



Longer-Term Employment Outcomes of Ex-Service Personnel

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Forewords

Mike Ellicock – Chief Executive, Forces in Mind Trust

This is my first Chief Executive's foreword to a report that Forces in Mind Trust have funded since I took over from Ray Lock CBE in June. It is a great one to start with. The most visible and arguably most impactful measure of whether a transition out of the Armed Forces has been 'successful' is whether an ex-Service person has consistently found employment that meets the definition proposed in this report:

Successful longer-term employment is extrinsically and intrinsically rewarding. It is a good fit with the skills/qualifications/experience of the ex-Service person as well as their values. It allows them to balance work and non-work time appropriately. It is also subject to change over time.

This is a challenging ask; one that is unlikely to be entirely met throughout a career (either in the Services or outside), yet it is an appropriate aspiration for all ex-Service people and for all of us working to support transition. I am therefore pleased that Forces in Mind Trust took the decision well before my time to fund work that looks beyond the traditional two-year point and beyond a rather simplistic approach that saw being employed as success, full stop.

This report highlights that the reality is, of course, more nuanced and that Service leavers are, of course, a heterogeneous group. As one among many Service leavers, there are numerous findings in this report that ring true for me, particularly around adapting to civilian work and successfully detaching from the military. Having served as an officer in the Parachute Regiment for seven years, the easy choice when I left was to move into the security world but for me the harder, and I believe right, choice was to return to education, in part at least to make a clean break and adapt to civilian work. I am fully aware that this choice is not available for everyone, but, as the report identifies, we do need to enable all Service leavers to take the initiative, take responsibility for their resettlement, and proactively harness the support available. For me, doing so has meant that the seven roles I have had since I left have (mostly!) ticked the box for the definition above.

I hope that this report will be of use to everyone involved in supporting ex-Service people and their families to transition successfully – and I look forward to working with you all on this mission in the coming years.

Alistair Halliday – Chief Executive, RFEA: The Forces Employment Charity

Successful transition is such an important thing to get right. It is something that every member of the Armed Forces has to tackle at some stage. This may be after a long career spanning many years, but can equally apply for Early Service Leavers after a short period of service. But while it is clear that many Service leavers appear to do well in initial transition, they might face other challenges later in their working careers. There has been a great deal of research in recent years about transition (usually termed the period 2 years pre and post discharge), but we have never really understood what happens in the period 2-10 years post discharge. Until now. Anecdotally, we seem to have been used to many Service leavers getting into jobs and then moving on after about 2 years. Perhaps this has been in our psyche, used to being drafted or reappointed every 2 years or so, but there are other reasons.

This research sets out and develops some very interesting factors, for the first time. There are some findings in this report which are not new - such as the need for early preparation. But the need for Service leavers to take the initiative and take responsibility for their own resettlement, and proactively harness the support available, is more enlightening. The need to "move on" and "fit in" to the new civilian workplace and embrace new civilian cultures, is key to success. Some veterans find this more difficult than others and it is important that they embrace it, while not turning their back on the defining and whole life experiences they have acquired in service. It is of course right to be justly proud of past service, attend regimental reunions and keep in touch with buddies, shipmates and so on. However, this should not be at the expense of being able to look forward and move on. It is equally important that past service does not itself become a barrier to getting on with new civilian work colleagues. This report sets this out clearly.

It is also encouraging to see the recommendation that successful longer-term employment is extrinsically and intrinsically rewarding. It is a good fit with the skills/qualifications/experience of the ex-Service person as well as their values. It allows them to balance work and non-work time appropriately. It is also subject to change over time.

In the end everyone has a different experience of transition which is not a homogenous experience that everyone shares, but is much more varied, nuanced and personal: past notions of "good" or "bad" transition are too simplistic. The reality lies somewhere in the middle.

I strongly believe this report can really help those charged with supporting veterans into employment, as well as the Service leavers themselves. This increases understanding of the issues to help veterans make a real success of it, enabling them to take up their new and deserved place in society, with rewarding and sustainable employment, long after their military careers.

This is an excellent report which offers much food for thought, and I commend it to you.

Acknowledgements

QinetiQ and the Institute for Employment Research at the University of Warwick would like to thank Forces in Mind Trust (FiMT) for all its help and support throughout the research. We would especially like to thank Isabel Summers, Tom McBarnet, Caroline Cooke, Ray Lock and Mike Ellicock. We would also like to thank RFEA: The Forces Employment Charity, for all their efforts in helping to advertise and recruit study participants. Finally, we would like to thank the participants who took part in this research: the stakeholders, ex-military personnel, spouses and partners who gave up their time to tell us about their own experiences, enabling us to provide a series of recommendations to support the longer-term employment outcomes of ex-Service personnel.

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Executive Summary

Background

For those leaving the United Kingdom (UK) Regular Armed Forces, employment is seen as a key indicator of a successful and sustainable transition. Whilst previous research (Deloitte, 2018; FiMT, 2013), and Ministry of Defence (MOD) employment statistics (MOD, 2021), show that the vast majority of ex-Forces personnel gain employment after leaving, very little consideration has been given to the longevity of the employment achieved or whether ex-Service personnel are employed in the 'right' jobs (i.e. fulfilling, sustainable, matching their aspirations or maximising their potential). There remains a lack of research into longer-term life and work outcomes for Service leavers, particularly beyond the two-year point when Career Transition Partnership (CTP) support ceases, and how this links to a person's time in service.

Study Aims

The aim of this study was to explore:

1. How a person's time in Regular service and the support received during transition impacts their longer-term employment outcomes.
2. The longer-term employment outcomes for ex-Service personnel.
3. The barriers and facilitators to successful and sustainable employment.
4. How 'successful employment' is defined. What are the wider measures of this and what does this mean in relation to ex-Service personnel? Is there a more comprehensive metric for measuring employment success in future research/studies?

Method

A mixed methods approach was taken, gathering both quantitative and qualitative data. Specifically:

- A review of relevant literature, both from the UK and overseas, and current UK employment statistics to examine the longer-term employment of ex-Service personnel.
- 10 stakeholder interviews with representatives from organisations that provide support to ex-Service personnel (i.e. Service Charities) and those which employ them (including both small, medium enterprises and large companies).
- An online survey of ex-Service personnel who had left the Regular Armed Forces a minimum of 24 months and a maximum of 10 years ago (534 valid responses).
- 42 telephone interviews with ex-Service personnel.
- 19 telephone interviews with the spouses/partners of ex-Service personnel.

Key Findings

Impact of Time in Service and Resettlement Support

Study findings indicate that time in service and support during resettlement impact on the longer-term employment outcomes of ex-Service personnel. Whether this impact is favourable (or not) will largely depend on four factors related to the serving person: their individual characteristics; actions taken; personal circumstances; and support on leaving. Whilst some of these factors are within the control of the individual, others (such as individual characteristics) are clearly not. Resettlement support was not felt to be particularly helpful in securing employment in the short-term (only 45.9% agreed it was), and even less so in the longer-term (23.9% agreed it was). In addition, many ex-Service personnel felt that whilst the military provided them with the 'soft' skills to secure employment in the longer-term, support with the development of business skills (e.g. commercial, marketing, finance) was lacking.

Those who were better prepared to leave often had fewer decisions to make at the point of leaving, and as a result often fared better longer-term. However, it is important to note that a 'good' or 'bad' initial transition is not the only pre-determinant of success longer-term. Many of the decisions made were found to be reversible. In fact re-planning is a key feature of the experience of many ex-Service personnel as their situation changes and evolves over time.

Maintaining Employment

Most ex-Service personnel maintain employment over time (even if this involves numerous jobs and/or periods of unemployment). However, it is clear that not all ex-Service personnel are satisfied with their civilian job or career. Less than half (44.5%) feel that they have found the 'right job' for them in the longer-term, whilst 42.5% state that their current job has not met their expectations in terms of maximising their potential or providing opportunity for career progression (42.4%). It would seem that many of the challenges that ex-Service personnel face on initial transition continue (at least for the 10 year period of this study, possibly longer). Challenges with securing and maintaining employment, using their knowledge, skills and experience, overcoming employer perceptions and acclimatising to a civilian workplace persist.

Period of Adjustment

The idea that transition ends at an arbitrary point in time (two years after leaving, when support from Defence ceases) is not supported by the data. For many ex-Service personnel the adjustment period is far longer, and differs according to the individual and complexity of their situation.

Who Adjusts

Individuals who seemed to find the adjustment easier were often working in Defence-related or adjacent roles. A common language, shared understanding and familiar culture required less adaption. Others who fared better were those who formed a new civilian identity or at least accepted the loss of their old military one. Adapting to a civilian environment is key. For many though, the biggest challenge longer-term was accepting that they were no longer a serving member of the Armed Forces. Detachment from the military was a significant challenge for many, even for those, who on the face of it, had successfully transitioned into civilian employment. Whilst some were able to accept the losses that detachment from the military represents, for others it impeded progression. Outcomes ranged from: those who fully adjusted; to those who reached contentment; to those who simply accepted their situation; to those still seeking work; to those who simply gave up.

Perceived Barriers and Facilitators

When asked what the key barriers and facilitators were to obtaining successful and sustainable employment in the longer-term, ex-Service personnel cited the following:

Perceived Barriers	Perceived Facilitators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A lack of relevant qualifications/experience and problems translating skills. • Negative employer perceptions. • A lack of support (from the Armed Forces and employers). • Physical and mental health challenges. • Poor cultural fit in a civilian organisation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual traits (confidence and self-reliance). • Having relevant skills, qualifications and experience. • Support from family and friends. • Networks.

When assessing barriers and facilitators it would seem that ex-Service personnel believe that many of the barriers are things which are outside of their control. In comparison, the key facilitator (confidence and self-reliance) is internally focused suggesting that success is down to the individual. The challenge here is that if ex-Service personnel feel the barriers are outside of their control, and they are unable to do anything about them, they may not seek to try by changing their behaviour, or reaching out for help.

Defining Success

There were mixed views with regards to whether ex-Service personnel felt successful in their civilian career/employment (47.5% said they felt successful; 28.1% unsuccessful). This may be partly because what constitutes success changed over time for some of them (46.4% said their definition of employment success had changed since they left the Armed Forces; 53.6% said it had not). For some ex-Service personnel, intrinsic rewards (such as being valued, enjoying their job) and the impact upon their personal life (achieving work-life balance) took on greater weight than extrinsic rewards (pay and status) over time. Consequently, in defining longer-term employment success, findings from this study point to the need for a definition which captures the individualistic and changing nature of success. With this in mind, the following definition of success has been generated during this research:

Successful longer-term employment is extrinsically and intrinsically rewarding. It is a good fit with the skills/qualifications/experience of the ex-Service person as well as their values. It allows them to balance work and non-work time appropriately. It is also subject to change over time.

This definition moves beyond the simple metric of whether the individual is employed or not and (after further testing) should be considered for use in future research.

