

IMPACT REPORT 2025



Charity number: 1170528

 **scotty's**
THE MILITARY BEREAVEMENT CHARITY





SCOTTY'S MISSION

Everyone affected by military-connected bereavement feels supported and empowered in their journey.

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OUR HISTORY

Scotty's Little Soldiers was founded in 2010 by Nikki Scott.

The previous year, Nikki's husband, Corporal Lee Scott, who served with the 2nd Royal Tank Regiment, left home for a tour of Afghanistan. On 10th July 2009, Nikki got the knock on the door that every military wife dreads. Lee had been killed in action.

Nikki had to sit down her son Kai, who was five years old at the time, and tell him daddy wouldn't be coming home. Her daughter Brooke was just seven months old and would have no memories of her dad.

Nine months later, Nikki's cousin persuaded her to go on a family holiday, and on that holiday, Nikki saw Kai looking happy and enjoying himself for the first time since his dad's death. This was a reminder that life is for living and Nikki started thinking about all the other children who have experienced the death of a parent who served in the British Armed Forces.



Nikki decided to set up a charity for bereaved military children and young people – she wanted them to feel part of a supportive community, remain connected to the military and know their parent hadn't been forgotten.

As the charity has developed, we've supported hundreds of families and have learned more about the impact of military-connected bereavement, brought specialists to the team, and tailored support specifically to the needs of military children and their families.

WELCOME FROM SCOTTY'S COUNCIL

We joined the Council because we wanted to make a difference. Being part of Scotty's helped each of us as we were growing up. Whether it was feeling remembered with all the little gifts each year or making friends with other young people at events. We know, better than anyone, how difficult things can be sometimes. But we also know what helped us.

Joining the Council meant we could raise the issues that we knew were the most important, like how schools can sometimes be insensitive, and teachers need training to understand how to help us. That's why, in 2025, we launched the **Behind the Uniform** Campaign. Our campaign features animations that tell our stories in our own words, and research with the voices of many other bereaved military families. We have taken that campaign to policymakers and school leaders, and they are listening. Scotty's and Anglia Ruskin University collaborated to create teacher training materials to give school staff the knowledge they need to help make schools safe for bereaved children. It's been pretty incredible to see our impact this year.

We are ambitious and want to change systems. But we also know that little things can sometimes make the biggest difference. Being able to text another Scotty Member when we are feeling down or just want a chat – that can change your life. They understand what we are going through without us needing to say anything. Being a member of Scotty's helped us become part of a community. Being on the Council means we can encourage others to become part of a community. Building a community is probably the biggest impact of all.

From Scotty's Council



WHAT IS SCOTTY'S COUNCIL?

Scotty's Council is a group of Scotty's beneficiaries with lived experience who provide a voice for bereaved military children and young adults. The council is made up of members aged 12-25 years.

The council members meet up throughout the year to provide input into the charity, giving ideas and suggestions on the support they feel bereaved military young people will benefit from the most. Our members are the reason we do what we do, so their opinions are vitally important to how we guide the direction of the charity going forward.



A NOTE FROM NIKKI

2025 marked 15 years of Scotty's, and what a year it has been. It's amazing to see how far the charity has come and we remain committed to listening to bereaved military families as their needs change over time. In 2025, we supported 796 bereaved military children and young people, and I am incredibly proud of the specialist support we were able to offer each of them.

One of the most important developments has been strengthening our SUPPORT Programme by introducing accredited bereavement counselling alongside our long-standing bereavement support. While bereavement support gives young people the chance to talk through their feelings with a trained listener and feel understood, counselling offers a higher level of specialist therapeutic support when emotions are complex, intense, or begin to affect daily life. We also began offering pre-bereavement support, recognising the importance of being there for families earlier, at a time of great uncertainty. This means we can make sure families receive the right kind of help when they need it most.

I was also incredibly proud of the bravery of Scotty's Council for leading our *Behind the Uniform* campaign, which highlights the

experiences of bereaved military children in education. By sharing their own stories, they shone a light on the realities faced by young people in schools. Their honesty has influenced exam boards, policymakers, and teacher training, making a real difference for those who follow. Seeing them use their voices to drive change has been one of the most powerful moments of my journey with Scotty's.

Connection remains at the heart of everything we do. In 2025, we expanded our events programme in response to feedback from the families we support. Our aim was to create events that were accessible, inclusive, and welcoming to the whole family, including siblings, stepparents and children with SEND or diverse needs. The mixture of events we offered proved to be a huge success, which you'll read more about later in this report. The gatherings give bereaved military

families the chance to connect with others who understand their experiences, strengthen family bonds and create friendships and support networks.

Looking ahead to 2026, I'm so excited about the next chapter for Scotty's. We'll be building on everything we've learned over the past 15 years to reach and support the wider bereaved military community. Children and young people will always be at the heart of everything we do, but we're also determined to ensure that anyone affected by a military-connected bereavement knows Scotty's is here for them.

Thank you to everyone who is on the journey with us.

Nikki Scott

Nikki Scott
Founder, Scotty's





Scotty's is truly unique. There is nothing comparable to the sense of belonging that my children have found through the charity. We felt heard, understood, and supported at every stage of my son and daughter's childhood.



A Scotty parent

OUR PROMISES

EVERYONE AFFECTED BY MILITARY-CONNECTED BEREAVEMENT TO HAVE:

- › Ease in navigating their entitlements.
- › The chance to build social connections.
- › The very best mental health and wellbeing support.
- › Outstanding development opportunities.

OUR VALUES



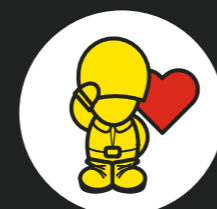
1 FAMILIES COME FIRST

Our beneficiaries are the sole reason we are here. For every decision we make and every action we take, we ask ourselves how this takes us closer to completing our Mission.



2 EVERYONE A SUPPORTER, EVERY SUPPORTER A VIP

Everyone who walks through our doors has the potential to support the charity. Without that support we can't achieve our Mission. Everyone is a potential supporter and every supporter should be treated like a V.I.P.



3 LOVE WHAT YOU DO

When you truly love what you do it shouldn't feel like work, and when it doesn't feel like work you can achieve great things. We work as a team towards one goal, our Mission.



4 REMEMBER EVERY DAY

For our beneficiaries Remembrance isn't just one day of the year, it's everyday of the year. We remember the sacrifices made by these families, everyday.

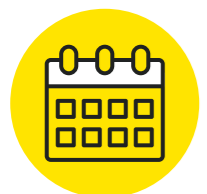
2025 AT A GLANCE

Our impact in numbers



796 children and young people supported

0-25 age range of people supported



75% of new members joined within six months of bereavement



78% of children and young people receiving SUPPORT saw improvement in at least three wellbeing areas

