlined below in Figure 4.11 and shows the breadth of qualifications open to pupils in CCF schools, with First Aid, DfE and the Cadet Vocational College (CVC) BTEC been the most popular qualifications available.

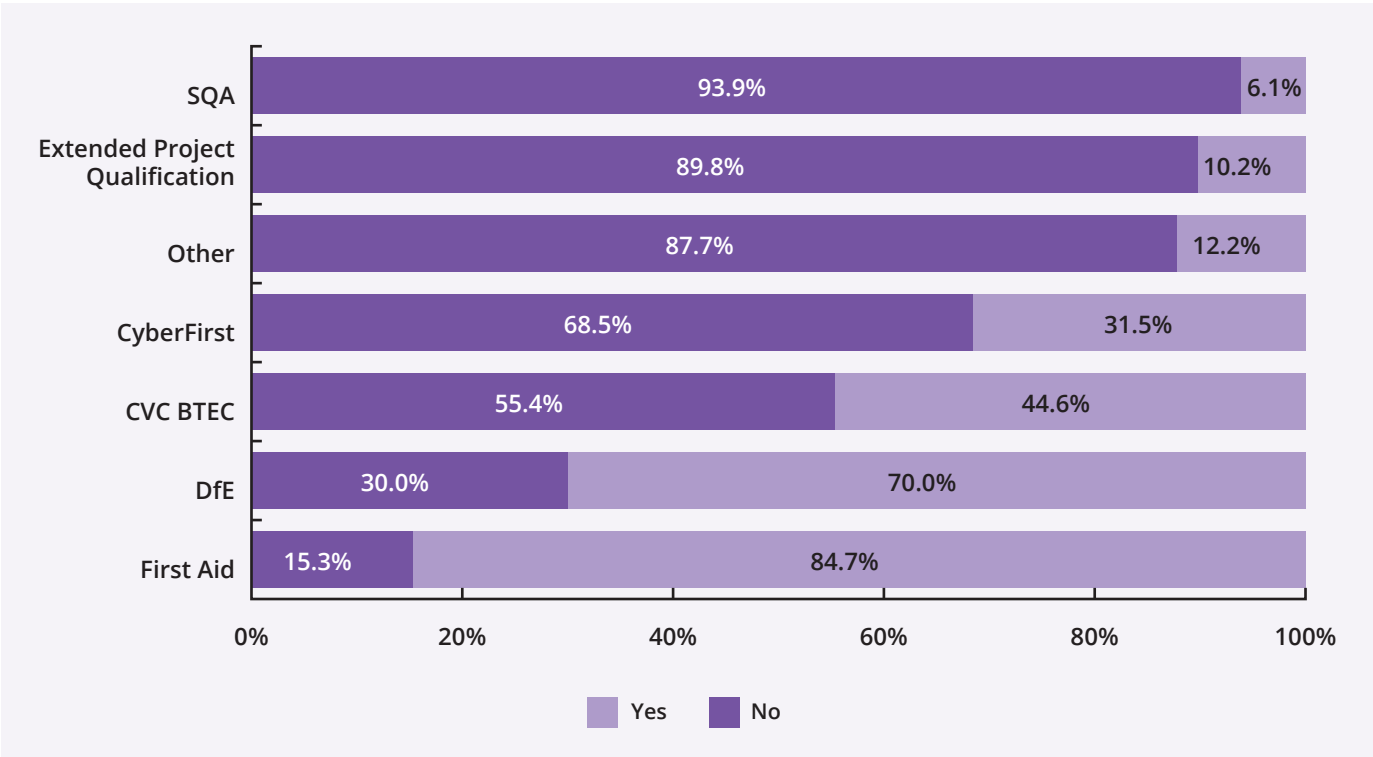


Figure 4.11 Does being a cadet in the school's CCF enable pupils to gain qualifications or awards from any of the following organisations or schemes.

Most schools with CCF contingents take part in the Duke of Edinburgh's award scheme which has been

mapped to the CCF syllabus. The CCF contingent can deliver the Duke of Edinburgh's scheme in a

79 Information supplied by the school's Head of Social Mobility, June 2023.

Key Findings cont.

cost-effective manner and SSIs frequently have a secondary role of running the scheme for non-cadets. Schools must buy a licence to deliver the scheme and, if the school has an Army CCF contingent, the Army meets the cost.

4.2.10 Career aspirations and intentions

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 contingent 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 college, university, apprenticeships and employment.

**“The CCF can break the cycle, it can make cadets realise they don’t have to be unemployed like their parents and grandparents”**  
**Head Teacher, Academy School, Scotland**

Head Teachers of schools in more deprived areas repeatedly observed 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 et al., 2016). Heads observed that some children do not travel beyond their local area, for example a CCF contingent 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<sup>80</sup> 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. Moreover, because CCF activities are either free or very heavily subsidized it is affordable to all.

The survey data gathered from Head Teachers and CC/SSIs also suggests that CCF contingents have a positive impact on pupils' career aspirations, with three-quarters of Head Teachers (75%) and 92.1% of CC/SSIs responding to this question with an Agree/ Completely Agree reply. However, it should be noted that Head Teachers were slightly less positive in this, with more merely agreeing or uncertain as to the impact (see Figure 4.12).

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



# Key Findings cont.

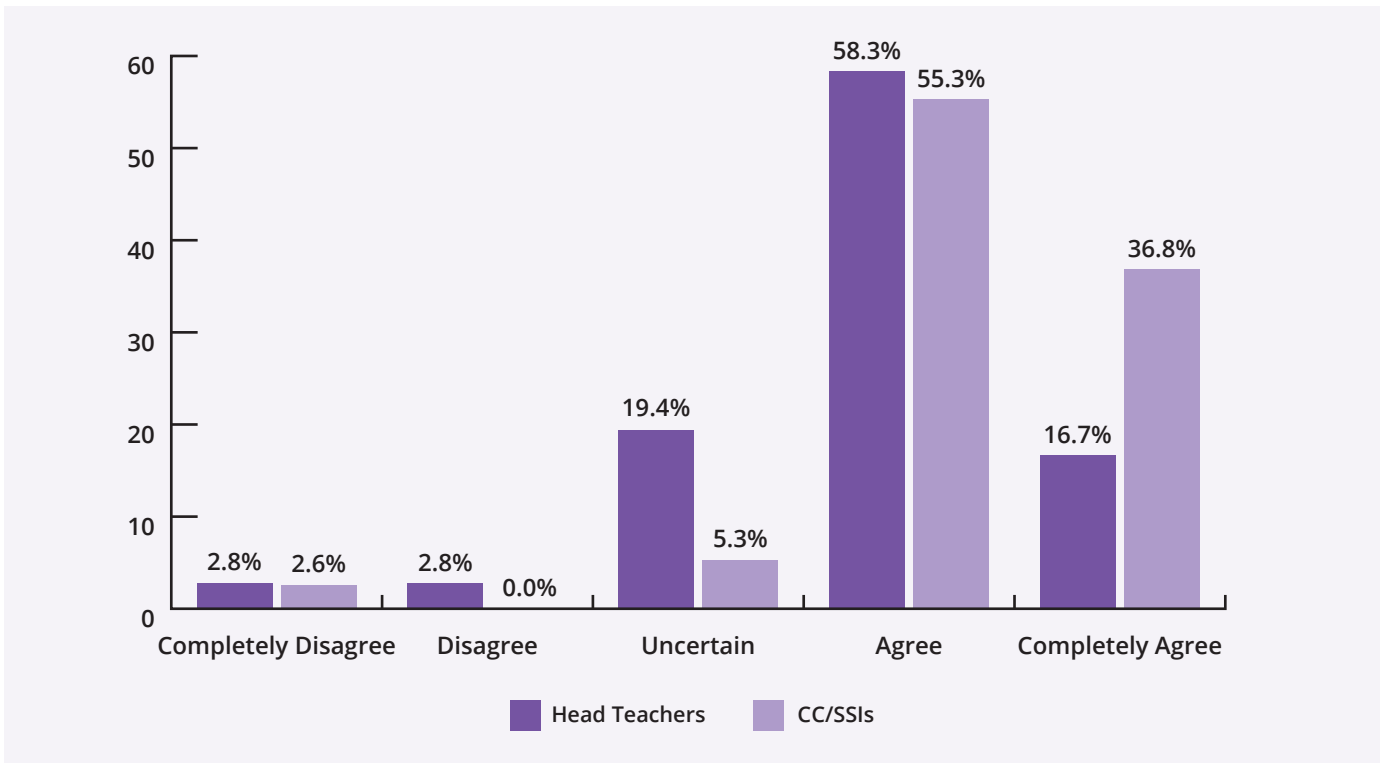


Figure 4.12 The school's CCF has a positive impact on the career aspirations and ambitions of pupils that are cadets

All interviewees based in CEP schools highlighted that being a cadet helped their pupils grow in confidence and maturity, enabled them to take on responsibility, and developed a sense of belonging; qualities that were essential to their success after leaving school. These respondents claimed that being in the CCF greatly increased the chances of an ex-pupil either continuing in education, or gaining employment. Given the national figures for young people that are not in education, employment or training, this is an important outcome for the CEP.<sup>81</sup>

## 4.2.11 Confidence and Competence of Teachers

Evidence from all the interviews with Head Teachers and teachers involved with the CCF is that being a CCF officer 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.

**"There's no doubt about it, seeing a teacher as a CCF officer changes the relationship with the pupils, for the better."**  
Head Teacher, CEP School, South East England

For teachers CCF training is often an 'eye-opener,' being around military people is different, they learn

<sup>81</sup> The percentage of the population (aged 16-24) defined as 'not in education, employment or training' (NEET) in 2023 (the latest year for which figures are available) was 11.9%. This is a statistically significant increase compared to the same period in 2021, where the figure was 10.5%, the lowest in the series. The female NEET rate in 2023 was 11.5%, a statistically significant increase of 2.4 percentage points over the figure for 2021. Source: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/neet-statistics-annual-brief>

# Key Findings cont.

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 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. The Contingent Commander, of a CCF contingent in Essex, commented that being a member of a CCF as a pupil and now as an adult volunteer had provided him 'with the entire skill set I have used.' 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.

The survey data also explored this area, with Head Teachers and CC/SSIs asked about the impacts of CCF contingents on the teachers that engaged with them (as Cadet Force Adult Volunteers - CFAVs). Again, the data here is overwhelmingly positive, with Head Teachers (86.1%) and CC/SSIs (89%) Agreeing/ Completely Agreeing that the CCFs have a positive impact on CFAV confidence and competence (see Figure 4.13).