Job Quality

As well as understanding what success looks like for ex-Service personnel longer-term, it is also important to determine what dimensions make up a quality job for this cohort. Based on the information gathered the team propose that good civilian employment comprises of the following key components:

- **Pay and reward:** Having enough money to maintain family and lifestyle. Satisfaction with pay.
- **Work-life balance:** Achieving a balance between work and family life
- **Intrinsic reward:** Undertaking work that is meaningful and provides challenge, job satisfaction and fulfilment.
- **Cultural fit:** Good person-environment fit. Match between personal values and those of the environment (organisation).
- **Job design and nature of work:** Opportunity to use qualifications, skills and experience (both hard and soft skills). Opportunity to progress and develop as required. Job security.
- **Social support:** Good relationships at work and a sense of camaraderie and social support.

It is important to note that not all components will carry equal weighting and are likely to vary based on individual circumstances and need. For example, whilst pay will be of less importance to some (i.e. those who have left with a full pension), for others (perhaps those with a mortgage and young family) this will have increased importance. As also noted, the relevance or importance of these factors are also likely to change over time in line with the changing expectations (or personal circumstances) of ex-Service personnel.

Predicting Success

In terms of predicting who is more likely to be unsuccessful longer-term the research team have identified ten key categories, at both an individual and organisational/environmental level that impact this:

- **Demographic variables:** factors relating to age, gender, ethnicity etc.
- **Service background:** such as Service, rank etc.
- **Mental and physical health:** factors such as illness, injury, disability, mental health.
- **Resettlement support:** resettlement support received and satisfaction with this.
- **Employer perceptions:** attitudes of employers to ex-Service personnel.
- **Qualifications, skills and experience:** factors relating to transferable skills and experience, civilian equivalent qualifications etc.
- **Job seeking behaviour:** approach to job-seeking.
- **Adapting to civilian employment:** challenges adapting to a civilian environment and new working relationships.
- **Detachment from the military:** issues around loss of identity, status and camaraderie.
- **Wider factors:** wider issues relating to the job market, macro events etc.

The more factors that apply, the more likely an individual is to be unsuccessful in the longer-term. However, facing fewer challenges is not necessarily a guarantee of success. Some factors likely hold greater weight than others (e.g. wider factors, such as a global pandemic or significant life events), whilst other factors will act as moderators, which act to lessen any negative impact. The interconnected nature of many of these factors make them difficult to tease apart.

Conclusions

The research findings show that some groups face greater challenges (and a more complex transition) at the point of leaving, thus making them more likely to experience unsuccessful employment outcomes longer-term. These groups include, females, ethnic minorities, wounded, injured and sick, older Service leavers etc. However, it is not only demographic and background factors that determine whether someone will have a more challenging transition. Other factors such as unrealistic expectations, no transferable skills and an inability to adapt to a civilian environment etc. also impact. This points to the need for tailored support for certain groups of individuals. Whilst the challenges to sustainable longer-term employment may be similar in some respects to those faced by civilians (e.g. the negative impact upon job retention

during an economic downturn; financial and psychological challenges of retraining or changing career later in life), some ex-Service personnel face barriers which are unique to them. Many of these are linked to the attitudes, behaviours and expectations formed as a consequence of their military Service. These include difficulties finding work that aligns with the values instilled in them during their military career; adapting to, and accepting, differences between the civilian and military work environment and culture; and identifying when perseverance in a role is in their best interests and when it may be of more benefit to their employment outcomes (and wellbeing) to move on. Barriers external to the ex-Service person include negative employer perceptions about Service personnel and lack of understanding of military roles and responsibilities.

It is evident from this study (and others) that ex-Service personnel should not be treated as a homogenous mass; the experiences across this cohort are varied and nuanced. It is too simplistic to divide ex-Service personnel into two groups: those who are successful and those who are not successful. Of course, these extremes exist, but for many the truth lies somewhere in the middle. Instead, success should be viewed along a continuum rather than as a dichotomy (see Section 11 – for further detail).

Recommendations

In order to effect change, a collaborative approach is suggested, requiring action from Defence/Government, ex-Service personnel, employers, and Service charities. Further research is also suggested. Based on the findings from the study, a series of recommendations have been made. These recommendations are grouped under the following headings:

- During Service.
- Resettlement support.
- Longer-term support.
- Monitoring longer-term employment outcomes.
- Future research.

The key recommendations are outlined in the table below. **A more detailed list of recommendations, including organisations responsible for their implementation, can be found in Section 12 –**

Whilst many of these recommendations are new, others are not. Problems persist, and whilst activity is underway to mitigate some of them, issues remain unresolved. This may be because the responsibility lies with multiple organisations; or no one is being held to account. In addition, resource constraints and practical challenges in tracking and contacting veterans act as barriers. In order to drive change, organisations (and individuals within them) need to 'sign up', prioritise and agree objectives and goals, and be made accountable for their actions.

During Service	All serving personnel should be required to produce a Curriculum Vitae (CV) at each role change, reducing the considerable challenge of creating a CV for the first time at the end of service.	The MOD, with support from the Office for Veterans' Affairs and relevant professional membership bodies should produce a Qualifications Matrix showing the civilian equivalents of each military qualification.	All Service personnel should have access to at least one work placement (up to a maximum of six months) with a civilian employer within their individual training plans, building knowledge for transition and innovation within the Armed Forces.	Spouses/partners of serving personnel should be supported to enter employment throughout military service to reduce risks of financial hardship and family breakdown at the point of leaving. Removing or reducing known barriers (such as childcare challenges and frequent moves) which prevent spouses/partners from seeking employment would help.
Resettlement support	Better expectation management of the challenges that Service leavers face is needed. This should use testimonies and first-hand experiences of veterans who have had a range of experiences.	Service personnel should take responsibility for their own resettlement. They must fully engage with the resettlement process, maximising the use of the resources available to them. This includes engaging with CTP	Service personnel should be provided with support at the point of resettlement, by CTP, that is tailored to their individual needs. Whilst some groups have already been identified as needing additional support there	At the point of leaving all Service personnel should be signposted to the Veteran's Gateway to ensure that they are aware of the range of Service charities and the support available to them after they leave.

		which should be mandatory for all Service leavers.	are other groups (i.e. females, ethnic minorities etc.) who have not. In addition, CTP should offer introductory modules/training on commercial, marketing and financial skills as part of the resettlement package for all.	
Longer-term support	The feasibility and applicability of providing through life support which is led by Defence (and supported by others) equivalent to that provided in Five Eyes Nations should be assessed.			
Monitoring longer-term employment outcomes	The Office for Veterans' Affairs should use the Census data to show unemployment rates in the longer term, following the introduction of the question 'Have you served in HM Armed Forces' in 2021, Scotland 2022.	The Office for National Statistics (ONS) should re-introduce veterans questions to the Annual Population Survey to show unemployment rates.	The ONS should introduce new occupational codes so that outcomes can be understood by rank and any interventions appropriately targeted.	The 'soft' employment outcomes of ex-Service personnel (i.e. satisfaction with work) should be gathered via an online, annual attitude survey conducted by the Office for Veterans' Affairs.
Further research	The definition of success for veterans' longer-term employment outcomes (developed during this research) should be tested and evaluated so that it can be used more widely.	A Support Needs Index tool should be developed which enables early identification of those Service leavers that need greatest support to shape the future of support during service, in transition and for the longer-term.	A longitudinal study of ex-Service personnel (and their families) should be conducted to fully understand employment outcomes (and wider challenges) in the longer-term.	Each recommendation should have a clear owner, objective and an implementation timeline. Many of the recommendations are not new and have persisted over time

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Abbreviations

Acronym	Definition
APS	Annual Population Survey
CTP	Career Transition Partnership
CV	Curriculum Vitae
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
ELC	Enhanced Learning Credits
FiMT	Forces in Mind Trust
GCE	General Certificate of Education
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
LFS	Labour Force Survey
MOD	Ministry of Defence
NCO	Non-Commissioned Officers
ONS	Office for National Statistics
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
SNCO	Senior Non-Commissioned Officers
SOC	Standard Occupational Classification
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States
WP	Work Package

Section 1 – Introduction

1.1 – Study Background

For those leaving the Regular United Kingdom (UK) Armed Forces, employment is seen as a key indicator of a successful and sustainable transition. Whilst previous research (Deloitte, 2018; FiMT, 2013), and Ministry of Defence (MOD) employment statistics (MOD, 2021), show that the vast majority of ex-Forces personnel gain employment after leaving, very little consideration has been given towards the longevity of the employment achieved or whether ex-Service personnel are employed in the 'right' jobs (i.e. fulfilling, sustainable, matching their aspirations or maximising their potential) (Deloitte, 2018). There remains a lack of research into longer-term life and work outcomes for Service leavers, particularly beyond the two-year point when Career Transition Partnership (CTP)¹ support ceases, and how this links to a person's time in service. This has also led to previously accepted metrics for measuring success (e.g. finding employment) being viewed as limited in nature, and failing to take into account the 'softer' factors² or 'broader Key Performance Indicators'³ of successful transition (FiMT, 2013).

1.2 – Research Questions

The aim of this study was to address these gaps in the research and explore the longer-term employment outcomes for ex-Service personnel who have been out of the Armed Forces for at least two years. Specifically, to explore:

1. How does a person's time in Regular service (including education, training and experience) and the support received during transition impact longer-term employment outcomes?
2. What are the longer-term* employment outcomes for ex-Service personnel?
3. What are the barriers and facilitators to successful and sustainable employment?
4. How is 'successful employment' defined? What are the wider measures of this and what does this mean in relation to ex-Service personnel? Is there a more comprehensive metric for measuring employment success in future research/studies?

***For the purpose of this study, longer-term was defined as anyone who had left the Armed Forces a minimum of two years ago (and a maximum of 10) and was no longer eligible for support from CTP.**

1.3 – Report Structure

This report is structured in the following way:

- Section 1: Introduction.
- Section 2: Method.
- Section 3: Presentation of study findings.
- Section 4: Setting the scene.
- Section 5: Participant profile.
- Section 6: Time in service and resettlement support on employment outcomes.
- Section 7: Longer-term employment outcomes.
- Section 8: Perceived barriers and facilitators to successful and sustainable employment.
- Section 9: Definition of success.
- Section 10: Cause and effect analysis.
- Section 11: Conclusions.
- Section 12: Recommendations.

¹ CTP is a partnering agreement between the MOD and Right Management Ltd. CTP are the official provider of Armed Forces resettlement services and support for Service leavers.

² Softer factors include levels of satisfaction with job roles, prospects for professional development as well as sense of purpose and direction (FiMT, 2013)

³ Broader key performance indicators are in line with a drive towards a broader definition of success (FiMT, 2013)



Section 2 – Method

2.1 – Technical Approach

A mixed methods approach was taken, gathering both quantitative and qualitative data across six Work Packages (WPs) (see Figure 2.1).