98%

of event attendees felt a stronger sense of belonging



344

children and young people attended Scotty's events and met others who understand



349

children and parents took part in a Scotty Break to rebuild as a family



3,085

care packages sent to ensure young people never felt forgotten



99%

of families said Scotty Breaks improved connection or communication



£73,149

distributed through grants to remove barriers to education



37

families supported through advocacy



2 million+

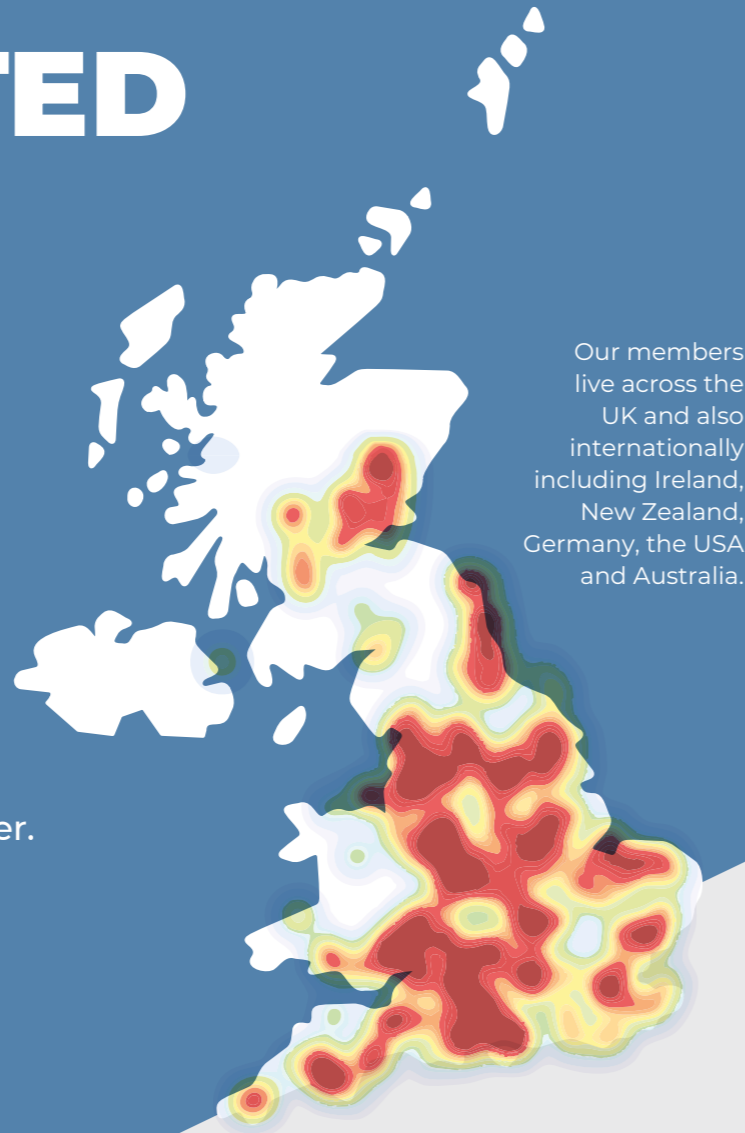
exams influenced through new guidance shaped with exam boards, ensuring exams are sensitive to the needs of bereaved children



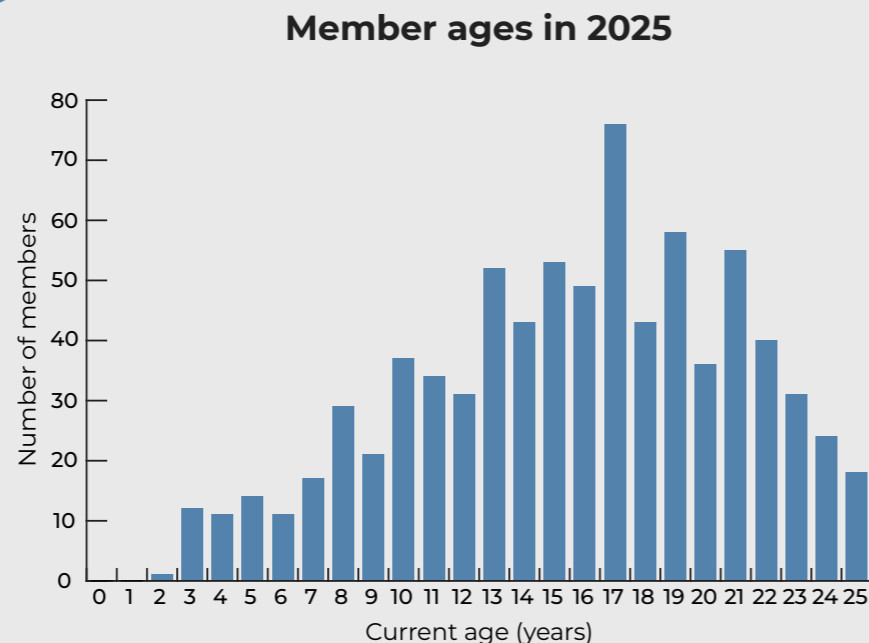
WHO WE SUPPORTED IN 2025

We changed our criteria so that we now support children if their military parent has a terminal diagnosis, as well as those who have already experienced the death of a parent who served in the British Armed Forces.

- ▶ The parent can be serving or a veteran at the time of death.
- ▶ Length of service does not matter.
- ▶ The parent can be from any branch of military service, including reserves.
- ▶ All causes of death, and all terminal diagnosis are eligible.

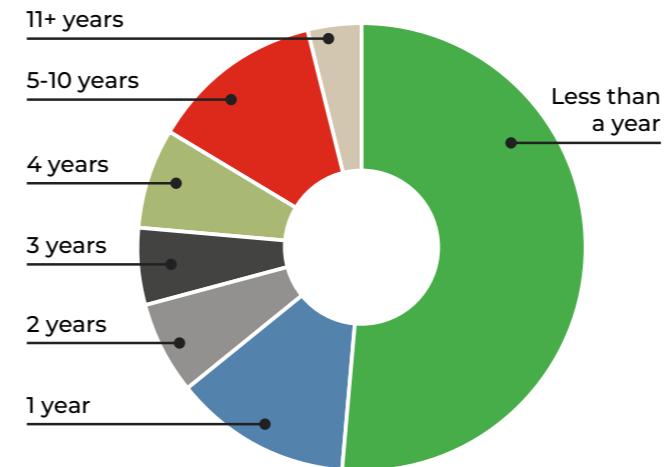


On average our members were seven years old when their parent died. In 2025, the average age of a Scotty Member was 15.6 years, with 17 being the most common age.

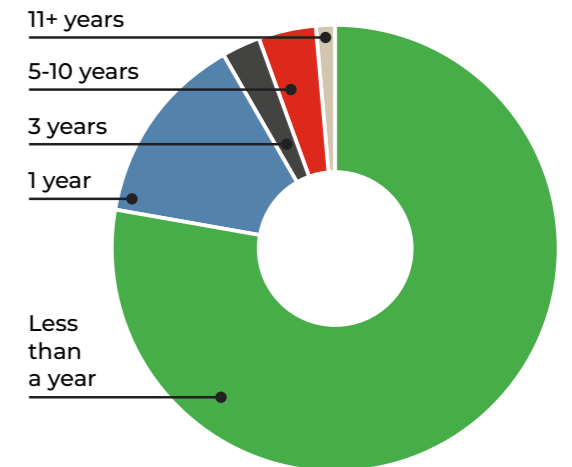


75% of the members who joined in 2025, **joined within six months.**

Prior to 2025, how quickly did members join after the death or diagnosis?



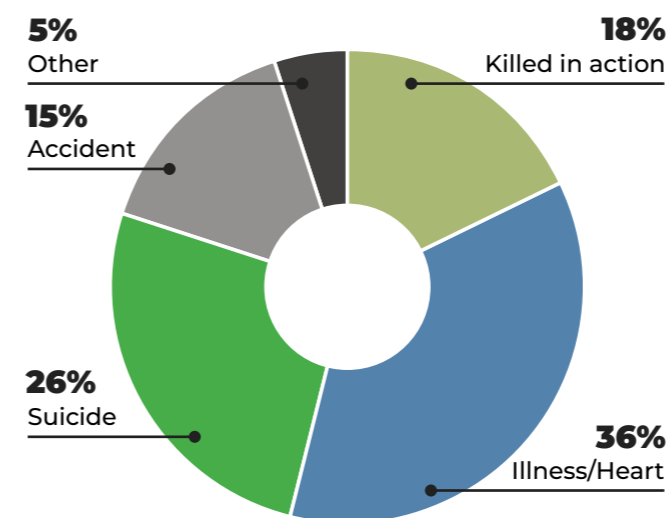
How quickly did those who joined in 2025 find Scotty's?