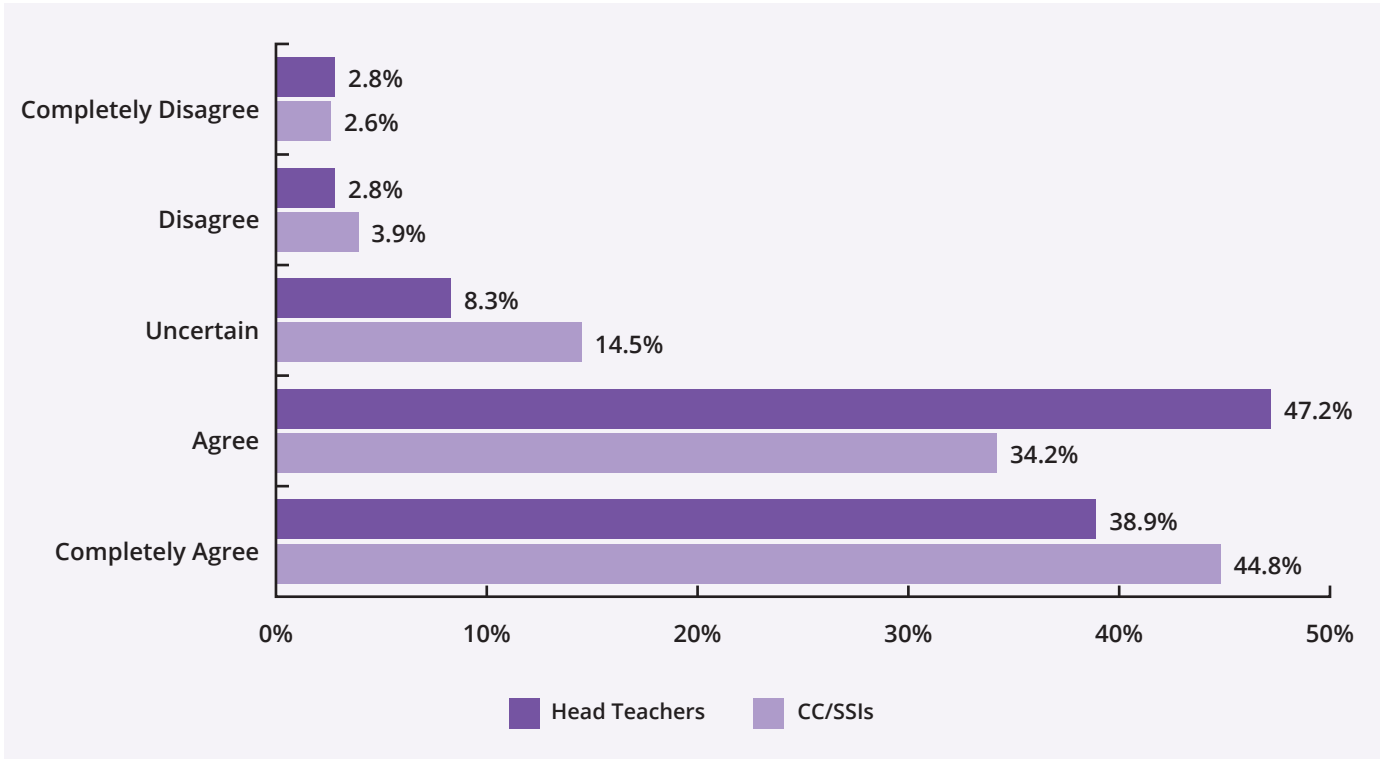


Figure 4.13 The school's CCF has a positive impact on the confidence and competence of those teachers that are adult volunteers

One aspect of the training of CCF adult volunteers introduces them to developing the instructional skills



# Key Findings cont.

of their cadets. As noted elsewhere in this report, senior cadets devise and run training sessions for their more junior colleagues. This peer coaching encourages a learner driven climate, enabling cadets to be able to talk to each other about their progress, establish effective working relationships and learn how to improve their practice through these discussions. The CCF peer coaching model is acknowledged as a way of improving student – teacher confidence and supporting the development of classroom practice (Prince et al., 2010).

As well as teachers, many CCF contingents include adult volunteers from the school's support staff. Head Teachers claimed that these staff enjoyed their contact with pupils and felt more engaged with the life of the school.

## 4.2.12 Overall School Outcomes

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 Comprehensive School**

While all independent school staff valued their CCF contingents 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. A 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 the Head of a CEP school in Nottinghamshire said, “the CCF is what the school is, it is not an add on, it is part of what we do.” The Head Teacher of a CEP school in Northamptonshire added that his CCF served a

different, challenged and challenging, community to more affluent areas of the county and that it was key to his strategy for school transformation.

**“If we didn’t have a CCF, we would have to invent it. It is the only activity that everybody can do, they can all be part of the same organization and share the same ethos and values.”**  
**Contingent Commander, CEP School, Northamptonshire**

The Head of a selective grammar school in the East Midlands pointed out that the CCF (which had been part of the school since the 1900s) was not a deciding factor for any parent whose child attended the school, but “there would be great outrage if the CCF stopped.”<sup>82</sup> This Head pointed out that being in the CCF can, “make students better human beings” and, despite being a selective school, he knew of several students who had very complex personal lives that had remained at school because of the CCF.

The survey data demonstrated that the perceptions of the impact of CCF contingents on overall school outcomes was positive, with 83.3% of Head Teachers and 69.8% of CC/SSIs responding Agree/Completely Agree to this question. Interestingly though, this is one area where the CC/SSIs were less positive about outcomes than the Head Teachers, which was a rarity in the survey dataset (see Figure 4.14).

82 Interview with project team 5 June 2023





Key Findings cont.

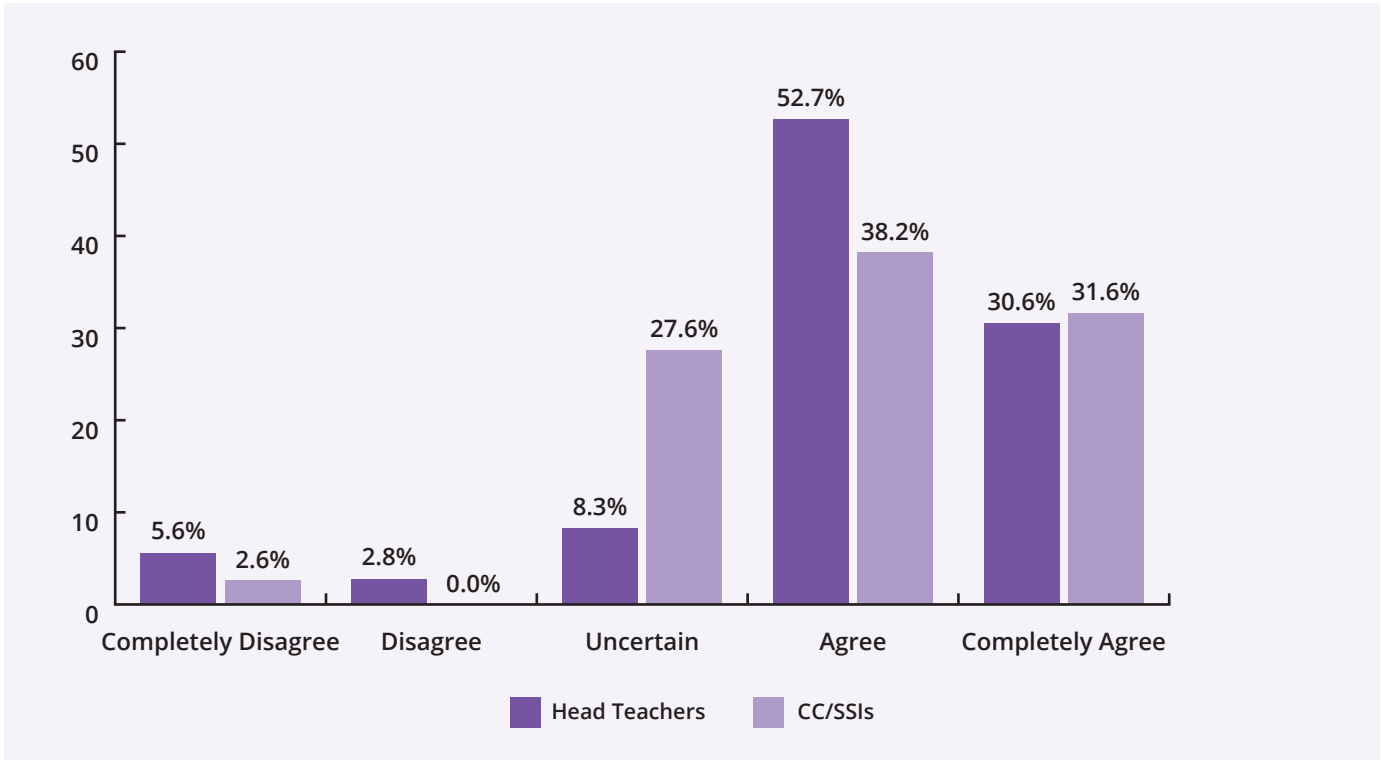


Figure 4.14 The school's CCF has a positive impact on the overall outcomes of the school

The survey data also explored perceptions of the impact of CCF contingents on helping a school's leadership team achieve objectives. Here, the data illustrates that there is a higher degree of uncertainty here, especially amongst CC/SSIs with only 52% Agreeing/Completely Agreeing, with Head Teachers figuring higher at 69.4%. Figure 4.15 outlines this data.

Key Findings cont.

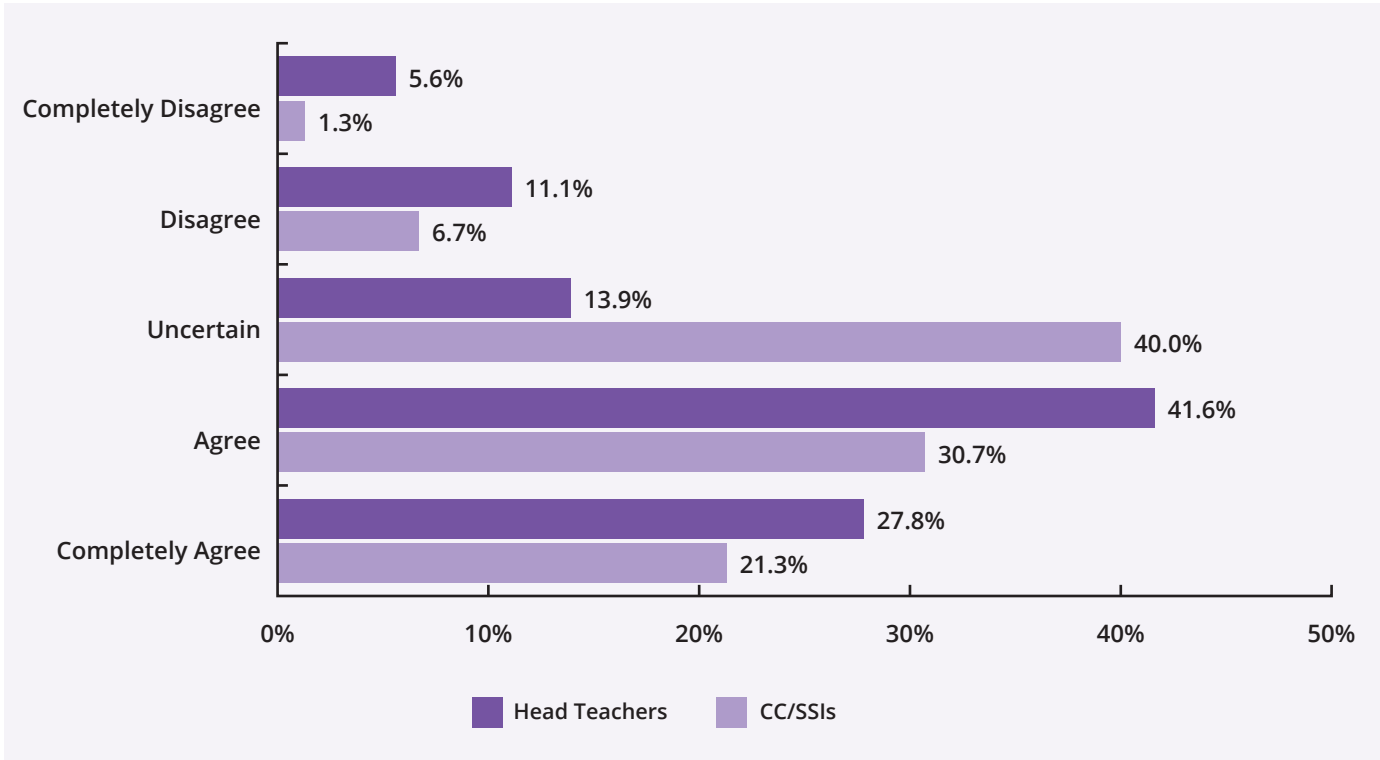


Figure 4.15 The school's CCF helps me and the senior management team to achieve set objectives

Differences in responses between school types showed no statistically significant differences for both CCs/SSIs and Head Teachers in this area.