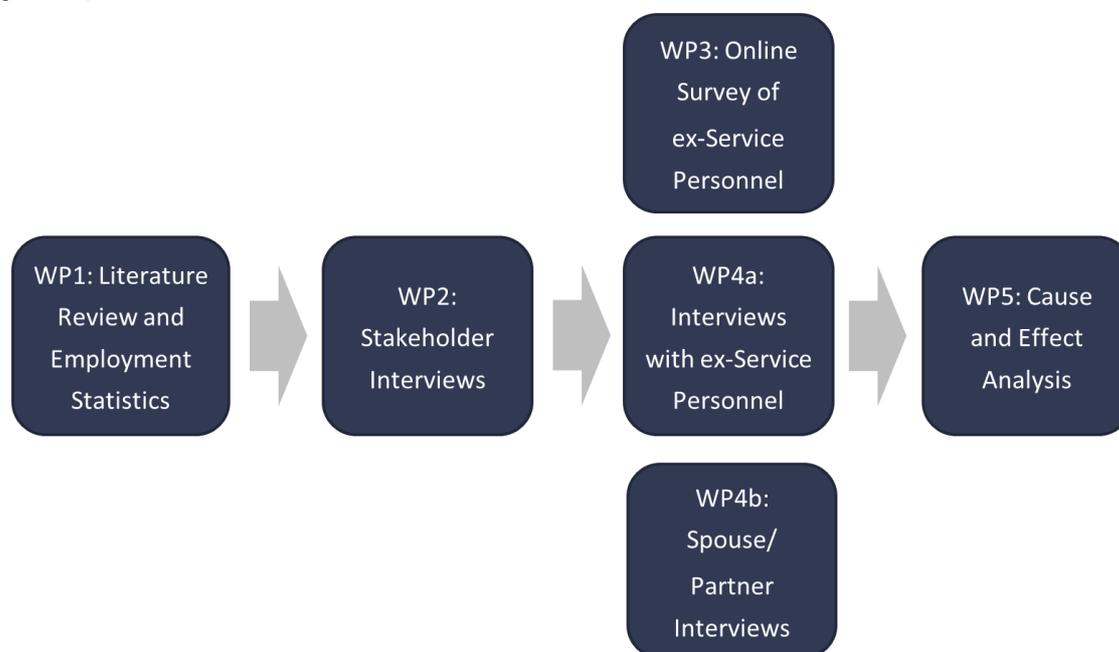


Figure 2.1 Overview of technical approach

2.2 – WP1: Literature Review and Employment Statistics

2.2.1 – Literature Review

A literature review of extant evidence relating to the longer-term employment outcomes of ex-Service personnel after leaving the UK Armed Forces was undertaken. The aim of the review was to examine and synthesise academic and grey literature, from the UK and internationally, to highlight what is already known about: the employment outcomes of ex-Service personnel; how time in service and support received/not received impacted this; and any barriers and facilitators that have been linked to achieving (successful) employment.

An established, five-stage methodology was used to conduct the literature review:

- **Setting review parameters:** Development of a keyword search strategy to systematically search databases for relevant literature.
- **Searching:** Application of the keyword strategy to identified databases. This was extended with searches within military specific journals and websites. Snowball referencing was also utilised, with additional evidence identified through the review of relevant article reference sections and citation tracking databases. Searches were enhanced through the application of advanced search options (Boolean, wild cards, proximity operator) available in many of the databases. All relevant evidence was managed in a bibliographic software programme (Endnote) where the full text could be stored.
- **Screening:** Inclusion and exclusion criteria were developed and implemented to screen for relevant evidence and used to determine which studies to include or exclude from the review.
- **Data extraction and synthesis:** Included evidence was reviewed using an inductive thematic framework to record, analyse and synthesise key information.
- **Reporting:** Synthesised evidence is presented in this report.

This search strategy was applied to five databases: ProQuest ABI Inform, PsycINFO, Science Direct, Wiley, and EBSCO (which was limited to the following databases: British Education Index, Business Source Complete, ebook collected EBSCO, Education Research Complete, e-journals and ERIC). Evidence from previous reviews in the military field were also examined. The main review was undertaken between April and November 2020 with a further targeted search undertaken

in early 2021 to capture any new evidence. This search was supplemented with a review of 22 UK and international websites. All potentially relevant evidence was managed in a bibliographic software programme.

Table 2.A provides an overview of the search strategy developed and applied to the databases via the University of Warwick library.

Table 2.A Keyword search terms and phrases

Keyword 1	Keyword 2	Keyword 3
Veteran	Military	Employment
Ex-military	Armed Forces	Employment outcome
Ex-Service	Air force	Long-term employment
	Army	Sustainable work
	Navy	Sustainable employment
	Marine	Maintain employment
	Royal Air Force	Underemployed
		Underutilised
		Low skilled work
		Mismatch
		Underqualified
		Overqualified
		Employment transition
		Second career
		Vocational outcome
Key phrases		
Military transition to employment		
Military transition to civilian life		
Second career of military		
Employment transition		
Transition to civilian workforce		
Transition to civilian labour market		
Military veteran career		
Military veteran job		

In total, there were 4,712 search results screened by title from across the databases and other sources. Of the 315 articles and reports reviewed in full, including grey literature identified from the UK and international websites, 68 pieces of evidence were included in the final review (see Table 2.B). This was supplemented with some articles that provided context. The review only included research evidence produced in the last 20 years to ensure evidence was appropriate to the current context and focused on ex-Service personnel who had transitioned more recently.

Table 2.B Overview of literature review search results

Search results screened by title	4,712
Evidence from academic databases	191
Evidence from previous review	101
Evidence from follow up references	32
Evidence from websites (including grey literature)	47
Search results screened by full text	371
Exclusions	

Duplicates deleted from database	56
Not based on empirical research or focused on single person opinion	27
Not based on the military	18
Out of date or data collected pre-2000	17
Focus on serving personnel or family	16
No evidence on longer-term outcomes	169
Unobtainable	0
Total excluded	303
Total included in review	68

Whilst the review sought to include evidence about all three Services, limited evidence was found that focused on the outcomes of ex-Service personnel from a specific Service. There was also very limited evidence on longer-term outcomes of ex-Service personnel by rank and length of service.

The review included evidence from the UK and internationally. International evidence was predominately from the United States (US), Canada, Australia and one study from Israel. Overall, the review is biased towards international evidence where more studies have been undertaken to better understand longer-term well-being and employment outcomes of ex-Service personnel.

2.2.2 – Employment Statistics

In order to understand the labour market experience and employment patterns of ex-Service personnel, a variety of population and social surveys were reviewed and secondary analysis conducted. The sources that were reviewed are shown in Table 2.C with an indication as to whether the data were used for this study (i.e. to understand longer term employment outcomes).

Table 2.C Overview of survey sources reviewed to assess the longer-term employment outcomes of ex-Service personnel

Source	Description	Suitability for use within study (yes/no)
UK Census of Population	This identifies members of the Armed Forces and produces a set of tables detailing the demographic and household characteristics of those serving at the time of the Census. There is limited information available on the UK veteran population. By linking individual 2011 Census records with the Service Leavers Database (MOD, 2018), the Office for National Statistics (ONS) has produced a small number of tables describing the veteran population of England and Wales. This enables the economic activity of the working age veteran population to be reported.	Yes
Census Longitudinal Studies in the UK	These studies trace a sample of individuals across Censuses. It is possible to identify veterans from people who were in the Armed Forces at one Census and identify their economic activity in subsequent Censuses. However, there is limited data and a full matrix of inter-occupational flows would make it easier to interpret patterns of occupational change	No

Source	Description	Suitability for use within study (yes/no)
The Labour Force Survey (LFS) and Annual Population Survey (APS)	This provides data for each local authority district enabling robust local analyses of the data (published for rolling 12-month periods) to be produced (via the nomis local labour market information system). The LFS and APS also include questions on last job and employment one year ago, which could be used to identify veterans. The 'last job' questions are only asked of those NOT in employment, so cannot be used to analyse the job mobility of those currently in work. The ONS has added questions to the APS on the veteran population (recording veteran status and the year in which the veteran left the Armed Forces).	Yes
Understanding Society	This is a representative longitudinal survey of the UK population, which has been operating since 2009 with a sample size of around 40,000 households. This dataset does not include a veteran indicator, but individuals currently or formerly working in the Armed Forces can be identified using four digit occupation (or industry). This provides the possibility of studying the labour market history of veterans after they leave the Armed Forces. However, the number of veterans in the dataset is likely to be quite small.	No
MOD Service Leavers Database	This contains data on all personnel that have left the UK Armed Forces, irrespective of Regular/Reserve status and length of service. It is updated monthly and contains the records of approximately 2.1 million Service leavers, There is no public access to these data. After the 2021 Census of Population data are published, the ONS will investigate the production of statistics on the veteran population by linking the Census with the Service Leavers Database and other administrative data sources.	No
Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Workforce data	DWP are required to support veterans as part of the Armed Forces Covenant. Participation of veterans in DWP programmes is recorded in the DWP Labour Market System database. However, the DWP produces no statistics on veterans and it currently has no plans to provide further details of the characteristics of clients (including veteran status) in their statistics.	No

2.3 – Stakeholder Interviews

A total of 10 telephone interviews were conducted with representatives from organisations that provide support to ex-Service personnel and those which employ them. This included registered charities/third sector organisations as well as public and private sector companies (small, medium enterprises and large companies).

The purpose of the interviews was to gain a better understanding of the different perspectives around the longer-term employment of ex-Service personnel, the issues faced and whether there are any common trends that arise later on in the transition process.

Two sets of interview questions were developed (informed by early findings from the literature review and the expert knowledge of the research team). The questions explored: the support requested by and provided to ex-Service personnel during resettlement and beyond; the type of employment status and contracts that leavers initially seek and obtain; whether employment ambitions/motivations change over time; barriers and facilitators to gaining and maintaining employment in the longer-term; and how the career progression of ex-Service personnel is perceived to compare with their civilian counterparts.

Interviews took place between May and July 2020. Each interview lasted approximately 45 minutes. Comprehensive notes were taken, typed up and the data were thematically analysed, alongside data from the ex-Service personnel and spouse/partner interviews. Braun & Clarke (2006) describe thematic analysis as "*a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data*" (p. 6).

2.4 – Online Survey of Ex-Service Personnel

Ethical approval to conduct the online survey (and the ex-Service personnel and spouse/partner interviews) was sought from the QinetiQ Ethics Committee. Following some minor amendments approval was received in August 2020.

To be eligible to take part in the survey ex-Service personnel had to have left the Regular Armed Forces a minimum of 24 months and a maximum of 10 years ago. The period of 10 years was chosen in order to aid collection of data that was relevant to current and recent Service leavers whilst also taking into consideration the need for participants to be able to recollect the detail of their transition and any challenges faced. Participants had to be aged over 18 and under 60 years and either: in employment/volunteering; unemployed and actively seeking work; or unemployed and not seeking work (but having had paid employment since leaving the Services). This was to ensure that respondents were able to provide feedback on their experience of seeking and/or maintaining employment since leaving the military. Respondents had to confirm their eligibility to take part, against these criteria, prior to commencing the survey.

Questions were developed based on initial findings from the stakeholder interviews and the literature review. They related to the following topics:

- Transition/resettlement plans and moving into civilian employment.
- Resettlement support and impact upon longer-term employment outcomes.
- Longer-term support and impact upon employment outcomes.
- General feelings towards employment, including what success means to them; and whether they feel they have found the 'right type' of role for them.
- Barriers and facilitators to obtaining and maintaining employment in the longer term.

Respondents were asked to provide demographic data (e.g. age, gender) and background information relevant to their time in service (e.g. Service, rank, year of leaving, length of service) to allow understanding of the sample composition. To aid interpretation of the data, there were options for respondents to provide written responses to some survey questions.

The online survey was hosted by Snap Surveys and promoted with help from RFEA: The Forces Employment Charity using various access routes and communication channels. The survey was open for two and a half months between October and December 2020.