Breakdown of members by service in 2025:



Causes of death



In 2025, we supported **796** children and young people (age 0-25 years)



OUR IMPACT THROUGH OUR PROGRAMMES

In 2025, Scotty's delivered support through three Family Programmes:



SMILES

Helping people create social connections



SUPPORT

Helping people improve their mental health and wellbeing



STRIDES

Helping people with development opportunities

The following pages demonstrate how each of these programmes make a difference to the lives of bereaved military children and their families.



SMILES PROGRAMME



When a child experiences the death of a parent, everyday family life can feel fractured. Moments that once felt ordinary can become difficult, and many families describe feeling isolated from those around them. Following a childhood bereavement, strong family and social connections is the single most important protective factor for a child's wellbeing (McLaughlin et al., 2019) (Holmes et al., 2013). The SMILES Programme exists to help families reconnect, rebuild trust and communication, and feel part of a community that understands what they are going through.



WHAT WE OFFER

- › **Events** to help bereaved military families feel connected and part of a supportive community.
- › **Scotty Breaks** to enable families to come together, bond, make new memories and talk to one another.
- › **Care packages** sent at difficult times, so our members know they haven't been forgotten.

SCOTTY BREAKS

REBUILDING AS A FAMILY

Scotty's owns six lodges across the UK where bereaved families can take fully funded breaks. It's an opportunity for families to get away from everyday pressures, spend quality time as a family and make new memories. Each lodge is carefully designed to meet the needs of bereaved families, removing financial pressure and practical barriers so families can focus on being together.

Priority is given to newly bereaved families and those facing particularly challenging circumstances.

- › We have six lodges all located on Haven sites.
- › We even have a dog friendly one in Devon.

LOCATIONS OF LODGES

Did you know Scotty's offers respite breaks in five locations across the UK?



18 families took their dog on a break

as part of our improved accessibility in 2025 ensuring families with additional needs and support needs can access our respite breaks



CASE STUDY: Reconnecting as a family through Scotty Breaks

For this family, a Scotty Break at Haven Devon Cliffs provided a much-needed pause from the pressures of everyday life. The two members of Scotty's, aged 17 and 18, joined Scotty's in 2016 after their dad, who served in the Army, died in a road traffic accident in 2008. While this was not their first Scotty Break, it came at a time when work and routine had taken over, leaving little space for quality family time.

The break was described as **extremely beneficial**. Being away together allowed the family to slow down, reconnect and

spend meaningful time with one another, talking, bonding and creating new memories. They shared that it was "just what we needed to reconnect," offering space not only for rest and fun, but for honest conversations too.

During the break, the family felt more connected both to each other and to the wider Scotty community. Having the chance to enjoy a proper holiday together strengthened their sense of togetherness and reminded them they are part of a supportive network that understands their experiences.

Reflecting on what the break meant to them, the family shared:

“We are so thankful for the opportunity this break gave us all. Life is slipping by with work and everyday mundane tasks. This provided us the opportunity to reconnect, talk and bond as a family. Without these breaks we wouldn't have the means to do this, so we are eternally grateful to Scotty's and everyone who supports us.”



349

bereaved children and parents had a Scotty Break providing an opportunity to rebuild as a family

94%

felt the break provided real, quality time, as a family



99%

of families attending felt it improved their sense of belonging, communication or connection

94%

made new memories together as a family, strengthening their bonds

39%

used the break to also connect with friends or wider family further building their community of support





Scotty's on Tour Bristol

2025 EVENTS AT A GLANCE



ACROSS ALL EVENTS

98%

gave a 4 star or above rating



(77% gave 5 stars)

96%

met other families, building their peer network



98%

felt the event improved their belonging or connection



EVENTS BUILDING BELONGING AND PEER CONNECTION

In 2025, we expanded our events programme. This was in response to direct feedback from nearly 200 Scotty Families and input from Scotty's Council.

Our new events strategy was to ensure:

- › **Greater accessibility:** Our events were designed to include families with SEND needs and neurodiversity.
- › **Wider reach:** We planned a range of different events to accommodate different requirements.
- › **Stronger family bonds:** We had events that welcomed wider family members, including stepparents and siblings from new partnerships, to strengthen family support networks.

Research demonstrates that following a bereavement, children are at risk of isolation and feel that connecting with their peers, and especially those who have also experienced a bereavement,

can help. Bringing families together through events can have an immediate positive impact, and the aim is that families also build connections with each other that transcend Scotty's, having a long-term impact.

Scotty's held seven of our own events in 2025 (two festivals, three small regional events called Scotty's on Tour, an online event and an event at the Tower of London). The range of events are designed to appeal to all types of people and are inclusive by design. They provide opportunities throughout the year to meet other bereaved military families and build networks of support. We also brought groups to two other national events – Remembrance weekend in London and the Time to Reflect event at the National Memorial Arboretum.

WHO ATTENDED

Small regional events were introduced in part to encourage new people, who had never been to a Scotty event to come along. It worked – **39% of Scotty's on Tour attendees were first timers vs 14% of festival goers!**

344 children and young people attended events



206 family members attended events

LASTING IMPACT

Lasting impact for both festivals and Scotty's on Tour was very high, with **86% of Scotty's on Tour attendees at least hoping to meet up with new friends again, and 52% of festival attendees.**



96% of attendees said attending **Scotty's on Tour** gave them more confidence to go and make new friends in their regular life

88% of attendees said attending the **Summer Festival** gave them more confidence to go and make new friends in their regular life

FESTIVALS

Scotty's held two festivals in 2025 – a Summer Festival held in August on a farm in Andover and a Winter Festival held in December in Salford, Manchester.

The festivals are an opportunity for members of Scotty's from all over the country to come together to have fun, laugh, relax and meet others without the pressure of explaining their story.

The Summer Festival was attended by 68 children and young people, taking the total to 113 when including parents, carers and supporting adults. The mainly outdoor event included a splash zone and rockeoke (rock karaoke!).

The Winter Festival was attended by 71 children and young people, taking the total to 115 when including parents, carers and family members. The event included a circus theme, festive fun and a visit from Father Christmas.

Both events provided opportunities to build friendships, lots of fun and games, but also quiet zones and sensory areas for people to step away if needed.

“ Scotty's events have this wonderful ability to bring people together. Those first moments of uncertainty and doubt are quickly washed away by the community that you find. Our individual families with a heartbreak that not everyone understands come together and find reasons to smile and laugh and celebrate together and you find yourself a part of a bigger family with new friends and new memories. ”

A Scotty parent

Families rated the festivals highly and reported meaningful shifts in confidence and connection.

139
children and young people attended festivals

97%
of attendees said it increased their sense of belonging and connection

95%
said they met new families

52%
said they hoped to meet up with them again after the festival

EASY-TO-ACCESS EVENTS

REGIONAL GATHERINGS AND ONLINE PARTY

Attending an event can be difficult for a number of reasons. Distance, cost, caring responsibilities or anxiety can all create barriers. So, in 2025, Scotty's introduced events to remove some of these hurdles.

SCOTTY'S ON TOUR

Scotty's on Tour took events, that were deliberately small in scale, to three different regions of the UK, creating welcoming environments for bereaved British Armed Forces families to come together.

The Scotty's on Tour events held in Bristol, Portsmouth and Newcastle were open to wider family members, such as stepparents, half-siblings and grandparents – reflecting Scotty's inclusive approach to supporting the whole family.

37 family members attended the Bristol event, 30 family members attended the Portsmouth event, and 20 family members went to Newcastle. The low-key format was especially designed to support those who may find larger events daunting – including families with SEND needs – and to help build confidence in attending future gatherings.



“ Meeting other families and seeing my daughter interact with others and let herself go a little. She even exchanged socials with another member, which is huge for her. Everyone was super friendly and made us feel really welcome. We can't wait to come to our next event. ”

A Scotty parent

CASE STUDY: Feeling confident, included and connected

After attending the Scotty's on Tour event in Newcastle, a family had an overwhelmingly positive experience that strengthened their confidence and sense of connection with others who understand life after military bereavement.

