

PE1603/L

South Lanarkshire Council Letter of 11 October 2016

I am writing in response to your letter of 19 September 2016 in which you advise that the Public Petitions Committee is seeking views from local authorities on the above issue. The Armed Forces is an employer which offers a very diverse range of career paths. South Lanarkshire Council (SLC) works in partnership with a number of employers/business partners, including the Armed Forces. A response to the questions you have raised is as follows.

1. Guidance is provided on how visits to schools by the armed forces should be conducted so that information presented to children takes account of the unique nature of armed forces careers, -ensures political balance, and offers a realistic presentation of the role of the armed forces and what a career in the armed forces involves.

The Armed Forces engage with schools in a range of ways, for example, to support the delivery of leadership skills, to deliver team building and Health and Wellbeing events and through Careers Fairs. I can confirm that the decision to invite members of the armed forces to visit schools is delegated to Head Teachers on the basis that the purpose of the visit is to let young people know about their role and potential career pathways and/or through activities on leadership and team building. No direct recruitment is undertaken in schools. This takes account of the unique nature of armed forces careers and provides an opportunity to discuss career and leadership skills with young people. Alongside many of our other business partners the Armed Forces have a role in our communities and many families and individuals have links to them.

2. Information is collected to enable public monitoring of the number and location of visits, the purpose and content of visits, and comparison with the number of visits by other employers

Over the last two years, 12 secondary schools have had visits from the armed forces and/or been involved in career fairs along with other employers.

- Army
- Navy
- Marines and Marines Band
- RAF

Schools have very positive partnerships with local businesses and employers. These partnerships are managed locally by Heads of Establishment who are best placed to make decisions about which partnerships will be most beneficial to their young people. The purpose and content of the visit is agreed in advance as is the pupil year group(s) who will be involved. These type of visits by members of the armed forces and other employers are generally part of a school's strategy to develop effective approaches to careers education and employability in order to help young people make informed choices.

3. Parents/guardians are consulted as to whether they are happy for their child to take part in armed forces activities at school.

Our schools are highly effective at establishing and maintaining partnerships with employers and business links. It is considered good practice to keep parents/carers apprised of the wide range of events which happen throughout the school session. Schools do this in a number of ways e.g. Twitter, websites, newsletters, apps etc. Overall, parents/carers are notified of the purpose of visits by the armed force and where there are career fairs. If any child or family express a wish not to take part this will be considered and actioned by the school.

I can confirm that our schools do make clear the purpose of the visit which is generally to let pupils hear from practitioners about their experiences and career choices.

Yours sincerely

Jim Gilhooly

Executive Director (Education Resources)