On closure of the survey, data were downloaded into a spreadsheet. After data cleansing 534 responses were available for data analysis.

2.4.1 – Reporting the Survey Data

The following are of note when considering the survey responses.

- Not all questions were mandatory so the number of participants responding to each question varies and does not always total 534 (the total sample size).
- Question filtering was used in the survey. This meant that some questions were presented to a sub-set of respondents only. For example, only those who stated they had received support from CTP and/or other sources were presented with questions relating to their perceptions of the support received.

- In some instances the data from several response options to a question have been combined. For example, when reporting level of agreement, the number of respondents selecting 'strongly agree' and 'agree' have been summed to derive an overall figure and percentage representing the extent of agreement.
- Not every response option to a question is reported in the text. For example, not applicable or neither agree nor disagree options, are sometimes not reported.

2.5 – WP4a: Ex-Service Personnel Interviews

A total of 42 semi-structured, telephone interviews were conducted with ex-Service personnel between November 2020 and April 2021. The aim of the interview was to further expand and build on some of the questions asked during the survey. Inclusion criteria (age, time since leaving the Services etc.), were the same as the survey.

Personnel were recruited to take part via the online survey. Respondents were asked at the end of the survey whether they would be willing to take part in an interview, and if so, were asked to provide their email address. From this, a sample of personnel were contacted and invited to take part in an interview. The sample covered a spread of demographic and background variables in order to reflect the study population as far as possible. This included:

- Gender
- Age
- Ethnicity
- Highest level of qualification obtained
- Former Service
- Length of service
- Rank
- Date of leaving and reason why
- Current location
- Employment history since leaving

Of the 314 volunteers, 109 were invited to take part and 42 ex-Service personnel agreed to be interviewed. Each interview lasted approximately one hour. During the interview, notes were taken which were then typed up and thematically analysed. Interviewees were also offered a £10 gift voucher to thank them for their time.

From these interviews a series of individual case studies were identified and highlighted to show differing experiences of employment transitions longer-term for ex-Service personnel, and the challenges involved.

2.6 – WP4b: Spouse/Partner Interviews

Overall, 19 interviews were conducted with the spouses/partners of ex-Service personnel between February and April 2021⁴. The aim of the interview was to ascertain a more holistic view of what success looks like when transitioning out of the Armed Forces, enabling comparisons to be made between the perspectives of ex-Service personnel and the perspectives of spouses/partners.

The study was advertised repeatedly through a variety of different channels including social media, newsletters, snowball sampling etc. Spouses/partners were directed to an online demographic questionnaire to complete.

Overall, 41 spouses/partners expressed an interest in taking part in an interview. Of the 41 volunteers that were contacted,, 19 spouses/partners agreed to be interviewed . Each interview lasted approximately one hour. During the interview, notes were taken which were then typed up and thematically analysed. Interviewees were also offered a £10 gift voucher to thank them for their time.

2.7 – WP5: Cause and Effect Analysis

Utilising the findings from all the previous WPs, a fishbone analysis was conducted to further define and categorise the factors, or causes, that contribute to less successful longer-term employment outcomes. A fishbone analysis is a type of root cause analysis that provides a visual representation of a problem and the factors contributing to this (Phillips &

⁴ The intention was to conduct 30 interviews with spouses/partners. However, this population was incredibly hard to access, despite repeated attempts using a variety of access routes. The impact of COVID-19 (lockdowns and home schooling) is believed to have made this even more challenging.

Simmonds, 2013). It is an iterative technique used to explore all the possible underlying causes of a particular problem. In producing the fishbone analysis/Ishikawa diagram the following steps were taken:

- The problem ('effect') was identified (i.e. unsuccessful longer-term employment) and represented as a horizontal line in the middle of the page with an arrow facing to the right and the problem displayed at the end of the arrow.
- The major categories of causes of the problem were discussed and agreed by the research team.
- These categories were displayed as branches emerging from the centre of the diagram.
- Each category was reviewed in turn. All the possible causes of each category were discussed and reviewed asking 'why does this happen?' about each cause.
- Each answer was written as a sub-branch from the major category.

2.8 – Study Limitations

As with all research there are limitations to the methodological approach that may impact upon the study findings. Specifically::

- The survey and interviews draw upon retrospective self-report data requiring some participants to recall events from up to ten years ago. There is the possibility that some experiences may not be recalled accurately/without attribution bias, or at all.
- The spouses/partners interviewed were those in a relationship with the ex-Service person at the time of interview (including relationships formed before and after leaving the Armed Forces). The research did not tap into the viewpoints of spouses/partners who separated/divorced from an ex-Service person.
- Some of the routes used to promote the research (i.e. via RFEA) may have been less likely to reach Service personnel who have not needed employment support. Therefore the sample may not be representative of the ex-Service personnel community as a whole.
- This research was conducted in its entirety during the COVID-19 global pandemic. This impacted on the availability of some stakeholders (and spouses/partners in particular) to take part in an interview. It should also be noted that for some participants employment plans were disrupted (furlough, job offers retracted) in ways that they might not have been otherwise.



Section 3 – Presentation of Study Findings

The findings from this research are presented in the following way:

- A review of existing literature and secondary data analysis are presented to outline what is already known about the research questions (Section 4: Setting the Scene).
- Section 5 (Participant Profile) outlines who took part in the study; the demographic characteristics and background of survey respondents and interviewees.
- The findings from the interviews (stakeholder, ex-Service personnel and spouses/partners) and survey data have been combined and are examined in Sections 6 to 9. Specifically, the findings are presented by research question:
 - Section 6: Time in Service and Resettlement Support on Employment Outcomes.
 - Section 7: Longer-Term Employment Outcomes.
 - Section 8: Perceived Barriers and Facilitators to Successful and Sustainable Employment.
 - Section 9: Definition of Success.
- Section 10: Cause and effect analysis exploring the factors that lead to unsuccessful employment longer-term.
- Conclusions are drawn about the study findings (Section 11).
- A series of evidence-based recommendations for ex-Service personnel, employers, Service Charities and the MOD (as well as for future research) are proposed in Section 12.
- More detailed information on available employment data from the employment statistics (Appendix A).
- Finally, a more detailed breakdown of demographic and background data tables from the online survey can be found in Appendix B.



Section 4 – Setting the Scene

This section of the report outlines what is already known about the longer-term employment of ex-Service personnel from existing literature/research and available employment statistics.

It should be noted that whilst this study uses the term ex-Service personnel, much of the extant literature and employment statistics refer to veterans. Therefore, this term has been retained within this section of this report, however, it is viewed by the researchers as an interchangeable term and no meaning should be attached to the use of one word over the other.

4.1 – Literature Review

Extant research and evidence on the longer-term employment outcomes of ex-Service personnel, which inevitably links to life and well-being outcomes, has been reviewed. Within each topic evidence from the UK is presented first, followed by international evidence, in order to address gaps in the UK literature and to extend understanding of the area.

Key Points:

- Generally, ex-Service personnel who are in work do well in the longer-term. Employment and well-being outcomes have been shown to improve over the longer-term in countries with education and vocational programmes, and physical and mental health interventions in place to support ex-Service personnel.
- When examining demographic data, particular groups of ex-Service personnel do less well at the point of leaving and over the longer-term, including females and ethnic minorities, those with a disability (or medically discharged), early Service leavers, and those aged 50 plus. There is very little evidence on the employment outcomes of ex-Service personnel by Service or rank, with only evidence to suggest that those from the Army fared less well.

Resettlement Support that Helps Longer-Term Outcomes

- Career and vocational support can be effective in helping ex-Service personnel find sustainable employment, but personalised support is particularly helpful for ex-Service personnel, including those with a disability and those aged 50 years and over.
- Ex-Service personnel attaining a higher education or vocational qualification can enhance their employment outcomes over the longer-term. Where ex-Service personnel have received individualised support in an academic setting, retention and graduation rates are higher.
- Individualised placement and support, job placement programmes and on-the-job support have a positive impact on the employment of ex-Service personnel and well-being outcomes.
- Social networks are important in supporting ex-Service personnel to gain and, significantly, to remain in work.

Sustainable Employment Outcomes

- Military skills and attributes gained in the military can help longer-term and help enhance employment prospects.
- Ex-Service personnel in employment have high life satisfaction rates and are more likely to be promoted earlier or move into a leadership role faster than civilians. However, culture and person-fit are important factors in sustainable work.

Longer-Term Outcomes

- Whilst there is much evidence on the challenges ex-Service personnel experience when transitioning into the civilian labour market, there is very little evidence on whether and how this impacts longer-term outcomes. However, where ex-Service personnel experience discrimination initially, this can result in long-term unemployment or underemployment.
- Career success and life satisfaction are seen as key elements of successful employment in the longer-term.
- Poor mental and physical health tend to result in poor employment outcomes and negatively impacts outcomes in the longer-term for the individual and their families. Those individuals with health issues that are in employment do well, but positive outcomes take longer when compared to other ex-Service personnel.

- Earnings of ex-Service personnel have been found to decrease at the point of transition to the civilian labour market, but increase in the longer-term.

4.1.1 – Overview

Extant evidence on longer-term outcomes of veterans was found and examined from studies analysing national population and labour force surveys, qualitative studies that followed up veterans that had participated in a some form of support programme and longitudinal studies that tracked veteran. The US, Canada and Australia all have mechanisms in place to track veterans through national surveys, targeted cohort studies and programme evaluations, which are reviewed in this section. Whilst this evidence may not comparable to the UK, it provides some insights into the longer-term employment experiences and outcomes of veterans. Only one cohort study that tracked veterans over the longer-term was found in the UK. There were a few studies that tracked veterans in the short to medium term (up to two years post programme or course completion) in the UK. However, much of the longitudinal evidence on work and life outcomes is focused on veterans with mental and physical health issues; evidence is primarily quantitative. The evidence from qualitative studies provides a rich source of information on employment outcomes, but is often based on small samples. This evidence provides some insights into veterans' experience of employment in the longer-term. The following review brings together the quantitative and qualitative findings from UK and international literature to evidence what is known. It should be noted that international contexts are often not directly comparable to the UK, so international evidence should be read with caution. However, international literature on longer-term employment outcomes of veterans has been included in this review as it provides insights where UK evidence is lacking or missing.

4.1.2 – Employment Outcomes of Ex-Service Personnel

In the UK, a survey conducted in 2014 by the Royal British Legion found there are data evidencing that veterans of working age (based on a weighted sample of 1,943 respondents) were less likely to be employed and more likely to be economically inactive than the general population (The Royal British Legion, 2014). This confirmed the findings of the Royal British Legion 2006 survey of 1,075 responses. Whilst responses are weighted it is a relatively small sample (the whole UK veteran population at the time was estimated to be 2.8 million). The MOD (2021) statistical bulletin presented data from 10,357 Regular serving personnel from the UK Armed Forces (including Gurkhas) who self-reported their outcomes six months after accessing CTP service.⁵ This more recent data from CTP, which records rates of employment six months after discharge, similarly show that veterans were much more likely to be unemployed compared to the UK population (7% and 4% respectively) (MOD, 2021).