Their 17-year-old Scotty Member, whose dad was killed in action in 2008, has been part of Scotty's since 2011. Being able to bring her family to the event meant a lot to her, giving those closest to her the chance to see first-hand the support and community Scotty's provides.

From the moment they arrived, the family felt comfortable meeting and talking with other families, experiencing a strong sense of belonging throughout the day. The event boosted their confidence and they left feeling more able to attend future Scotty events and engage with other bereaved military families. By the end of the day, new friendships were forming, and they hoped to stay in touch with the families they had connected with.

The day was great fun but also created lasting confidence,

connection, and a sense of being supported within a community that truly understands.

The family shared:

“ We all loved it! Thanks so much for organising an event 'up North' so we could bring family and friends who wouldn't normally be able to attend. Please do another! :) ”



SCOTTY'S VIRTUAL PARTY

In November, Scotty's brought bereaved military children and young people together for a lively virtual party that sparked connection, confidence and a sense of community – with an extra burst of energy from inspirational special guest Zack George, best known as **Steel from the TV show *Gladiators***.

Online events are an important part of the events calendar as they remove barriers such as travel, busy venues or worries about stepping

into a large group, while still giving families the chance to join in, have fun and feel part of something special.

The event included cushion-jumping, toilet-roll stacking, paper-aeroplane challenges, and lots of waving of the famous foam Gladiators fingers that Scotty's sent to members ahead of the event. Members of Scotty's were also invited to ask Zack questions, and he gave honest, insightful and inspiring answers.

100% rated the event with over 4 stars



97% said the event improved their sense of belonging and community

Everyone said the party made them smile



“ I love all the Scotty's events. I love spending time with other Scotty Members and I had so much fun. Thank you, Scotty's. Thank you, Steel. ”

A Scotty Member



TOWER OF LONDON EXPERIENCE: Bringing families together before Remembrance

Scotty's partnered with Historic Royal Palaces to offer bereaved military families a unique and meaningful day at the Tower of London.

A group of 77 family members, including 34 bereaved children and young people, attended the event, with extended family members also welcomed to take part. Held in October, the day offered time for reflection, connection and shared experiences ahead of Remembrance. Families explored the Tower at their own pace, met the Yeoman Warders, took part in creative activities such as poppy art, and gathered together in a private space provided especially for Scotty's families. They also visited the striking poppy installation marking the 80th anniversary

of the end of the Second World War, creating a powerful moment for remembrance.

Following the death of a parent who served, children and young people can often feel disconnected from the Forces community. This event helped families reconnect with others who understand their experiences, in a relaxed and supportive environment, while allowing wider family members to share in the day together.

This event marked the beginning of a new partnership with Historic Royal Palaces, with future experiences planned to continue bringing bereaved military families together in meaningful ways.



REMEMBRANCE



Remembrance can be a time of mixed emotions for bereaved military families, combining pride, reflection and sadness.

Each year, Scotty's hosts a dedicated weekend in London to commemorate Remembrance, providing an opportunity for members and their families to come together.

Over Remembrance weekend, 83 bereaved military family members, including 48 children and young people, gathered in London to honour the memory of their loved ones who served. Families travelled from various parts of the UK, with free train travel courtesy of Rail Delivery Group, as well as one family travelling from overseas. Scotty families attended both the **Royal British Legion's Festival of Remembrance** at the Royal Albert Hall and the **National Service of Remembrance** at the Cenotaph, proudly representing the bereaved military community.

The group from Scotty's stood out in our distinctive yellow and black scarves – the Scotty colours – worn out as a symbol of unity, pride, and remembrance. The colours were chosen to match those of the 2nd Royal Tank Regiment, where Corporal Lee Scott, husband of Scotty's founder Nikki Scott, served before being killed in Afghanistan



After Remembrance Weekend, 100% of families said attending the event improved their sense of belonging and community

in 2009. Many of the children and young people also wore their parent's medals with pride, helping them feel connected to their loved ones.

17-year-old Abigail Haldane, whose dad Lt Col Andrew Haldane, of 16 Medical Regiment, Army, died in June 2022, carried the wreath on behalf of Scotty's, leading the charity's contingent in tribute to all those who have served. She also represented Scotty's and bereaved military families by taking part in media interviews including, BBC Breakfast. Abi said:



Abigail being interviewed by the BBC.

“ A fabulous day provided by Scotty's that enabled my girls to have a fun, stress-free day, surrounded by old and new friends, all whilst being supported by an amazing team of people. ”

A Scotty Parent

65%

of attendees rated the experience 5 stars, with a further 29% giving it 4 stars

94%

said the day gave them an improved sense of belonging and community

“ Remembrance is important to me because it's a time to honour and remember my dad and everyone who has served and sacrificed for our country. I lost my dad in June 2022, and Remembrance gives me a moment to reflect and feel proud of everything he did. It's a way to keep his memory alive and to show that his service, and the service of others, will never be forgotten. Seeing this many people show their support and recognition is so special.

Taking part in the parade means a lot to me because it's my way of saying thank you to my dad and to all those who've served. It's a chance to stand alongside others who have gone through similar losses and to feel part of something bigger. Being there helps me feel close to my dad and proud to represent him and the military community. ”

Abigail Haldane (17)

PRINCE HARRY'S ANNUAL REMEMBRANCE LETTER



6th November 2025

Members of Scotty's received a heartfelt letter from the charity's Global Ambassador, Prince Harry, the Duke of Sussex, ahead of Remembrance weekend – letting them know how proud the nation is of them and reminding them that they are never alone.

Prince Harry has supported Scotty's since 2017 and became the charity's Global Ambassador in 2023. It's become an annual tradition for the Duke to write a letter to members of Scotty's over the Remembrance period. In this year's letter, he shared words of encouragement and admiration, acknowledging the young people's strength, pride and unity.

Dear Scotty's Little Soldiers,

As Remembrance approaches, I wanted to write and let you know how incredibly proud we all are of you.

This time of year can bring a lot of emotions - pride, love, and sometimes sadness - as you remember your parent or loved one who served our country. Please know you're not alone in that. You've got each other, *and a whole community of friends and family* who understand what this time means and who are standing right beside you, myself included.

Every time I see what Scotty's families do - the way you remember your loved ones while still finding joy and living life to the fullest - I'm reminded of just how strong and inspiring you all are. Your mums and dads would be so proud of you. We all are. The way you support one another, grieve and laugh together, and keep moving forward, says so much about the kind of people they were too.

Remembrance is such a powerful moment for all of us. It's a chance for the whole country to pause and come together to say thank you to those who served - and to the families who love them, because when one person serves, the whole family serves. You play a really special part in that. I'm so proud that Scotty's will be represented at the Festival of Remembrance and at the Cenotaph Parade this year; 100 of you from 38 families, from the youngest at just eight to the oldest at 24. When you march, you're showing the world what it means to remember with love and pride.

Whenever I see those yellow and black scarves, I think of the unity, strength, and sense of belonging that runs through Scotty's. You show everyone that in tough times, you stand together, while your loved ones watch on from wherever they may be, with admiration.

I often think back to my own time in the military; the friendships, the laughs, and the sense that no matter what, someone's got your back. That same spirit lives in all of you. Through Scotty's, you carry forward your parents' legacy - one built on love, courage, and service - and you keep that spirit alive every day. As your proud Global Ambassador, I just want to say thank you. You inspire me and so many others with your strength. Over Remembrance weekend, I'll be thinking of you all with so much pride and admiration.