The surveys also explored the engagement and support of School Governors with CCF contingents, showing that the support of governors was very positive. In total, 94.4% of Head Teachers and 77.7% of CC/SSIs felt that the governors supported contingents. Interestingly however, the CC/SSIs were less positive and more likely to be uncertain with regards to that support. Figure 4.16 outlines this data.



Key Findings cont.

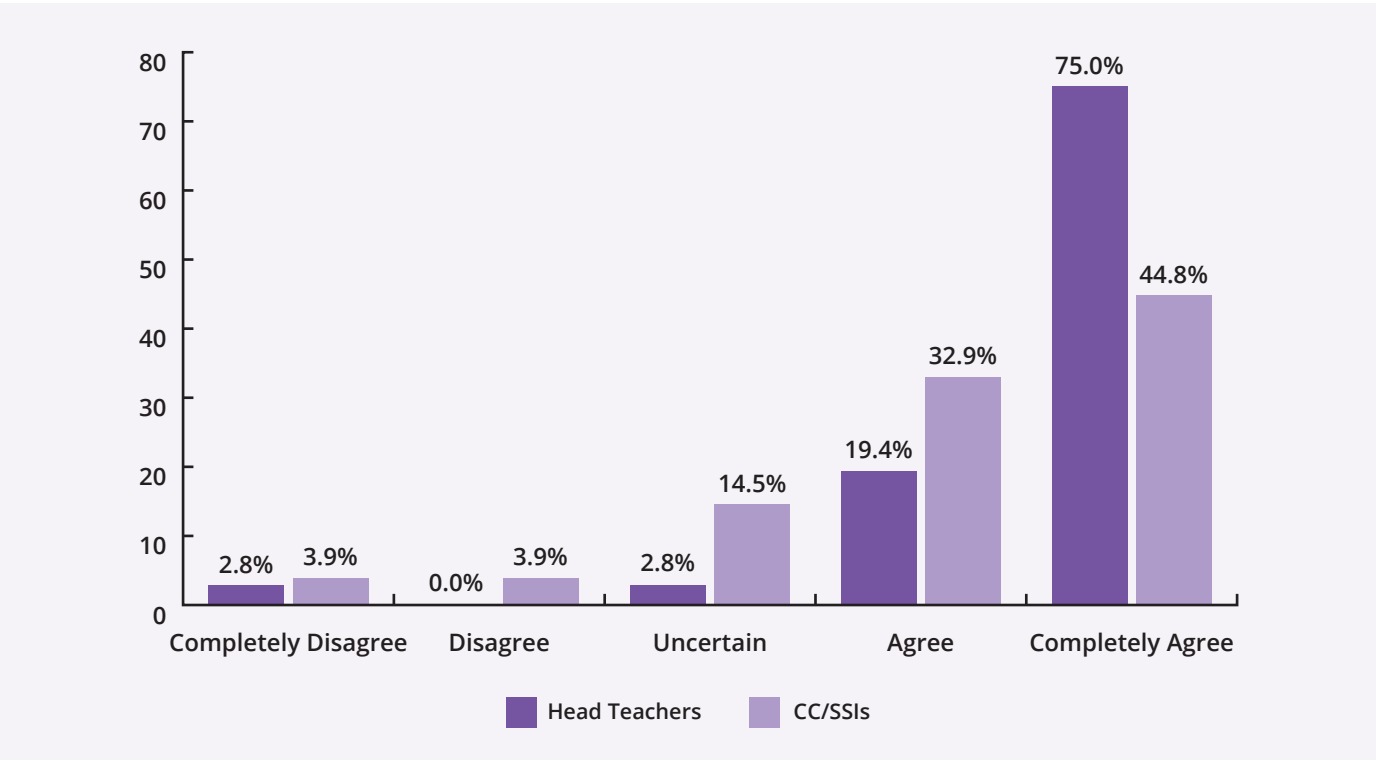


Figure 4.16 The school's governors support the school's CCF

4.2.13 Inspections

As noted above, most CCF contingents are based in schools in England, and thus come under the Department for Education (DfE). The DfE has policies that state what schools should do outside the main academic curriculum to provide wellbeing.<sup>83</sup> These extra-curricular or enrichment activities include clubs, school plays and concerts, non-compulsory sports, lessons such as sex education, personal development through such activities as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, and the CCF. In the post-pandemic context for education, investing in enrichment is regarded by the DfE as a way of helping a school solve the big problems of attendance and mental wellbeing. The DfE maintains that there is a strong link between extra-curricular enrichment activities such as the CCF and pupil wellbeing, a belief endorsed by the NHS<sup>84</sup>

and the Children's Society.<sup>85</sup> Interestingly, DfE officials that have visited CCF contingents have described themselves as being 'uplifted' by their experiences. The DfE expects the CCF to deliver benefits to the individual (life skills, personal development, welfare etc.), and increased levels of engagement with the school (seen as especially important for children that are somehow 'apart' from the school). It is also seen as a way of increasing opportunities for staff volunteering and retention, through rewarding experiences with children. The CCF, with its ability to draw on a wide-range of support and opportunities from the Ministry of Defence, gives schools a powerful option for engagement. It is accepted that schools, especially school leaders, need to put time and energy into the CCF for it to deliver to its full potential. Encouragingly, the CCF is seen as cutting

83 Source: Interviews with Team Leader – Pupil Enrichment, Mental Health and Wellbeing 28 April 2023 and Deputy Director Life Skills 12 May 2023  
84 See, for example the NHS Five Ways to Wellbeing <https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/self-help/guides-tools-and-activities/five-steps-to-mental-wellbeing/> The CCF delivers against all criteria.  
85 See, for example <https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-10/Young-People-Guide-to-Stressful-Situations.pdf>

Key Findings cont.

across political boundaries and “scepticism does not survive first contact with benefits.” (Deputy Director Life Skills.) To ensure that schools are not further burdened with measures, the DfE does not require schools in England to attempt to measure the outputs and outcomes of a CCF contingent. Education authorities in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales take the same approach. The DfE provided funding to help meet the costs of the SSI post in CEP schools from September 2021 to August 2024.

The 2021 report into the social impact and return on investment of the Cadet Forces in the UK, commissioned by the Ministry of Defence<sup>86</sup> identified that CCF contingents in schools had positive impacts on attendance, behaviour and personal development of young people in schools, all factors that form part of school inspection regimes in the four countries of the UK. The four countries of the UK have different criteria for the inspection of schools, see Table 4.1.

Country	England	Northern Ireland	Scotland	Wales
School Inspection Body	Ofsted	The Education and Training Inspectorate	Education Scotland	Estyn
Summary of Main Inspection Criteria	Quality of Education <sup>87</sup> Behaviour and Attitudes Personal Development School Leadership and Management	Outcomes for Learners <sup>88</sup> Quality of Provision School Leadership and Management	Learning Provision <sup>89</sup> Successes and Achievements School Leadership and Management	Learning <sup>90</sup> Wellbeing and Attitudes to Learning Teaching and Learning Experiences Care, Support and Guidance School Leadership and Management

Table 4.1: Summary of Main School Inspection Criteria in the Four UK Nations

Head Teachers of schools in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales were interviewed by the research team. As part of the interviews, they were asked whether their CCF contingents had any impact (either positive or negative) when their schools were inspected. Although not all schools had had recent inspections, all Head Teachers were able to describe ways in which their CCF (or, in Scotland, Linked Detachment) delivered outcomes that were directly relevant to their nation's school inspection criteria. For example, Head Teachers in England pointed out

that the impacts of the CCF on pupils that joined it were very relevant to the Personal Development element of Ofsted's inspection criteria. Interestingly, school leaders also observed that cadets in CCF contingents who undertake Cadet Vocational College vocational qualifications improve the outcomes for a school as measured by external inspection. Both a Deputy Head Teacher in a secondary school in south east England and an Ofsted inspector pointed out that BTEC qualifications, 'blend really well with the national curriculum and have a focus on

86 See footnote 16  
87 See, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspection-handbook-eif/school-inspection-handbook-for-september-2023>  
88 See, <https://www.etini.gov.uk/publications/inspection-and-self-evaluation-framework-isef-effective-practice-and-self-evaluation-1>  
89 See, [https://education.gov.scot/media/2swjmnbs/frwk2\\_hgios4.pdf](https://education.gov.scot/media/2swjmnbs/frwk2_hgios4.pdf)  
90 See, [https://www.estyn.gov.wales/system/files/2023-09/How%20we%20inspect\\_1.pdf](https://www.estyn.gov.wales/system/files/2023-09/How%20we%20inspect_1.pdf)



# Key Findings cont.

personal development,' one of the four Ofsted school inspection criteria. Head Teachers in England also commented that their CCF added an additional skill-set that fits well with British Values, with one saying 'you can watch children grow in confidence. It gives the school a sense of stability.'

However, the school leaders interviewed reported that school inspectors (in all UK nations) rarely specifically ask about, or comment on, the CCF; rather it is viewed as part of extra-curricular activities offered by a school. A Head Teacher of a school in Scotland who is an associate inspector with Education Scotland observed that, 'Education Scotland is not particularly informed about the CCF, but inspectors are always impressed when they visit a school and meet the cadets.' The Commander of a Linked Detachment agreed with this statement, saying "our Linked

Detachment has been verified twice by Education Scotland. Inspectors often don't understand what is going on so we have to ensure they see the cadets doing tasks and activities."<sup>91</sup> This Linked Detachment has also been visited by two Members of the Scottish Parliament, one of which praised the model at a Scottish education conference.

The survey data was also instructive here, illustrating broadly positive perceptions amongst Head Teachers (77.1% Agree/Completely Agree) and CC/SSIs (76.3% Agree/Completely Agree), albeit there was a significant minority in both groups that were uncertain as to the impact on inspections (perhaps mirroring the lack of recognition given by school inspection bodies to CCFs outlined above) (see Figure 4.17).