A review of literature by Fear et al. (2009, p. 53) reported on a number of factors that have been found to increase the likelihood of veterans experiencing poor outcomes when leaving the Services, including: being younger; being single; being in the Army; holding a lower rank; being male; being exposed to combat; being a reservist; having pre-enlistment factors such as childhood adversity; being deployed for a long time; having mental health problems at the time of discharge; and being an early service leaver. Whilst these factors are known to impact outcomes in the short-term, little is known about the impact over the longer-term.

Differences in the employment outcomes of veterans are also noted by age, gender, ethnicity, socio-economic background and length of service. Female veterans, based on self-reported employment outcomes 6 months after accessing CTP service, are more likely to be unemployed compared to the UK population (8% and 5% respectively) (MOD, 2021). A mixed methods study with UK female veterans found that 65% of Service leavers had secured employment before leaving the military or within one month of leaving (Parry et al., 2019). However, 18% reported taking up to six months to secure employment and 19% did not start work for six months or more; the reasons for which are not explored. The majority reporting that they were not in work at the time of the survey were looking for employment. Analysis of CTP data reported that ethnic minorities were more likely to be unemployed than White veterans (11% and 6% respectively) (MOD, 2021). Research in the UK has also highlighted that veterans aged 50 years and over are more likely to be long-term unemployed (unemployed for 12 months or more) or under-employed (not in work that is using skills and abilities) (Flynn & Ball, 2020).⁶ Similar evidence is reported for those who leave the Service within four years, with research suggesting that they are more

⁵ In 2019/20, 15,368 Regular serving, including Gurkha, personnel left the UK Armed Forces, of which 12,258 (80%) used a billable CTP service (MOD, 2021).

⁶ Recent data from the ONS (2021) reported that around 25% of unemployed people are over 50 years of age and are more likely to be unemployed for longer.

likely to experience poor labour market outcomes and disadvantage in the labour market when compared to other veterans (The Centre for Social Justice, 2014).

In Canada, a quantitative study analysing national survey data reported similar findings to that of the UK in terms of employment rates (MacLean et al., 2019). Employment rates were lower for veterans than the rate for Canadians (72% and 76% respectively). It was noted that the majority of Canadian veterans surveyed were in employment and satisfied, with rates for both increasing over time. Notably, veterans who were unemployed were more likely to be younger, only have a few years of Service and had been in the Army. It was also found that older individuals who were unemployed had more years of Service and had experienced multiple barriers to work.

Seven years post discharge, the employment rate for Canadian veterans was 80% (MacLean et al., 2019). The employment rates were lower among females and among those medically discharged at the time of the first survey. The unemployment rates of medically discharged personnel rose over the longer-term from less than one third to 60% seven years post discharge. However, they were less likely to be satisfied with work activity, life and finances, which did not change over the longer-term. They were also less likely to rate their health as 'very good' or 'excellent'. Employment rates for female veterans rose from 39% one year after discharge to 63% seven years post discharge. One year after discharge female veterans were more likely to be in education or in a caregiving role than male veterans. Overall, labour market outcomes for Canadian veterans are good, but there are some whose experience is less positive. MacLean et al. (2019) suggest that more targeted provision is needed to improve employment outcomes.

In the US, national surveys track veterans and there is more targeted provision aimed at improving their employment outcomes. This provision is evaluated and monitored, which means a better understanding of their outcomes over the longer-term. The unemployment rate for veterans who served after September 2001 is higher than the unemployment rate of civilians and ex-Service personnel who served before 2001, but unemployment rates of veterans have been decreasing since 2009 (Collins et al., 2015).

Statistical data from the UK, US and Canada show that most veterans are in employment, but these rates are not as good when compared to civilian employment rates (Collins et al., 2015; Flynn & Ball, 2020; MacLean et al., 2019; MOD, 2021; The Centre for Social Justice, 2014). Evidence also highlights that ex-Service personnel are more likely to have poor employment outcomes when compared to the general population. There is limited quantitative data for those that have been out of the service for six months or more. Generally, it is shown that those ex-Service personnel in employment are better off than those who are unemployed. Overall, it is important to look at evidence beyond the statistics to gain a better understanding of what employment outcomes actually look like in the longer-term for veterans.

4.1.2.1 – Labour Market Discrimination Impacting Outcomes

There is evidence that some ex-Service personnel experience discrimination when trying to gain employment, which results in some being long-term unemployed or underemployed (e.g. Flynn & Ball, 2020; Mavromaras et al., 2013; MacLean et al., 2019; Prokos & Cabage, 2017; Stone et al., 2018). A recent study has highlighted that some UK ex-Service personnel age 50 years and over experience discrimination due to their age and military status (Flynn & Ball, 2020).

Internationally, discrimination against veterans has also been reported. In Australia, analysis of national data found that veterans are discriminated against and therefore have difficulty finding work (Mavromaras et al., 2013). Whilst lack of employability seems to be a problem, for older workers the impact on outcomes is more significant particularly when compared with civilians. Similarly, in Canada, the rate of ex-Service personnel not in the labour force is higher than for civilians, which, according to MacLean et al. (2019), is the result of barriers to employment experienced by veterans (23% of veterans and 18% of civilians). Similar evidence was reported in the US for female veterans with particularly negative employment outcome for females with a disability in the longer-term (Prokos & Cabage, 2017). MacLean et al. (2019) reported on the barriers to employment including: potential bias and stigma because of the military status; effects of disability; difficulty translating military experience to civilian workplace; and perceptions of mental instability. Veteran employability was found to improve after completing training except for female veterans.

4.1.3 – Gaining Employment

There is much research and evidence on ex-Service personnel transitioning to civilian life in terms of what works, and the barriers and the challenges they are likely to face. A successful transition is often reported to be about gaining employment, but there are many factors that can influence whether and how work is gained. Some suggest that a negative transition (broadly defined here as one where a veteran is unable to secure employment, translate their skills and qualifications, earn a salary where they are unable to maintain their standard of living or have trouble adjusting to civilian life) can impact on

the veteran and their family (for the UK, see for example: Binks & Cambridge, 2018; Boutin, 2011; Brunger et al., 2013; Carolan, 2016; Cox et al., 2018; Dandeker et al., 2011; Deloitte, 2018; Jones et al., 2020; Keeling et al., 2019; Parry et al., 2019; The Centre for Social Justice, 2014; FiMT, 2013).

It is well evidenced that some veterans experience challenges with translating qualifications and skills to the civilian labour market and that when they are in employment some can experience challenges in adapting to a civilian work culture (e.g. Carolan, 2016; Deloitte, 2018; Fellows et al., 2020; Flynn & Ball, 2020; Lyonette et al., 2018; Lyonette et al., 2020; Rhead et al., 2020; Tao & Campbell, 2020; The Royal British Legion, 2014; The Centre for Social Justice, 2014). Other research suggests a number (or combination) of factors can make the transition harder, such as: having poor numeracy and literacy skills; coming from a disadvantaged background; and entering the Services when young (Iversen, Dyson, et al., 2005; Iversen, Nikolaou, et al., 2005; The Centre for Social Justice, 2014; FiMT, 2013). As there is no longitudinal evidence or tracking of veterans and their employment post-Service in the UK, it is only possible to draw conclusions from qualitative narratives that a poor transition impacts the longer-term employment outcomes of veterans.

4.1.4 – Transitional Support that Helps ex-Service Personnel Gain and Enhance Employment

In the UK, the *Veterans' Transition Review* (Ashcroft, 2014) concluded that a successful transition was about preparation and planning over the longer-term and not in the limited time before leaving the Service. A qualitative study found that veterans who did not have long-term plans resulted in veterans and their families experiencing difficulties with mental health, gaining employment and securing a home (Heal et al., 2019). Veterans with difficulties tend to neglect longer-term goals or intentions, and were reported not to understand how long it would take to transition (Heal et al., 2019; Keeling et al., 2019; FiMT, 2013).

International research from Israel examined the longer-term impact of a veteran's transition. A small study involving higher ranking veterans (including Lieutenant Colonel, Colonel, Brigadier General, Head of Branch, Head of Department, Head of Division) examined the factors of a successful transition that could lead to a successful second career in the civilian labour market (Vigoda-Gadot et al., 2010). It reported that successful transition was dependent on: being prepared for retirement; having social capital⁷; understanding civilian workplaces; and understanding work-family conflict⁸. Longer-term success was evidenced to be dependent on career success (defined in this study by income and position, hierarchy and power) and life satisfaction, as reported in a study with veterans from the UK Navy (Baruch & Quick, 2007, 2009). However, others from the US suggest that a lack of jobs relevant and appropriate to veteran skills and experience⁹, and fewer jobs available that paid a living wage can cause problems (Kintzle et al., 2015; Szelwach et al., 2011). Therefore, for some veterans gaining work was difficult and can be argued to negatively impact longer-term employment outcomes.

Targeted support at the time of transition for veterans is important and there is some suggestion as to what this should comprise; the evidence for which is explored in the sections below. For instance, a survey of the UK veteran population reported that one in twenty had an unmet need with most reporting to be unemployed (The Royal British Legion, 2014). Help and support was notably needed around physical and mental conditions, loneliness and bereavement, financial problems related to employment, education and family. Targeted support for veterans in the US are mainly directed at those with physical and mental health issues (see Section 4.1.5 –).

4.1.4.1 – Skills and Qualifications Gained whilst in the Military

Whilst there is much research on the role of skills and qualifications gained whilst in military life supporting transitions to civilian work, there is no evidence on whether and how this may influence longer-term employment outcomes. Recent research suggests that those leaving the UK military after long service can be forced into early retirement as they lack employability skills to support their transition from the military into civilian employment, such as social networking skills, interviewing and Curriculum Vitae (CV) writing skills, plus they have a strong military identity (see for example: Parry et al., 2019; Flynn & Ball, 2020). This is thought to have a knock-on effect impacting their ability to find and remain in employment. However, there is much research that suggests that strength, resilience and adaptability developed during a military career

⁷ Vigoda-Gadot et al. (2010) defined social capital as having knowledge of and networks with people who helped them by speaking in their favour, supplied them with information regarding career opportunities, supported them psychologically or by speaking to them about the difficulties of the job, alternative functions or long-term goals in their career.

⁸ Vigoda-Gadot et al. (2010) defined work-family conflict as the tensions and demands at work influence the family life.

⁹ This was noted to be veterans unable to translate their military skills and background, as well as qualifications not seen as relevant to available civilian jobs.

can help veterans' transition (e.g. Baruch & Quick, 2007, 2009; Johnston et al., 2010; Leslie & Koblinsky, 2017; FiMT, 2013; The Royal British Legion, 2014). It can be assumed that these skills can be drawn upon throughout the initial transition to civilian life and in the longer-term.

4.1.4.2 – Individual Behaviours

There is much evidence on the challenges some ex-Service Personnel face when transitioning to the civilian job market, with some individuals needing to adapt and adjust their behaviour. Some ex-Service personnel are reported to have problems: adjusting to the culture of civilian life and the work environment; translating skills and experience to the civilian labour market; managing the loss of their military identity and sense of belonging; adjusting their perceptions of opportunities available to them (see for example: Binks & Cambridge, 2018; Flynn & Ball, 2020; Johnsen et al., 2008; Johnston et al., 2010; Keeling et al., 2019; Kintzle et al., 2015; Lyonette et al., 2020; Parry et al., 2019; Prokos & Cabage, 2017; Stone et al., 2018; FiMT, 2013; The Royal British Legion, 2014). These challenges have been found to impact the likelihood of some veterans being unemployed in the longer-term.