With my very best,



Prince Harry, The Duke of Sussex
Global Ambassador, Scotty's Little Soldiers

Prince Harry wrote:

“As Remembrance approaches, I wanted to write and let you know how incredibly proud we all are of you. This time of year can bring a lot of emotions – pride, love, and sometimes sadness – as you remember your parent or loved one who served our country. Please know you're not alone in that. You've got each other, and a whole community of friends and family who understand what this time means and who are standing right beside you, myself included.”

Photo Courtesy of Archewell Philanthropies

CARE PACKAGES NEVER FEELING FORGOTTEN

It's important to us that every single member of Scotty's knows we care about them. When a new member joins, they receive a welcome pack, and from then on, we send gifts or vouchers on their birthday, on the anniversary of their parent's death and at Christmas. These are the times of year when a child might be missing their parent more than ever, and it's really important they don't feel forgotten. We also send a voucher for Remembrance so they can share a meal together and be together as a family. These little things can make a huge difference.



84
Welcome packs

753
Birthday gifts



752
Christmas presents

“Thank you for my daughter's voucher. She can't wait to go out for a little mummy and daughter date to remember daddy.”

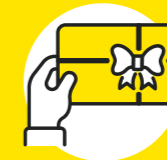
A Scotty parent

741
vouchers on the anniversary of their parent's death

“Thank you Scotty's for always being there for us, especially on the harder days like today.”

A Scotty parent

755
vouchers so families can have a meal together at Remembrance



Amazon provided care packages for all Scotty Members for Christmas and their staff volunteered to write cards and wrap gifts.

Special thanks to Veterans' Foundation and Forces Support for major, multi-year funding for the SMILES Programme.



SUPPORT PROGRAMME



Grief affects everyone differently. While connection and community are vital, some children and young people need specialist support to help them make sense of their feelings and develop healthy coping skills. The SUPPORT Programme ensures help is available when challenges feel overwhelming.



WHAT WE OFFER

- › **1:1 bereavement support** for children and young people.
- › **Accredited counselling**, introduced in 2025, provides **specialist clinical support** for children and young people with more complex emotional or mental health needs, complementing Scotty's existing 1:1 bereavement support which offers a safe space to talk and be heard.
- › **Parent and carer support** for those supporting younger children or children with additional needs.
- › Throughout the year we run **group drop-in sessions**.
- › The SUPPORT team can **advocate for families** on issues such as repatriation, probate, pensions, medals and housing.

Data from the parents version of the CBSQ – a robust academically developed assessment tool that looks at six impact areas – demonstrated that:

90%

of parents and carers saw an improvement in their child's communication, belonging or connection



86%

of parents and carers saw an improvement in their child's self-esteem



86% of parents and carers saw an **improvement in three or more impact areas**

81% of parents and carers saw an **improvement in their child's physiological symptoms** (somatic indicators) such as sleeping badly, or stomach aches

62% of parents and carers saw an **improvement in their child's anxiety**

Data from Childhood Bereavement Service Questionnaire (CBSQ) – a robust academically developed assessment tool that looks at five impact areas – demonstrated that:



83%

of children and young people saw an **improvement in coping skills**

78%

of children and young people reported **improvements in at least three of the five impact areas**

The biggest changes reported by children and young people were seen in self-esteem, closely followed by developments in their coping skills and improvements in their engagement with education.

72% of children and young people saw an **improvement in anxiety**

67% of children and young people saw an **improvement in self-esteem**

SUPPORT REACH IN 2025

70 people

received 1:1 support or counselling from Scotty's



We advocated for **7 families**

helping with issues such as pensions, medals and other death admin



20 people

received ad hoc support from trained bereavement specialists such as wellbeing check-ins, or providing a listening ear for people feeling overwhelmed

CASE STUDY: 11-year-old Scotty Member receiving support

BACKGROUND

"Sam" is an 11-year-old boy who lives with his mum and younger brother. Sam's dad died following a prolonged physical illness 15 months prior to referral. Sam was referred for bereavement support by his school Head of Year due to concerns about emotional withdrawal and changes in behaviour.

PRESENTING DIFFICULTIES

At the time of referral, Sam presented as quiet and emotionally guarded. Teachers reported that he had become less engaged in class, appeared tired, and struggled with concentration. At home, his mum described increased irritability, reluctance to talk about his dad, and difficulty sleeping. Sam expressed worries about further loss within the family.

Sam demonstrated limited emotional vocabulary and found it hard to articulate his feelings verbally. He appeared unsure whether it was "acceptable" to talk about his dad and showed concern about upsetting his mum.

INTERVENTION

Sam received short-term, child-centred bereavement support over several sessions. Initial sessions focused on building rapport and establishing a sense of safety. Informal assessment through conversation, drawing, and simple activities indicated that Sam understood the permanence of death but held unresolved feelings of sadness, anger, and confusion. He also expressed feelings of guilt related to not having spent more time with his dad during his illness.

A variety of interventions were used with Sam including Psychoeducation about grief to normalise Sam's

experience, creative activities such as drawing and using the Scotty's Keepsake Box to help Sam express his feelings indirectly and emotion identification work using our grief wall activity to build emotional literacy and confidence in naming feelings.

We also completed some memory-focused activities to support continuing bonds with Sam's dad in a healthy way, and it was important to explore coping strategies such as simple grounding techniques and routines to help Sam manage his anxiety and sleep difficulties.

Parallel support was offered to Sam's mum, focusing on communication, reassurance, and understanding children's grief responses.

OUTCOMES

Over the course of support, Sam became more able to talk about his dad and express his emotions openly. He demonstrated improved emotional awareness and reduced anxiety around discussing the death. School reported improved concentration and engagement, and Sam's mum noted fewer emotional outbursts and improved sleep.

While Sam continued to experience sadness, he showed increased understanding that grief can fluctuate over time. He identified trusted adults he could talk to when feelings became overwhelming and had some key resources he could draw on to support his emotional regulation.

To protect the privacy of families using the SUPPORT Programme, we use composite case studies.

Special thanks to Annington for their multi-year funding and championing of the SUPPORT Programme from 2019-2025 – and to Vinehill Trust for stepping forward to replace this funding in 2026.

VINEHILL TRUST



STRIDES PROGRAMME

CHANGING SYSTEMS THROUGH LIVED EXPERIENCE

Research shows that bereavement can negatively affect children's educational and employment outcomes (Parsons, 2011). While family and emotional support are vital, bereaved children and young people also move through education systems that can unintentionally cause further harm. The STRIDES Programme exists to remove barriers, challenge inequity and ensure bereaved military children are supported to learn, achieve and thrive.



WHAT WE OFFER

To help bereaved military young people thrive, the STRIDES Programme:

- › Provides **grants** to remove financial barriers to learning.
- › Offers **resources and training** to schools to support compassionate classroom practice.
- › **Advocates** for families facing educational challenges.
- › Works to **influence national policy**, creating a fairer and more inclusive education system.



BEHIND THE UNIFORM CAMPAIGN: Transforming education through lived experience

In 2025, Scotty's Council worked closely with us to launch *Behind the Uniform* – a campaign created and led by young people with lived experience of military bereavement. The campaign highlights how everyday classroom practice, curriculum content and exam questions can unintentionally harm bereaved students, and how small changes can make a meaningful difference.

RESEARCH ON EDUCATION EXPERIENCES

The *Behind the Uniform* campaign was all about sharing powerful new research conducted by Scotty's based on school experiences of nearly 200 bereaved military children which revealed challenges faced by bereaved military children in UK schools.

CAMPAIGN LAUNCH EVENT

Scotty's launched the campaign, alongside The Royal British Legion, with an event held at the Churchill War Rooms in London. The purpose of the event was to call for policy change following the groundbreaking findings. The event was attended by representatives from Department for Education, Ministry of Defence, Members of Parliament and corporate supporters.