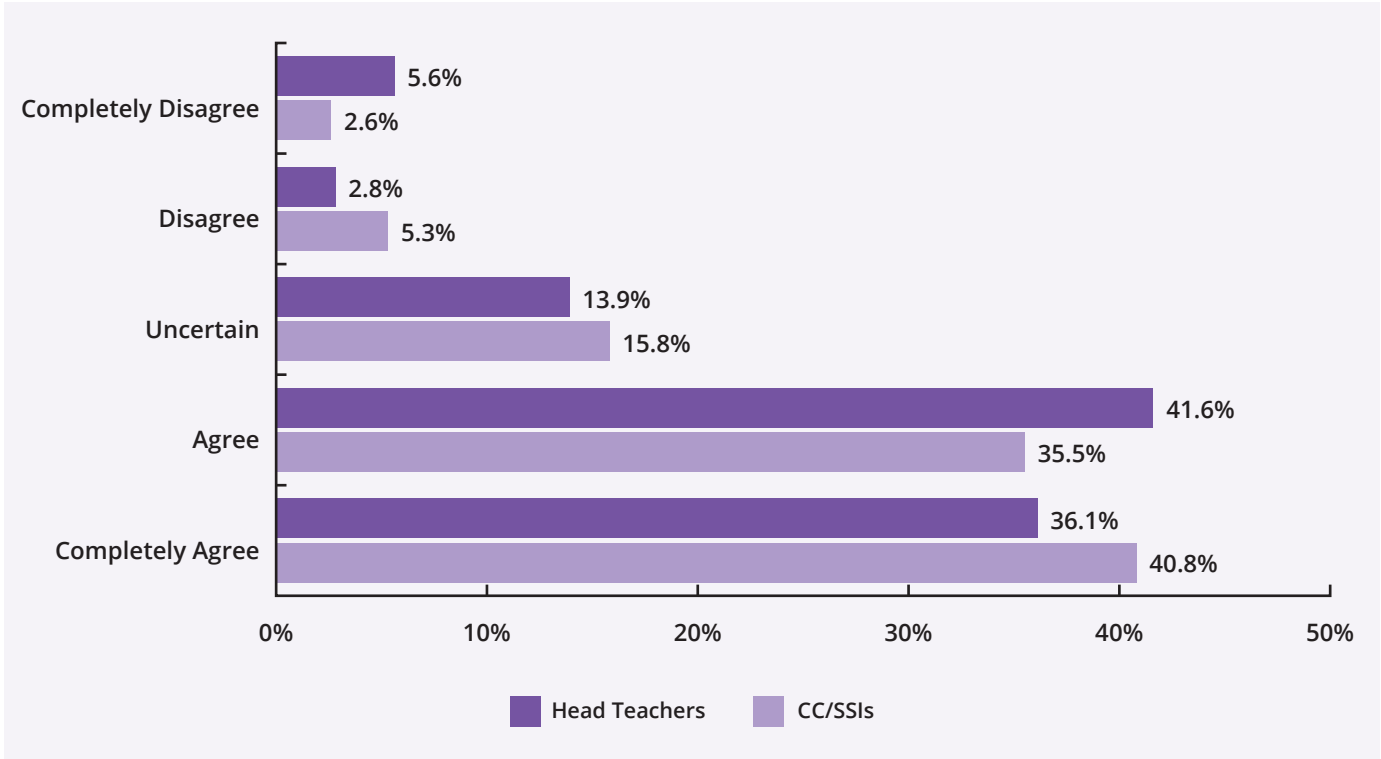


Figure 4.17 The school's CCF has a positive part to play when the school is inspected

91 Interview August 2023

# Key Findings cont.

## 4.2.14 Role in wider community

Many CCF units take part in Remembrance Parades in their local community. For example, Treorchy school's CCF gets involved with events in the community including Remembrance Sunday parades, community fairs, fundraising for charities etc. The feedback from the community is positive and people respect the values and standards developed by the CCF. In addition, the SSI runs (free) first aid courses for

members of the community. In Scotland, Broxburn Academy's cadets take part in litter picking and grass cutting to improve the appearance of the local area.

Both Head Teachers and CC/SSIs are very positive about the role played by CCF contingents in the wider communities surrounding schools. Indeed, 77.8% of Head Teachers and 80.3% of CC/SSIs Agreed/Completely Agreed that contingents played a positive role in communities (see Figure 4.18).

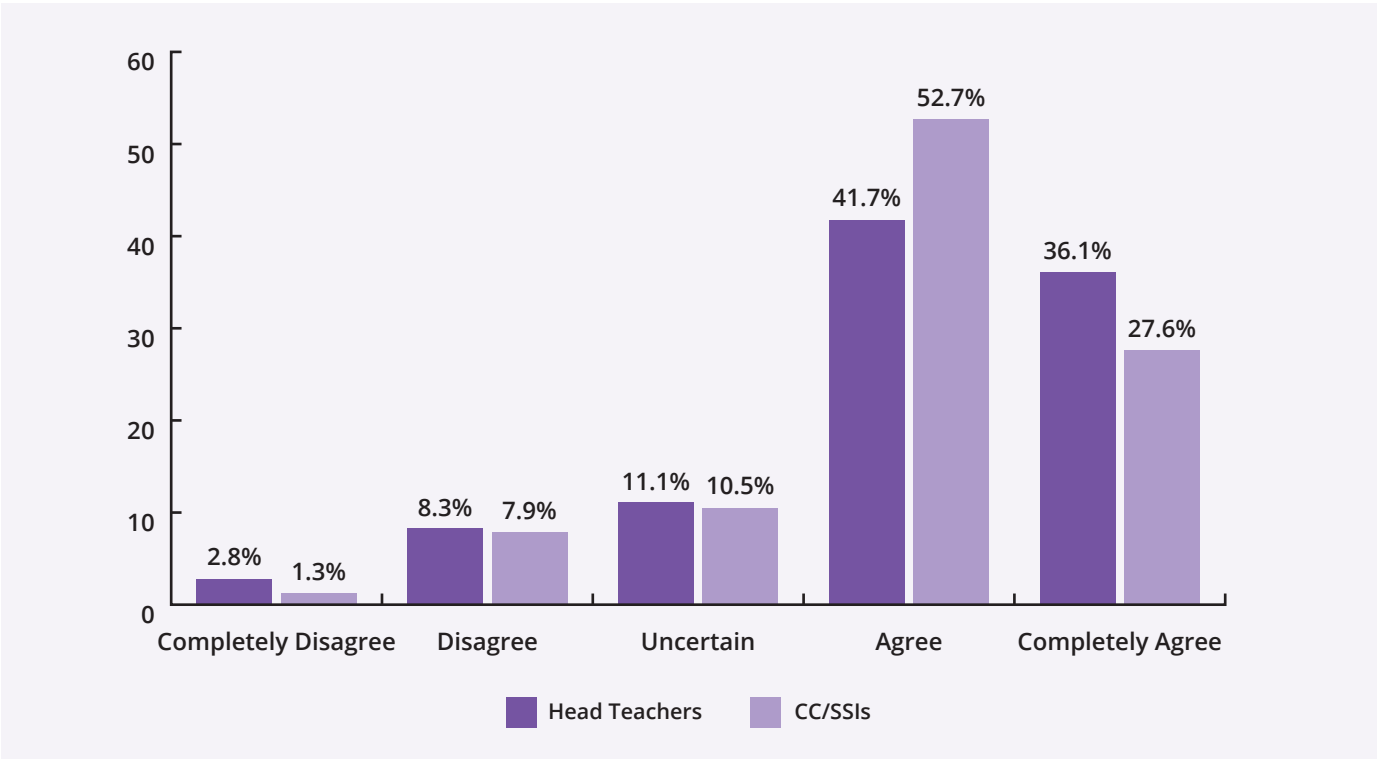


Figure 4.18 The school's CCF plays a positive part in the wider community

## 4.3 The Impact of School-Based Cadet Forces on Cadets

Cadets are, of course, pupils at a school that has a CCF (although a few schools without CCF contingents have partnership arrangements that enable their pupils to be part of a CCF contingent at a different school). Therefore, it is important to examine whether being part of a CCF has any impact on the cadets themselves.

**"CEP CCFs capture lots of children that would not be in Cadet Forces in the community."**  
Chairman of Northamptonshire Reserve Forces and Cadets Association

Previous research suggests that girls that take part in outdoor challenges, such as those offered by the CCF, develop increased confidence in physical activity, feelings of physical strength, confidence, self-esteem, perseverance, courage, resiliency, a connection



# Key Findings cont.

with other girls and a sense of self; although the impacts on gender identity development, gender role stereotypes and body image were less clear (Rocklynn, 1998; Whittington and Budbill, 2013). Controlled exposure to challenge has also been found to enhance the psychological resilience of both girls and boys (Neill and Dias, 2001; O'Reilly et al., 2023).

## 4.3.1 Skills Development

CCF cadets work through a progressive syllabus with opportunities to gain both skills awards (badges for first aid, communication etc.) and promotions. These skills are developed both during the week in term time (CCF contingents typically parade after school one-day a week), and at weekend and school holiday camps. Sadly, at the same time as the number of CCF contingents has more than doubled, the Ministry of Defence has sold off many of its training areas. As a result, fewer training areas are competed for by the Regular and Reserve Forces, and the Cadet Forces, reducing the opportunities for CCF contingents to benefit from camps in traditional locations.<sup>92</sup> Fortunately, in many cases Contingent Commanders have been able to come up with meaningful alternative venues to ensure that skills development is not hindered.

All school-based interviewees pointed out that one of the ways that the CCF develops important skills and personal confidence is through the role senior cadets have in training their more junior comrades. This peer-mentoring approach has benefits not only in improving skills and personal confidence, but in developing the skills required to navigate and build social relationships, develop problem solving skills and engage in education (Willis et al., 2012) Using pupils to plan lessons and give instruction to peers is unusual in a school and interviews with Head Teachers, Contingent Commanders, and adult volunteers frequently cited 'learning to teach others' as a very important skill. All schools also said that senior cadets talk with pupils that are junior cadets during the normal school week.

<sup>92</sup> Additionally, since 2022 five training areas have also been used to train Ukrainian military personnel, further reducing the opportunities for CCF contingents.

## 4.3.2 Post-School Plans and Career Aspirations

The surveys explored with Cadets their plans for their post-school lives, with the data revealing that the majority of cadets (62.4%) planned to go to university, with other significant destinations being employment, including apprenticeships (23.5%), and further education (9.4%) (see Figure 4.19). There were no statistically significant differences between cadets from the different types of school.

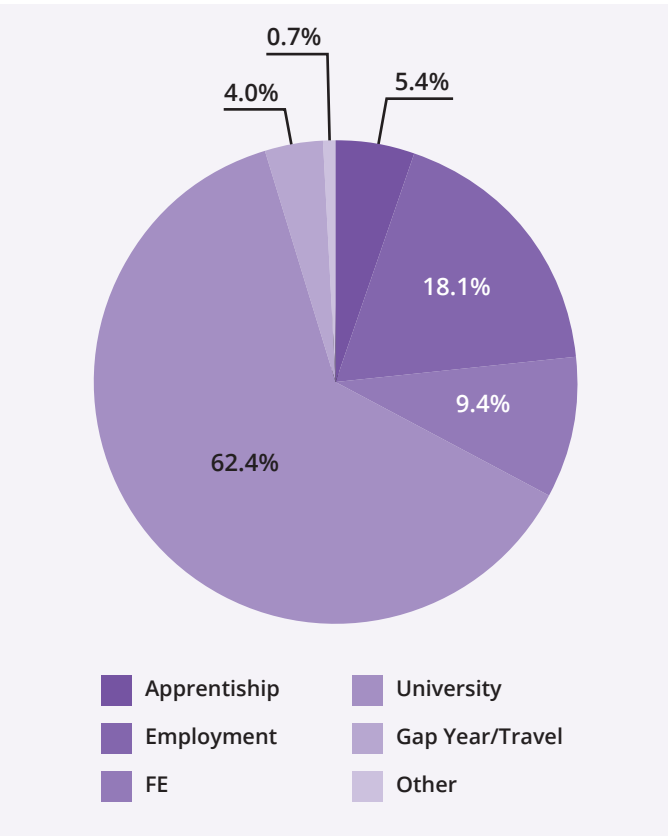


Figure 4.19 What are your plans after leaving school?