In the US, for instance, veterans' unpreparedness for civilian employment, such as veterans having unrealistic expectations about jobs they would qualify for and the salary they could earn has been observed (Kintzle et al., 2015). There was also evidence that veterans felt uneasiness about how to 'start over' as a civilian (Kintzle et al., 2015). Tao and Campbell (2020, p. 513) suggest that veterans transitioning to the civilian labour market may have a period of 'reintegration, unlearning their prior experiences and/or adapting to their new civilian employment environments'. Evidence suggests that veterans' military experience can have a lasting impact, both positive and negative, on their outcome, but this can diminish over time (Stone et al., 2018; Tao & Campbell, 2020). A small qualitative study with veterans in the UK noted that there was a number of aspects to transition that an individual had to manage in the longer-term (Brunger et al., 2013). Mental health and well-being was one element, which is discussed next.

4.1.5 – Mental and Physical Health Issues impacting Outcomes

There is much research on the mental and physical health and well-being issues experienced by veterans from the UK and internationally (in the UK for example: Carolan, 2016; Fear et al., 2009; Iversen et al., 2011; Iversen, Dyson, et al., 2005; Iversen, Nikolaou, et al., 2005; Iversen & Greenberg, 2009; Roberts et al., 2020; The Centre for Social Justice, 2014; FiMT, 2013; The Royal British Legion, 2014; van Staden et al., 2007). Common issues can include: depression; anxiety; Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD); drug and/or alcohol misuse; adjustment disorder (a stress related, short term condition triggered by life events); and personality disorders. There is evidence that veterans are not good at seeking help (particularly with health and well-being issues), which has been found to have negative results in the longer-term for the veteran themselves and their families (e.g. Carolan, 2016; Gonzalez et al., 2019; Heal et al., 2019; Iversen et al., 2011; Karney et al., 2008; The Royal British Legion, 2014; Williamson, Greenberg, & Stevelink, 2019). A study in the UK with veterans and their families found that mental health problems can go on for a long time with many families 'just coping' (Heal et al., 2019). Equally, alcohol abuse by veterans was reported to cause long-term damage (Fear et al., 2009; The Centre for Social Justice, 2014).

In the UK, research has evidenced that veterans with mental health problems are more likely than other veterans to be unemployed, experience disadvantage in the labour market, be vulnerable to social exclusion and homelessness, and experience marital breakdown (see for example: Deloitte, 2018; Fear et al., 2009; Heal et al., 2019; Iversen & Greenberg, 2009; Rhead et al., 2020; Robertson, 2014; The Royal British Legion, 2014; FiMT, 2013; van Staden et al., 2007). Recent evidence suggests that veterans, when compared to civilians, are more likely to have common mental disorders (23% of veterans in the sample compared to 16% of civilians), alcohol misuse (10% compared to 5%) and PTSD (7% compared to 5%) when unemployed, have a long-term illness and/or have a disability (Rhead et al., 2020).

The 2014 survey of veterans carried out by The Royal British Legion reported on a number of issues experienced by veterans many of whom were older and had been out of the Service for some time. Whilst analysis was not undertaken on longer-term outcomes, where significant, some evidence is reported by time from discharge and those of working age. The Royal British Legion (2014) reported that more than half of those surveyed (who had been discharged in the five years prior to the survey) reported difficulties within the last year. Difficulties with employment were prevalent in those discharged in the last five years and those of working age. Common difficulties that were also reported were based around mental and physical health, finance and housing. Those experiencing mental health difficulties were more likely to be unemployed, have a higher level of deprivation, widowed, divorced or separated, suffer with a long-term illness or disability. A longitudinal cohort study undertaken by Iversen and colleagues (Iversen, Dyson, et al., 2005; Iversen, Nikolaou, et al., 2005) has examined the longer-term outcomes of UK military personnel and veterans. Whilst this evidence is dated, it was

the only longitudinal study on UK veterans found so was included in the review. The King's Military Cohort study provided a baseline of information for a cross-sectional sample which were followed up around four years later (Iversen et al., 2005). Similar to international evidence, those veterans in employment tended to do well, whilst the minority with mental health problems were more likely to be unemployed and of high risk of being socially excluded. Using the same longitudinal study, a cross-sectional cohort of vulnerable veterans were identified and followed up with a telephone survey (Iversen, Dyson et al., 2005). Nearly half of respondents had a psychiatric diagnosis, commonly depression, and were more likely to be from a lower rank and be divorced or separated. Over the long term, half of the veterans in the cohort were found to be receiving support and around 14% were unemployed. These findings can be considered dated, but more recent research reviewed next, particularly from international studies, shows that these issues still persist.

As noted earlier, particular groups of veterans (such as the young, recently discharged, aged 50 years plus, those leaving military corrective training) are more likely to experience poorer outcomes when compared to other veterans. These particular groups of veterans have greater potential for mental health problems and may experience long periods of unemployment as transitioning to civilian life can be difficult (Fear et al., 2009; Flynn & Ball, 2020; Iversen, Nikolaou, et al., 2005; Robertson, 2014; The Centre for Social Justice, 2014; The Royal British Legion, 2014; van Staden et al., 2007). Some evidence suggests that those veterans that recover from mental health problems and do well are more likely to be in employment (Robertson, 2014; MacLean et al., 2019).

From the US, there is much evidence that veterans with physical and mental health issues are at increased risk of long-term unemployment (e.g. Church et al., 2019; Dillahunt-Aspillaga et al., 2018; Karney et al., 2008; Kintzle et al., 2015; Solomon & Mikulincer, 2006; Smith et al., 2005; Smith et al., 2009) and likely to be less satisfied with post-military life (Gause et al., 2017). One study reported that unaddressed mental health (PTSD and/or depression) and substance abuse negatively impact on veterans' motivation to find and maintain work, as well as find success in a job (Kintzle et al., 2015) with negative outcomes accumulating over time (Karney et al., 2008). Others recognise that mental health problems can improve, but that the veterans themselves said it had taken them a long time (Stevens, 2014).

Interventions and rehabilitation programmes have been found to have a positive impact on life and work outcomes in the longer-term (Kintzle et al., 2015; Kukla et al., 2015; Stevens, 2014). A number of studies report positive longer-term employment outcomes (in terms of stable employment) for veterans with traumatic brain injuries and PTSD when they had received long-term support (Bakken-Gillen et al., 2015; Church et al., 2019; Dillahunt-Aspillaga et al., 2018; Karney et al., 2008; O'Toole & Catts, 2008; Solomon & Mikulincer, 2006). A three year UK study of veterans with an injury reported that veterans who had received support tended to gain greater independence and longer-term were in sustainable employment (Bahadur et al., 2017). However, some suggest that there are a number of mitigating factors, such as extent of injury, work history, and marital status (Stevens, 2014). Overall, negative outcomes of poor health can be broad ranging for both the individual veteran and their family often occurring over the lifespan.

Whilst the evidence from veteran interventions and rehabilitation programmes suggests there is a need for more evidence on what works, it also suggests that programmes aimed at veterans with physical and mental health issues need to be carefully designed to improve longer-term work and life outcomes for veterans (Bakken-Gillen et al., 2015; Church et al., 2019; Dillahunt-Aspillaga et al., 2018; Karney et al., 2008; O'Toole & Catts, 2008; Solomon & Mikulincer, 2006). It is suggested that individual circumstances need to be assessed and should inform discharge recommendations, which could inform a more targeted or personalised support. Veterans with physical and mental health issues do have positive outcomes, but more time is often needed.

4.1.6 – Maintaining Employment

There is a range of international evidence relating to the positive outcomes that veterans who are in sustainable work experience. These include improved health and wellbeing, high life satisfaction rates and career progression as discussed next. Whilst there are a number of challenges to sustainable work, evidence on longer-term outcomes suggests that these tend to be, for example, on culture and person-fit or a lack of understanding (or inability) to translate skills, particularly when moving between roles. A small qualitative study with veterans in the US who were unemployed or assessed to be underemployed identified the reasons as to why (Harrod et al., 2017). These reasons included: feelings of demotion; loss of military identity; and being unable to fit in with or relate to civilian colleagues. This reflects challenges experienced by veterans at the point of leaving, which illustrates the possible longer-term impact of some of the issues for those that do not transition well.

High life satisfaction rates are important as they point to low attrition rates with veterans staying in work (Cotner et al., 2018; Robertson, 2014; Robertson & Brott, 2013, 2014). For instance, a survey of veterans that had entered the teaching profession through the US *Troops to Teachers* pathway found that veterans were satisfied with this second career with

many saying that they felt they were 'helping and serving others' and were loyal to their employer (Robertson, 2014). Research with US veterans (with a spinal cord injury) who had received individual placement support found that high life satisfaction rates resulted in veterans staying in work (Cotner et al., 2018).

In the US, LinkedIn undertook a member's study of veterans and civilians who had attained a degree or higher to examine veteran employment outcomes over the longer-term (three to seven years into transition) (Boatwright & Roberts, undated). Whilst some caution is required with the results due to the study sample (in terms of size and purposive approach to sampling) and from the US, there are some interesting findings in terms of employment outcomes over the longer-term. The study found that veterans, when compared to civilians, are more likely, in the longer-term, to: remain with their initial company longer; be promoted earlier and/or have been moved into a leadership role; have attained a graduate degree of higher; and to have more work experience. Overall, Boatwright and Roberts (undated) suggested that veterans are underemployed when compared to civilians, and more likely to be disadvantaged.

In terms of the influence of culture and person-fit of sustainable work, there is evidence to suggest that there are a number of indicators of successful work (defined variously by the following studies as remaining in employment and being satisfied with work and life). A study of US veterans with PTSD reported on the factors of successful work (Kukla et al., 2015). Much of the previous research has suggested personal characteristics considered helpful for successful work, include: personal motivation and initiative; self-efficacy; self-resilience; work skills; ability to manage interpersonal issues; ability to manage cultural adjustment; and good health (Keeling et al., 2019; Keeling et al., 2018; Kukla et al., 2015). Research has also highlighted the importance of veterans in the US understanding that work and life satisfaction is about more than career advancements and promotion (Robertson, 2014). There is a suggestion that veterans mentoring other veterans can support this shift in thinking. Life satisfaction is considered important to veterans staying in work.

Where veterans are unable to stay in work, evidence suggests this is because they have difficulty in understanding how military experience translates to civilian employment and do not possess transferable skills (e.g. Carolan, 2016; Deloitte, 2018; Fellows et al., 2020; Flynn & Ball, 2020; Lyonette et al., 2018; Lyonette et al., 2020; Rhead et al., 2020; Tao & Campbell, 2020; The Royal British Legion, 2014; The Centre for Social Justice, 2014). A report on the experiences of homeless veterans in London found that veterans with highly specialised military-specific roles had a lack of transferable skills, which limited employment options in the short to medium term (Johnsen et al., 2008).