Findings include:

77%

of bereaved military children experienced lessons directly related to the cause of their parent's death

“ In physics, we had to learn the effects that different bombs had on people, when I asked to leave I wasn't allowed because I might have a question about it in the GCSE. My dad was killed by a bomb in Afghanistan. ”

Child/young person

52%

had multiple experiences of potentially distressing classroom content



1 in 8 students sitting GCSEs or A-Levels faced exam questions that directly reminded them of their bereavement

< 1 in 3 Less than 1 in 3 of families felt schools handled this sensitively

Read research in full: www.scottyslittlesoldiers.co.uk/education-research

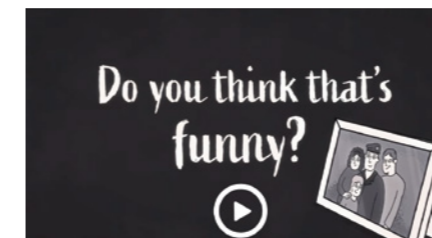
ANIMATIONS

Two animations, titled “**Do You Think That's Funny?**” and “**Time's Up**” created by Scotty's Council shared their lived experiences of navigating education after the death of a parent. The animations were premiered at the *Behind the Uniform* launch event.

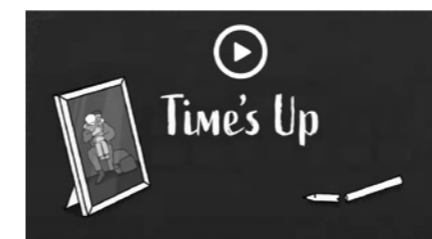
Council Member Micah Matson, whose dad, Flt Sgt Robert Matson (RAF), died of cancer in 2018 when Micah was 14, said:

“ Using my experiences to create this animation was emotional but important. I wanted to show people what it's really like to go through school when your parent has died, and I hope it raises awareness and leads to real change. ”

Micah Matson, Council Member



Scan below to watch “**Do you think that's funny?**”.



Scan below to watch “**Time's Up**”.



NATIONAL INFLUENCE AND SYSTEMS CHANGE

The *Behind the Uniform* campaign has helped move hearts and minds across the education system, influencing policy, practice and assessment at a national level.

Impact highlights include:

- Exam boards **WJEC (Wales)** and **Eduqas (England)** invited Scotty's to shape new in-house guidance and train subject leads responsible for writing exams (**circa 2 million exams annually**).
- **The Scottish Commissioner for Veterans** called for education policy to adopt the campaign's learning.
- Following a meeting with Scotty's founder and her son Kai, the **Prime Minister, Keir Starmer**, wrote to Scotty's recognising the campaign's wider impact for all bereaved children.



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

17 November 2025

THE PRIME MINISTER

Dear Nikki and Kai,

I am writing to thank you both for joining me at our Remembrance reception on Monday 3 November. This is a particularly poignant time of the year, and I was very pleased you could be with us in Downing Street as we honoured the courage and sacrifice of our armed forces and their families.

Nikki, I am continually inspired by your story and the way you have used the pain of your experience to transform the support available for other bereaved military families. *Scotty's Little Soldiers* is a remarkable tribute to Lee's memory. It has enabled thousands of bereaved military children like Kai to build lifelong friendships and discover that, because of you, they are not alone.

Kai, thank you so much for travelling down from Norfolk with your Mum to share this occasion with her. I understand you visited once before when you were very young, and I felt truly honoured to meet the delightful young man you have become. Your strength and resilience are an inspiration to us all.

It is heartbreaking to know that each year brings more newly bereaved military children. It makes the work you do even more important. Your ability to relate to their experiences, combined with your courage and determination to continue leading change is also shaping public policy. Through your work helping our education system improve its support for bereaved children, your influence extends even beyond military families.

On behalf of the whole country, I want to say a huge thank you for the important role you play each day supporting our armed forces community.

All best wishes,

Keir Starmer

TRAINING THE NEXT GENERATION OF TEACHERS

At the end of 2025, Scotty's published new **free, open-access training materials** for initial teacher training (ITT) providers, developed in partnership with **Anglia Ruskin University (ARU)**.



The training was created in direct response to what bereaved military children and families told us through the *Behind the Uniform* research: that many teachers want to help, but don't feel confident or equipped to support bereaved pupils well.

Designed with trainee teachers and ITT tutors, the resources help newly qualifying teachers to:

- › Understand how bereavement can affect learning, behaviour and wellbeing.
- › Recognise potentially distressing curriculum content and assessment practices.
- › Build compassionate, supportive classroom environments.
- › Feel confident having sensitive conversations about death and bereavement.

By embedding this learning at the start of a teacher's career, Scotty's is helping to create long-term change across the education system – improving outcomes not just for bereaved military children, but for all bereaved pupils.

“It has been a privilege to work with Scotty's on this project, which was designed and developed with trainee teachers and ITT tutors at ARU. We are proud to be contributing open access resources, free to providers, to promote compassionate conversations about death and bereavement in classrooms. Our trainees told us the module content helped them feel more confident to support bereaved children whilst on placement and talk to their School Mentors about bereaved children in their class. We are looking forward to sharing learning with other providers who use the resources.”

Jenny Fogarty, Director of Initial Teacher Training at Anglia Ruskin University

The training has been reviewed against the **NASEN Quality Framework for Inclusion**, confirming that it meets high standards of accessibility, inclusivity, and representation for all learners.

The resources are live and available for all to access at: www.scottyslearning.com

YOUNG PEOPLE SHAPING GLOBAL UNDERSTANDING with a trip to Canada!

Four members of Scotty's Council, Angel (21), Molly (21), Joshua (20) and Baxter (19), travelled to Canada alongside founder Nikki Scott to attend The Canadian Institute for Military and Veteran Health Research (CIMVHR) Forum 2025, sharing their lived experiences and helping to showcase the charity's work on an international stage.



Scan below to watch "Scotty's in Ottawa".



Scotty's was invited to attend following its ongoing collaboration with **Anglia Ruskin University's Veterans and Families Institute for Military Social Research (VFI)**. Dr Faye Acton presented updates from their joint research project, *The Impact of Bereavement Support for Military Children*, which explores how being part of a military-specific charity shapes a bereaved child or young person's sense of identity and belonging.

The four young members spoke confidently during sessions and discussions, representing bereaved British Forces children and young people. For them, this was not only an opportunity to influence global understanding of childhood bereavement, but a once-in-a-lifetime personal and developmental experience, building confidence, skills and a sense that their voices matter beyond Scotty's and beyond the UK.

Dr Faye Acton said:

"CIMVHR is recognised as one of the leading international conferences in military and veteran health research, so being invited to present the work that Scotty's and I have been working on was a true privilege. Having Angel, Molly, Baxter, Josh and Nikki out in Canada to support the project and champion Scotty's was absolutely wonderful. I felt deeply honoured to share our

co-produced project with such a large and diverse audience of practitioners, policymakers and researchers, and I was thrilled by the overwhelmingly positive feedback the presentation received from delegates."

The **full research publication is due in 2026**, with findings expected to further influence policy, practice and understanding of bereavement in education and beyond.

“Attending the conference in Canada was a surreal experience! It felt very special and moving to witness a piece of research which placed voices of Scotty's members at the heart, presented on an international stage. It was also great to have the opportunity to spend time with the other members, exploring Canada and soaking in the experience together.”

Angel (21), Scotty's Council Member

GRANTS AND ADVOCACY

Removing financial barriers to education and opportunity

Bereavement can place sudden and lasting financial pressure on families, particularly at key points in a child or young person's education. Without the right support, costs linked to learning, development and independence can limit opportunity. Through STRIDES, Scotty's provides practical financial help and advocacy so bereaved military children and young people can continue to learn, grow and plan for their futures.