As noted above Head Teachers believe that being a cadet helps their pupils gain places in further education colleges and universities. The research team studied university and college admission websites to assess whether this belief was valid. Unsurprisingly, the team found that higher and

# Key Findings cont.

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."<sup>93</sup> 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."<sup>94</sup> Moreover, some 73 per cent of university admissions officers have said they look for evidence of an ability to work well in groups.<sup>95</sup> 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.

There is a huge skills gap in the UK<sup>96</sup> 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.<sup>97</sup> Worryingly, 50% of all UK businesses have a basic cyber security skills gap, while 33% have an advanced cyber security skills gap.<sup>98</sup> With this context in mind, the research team sought to identify whether the range of skills and attributes developed by the CCF were valued by employers.

The web and literature reviews conducted highlighted that employers in the UK look for a range of attributes in a new, young 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).

While some posts require certain academic qualifications, a search of employer websites clearly indicates that all roles require personal or social skills. Table 4.2 summarizes the qualities or traits that employers are seeking.

Source	Qualities/Traits required
Nationwide <sup>99</sup>	Reliability, Problem-solving skills, Teamwork, Conflict resolution, Communication Skills, Willing to learn and ask questions
Recruiter.com <sup>100</sup>	Confidence, Communication, Ability to work on a team, Emotional intelligence, Culture fit, Positivity, Potential, Loyalty, Honesty
Workable.com <sup>101</sup>	Teamwork, Willingness to Learn, Communication, Self-motivation, Culture fit

<sup>93</sup> <https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-university/writing-personal-statement/how-write-personal-statement>  
<sup>94</sup> <https://www.theuniguide.co.uk/advice/personal-statements/personal-statement-secrets-universities-reveal-all>  
<sup>95</sup> <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/student/advice/top-7-qualities-universities-look-student-applicants>  
<sup>96</sup> <https://www.edge.co.uk/research/projects/skills-shortages-uk-economy/Skills-Shortages-Bulletin-Summary/>  
<sup>97</sup> <https://www.fsb.org.uk/resource-report/scaling-up-skills.html>  
<sup>98</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cyber-security-skills-in-the-uk-labour-market-2023>  
<sup>99</sup> <https://www.nationwide.com/business/solutions-center/managing-employees/good-employee-qualities>  
<sup>100</sup> <https://www.recruiter.com/recruiting/top-9-qualities-to-look-for-when-hiring-employees/>  
<sup>101</sup> <https://resources.workable.com/stories-and-insights/qualities-of-good-employee-and-candidate>





## Key Findings cont.

Source	Qualities/Traits required
Indeed.com <sup>102</sup>	Dedication, Confidence, Reliability, Teamwork, Independence, Leadership, Interpersonal/communication skills, Self-awareness, Critical thinking, Integrity, Problem-solving skills

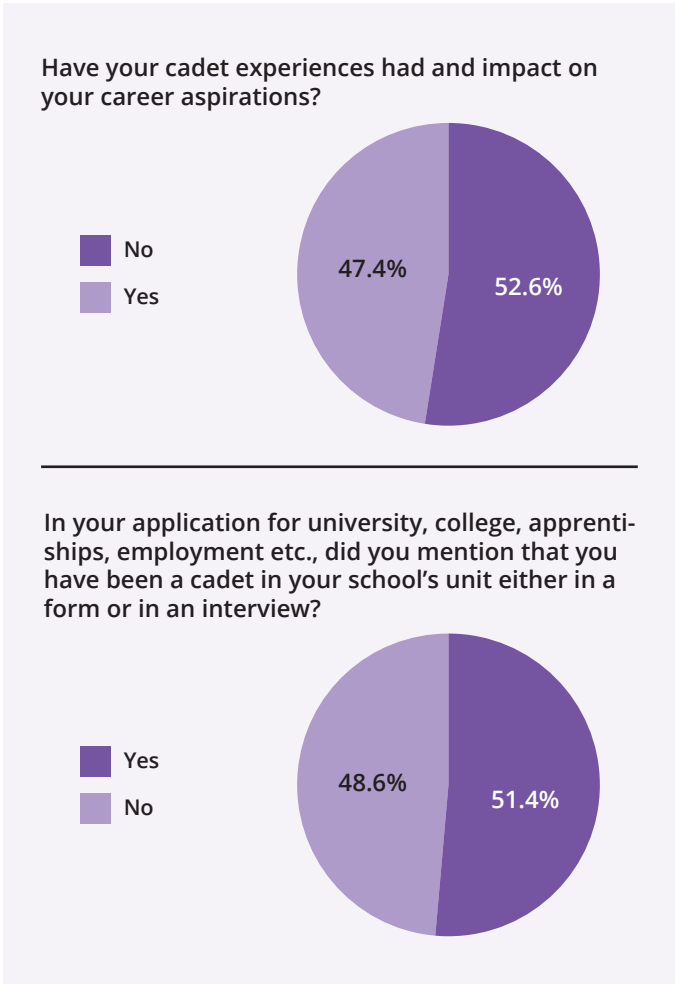
**Table 4.2: Personal or Social Skills required of new, young, employees in the UK**

The interviews held with officials of the Department for Work and Pensions, career advice professionals, and an Ofsted inspector revealed clear, and common, themes. Employers believe ‘soft skills’ e.g., leadership, teamworking, communication, are especially important for new employees. The careers advice professionals, who have spoken with thousands of students in hundreds of schools, commented how cadets in the CCF have such a wealth of skills and experiences to talk about in interviews (although some struggle to ‘translate’ the skills they have developed in the CCF into language employers use). Both remarked that they were ‘always able to identify the cadets.’ The careers advisors stressed that the personal skills developed by the CCF were as important to employers as academic qualifications.

Interestingly, a unique study of the impacts on girls resulting from participation in the CCF found that participants were effusive about the transformative effects of CCF in relation to their personal confidence. They recognized that being in the CCF had given them transferable skills and raised their personal aspirations, all key elements to employability, particularly for women. All the respondents to the study also considered they had gained future workplace advantage having had the opportunity to trial leadership strategies in mixed gender teams, an experience unavailable elsewhere to them (Grant and Yates, 2023). This impact of the CCF is important, given that previous research has suggested that a lack of confidence among women can reduce their career aspirations and thwart advancement in whatever career they choose (Carlin et al. 2018) and that women frequently undervalue their participation and

are more likely to be dismissive of extra-curricular activity as of value to their employability than men (Stevenson and Clegg, 2012).

The survey also asked Cadets whether they believed that being in the Cadets had impacted their career aspirations and whether they had evidenced it in their university/employment applications. The data reveals a significant split in this area, with a clear dichotomy between those that felt it had impacted their aspirations and applications, and those for whom it had not (see Figure 4.20). There were no statistically significant differences between Cadets from different school types in this analysis.



**Figure 4.20 Cadets Impact on Career Plans and Applications**

<sup>102</sup> <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/good-employee-qualities>



# Key Findings cont.

Interestingly, there is a noticeable difference between the views of Head Teachers and Contingent Commanders/SSIs on how participation in the CCF has a positive impact on career aspirations (see Figure 4.12) and those of the cadets that responded to the survey. The research team believes that this result is affected by the small number of cadets from CEP schools that responded to the survey (n=14). The great majority of the cadet respondents came from schools in the independent sector (117 out of a total of 154, see Table 3.3) and in many of these schools, participation in the CCF is compulsory. It is hypothesized that pupils that are in a CCF contingent because they have to be in it are in less interested in the activities and learning offered, thus find it influences their aspirations to a lesser extent.

The Cadets also provided qualitative comments as to their career aspirations, with some identifying how being in the cadets had made them more likely to explore a military career, whilst others discussed engineering, research and cyber.

**“I’m considering climbing up the ranks of research beyond my undergraduate degree and may look to lead a research team.”**

**“Before I joined the CCF I was not sure what career option I wanted to pursue in the forces but now I know that I want to join the Army.”**

**“I’m now more interested in going into a military or government cyber position.”**

## 4.3.3 Vocational Qualifications

Members of the Cadet Forces of the UK, both cadet and adult volunteers, are able to gain vocational qualifications from the Cadet Vocational College<sup>103</sup> while participating in Cadet Force activities. Vocational qualifications have been mapped to the CCF syllabus. Most of those that take advantage of this opportunities are members of Cadet Force units in

the community (the Army Cadet Force, Air Training Corps and Sea Cadets).

**“Our students want to go onto Russell Group universities. They are competing with people that all have top grade A levels. I want our students (in the CCF) to have the vocational qualifications that the Cadet Vocational College provides. They will give them the edge they need.”**  
**Head Teacher, Public School in London**

**“This school is top of the tree, we have very intelligent students who want to go to good universities. Gaining vocational qualifications through the CCF gives the students an advantage over other good students; universities like them.”**  
**Contingent Commander, Selective Academy school, Lincolnshire**

However, during the last three years more than 2,100 learners from 118 different CCF units (see Table 4.3) have actively engaged with the Cadet Vocational College.<sup>104</sup> As part of this study, the research team wanted to identify the impacts that gaining vocational qualifications had on members of CCF contingents.

Academic Year	No. of CCF Units	No. of Learner Registrations
2021-22	59	606
2022-23	59	582
2023-24	80	940

**Table 4.3: CCF units and learners registering with the Cadet Vocational College 2021 - 2024**

In interviews, teachers in schools where cadets in the CCF contingent did Cadet Vocational College awards pointed out that, especially for the less academic pupils, BTEC Level 1 was particularly valuable. A Contingent Commander of a school in the south east

# Key Findings cont.

of England<sup>105</sup> highlighted the link between BTEC Level 1 and Progress 8<sup>106</sup> achievement. This school now pays for all CCF cadets to undertake the BTEC.

Previous research indicates that the BTEC qualifications that the Cadet Vocational College provides have a greater impact on gaining access to higher and further education courses than other vocational qualifications e.g., NVQs. Patrignani et al. (2018) pointed out BTECs act more often as a stepping stone to learning at higher levels (including degree level) compared with other vocational qualifications. They concluded that BTEC qualifications at Level 3 and Level 2 help both male and female school leavers to be successful in applications for further and higher education, with between 40% and 45% of learners with BTECs at Level 3 attaining degree-level qualifications or above, compared with between 5% and 8% for Level 3 NVQs and 20% and 25% for other vocational qualifications at Level 3. At Level 2, the percentage of BTEC holders achieving a Level 3 qualification or above is in excess of 50%, with 15% attaining at least degree-level qualifications or equivalent. The corresponding proportions for NVQs at Level 2 are considerably lower, and slightly lower for ‘other’ vocational qualifications. These findings were supported by Pember et al. (2019).

As noted above, three managers from the Department of Work and Pensions (one a Deputy Director) and two career advice professionals were interviewed. All five respondents 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,” another commented that, “employers like vocational qualifications, they show that somebody has done something.”

To find out if universities and further education colleges were genuinely interested in extra-curricular achievements, interviews were held with five ex-

cadet students (young people that had gained their ILM level 3 in Leadership and Management with Cadet Vocational College while in the cadets) who were currently in higher education (n = 4) or further education (n = 1). All interviewees said that they had included their cadet experience, and their Cadet Vocational College vocational qualifications, on their personal statements, and all said they had been discussed (often at length) by their educational institution at interview. One ex-cadet said that “my vocational qualifications have been very helpful at (university) interviews. Everybody gets GCSEs and A Levels, but not many have vocational qualifications.”

