

PE1603/F

East Ayrshire Council Letter of 5 October 2016

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Scottish Parliament petition above, dated 19 September 2016.

I am pleased to provide East Ayrshire Council's comments on the three issues raised in the petition, these are set out below.

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 representation of the role of the armed forces and what a career in the armed forces involves.

East Ayrshire Council would agree that school pupils should be provided with a clear, comprehensive and realistic understanding of the career opportunities / unique career opportunities available with all employers in all sectors of the economy, this includes the armed forces.

We note the comment about political balance; it has not been our experience that there is political imbalance in presentations by the armed forces. In our experience, members of the armed forces explain the political environment in which they operate in and do not promote any specific political ideology.

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.

East Ayrshire Schools collate information on all the organisations / business partners taking part in school career and other events at all our secondary schools, this includes the armed forces. Information is currently available to identify the purpose and type of support made available by all organisations! business partners taking part in career events with our pupils. These events play a vital role in helping our pupils make an informed decision on their future career path.

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

East Ayrshire Council as the Education Authority welcomes the input of parents and guardians in relation to all school and education matters.

The Parent Council! Parent Forum in our schools is the formal setting for any education or school matter to be raised. The Council is happy to hear and act on parent's views with regard to children taking part in armed forces activities at school.

To date the Council has not received any contacts from parents or guardians stating their unhappiness with schools engaging with the armed forces.

I trust that the attached information is of use.

Yours faithfully

ALANWARD

Head of Education