STRIDES provides targeted grants to help with education, development and independence, including:

- › **Education transition grants** – such as school uniform costs when starting a new school.
- › **Further and Higher Education grants** – helping young people access college, university or training.
- › **Driving and independence grants** – supporting young people to learn to drive.
- › **Supergrants** – once-in-a-lifetime developmental opportunities.
- › **Scotty Allowance** – annual support for extracurricular activities, school trips, tutoring or SEND equipment.

GRANTS IMPACT IN 2025

329
grants given to bereaved military children



£73,149
given out to bereaved military children



37 children were **helped with uniform costs** for starting a new school totalling £2,930.84

24 young adults were supported to **learn to drive**, totalling £2,400

19 young adults received financial **help to access Higher Education**, totalling £18,806.68

8 young people were given help to achieve a **once-in-a-life-time development opportunity** totalling £8,000

In 2025, Scotty's launched a new grant to **help families with costs associated with Further Education**. £15,450.39 was distributed to 34 bereaved military children.

We distributed £25,561.17 to 207 children and young people to **help them access extracurricular activities** using our Scotty Allowance. In 2026, we will be publishing research with our families to understand the role that extracurricular activities play in helping military children thrive after bereavement.

ADVOCACY SUPPORT



Alongside financial support, **STRIDES** provides advocacy for families facing education-related challenges, helping ensure children's needs are recognised and supported.



JohnnyGrieg/Stock

30
families supported with education-related advocacy cases in 2025



CASE STUDY: Advocacy within the STRIDES Programme

Scotty's supported a family that were relocating from Scotland to England to live closer to relatives, following the death of an RAF serviceman.

The family's two children, a 15-year-old son and a 10-year-old daughter, faced the challenge of starting at new schools. The family struggled to secure a place for their son at a suitable secondary school due to differences between the Scottish and English education systems. Scotty's contacted the local authority and the school, providing supporting statements and guidance on the impact of transitions for children bereaved of military parents. Thanks to this support, the school offered him a place, adjusting admissions criteria to prioritise his needs.

Once the family had moved, their younger daughter struggled with the transition linked to having a diagnosis of Autism and Special Educational Needs. Scotty's worked with the family and school to secure an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) through the local authority, providing her with a personal budget for additional educational and emotional support to help her thrive.

Scotty's continues to provide consultation with both schools, ensuring support evolves as the children grow. Both children have also benefited from their Scotty allowance, funding extracurricular activities such as theatre school and swimming lessons. These opportunities

have helped them pursue their passions, build friendships, and maintain a sense of normality during a period when the world felt unstable.

The family shared:

“Thank you so much for all the help you've given us – it really has made such a difference, we don't know what we would have done without the support of Scotty's.”

****To protect the privacy of families, we use composite case studies.****

Special thanks to the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust and Lloyd's Veterans Charity for significant, multi-year funding and Gleeds for large funding enabling development of the STRIDES Programme.



THE FAMILIES TEAM

The Families Team is at the heart of Scotty's. They are the people who walk alongside bereaved military children, young people and their families from the moment they enquire about becoming a member and then stay with them through their journeys for many years afterwards.

Our multidisciplinary team brings together lived experience, professional expertise and a deep understanding of military life. They provide emotional and practical support, help families navigate complex systems, create opportunities for connection and joy, and advocate on behalf of families when challenges feel overwhelming.

The Families Team ensures that every child and young person is seen as an individual and supported in ways that reflect their age, their experiences and what they need at that moment in time. Families consistently tell us that the relationship they build with the team helps them feel understood, supported and not alone.

MEET THE FAMILIES TEAM



NIKKI SCOTT BEM

Founder and Head of SMILES

Nikki Scott BEM founded Scotty's in 2010 following the death of her husband, Corporal Lee Scott, who was killed while serving in Afghanistan. As a bereaved military spouse and mum, Nikki saw first-hand the devastating impact of military bereavement on children and families and recognised the urgent need for specialist, long-term support.

What began as a deeply personal response has grown into a national charity supporting hundreds of bereaved British Forces children and young people. Nikki is not only the founder but also Head of the SMILES Programme. In this role, she leads initiatives that improve family connection, communication and a sense of belonging, creating fun shared experiences through events, breaks, care packages and opportunities that help families feel part of a supportive community.

Alongside her lived experience, Nikki is professionally qualified, holding a Level 5 qualification in Working in Childhood Bereavement (children and young people and their families), achieved in June 2022. Her combination of personal insight, professional learning and unwavering commitment continues to shape Scotty's. Genuine need remains at the centre of everything Scotty's does.

CARLA ROSE-HARDMAN

Head of Service

Carla joined Scotty's at the beginning of 2026 and leads the development and delivery of Scotty's services, ensuring the charity's support is effective, evidence-led and ready to grow. She has taken over the Head of Service role from Rachel Scott and we'd like to thank Rachel for all her hard work prior to Carla joining the team.

Carla brings over 20 years' experience in the charity sector, having held senior leadership roles in national charities supporting children and families, but having also worked on the ground as a practitioner supporting families in her earlier career, and been a trustee for local children's charities.

Carla has extensive knowledge of holistic family support, emotional wellbeing support, advocacy and involvement work, information, advice and guidance, as well as running high quality activities and events for children and families. Carla specialises in scaling and developing successful quality

programmes, led by lived experience and evidence of need.

She is looking forward to ensuring that learning from families continuously shapes delivery, and that their voices lead the way in determining what is most needed by the bereaved military community. Carla will be using the nationally significant research that her predecessor had developed, which includes the UK's first estimates of the bereaved military community, and research on bereaved military children's experiences in education, together with the analysis of longitudinal data from more than 750 Scotty Members, to shape the future of Scotty's services and support. This work has also been integral in underpinning Scotty's growing influence on national policy affecting bereaved military families.

Working closely with Scotty's CEO, Carla will be supporting the development of Scotty's new vision for 2026 – positioning the charity



to extend its expertise and support to the wider bereaved military community, while remaining firmly rooted in lived experience. She will be working closely with Scotty's Council to ensure that the voices of bereaved children and young people remain at the heart of every strategic decision, alongside the wider bereaved military community as Scotty's vision develops through 2026.

CHARLIE

Head of SUPPORT

Charlie joined Scotty's in 2021 and leads the SUPPORT Programme, which provides specialist emotional, mental health and bereavement support to Scotty's members and their families.

With a degree in Sports Science and a strong foundation in behavioural medicine and psychology, she brings a deep understanding of the links between health, wellbeing and human behaviour. Charlie has over 20 years of experience working with children and young people across diverse settings, including outdoor education, forest schools, sports coaching, and the Duke of Edinburgh Awards which has equipped her with the skills to design and deliver impactful programmes.

She is qualified in Working in Childhood Bereavement and is currently completing a professional counselling qualification to become a fully qualified counsellor, enhancing her ability to provide empathetic, evidence-based support. Charlie also volunteers with mental health text line SHOUT, providing emotional and mental health support to those in times of crisis.

Before joining Scotty's, Charlie worked for three years with military families at an RAF station as a Chaplaincy Families Worker where she created and delivered a comprehensive families programme to deliver high-quality support especially during deployments and times of crisis.



Led by Charlie, the SUPPORT Programme provides 1:1 bereavement support and counselling, parent and carer support, advocacy across housing, pensions and statutory services, and regular online peer support sessions, which many families describe as a lifeline.

NICOLA

Bereavement Counsellor



Nicola joined Scotty's in 2025 as part of a significant expansion of the SUPPORT Programme, when the charity introduced accredited bereavement counselling alongside its long-standing bereavement support. This development recognised that while many children benefit from peer connection and emotional support, some need a higher level of specialist therapeutic intervention at certain points in their bereavement journey.

Nicola is a qualified Integrative Counsellor and has supported young people and adults since 2017. Her counselling career began at a youth charity working with young people aged 11-25, before developing and delivering a counselling service within

a secondary school, supporting students from Year 7 through to sixth form. Her work included safeguarding, risk assessment and close partnership working with external services such as CAMHS and social care.