The Higher Education Policy Institute has claimed that BTEC qualifications have been the fastest growing route to university with one-in-four students now enrolling doing so with a BTEC. <sup>107</sup>In addition to being of value to CCF cadets applying for places in further and higher educational institutions, there are many studies that have concluded that gaining vocational qualifications is strongly associated with increased earning power ((Dearden et al. (2004), Jenkins et al. (2007), Patrignani and Conlon (2011), Wiseman et al. (2013), Lynch et al. (2015), Patrignani et al. (2018), Pember et al. (2019), Bratsberg et al. (2020). The National Federation for Educational Research<sup>108</sup> published reports in 2015 (Lynch et al. 2015) and 2019 (Pember et al. 2019) which found that:

- There was evidence of value for all stakeholders (i.e., young people, business, the UK economy) when young people complete vocational qualifications, *regardless of the level of study*,<sup>109</sup>
- The strongest evidence related to the positive impact of attainment on the earnings potential of learners, especially if the qualifications are gained before the age of 25,
- Young people should be encouraged to take the highest-level vocational qualifications that they can,
- People holding vocational qualifications are more likely to be employed than the 16 – 65 population

103 CVQO was renamed the Cadet Vocational College in July 2023.  
104 Data supplied by the Cadet Vocational College

105 Interviewed in April 2023.  
106 Progress 8 is a measure of 'value-added' indicating how pupils have progressed over a five-year period compared with expected improvement.  
107 <https://www.hepi.ac.uk/2016/11/18/btec-important-universities-employers-studentsand-pearson/>  
108 <https://www.nfer.ac.uk/>  
109 Author's italics.



# Key Findings cont.

- generally, and vocational qualifications are recognized by employers as valuable,
- Vocational qualifications are increasing in importance as a route into higher education.

The evidence from both the literature and from interviews is that vocational qualifications such as the BTEC, ILM and City and Guilds programmes provided by the Cadet Vocational College deliver positive benefits to members of CCF contingents that gain qualifications. While the benefits to adult volunteers, who are likely to be in employment, are likely to be more immediately apparent than to a cadet at school, the ability of vocational qualifications to change life opportunities and outcomes should not be underestimated. Head Teachers should note this finding.

**“Employers are crying out for practical skills; teamwork, leadership and management. The ILM Level 3 is an answer to employers’ prayers.”**  
**Chief Executive, Ulysses Trust, April 2023**

## 4.3.4 Scottish Qualifications Authority Awards

SQA Awards are practice-based work qualifications for specific sectors, providing skills and recognition for a diverse range of learners. The level of the qualification shows how demanding it is. There are 12 SCQF levels, with level 1 being the least demanding (the introductory level of qualification) and level 12 the most demanding (for example, PhDs). SCQF level 7 is the starting point of the higher education levels on the framework.<sup>110</sup> For comparison purposes, the S6 is roughly equivalent to an A level and the S4 is roughly equivalent to a GCSE.

As noted earlier there are five Linked Detachments in schools in Scotland. As part of the timetable, pupils that are cadets can gain SQA awards in Uniformed Services (Level 4), Leadership (Levels 5 and 6), and Volunteering (Level 5). It was pointed out that cadets in Linked Detachments normally gain more SQA

awards than pupils that are not cadets. This formal accreditation of cadet service is an interesting feature although it is limited to just five schools.

## 4.3.5 Skills Development

Teaching younger cadets parts of the CCF syllabus develops confidence and self-efficacy. The influence of older cadets as non-adult role models should also not be discounted. Cadets provides soft-skills to young people that can have positive impacts on their lives, progression and future careers. As part of the survey with Cadets, questions were asked around skills development. Specifically, the question asked was: ‘The schools cadet unit has helped me build the following skills and abilities...’, with respondents answering on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from ‘Strongly Disagree’ to ‘Strongly Agree’. The results of the data gathering in relation to the six selected skills/abilities are presented below in Figure 4.21. The data reveals that Cadets on average rated their experience of developing skills/abilities through their contingents very positively, with the averages all in the Agree/Strongly Agree categories. The analysis reveals that this was particularly impactful for Cadets in the areas of Leadership ( $\bar{x}$  = 4.29), Teamwork ( $\bar{x}$  = 4.27) and Resilience ( $\bar{x}$  = 4.22). These average values are particularly high, given that the maximum score that a respondent Cadet can give is 5, showing that the respondents agreed that Cadets supported their leadership, teamwork and resilience development.

# Key Findings cont.

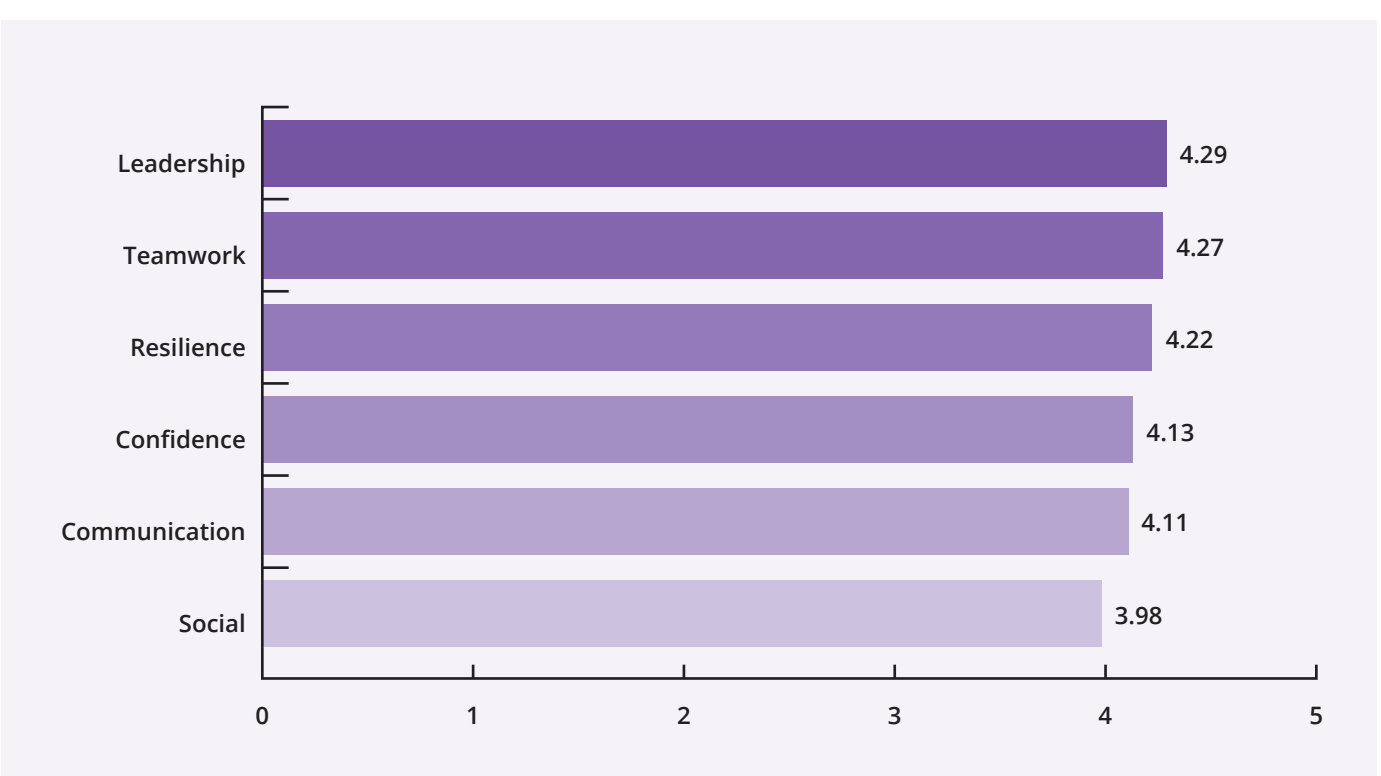


Figure 4.21 Skills/abilities development in Cadets

## 4.3.6 Wellbeing

The camps, expeditions and adventure training that cadets in the CCF undertake have been found to produce physical, psychological and social benefits in young people, increasing their resilience, self-esteem and reducing incidence of depression (Warburton et al. 2006). These benefits were gained by all participants, including those identified as at risk or experiencing a health condition (Peng and Lau, 2022). Importantly, these benefits are long-term in duration (Chung et al., 2021). The Curriculum for Wales, introduced in September 2023 for all learners between 3 and 16 years old, recognizes that outdoor learning is associated with improved well-being and confidence, supporting social and physical development and providing opportunities for the development of cross-curricular skills.<sup>111</sup>

The survey data gathered also shows the positive impact on wellbeing of engaging in Cadets. Data was gathered through a 7-item Wellbeing scale (SWEMWBS)<sup>112</sup>, with cadets asked to retrospectively judge how being in Cadet units had affected their wellbeing. Responses were provided on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from ‘Much Worse’ through to ‘Much Better’. The analysis reveals that the impacts on wellbeing across the eight identified areas were positive, albeit in the range of ‘Better’ to ‘Not Better but Not Worse.’ The most positive impacts were in relation to feeling closer to others ( $\bar{x}$  = 3.95), feeling useful ( $\bar{x}$  = 3.95) and making up one’s own mind ( $\bar{x}$  = 3.94). Figure 4.22 below outlines the results.

<sup>110</sup> People interested in the detail of Scottish Qualifications that children can get at school are referred to [https://www.sqa.org.uk/files\\_ccc/Guide\\_to\\_Scottish\\_Qualifications.pdf](https://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/Guide_to_Scottish_Qualifications.pdf)

<sup>111</sup> See, <https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/designing-your-curriculum/pedagogy/>  
<sup>112</sup> Stewart-Brown, S., Tennant, A., Tennant, R., Platt, S., Parkinson, J., & Weich, S. (2009). Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (SWEMWBS)