There is some evidence from the UK to suggest that social networks can support veterans to not only find work, but to also stay in work (Baruch & Quick, 2007; The Centre for Social Justice, 2014; FiMT, 2013; The Royal British Legion, 2014), as well as support transition to civilian life (Leslie & Koblinsky, 2017). Early in the transition phase, these networks tend to be with colleagues from the military and other veterans (Edelmann, 2018; Iversen & Greenberg, 2009; The Centre for Social Justice, 2014), which then expand over time (Iversen & Greenberg, 2009; The Centre for Social Justice, 2014). A small qualitative study reported that social networks are important as they help veterans maintain their personal identity and provide a link to military life (Beech et al., 2017). Younger veterans are thought to be at a disadvantage as they have not had the opportunity to develop these networks (The Centre for Social Justice, 2014). A survey of UK veterans from the Navy found that social networks played a key role in the transition phase and where these supported positive feeling there was longer-term career success (Baruch & Quick, 2007, 2009). Further research is needed to determine the role of networks in veteran employment outcomes in the longer-term.

4.1.7 – Veteran Earnings Longer-Term

In the UK there is no evidence on the earnings of veterans and if the change over time. There is some evidence, however, about the salary expectations that veterans have on leaving. One study reports that salary expectations of UK veterans can be unrealistic, with some earning more than expected and others less (Deloitte, 2018). Longitudinal research with Canadian veterans found that earnings decreased in the first three years of discharge and that their income was 36% lower than when they were in the military (not including their pension) (MacLean et al., 2019). When comparing the earnings of female veterans earnings were 51% lower than their military salary, compared to 34% for male veterans. This is thought to be the result of more female veterans occupying administrative jobs post discharge. Whilst medically discharged veterans also experienced a significant decrease in earnings, this was not offset by their pension. In the US, similar evidence from the analysis of longitudinal data reported that veterans earned less than civilians, which was not associated with occupation (MacLean, 2016).

Similarly, in Australia, a 30% drop in earnings was experienced by veterans transitioning to the civilian labour market compared to those that stayed in the military (Mavromaras et al., 2013). The difference in the pay gap is suggested to be the result of some military skills and experience not being transferable to, or valued in, the civilian labour market. Earnings

over the longer-term could be improved by those that increased their employability and engaged in further training. Female veterans or those veterans with a disability and/or a long-term health condition earned around 20% less than civilians.

4.1.8 – Enhancing Longer-Term Employment Outcomes

Evidence presented next focuses on how employment outcomes are enhanced in the longer-term. Whilst some of the evidence is in line with research on the civilian labour force, there is a lack of evidence focused on veterans particularly over the longer-term.

4.1.8.1 – Education and Training

In the UK, there is limited evidence on whether and how employment outcomes could be enhanced in the longer-term through engagement with education and training at the point of leaving, or later in their civilian career. In the UK, research found that engagement with education and training can improve employment outcomes at the point of transition (The Centre for Social Justice, 2014). A second study from the UK found that veterans reported no long-term value in terms of their resettlement support or their Enhanced Learning Credits (ELC) funding allocation (Fellows et al., 2020). Some commented that having undertaken 'trade like' courses in the military had not been of value in the long term. Of value in the longer-term had been exposure to employers and knowledge building events that had been delivered in partnership with employers, professional associations and higher education institutions (Fellows et al., 2020).

In some other countries, there is much more evidence on the positive outcomes of education and training engagement, plus the attainment of qualifications, on enhancing employment outcomes and longer-term prospects (Bank of America in partnership with Social Finance, 2014; Mavromaras et al., 2013; Siminski, 2010). This included finding skilled work and increasing their earnings. Retention and graduation rates have been found to be higher for those veterans receiving some form of continuous support when on an education programme, including mentoring, individual tutoring and access to veteran affairs (Bank of America in partnership with Social Finance, 2014; Voelpel et al., 2018).

4.1.8.2 – Career Development Skills

In the UK, US and Canada, research found that individualised career and vocational support (variously including career coaching, hands-on job search support, professional assistance with CV writing, on the job support) helped veterans gain and remain in employment (Carolan, 2016; MacLean et al., 2019; Ottomanelli et al., 2014; Ottomanelli et al., 2015; Ottomanelli et al., 2017; Troutman & Gagnon, 2014). Recent evidence from the UK with veterans over 50 years found that they needed longer-term employment support as they need longer to adapt and respond to the civilian labour market (Flynn & Ball, 2020). Veterans suggested that beneficial support helps with translating military experience into civilian language, drafting cover letters, and interviewing techniques.

4.1.8.3 – Job Accommodation, Internships and Job Placements

There is much evidence from the US on the positive impact of employment support for veterans, and particularly veterans who have mental and physical health issues (Abraham et al., 2017; Bank of America in partnership with Social Finance, 2014; Cotner et al., 2018; Davis et al., 2019; Flinn et al., 2005; Ottomanelli et al., 2015; Ottomanelli et al., 2014; Ottomanelli et al., 2017; Reddy & Kern, 2014; Rosenheck & Mares, 2007). Individualised placement and support programmes for veterans that have been found to improve longer-term outcomes are those that focus on: competitive employment and meaningful permanent jobs; integration of mental health and employment services; and the offer of personalised, unlimited and ongoing support (Bank of America in partnership with Social Finance, 2014, p. 9). Positive outcomes reported included veterans being more likely to be employed in competitive roles and earning more than those who did not receive support (see for example: Bank of America in partnership with Social Finance, 2014; Prokos & Cabage, 2017).

4.1.9 – Summary

At the point of leaving, or shortly thereafter (within six months), UK ex-Service personnel are likely to be employed. Evidence suggests that a small proportion of those leaving the Armed Forces do less well and experience life and work challenges over the longer-term. Compared to the civilian population, veterans in the UK are less likely to be employed and there is little evidence to determine whether this changes over the longer-term. There is evidence that suggests that those who receive individualised or targeted support (whether educational support, career development, employability training, or medical support) improve over the longer-term. However, there should be some caution in applying this evidence as it is primarily based on veterans who have received support for a physical or mental health issue. In countries with education

and vocational programmes in place to support veterans (such as in the US and Canada), employment outcomes have been found to improve over the longer-term.

Research evidences the positive outcomes of those veterans who are able to stay in employment, with career success and life satisfaction seen as key elements of successful employment in the longer-term. Successful transition and positive longer-term employment outcomes include when veterans: have made preparations for retirement (including financing and housing); have social capital and networks; understand civilian workplaces; and understand work-family conflict. In terms of maintaining employment, evidence suggests that culture and person-fit, and social networks are important factors in sustainable work. Significantly, veterans' earnings may decrease in the short-term, but increase in the longer-term particularly when veterans engage with education and training. Particular groups of veterans (including female and ethnic minority veterans, those with a disability (or medically discharged), early service leavers, and those aged 50 plus) have been found to do less well in terms of gaining and maintaining employment, earnings and health.

Overall, there is little to no evidence on what a successful outcome in the longer-term looks like for a veteran. This is probably because outcomes are highly individualised. Career success and life satisfaction are reported in the evidence, but this is often quantitatively measured. Whilst there is unlikely to be consensus on how to define success in the longer-term for veterans, more qualitative information would enable a better understanding of the various elements that could make up success.

4.2 – Employment Statistics

A review of UK data sources was undertaken to explore the labour market experience and employment patterns of former members of the UK Armed Forces. It is separated into three sections covering the following:

- Narrative which explains the lack of (current) data on ex-Service personnel and their employment activity over the longer-term.
- Recent labour market data for ex-Service personnel of working age, extracted from survey microdata¹⁰.
- The potential for future availability of data.

Key Points:

- There is currently a lack of available data on the employment patterns of ex-Service personnel with little understanding of economic activity and occupation mobility over time.
- The most recent data that are publicly available are now dated and there will be a gap in our understanding until data from the 2021 Census of Population is made available for Great Britain.
- Disaggregated and more nuanced data that would support a better understanding of the employment patterns of ex-Service personnel are not widely available.
- In 2017, the estimated size of the population of ex-Service personnel was 2.1 million, 1.45 million of whom were aged 65 or more. Amongst those aged 16 to 64 years: 79% were employed (males 81%, females 70%); and 3% unemployed (males 4%, females 2%).
- Ex-Service personnel with the highest educational qualifications are more likely to be economically active than those who are most poorly qualified.
- Around 57% of ex-Service personnel work in the following five industries: manufacturing, transport and storage, public administration and defence, construction and health and social work. Female ex-Service Personnel are more likely to work in health and social work and education, while men dominated employment in construction, transport and storage and manufacturing.
- Occupational data for ex-Service personnel traced in the Censuses for 2001 and 2011, suggests a degree of occupational downgrading for Officers. Data suggests that a relatively high percentage of those in manual occupations achieved 'upward' mobility over time.

¹⁰ The term 'microdata' refers to anonymised individual responses to surveys which can be tabulated to produce more detail than is available in published tables.

4.2.1 – A Lack of Data

The review of data sources has revealed that there is very limited information collected on the labour market characteristics of UK Armed Forces ex-Service personnel. The regular sources of employment and labour market data published by the ONS do not include information on ex-Service personnel or, where data are available, sample sizes are small so data are not reliable. The only two sources of socio-economic data for the UK which contain information on ex-Service personnel are the:

- APS, which is a boosted version of the quarterly LFS; and
- The decennial Census of Population.

The only source of data on the employment of veterans which covers the whole of Great Britain is the APS. This included questions on veteran status over the period 2014-2018 (which were not asked in Northern Ireland). Unfortunately, the only published information on ex-Service personnel is in the annual MOD reports on the veteran community (which have been discontinued). These reports contain limited information on employment, because they are mainly concerned with the older veteran population.

The Census of Population, collected every 10 years, is published in the form of standard statistical tables. Data regularly published from the LFS and APS is limited to ONS statistical reports and standard datasets available via the nomis labour market information system. Both have their limitations. Whilst existing Census data can provide the size of the Armed Forces community and its geographical distribution, information on the economic activity of Armed Forces personnel is not available in the standard reports or datasets published from the Census. Unlike the Census, the LFS and APS do include questions on last job and employment one year ago, which could be used to identify ex-Service personnel. However, veteran questions have not appeared in the APS since 2018 so, along with the Census data, both are now sources of historical information.

Unpublished microdata (individual and household-level data) is available from the Census. Further analysis for veterans is possible using Census microdata, but sample sizes would be small so estimates would be subject to a relatively high degree of statistical uncertainty. These data provide no information on veterans and only a snapshot in time.

Taken together this means there will be a gap in current data on ex-Service personnel until data from the 2021 Census of Population is published (from 2023 onwards).

4.2.2 – Available Employment Data on Ex-Service Personnel

This section focuses on data from the APS and analysis of microdata from the APS, conducted using the ONS Secure Research Service¹¹. APS data containing information on veterans is available for the period 2014-2018. The APS also has data in the form of three-year datasets, which provide a larger sample size to analyse. The data presented here are for the most recent three-year period, 2016 to 2018. It focuses on key labour market participation measures: the demographic profile of veterans; economic activity of ex-veterans (employment, unemployment and economic activity rates); industrial profile of veterans working; and occupational profile and mobility of veterans.