Nicola has extensive experience supporting bereaved young people and understands that grief affects everyone differently. At Scotty's, she provides a safe, trusted space where children and young people can explore complex feelings, remember their parent, and develop coping strategies at their own pace. Her therapeutic approach helps young people grow around their grief, build self-esteem and move forward in a way that feels right for them.

ROB

Head of STRIDES

Rob is a child and adolescent psychotherapist specialising in bereavement. He holds a degree in Psychology and a Postgraduate Diploma in Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy, with additional training in trauma therapy and cognitive behavioural therapy.

Prior to joining Scotty's in 2024, Rob worked in the voluntary sector for several years with over ten years working in hospice care, developing support services for children living with a family member's terminal illness and bereavement.

As Head of the STRIDES Programme at Scotty's, Rob's primary aim is to remove barriers to education and employment. Rob coordinates Scotty's educational grants and advocates for members who are facing challenges in their education – speaking with schools and education providers to put support plans in place, writing statements to accompany Education Healthcare Plan assessments and in support of members enrolling in the schools of their choice. Rob also develops training and resources for education providers to support them in understanding the needs of bereaved military children and young people.



KATIE

SMILES Programme Executive

Katie joined Scotty's at the beginning of 2024, bringing with her 17 years' service in the British Army with the Adjutant General's Corps (Staff and Personnel Support). During her military career, she worked alongside different Regiments in the UK and on exercises and deployments around the world, developing a deep understanding of military life and what families need during the most challenging times.

Her time in the Army reinforced the importance of compassion, resilience and looking after people when it matters most. In her role at Scotty's, Katie is able to use everything she learned in the Army – empathy, calm under pressure, a people-first mindset, and a strong sense of structure and professionalism – to support bereaved military children, young people and their families.

As SMILES Programme Executive, Katie plays a key role in delivering the practical and emotional elements of the SMILES Programme. She coordinates Scotty's respite breaks – helping families access time together away from everyday pressures and ensures children and young people receive gifts and vouchers at particularly difficult moments – including birthdays, Christmas and the anniversary of their parent's death – so they feel remembered and supported when it matters most.

Katie helps families feel remembered and connected to a community that understands.



VOICES OF THE COMMUNITY



Scotty collects and amplifies the voice of the bereaved military community. As a charity led by lived experience, this shapes Scotty's own programmes and activities but is also published in order to help inform provision from other organisations and to shape public policy.

In the STRIDES Programme section of the Impact Report we have shared details of our report **School Experiences of Bereaved Military Children** and how that is shaping education policy.

As the military bereavement charity for the UK Armed Forces, Scotty's holds one of the largest longitudinal datasets of bereaved military families. To mark 15 years of operation, in 2025 we published analysis of 753 children from 2012-2024, to better understand our community.



92% of children accessed at least one respite break with **88%** accessing multiple



KEY FINDINGS

› **Scotty's quickly and equitably reaches bereaved military families following a death.** With 65% of newer members joining within one year of death, and equitable representation across the branches and ranks. We were particularly pleased to see that bereaved veteran families are finding us nearly as quickly as those in service at death.



65% of newer members joined within one year of death

› **Bereaved military families need long-term support.** Respite breaks is one of the most highly utilised services we offer, with 92% of children accessing at least one break and 88% of children accessing multiple respite breaks. The high demand for breaks is maintained across many years (up to ten years) demonstrating the longevity of need. The consistently high uptake across all ranks shows these breaks offer something deeper than "just a holiday": Protected time for families to reconnect, talk and heal.

› **Military families bereaved by suicide are most likely to seek help from the charity.** Families bereaved by suicide are more likely to join Scotty's than other causes of death, and in particular veteran Army families bereaved by suicide.

This finding is important as children bereaved by parental suicide are at greater risk of suicidal ideation than children bereaved by other causes of death and so it is important to have readily accessible, long-term support available.

› **Bereaved military children who struggle to cope with their grief need support to manage anger issues, self-harm and access to education.** Amongst children accessing 1:1 support, the majority of children (59%) reported having problems with anger, and over a quarter said they were self-harming or had thoughts of suicide. Half of the children accessing support reported a negative impact on education including disengagement from school, school absenteeism, and inability to concentrate in lessons.



Key areas for further study were also identified, including the emotional and mental health needs of bereaved children under ten, participation in extracurricular activities for this cohort, and the growing number of veteran Army families bereaved by suicide who turn to Scotty's for support.

In early 2026, Scotty's will be publishing our first **Bereaved Military Community (BMC) Insights report**, drawing on over 200 members of the wider BMC. The report explores how the wider military community are impacted by death and identifies their needs across areas, including social connections, mental and emotional health, school and work and access to entitlements and death admin. This builds on from an internal pilot study with 85 families conducted in 2025, which identified similar areas of need. The internal study, and the wider BMC Insights report, will directly shape the development services in 2026 and beyond.

In early 2026, we will also be publishing a report on how the bereaved military community engage with extracurricular activities and the role such activities play in living with grief. This was a recommendation that arose from the 15 Years project.

In 2025, we were honoured by the findings of the **AFCFT commissioned report by Alma Economics** which quoted the bereaved military community calling our respite breaks "life changing" and our services "incredible". We were also honoured when the review by the **Scottish Commissioner for Veterans, Support for the Bereaved Community**, called Scotty's services "invaluable" and called for educators to embed the insights Scotty's gathers from the community into policy and guidance.

OUR SERVICES

“incredible”

– Alma Economics

“invaluable”

– Scottish Commissioner for Veterans, Support for the Bereaved Community



OUR RESPITE BREAKS

“life changing”

– Alma Economics

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2026

2026 will see the start of something new – a bold new vision for Scotty's.

After 15 years of delivering support to bereaved British Forces children, young people and their families, we have learnt a lot about the needs of the bereaved military community. We've seen first-hand what works and what doesn't work. We speak with bereaved family members, not just young people, daily and hear directly from them where the gaps are.

We've blended this professional and lived experience with theory and research to create a better understanding of the challenges faced by bereaved families from the military community, and the solutions that can help them.

After several years of work, we are ready to extend our offer to help *all* those affected by a military-connected bereavement.

Our new long-term mission is to support and empower anyone affected by a military-connected bereavement, and our 'big hairy audacious goal' is to be supporting a community of 25,000+ bereaved people by 2035.

This won't happen overnight, it will be a gradual process focusing on the greatest need first and plugging the biggest gaps in support. We'll work closely with the community to shape what this looks like and to ensure real change, not duplication of services.

Our plans will continue to be developed over the coming months but will include the creation of a brand-new programme: START.

START will be designed to help the community to navigate their entitlements. It will be a single point of contact for them to reach out to and speak with a caseworker who understands military bereavement, because that is all they do – 100%. The START team will help families find the right support to fit them and their needs.

Our existing programmes will also open up their activities to other cohorts gradually over time and of course we won't stop with our original mission of supporting children and young people. Far from it, in 2026 we plan to support more young people than ever before.



THANK YOU

Everything in this report – every story, every outcome
– was made possible by you.

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We also thank Northern Trust, Vinci Defence, MUJV, L3 Harris, CGI, North, Aurora and other brilliant organisations who have supported Scotty's through staff fundraising.

CAUSE-RELATED MARKETING PARTNERS

£2 from every pack of Contact Coffee Co's 'Scotty's Blend' supported Scotty's



5% of sales of RUCK Edge (Rugged Universal Charger Kit) supported Scotty's



GRANT FUNDERS



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Thank you to everyone who has stepped out or stepped up for Scotty's.

Thank you to every funder, every fundraiser, every regular giver, every advocate. If your contribution is not noted above, please know your support is valued and appreciated. You are making a difference – and we hope you take pride in the impact achieved with your support.

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