# Key Findings cont.

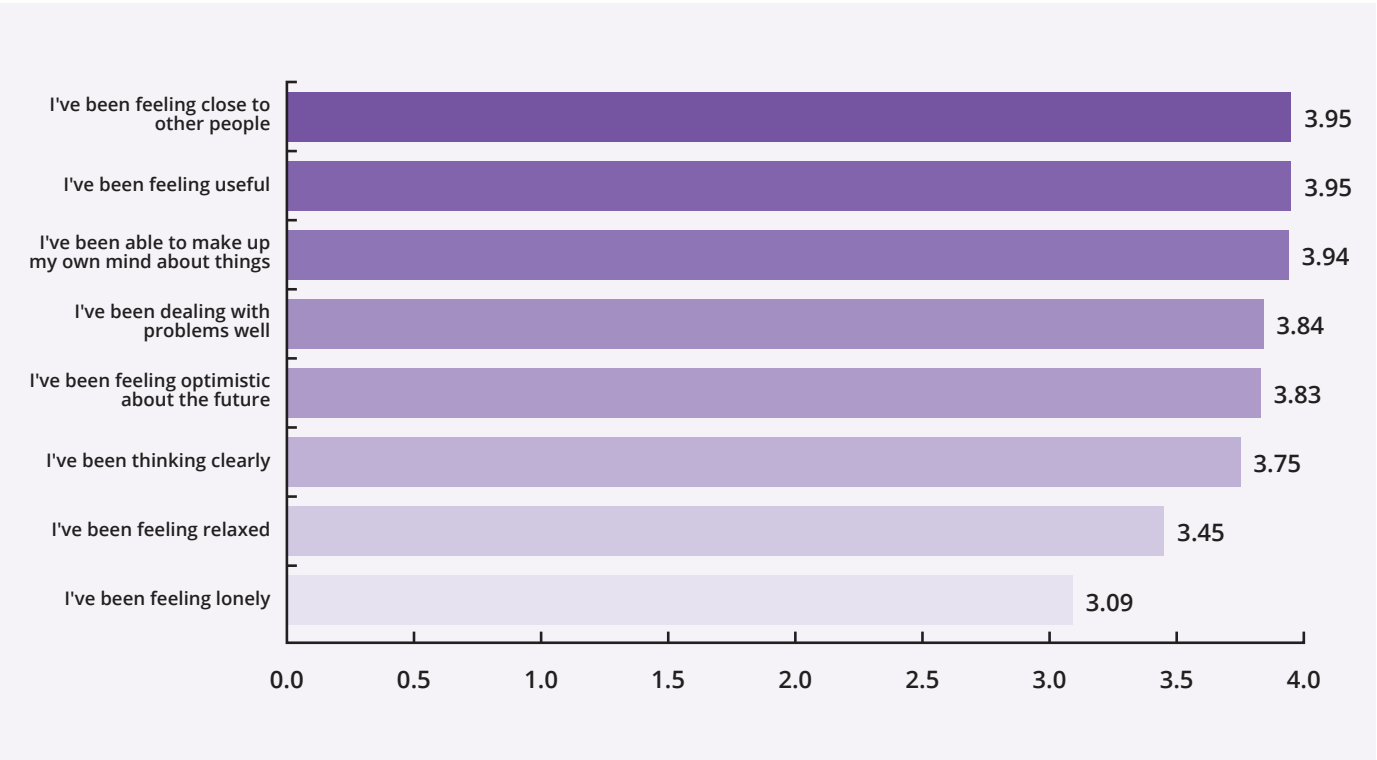


Figure 4.22 Wellbeing effects of being on Cadets

### 4.3.7 Resilience

It has been argued that schools should consider how they structure their learning and social environments in order to build resilience in their pupils. Resilience is important for both academic and physical aspects of school and adult life. Measures suggested to strengthen resilience include developing social competence, improving relationships between teachers and pupils, having high expectations of pupils, enabling pupils to meaningfully participate in the school and promoting the resilience of teachers (Brooks, 2006). The research team has found that a CCF contingent does all these things, as noted above.

The survey data also explored resilience in relation to the Feelings and Thoughts scale (Child & Youth Resilience Measure-Revised<sup>113</sup>). This contains 17 items that explore a person's feelings, with respondents answering on a 5-point Likert response ranging from 'Not at all' to 'A Lot'. The analysis reveals that the

biggest positive impacts on Cadets was related to having enough to eat ( $\bar{x}$  = 4.60), skills development ( $\bar{x}$  = 4.56), positive attitudes to education ( $\bar{x}$  = 4.53), feeling safe at home ( $\bar{x}$  = 4.49) and having parents/ caregivers that look out for them ( $\bar{x}$  = 4.46). Figure 4.23 illustrates this data.

# Key Findings cont.

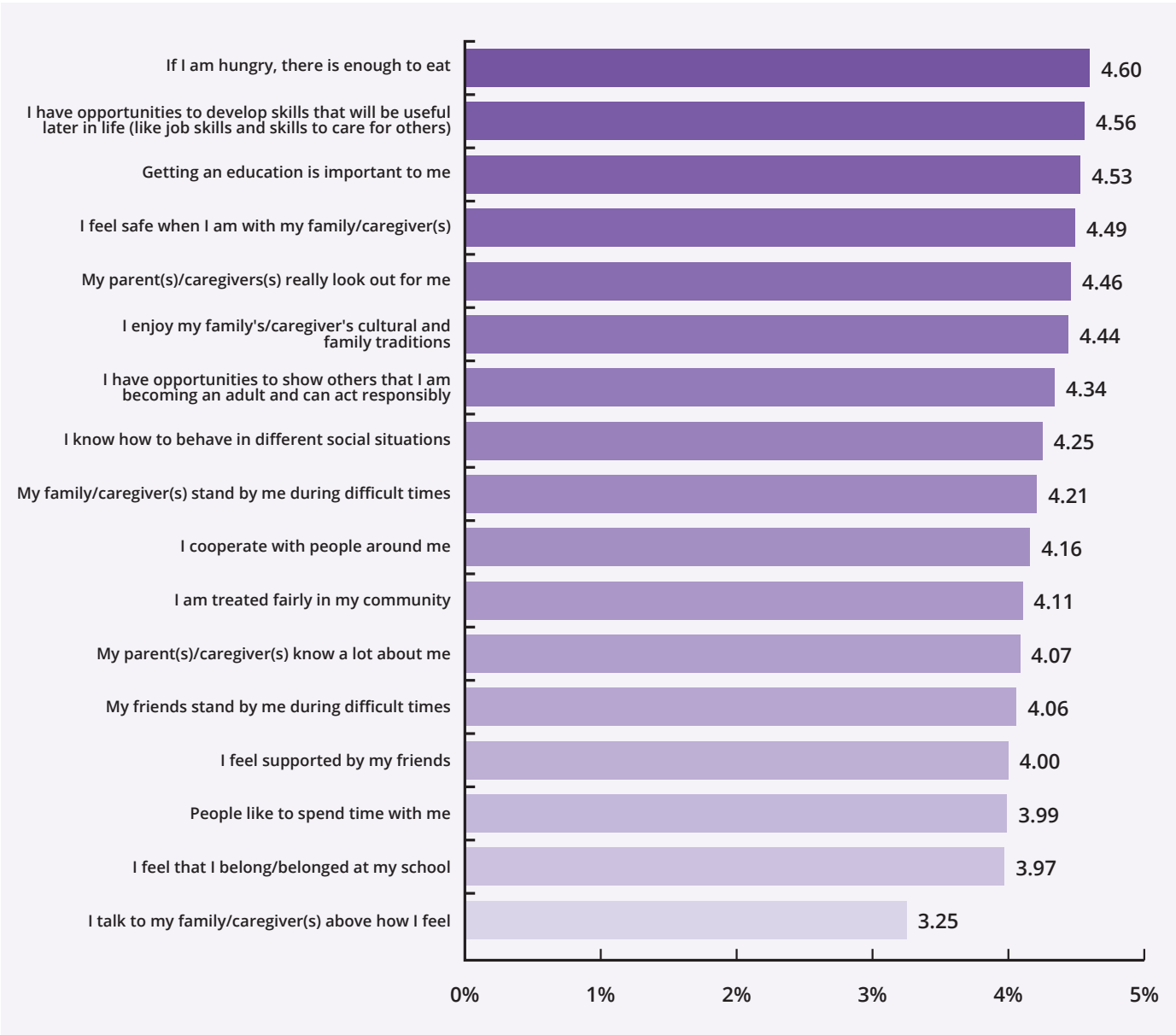


Figure 4.23 Feelings and Thoughts for Cadets

### 4.4 School-Based Cadet Forces – a Good Use of Money?

One of this report's objectives is to identify the potential value for money of the impacts of school-based Cadet Forces. Unlike business leaders, education leaders do not carry out return-on-

investment analyses for all initiatives (Frank and Hovey, 2014). Education leaders seek such outcomes as increased learning and achievement, higher graduation rates, improved career options and increased lifetime earnings. Such outcomes are a result of a complex interplay of factors and are not dependent on a single action or initiative.

Head Teachers of secondary schools in the UK

113 © Copyright Resilience Research Centre





## Key Findings cont.

are, along with many other tasks, responsible for controlling school finances. As noted earlier in this report, increases in wage demands, rising utility costs and inflation have put significant pressure on school budgets. Therefore, it is appropriate to study the views of Head Teachers on the value for money of their school-based cadet unit. The survey of Head

Teachers asked them to respond (using a Likert Scale with the options Completely Disagree, Disagree, Uncertain, Agree, Completely Agree) to 13 statements designed to identify whether they believed their cadet units were delivering value. Table 4.4 summarizes their responses.

Value Statement – The School’s Cadet unit...	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 4.4: Summary of Head Teacher Responses to Value Statements Relating to Cadet Units

It is noticeable that, with the exception of the impact of the cadet unit on exclusions (which has been discussed above), the great majority of Head Teachers completely agreed or agreed with all of the value statements. The responses to the value statements about whether the cadet unit 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 unit is interesting, and could be of interest to those involved in teacher

training and continuing professional development.

It is accepted that any calculation of the fiscal impact of school-based cadet units can only be indicative. However, even indicative calculations can indicate the potential magnitude of their value for money. As noted in Table 4.4, the majority of Head Teachers, especially those running schools in the CEP, felt that a school-based cadet unit reduces pupil absence, improves behaviour and has a positive impact on academic attainment. Additionally, a minority of



schools successfully use their cadet units to reduce exclusions. The Unit Cost Database<sup>114</sup> provides estimates of the financial and economic costs and/or values of some educational outcomes, including absence, behaviour, academic attainment and exclusions. This data has been subject to a rigorous validation process and has also been reviewed by analysts from relevant Whitehall departments. Therefore, it is considered the most authoritative current source of information. In the most recent edition of the Database, all costs are updated to account for inflation (currently quoted at 2022 prices). Using the figures from the Database, the research team carried out the following calculations presented in the next sections.

4.4.1 Attendance

As discussed earlier, both Head Teachers and CC/SSIs view the impact of CCFs on attendance in a very positive manner. Moreover, there is a financial incentive to increase attendance rates in schools. For example, DfE attendance statistics for the academic year 2021/22 show that the absence rate in secondary was 8.5%. This figure was much higher than in the six years prior to the pandemic (when absence ranged between 4.5% and 4.8%).<sup>115</sup> The Unit Cost Database gave the cost of persistent absence (missing at least 25 days of school a year) in 2021/22 as £2,166 per child. Therefore, if each of the school-based cadet detachments prevented the absence of just one pupil a year (a very conservative supposition given the evidence provided in interviews with school-based staff), the financial saving in 2021/22 would have been c. £1.14 million.

4.4.2 Behaviour<sup>116</sup>

As described earlier, all school-based staff interviewed claimed that pupils, especially those young people with some form of learning difficulty, welcomed the discipline and certainty about standards that CCF contingents impose. It was emphasized that discipline and structure gave the CCF its strength, through

enabling pupils to learn about standards of behaviour and about thinking about and helping others. The importance of the CCF in generating a sense of belonging and community, which affects behaviour for the better, was repeatedly mentioned. Both Head Teachers and CC/SSIs were very positive about the impact of CCF contingents on pupil behaviour. The Unit Cost Database describes the cost of delivering behaviour improvement programmes as being £171 per child. Given the positive impacts of cadet units on behaviour, it is suggested that such programmes need not be provided for pupils that are cadets. In April 2024 there were over 51,000 pupils in school-based cadet units, thus the potential saving from such an initiative could be in the region of £8.8 million per annum.

4.4.3 Attainment

Earlier in the report, we point out that school leaders in every school visited for interviews claimed that cadet units were important in increasing a sense of belonging, an important factor for academic achievement, and other positive impacts. Additionally, survey data gathered from Head Teachers and CC/SSIs illustrated a belief that attainment is linked with engagement with CCF contingents, albeit that there is some uncertainty about the strength of this relationship.<sup>117</sup> The Unit Cost Database points out that the lifetime economic benefit of a one-grade improvement in GCSE results, per subject, is £9,337. If we assume that c. 12,000 pupils in cadet units take GCSE or SQA Level 4 examinations a year, and that just 50% of these cadets improve their results in one GCSE/SQA subject by one grade, then the potential economic benefit is circa £56 million, per annum.

4.4.4 Exclusions

We note above that some schools, especially those that are part of the CEP, are using their CCF contingents as part of their strategy to reduce exclusions, and we cite the example of a school in Northern Ireland. In this school, pupils that are about

to be excluded are given a choice of being expelled or joining the CCF for a month. The school, which typically excludes between eight and ten pupils a term, has seen a 25% fall in the number of exclusions as some pupils decide to stay in school so they can be in the CCF contingent. The Unit Cost Database gives the cost of excluding a pupil as £13,230. Therefore, the school could be saving c. £80,000 per annum (assuming a reduction in exclusions of six pupils per annum), which more than pays for the costs of the SSI.

4.4.5 Value for Money Summary

It is stressed that the research team is not claiming that any of these calculations are ‘the answer.’ They are clearly indicative. However, the positive financial impacts, the value for money, of school-based cadet units are, we suggest, clearly indicated by the sums calculated. Moreover, the research team was only able to find authoritative financial values for four of the Value Statements shown in Table 4.4. For example, no attempt was made to estimate the value of increasing teacher confidence and competence resulting from participation in cadet units, or improved teacher retention. Given the views of Head Teachers and other school-based staff of the positive impacts of a cadet unit, and the indicative calculations that are shown above, the research team has no hesitation in asserting that school-based cadet units are delivering excellent value for money.

114 See, <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/research/research-cost-benefit-analysis/>  
115 Source School attendance in England - House of Commons Library (parliament.uk)  
116 Behaviour improvement schemes are described as Emotional Learning Programmes by the Database.  
117 The research team suspects that Head Teachers in selective and independent schools are less certain about the link between participation in a cadet unit and attainment than Head Teachers of schools in the CEP.





# 5. Summary of Findings.

## 5.1 Summary of Findings

The key findings from the report are divided into two categories: Impact on the School and Impact on the Cadet. For the first area, the data gathered illustrates that the CCF creates positive impact for schools in a number of areas:

**Enrichment:** The CCF contingents provide enrichment activity within schools, helping to build character, resilience, practical skills, and camaraderie in staff and students. The contingent enhances the educational experience by giving students from all backgrounds and all interests an opportunity to come together; it is this broad accessibility that makes CCF contingents appealing to schools and students, promoting teamwork, leadership and a sense of community cohesion.

**Attendance:** The CCF was viewed positively by schools in terms of preventing absenteeism, with CEP schools participating in this research reporting that members of their CCF contingents had significantly lower levels of absence. This decrease in absences for Cadets, has positive impacts for their life chances, but is also positive for schools as they do not have to deal with the costs associated with excessive absence.

**Exclusions:** The CCF contingents were integral to some schools in attempting to reduce exclusions, with one school (Northern Ireland) noting that pupils at risk of exclusion are given an opportunity to join the CCF for a month as an alternative to exclusion. The school found that this reduced exclusions, with a 25% reduction in exclusions following introduction of this opportunity. This is an area that more schools could utilise, given the costs to society of school exclusions and the long-term impacts on the young person excluded.

**Creating positive relationships:** The CCF role in creating positive relationships in schools was mentioned by all school-based interview respondents in CEP schools. It was noted that cadets behaved differently to non-cadets, with positive comments associated with maintaining eye contact with adults, having responsible attitudes and being supportive of others. The positive attitudes of CCF students allowed them to develop networks and relationships

that allowed them to present as positive role-models to new cadets. Indeed, there were opportunities for senior cadets to act as peer mentors to new cadets. These social skills are important for the future of young people academically and with regard to employability.

**Sense of belonging:** School leaders noted that the CCF contingents were instrumental in creating a sense of community and belonging for students. This has a long-lasting positive impact for students, influencing academic achievement, completing homework, attendance, and participation in wider school activities (Akar-Vural et al. 2013, St-Amand et al. 2017).

**Opportunities:** School-based staff were complimentary about the CCF's ability to create opportunities for students to gain qualifications, with cadets provided with opportunities to engage in Duke of Edinburgh Awards, BTECs, and First Aid programmes, to cite just a few. These qualifications opportunities, with some accredited and others being viewed favourably by universities and employers, place cadets in a good position when applying for employment or further education post-school.

**Teacher confidence:** The CCF officer role 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. It could be argued that this will help with teacher retention and thus reduce schools' recruitment costs.

**School Outcomes:** Schools reported positive outcomes associated with the CCF contingent, with all schools, whether independent or in the state sector, noting that their CCF was an excellent way of reinforcing the values and standards of the school. The CCF helped to achieve the school's mission and it helped achieve overall school outcomes, offering support to strategic leadership goals set by the schools' SMTs and Board of Governors. Cadet contingents also contribute to positive school inspection outcomes.

**Community Engagement:** Many CCF contingents take part in Remembrance Parades in their local community, which promotes community cohesion. This not only impacts on the cadet's engagement in



# Summary of Findings cont.

the community, but also that of their parents. This finding offers support to previous research into cadet forces that identified community building as a key outcome.

**Investment:** CCF contingents require a school to invest time and resources to establish them. Interviewees in CEP schools commented that it normally takes four to six years to set up an effective and efficient CCF contingent from scratch. Head Teachers and school leaders all claimed that, to gain the maximum benefit from a CCF contingent, it should be a part of the school, a ‘mini-department’, not merely another extra-curricular activity. Both CC/SSIs and Head Teachers viewed CCFs as a significant resource investment, but one that was a good investment for the school to make

**Turnover:** There are concerns about the turnover of CCF adult volunteers. In general, independent schools have less difficulty getting teaching staff to volunteer to be involved in the CCF, than CEP schools. However, the importance of having committed adult volunteers is recognised by both schools and the Armed Forces.

The CCF also creates positive impact for cadets in a number of areas:

**Skills Development:** The CCF contingents provide cadets with a progressive syllabus that includes skill awards (badges for First Aid, communication etc.) and promotions. Interview participants noted that the CCF contingents help cadets develop important skills and personal confidence, not only through skill development, but through the provision of peer-mentoring. This peer-mentoring approach has benefits not only in improving skills and personal confidence, but in developing the skills required to navigate and build social relationships, develop problem-solving skills and engage in education (Willis et al., 2012). Finally, members of the Cadet Forces of the UK, both cadet and adult volunteers, are able to gain vocational qualifications from the Cadet Vocational College while participating in Cadet Force activities.

**Career Aspirations:** The CCF contingents encourage cadets to consider the future, with data on cadets about their plans for their post-school lives, showing that the majority of cadets (62.4%) planned to go

to university, with other significant destinations between employment (18.1%) and further education (9.4%). Applications for 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.”

**Confidence and self-efficacy:** The CCF contingents create opportunities for cadets to develop confidence and self-efficacy. Cadet units provide soft-skills to young people that can have positive impacts on their lives, progression and future careers. As part of the survey with Cadets, questions were asked around skills development which showed that cadets on average rated their experience of developing skills/abilities through their contingents very positively.

**Wellbeing:** The CCF contingents provide routine and standards for all cadets, promoting mental health and wellbeing. Participation in camps, expeditions and adventure training that cadets in the CCF undertake have been found to produce physical, psychological and social benefits in young people, increasing their resilience, self-esteem and reducing incidence of depression (Warburton et al. 2006). Data from the Cadet survey showed positive changes in cadets wellbeing, with the most positive impacts being in relation to feeling closer to others ( $\bar{x}$  = 3.95), feeling useful ( $\bar{x}$  = 3.95) and making up one’s own mind ( $\bar{x}$  = 3.94).

**Resilience:** Resilience is seen as an increasingly important attribute for young people to have (Beale, 2020). The CCF contingents were believed to have a positive impact on the resilience of cadets, with the survey data supporting the interview data by demonstrating that both Head Teachers and CC/SSIs congruently viewed CCF contingents as having a very positive impact on pupil resilience.

# Summary of Findings cont.

## 5.2 Limitations of the Report

This report, like all other social science reports, is based on data that is, inevitably, incomplete. As noted in Section Three, the number of survey responses from School Governors was too small for them to be utilised in the analysis and the number of Cadets was lower than expected (with only 154 responses from over 50,000 Cadets). Despite the limitations with the sample, the use of multi-methodologies has enabled triangulation of data to ensure the results are valid and reliable.

In terms of comparable samples, no attempt was made to gather data from schools without CCF contingents in order to compare them with schools with CCFs. In addition, the impact of CCF contingents was not compared with the impacts of other extra-curricular activities offered by schools with CCFs. Expanding on this research to compare CCF contingents with other schools without CCF contingent or other extra-curricular activities would be beneficial.

The geographical reach of the survey and interviews covered all parts of the UK, although the majority of respondents to surveys and interviews were from England (the great majority of school-based cadet units are in England). The research team sought to overcome any single-country bias by conducting an extensive literature review and engaging with other stakeholders informally throughout the research.

Finally, the research team acknowledge the risks of bias associated with the interpretation of qualitative and quantitative data. To minimise the impact of any subjectivity bias, the research team have cross-checked the emergent themes with existing literature and other data sources.

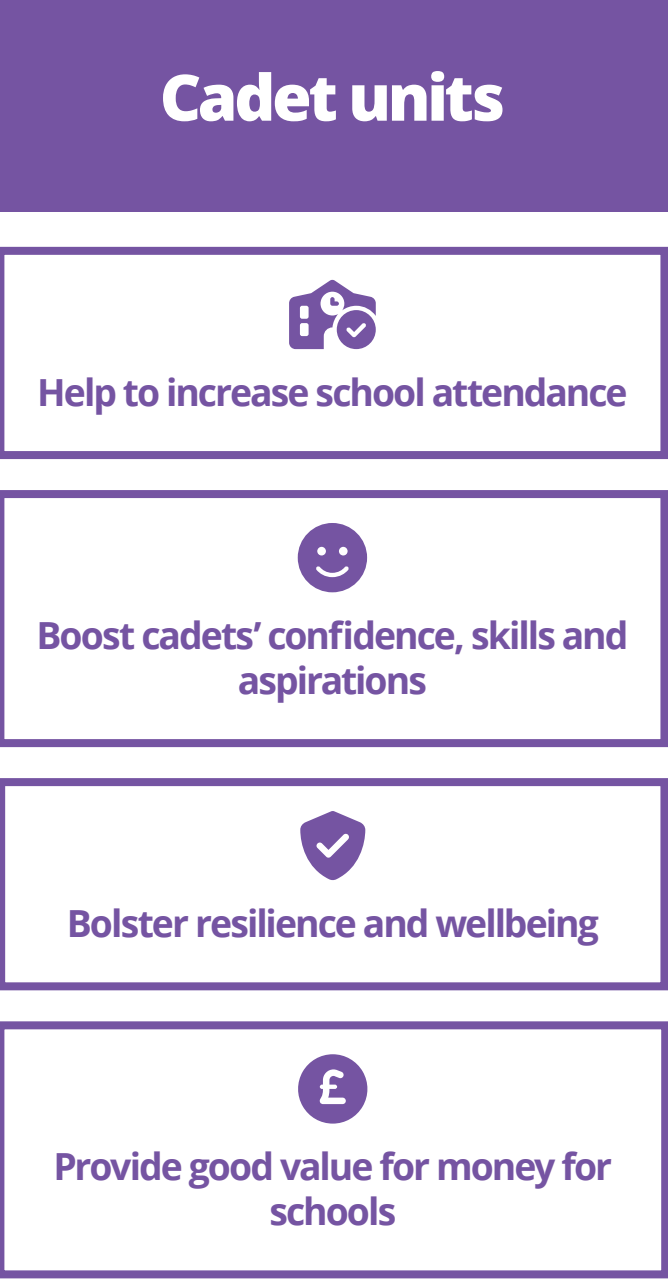


Figure 5.1 Summary of Key Findings



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