4.2.2.1 – Demographic Profile of Ex-Service Personnel

In total, there was an average of 748,500 Armed Forces veterans aged 18-64 living in Great Britain over the period 2016-2018. Figure 4.1 demonstrates that this is quite an aged population, with 71.2% of veterans aged 45 or over (see Table 4.A). It is also predominantly male, since only 99,500 (13.3%) are women. The female share of the veteran population (as shown below) is highest for those aged 35-39 (18.7%) and 60-64 (17%). The veteran population will inevitably be older than the general population, because they have already completed a period in the Armed Forces. By comparing the percentage of all veterans by age group with the percentage of the entire population aged 18-64 in the age group, Table 4.A shows, that young people are less common among the veteran population than in the population as a whole, while middle-aged and older people are more common. Veterans joining the civilian workforce are therefore competing with people with substantial experience in the sectors in which they are seeking work as well as younger people.

¹¹ These have been checked by ONS statisticians to ensure that no information on identifiable individuals can be derived. Disclaimer from ONS: The Secure Research Service (SRS) agrees that the figures and descriptions of results in the attached document may be published. This does not imply ONS' acceptance of the validity of the methods used to obtain these figures, or of any analysis of the results. Copyright of the statistical results may not be assigned. Specifically: *"This work was produced using statistical data from ONS. The use of the ONS statistical data in this work does not imply the endorsement of the ONS in relation to the interpretation or analysis of the statistical data. This work uses research datasets which may not exactly reproduce National Statistics aggregates"*.

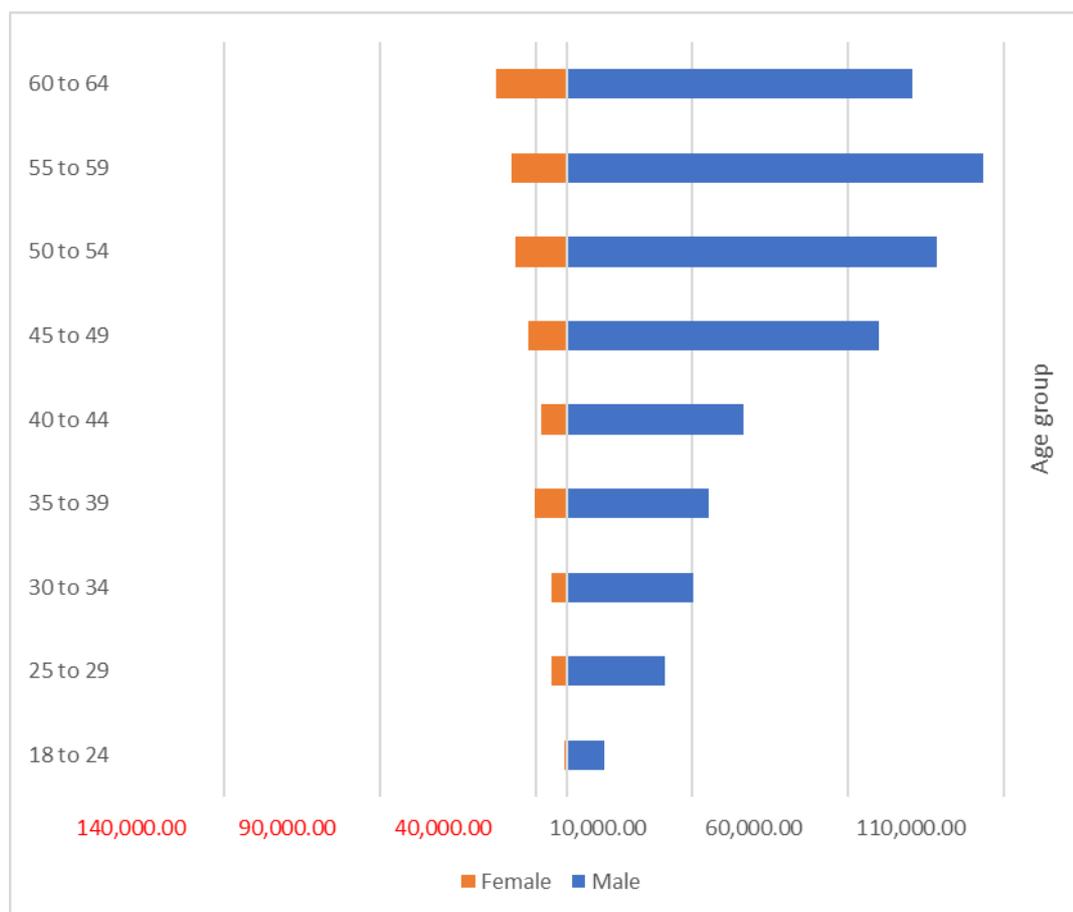


Figure 4.1 Age and gender distribution of veterans, 2016-2018

Source: Three-year ONS Annual Population Survey, 2016-2018.

Table 4.A Number of veterans by age and gender, 2016-2018

Age group	Male	Female	Persons	Share of all veterans aged 18-64 in Great Britain (%)	Percent female (%)	Percentage of all people aged 18-64
18-24	11,997	817	12,814	1.7	6.4	14.4
25-29	31,159	4,833	35,992	4.8	13.4	11.3
30-34	40,590	5,139	45,729	6.1	11.2	11.1
35-39	45,572	10,489	56,061	7.5	18.7	10.7
40-44	56,407	8,385	64,792	8.7	12.9	10.2
45-49	100,193	12,670	112,863	15.1	11.2	11.4
50-54	118,800	16,669	135,469	18.1	12.3	11.6
55-59	133,332	17,811	151,143	20.2	11.8	10.4
60-64	110,908	22,697	133,605	17.9	17.0	9.0
Aged 18-64	648,958	99,510	748,468	100.0	13.3	100.0

Source: Three-year ONS Annual Population Survey, 2016 to 2018.

Table 4.B presents the length of time which veterans have spent in the civilian labour force. The youngest veterans were most likely to have left the Armed Forces within the last 5 years, while more than half of those aged over 40 had left the Armed Forces more than 20 years earlier. Women were less likely than men to have left the Armed Forces recently, with

nearly two-thirds having spent more than 20 years in the civilian labour force. Those who formerly served in the Navy or Marines had spent longer in the civilian labour force than those from the other service branches.

Table 4.B Length of time since leaving Armed Forces (column percentages for each group)

Length of time since leaving forces	Age group				Gender		Service			
	18-29	30-39	40-49	50-64	18-64	Male	Female	Navy/ Marines	Army	RAF
0-4 yrs	59.1	15.8	8.1	2.6	9.2	9.4	7.6	8.2	9.7	9.6
5-10 yrs	36.3	24.9	10.4	3.4	9.9	10.2	8.1	9.4	10.2	12.2
10-20 yrs	4.7	56.7	30.0	11.7	21.4	21.3	21.9	20.8	21.2	22.2
over 20 yrs	-	2.5	51.6	82.4	59.5	59.0	62.3	61.7	58.9	56.0
Total (000s)	54.9	112.7	203.8	493.9	865.3	737.6	127.8	148.5	423.0	135.6

Source: ONS three-year Annual Population Survey, 2016-2018

Ex-Service personnel represented 1.9% of 18-64 year olds living in Great Britain. The veteran population had a different geographical distribution to that of all 18-64 year olds (Table 4.C). Veterans were markedly under-represented in London, but over-represented in the remainder of Britain. They were concentrated in South East, South West and North West of England and in Yorkshire and The Humber. The share of veterans amongst 18-64 year olds was largest in North East and South West England and smallest in London. This regional distribution probably reflects the distribution of military establishments, but could limit access to employment opportunities, given these are concentrated in the south-eastern corner of Britain. It might also reflect veterans having bought their own houses whilst serving, and therefore being limited in their ability to migrate to employment opportunities.

Table 4.C Geographical distribution of veteran population, 2016-2018

Nation or Government office Region	All aged 18-64	Share of Great Britain (%)	Veterans	Share of Great Britain (%)	Veterans as % of 18-64 year olds
North East	1,603,886	4.1	48,695	6.5	3.0
North West	4,376,856	11.2	90,431	12.1	2.1
Yorkshire & the Humber	3,290,145	8.4	76,666	10.2	2.3
East Midlands	2,867,113	7.4	64,475	8.6	2.2
West Midlands	3,499,360	9.0	59,661	8.0	1.7
East of England	3,639,724	9.3	61,683	8.2	1.7
London	5,792,925	14.9	29,137	3.9	0.5
South East	5,400,298	13.9	105,457	14.1	2.0
South West	3,251,433	8.3	97,343	13.0	3.0
Scotland	3,379,818	8.7	69,649	9.3	2.1
Wales	1,853,689	4.8	45,008	6.0	2.4
Great Britain	38,955,246	100.0	748,205	100.0	1.9

Source: Three-year ONS Annual Population Survey, 2016-2018 and ONS mid-year population estimates for 2016-2018.

4.2.2.2 – Economic Activity of Ex-Service Personnel

Table 4.D shows that veterans are more likely to be economically active, more likely to be employed and less likely to be unemployed than the whole population of working age¹². While only 79.5% of 18-24 year old veterans (the age group most likely to be engaged in education) were in work, the employment rate was 92% for 25-29 year olds and remained above 85% for each age group up to 55-59 (during 2016-2018). The rate fell sharply for older veterans, with just over half of 60-64 year olds being in work. The percentage of female veterans in work (72.6%) was considerably lower than that for males (81.6%) and men were more likely than women to be in work in each age group except 45 to 49 year olds. For women, with the exception of the high percentage of 45 to 49 year olds employed, the employment rate declined more quickly with age than for men.

Table 4.D Labour market indicators for veterans by age and gender, 2016 to 2018

	Employment rate (%)	Unemployment rate	Economic activity rate	Inactivity rate	Employment rate (%)
	male	female	persons	%	%
18-24	78.1	100.0	79.5	8.3	86.7
25-29	92.4	89.1	92.0	1.8	93.7
30-34	91.8	87.1	91.3	2.3	93.4
35-39	88.4	81.8	87.1	3.3	90.1
40-44	88.1	79.6	87.0	2.8	89.5
45-49	90.0	92.8	90.3	2.1	92.2
50-54	85.8	80.3	85.1	3.9	88.6
55-59	78.9	76.2	78.6	4.5	82.2
60-64	60.5	38.3	56.8	3.1	58.6
Aged 16-64	81.6	72.6	80.4	3.3	83.2
All persons aged 16-64	79.8	70.5	75.1	4.6	78.8

Source: Three-year ONS Annual Population Survey, 2016 to 2018. Note: the employment, economic activity and inactivity rates are percentages of the population, while the unemployment rate is the percentage of the economically active population.

With the exception of 18-24 year olds (the age group most likely to be in full-time education) and 40 to 44 year olds, more than 90% of veterans aged under 50 were economically active (Table 4.D). This economic activity rate was lowest (58.6%) for 60-64 year olds. The unemployment rate was highest (at 8.3%) for 18-24 year olds, fell to a minimum of 1.8% for 25-29 year olds, and increased with increasing age up to 59. The percentage of veterans economically inactive was lowest for those aged 25-29, and (with the exception of a lower rate for 45-49 year olds) increased with age, as the percentage retired increased. More than two-fifths of those aged 60-64 were economically inactive, while only 60.5% of men and 38.3% of women in this age group were employed.

An important influence on a veteran's ability to work is their health or disability status. Many who left the Services with a disability or long-term illness will be unable to work. Figure 4.2 compares employment rates for disabled and non-disabled veterans by age, gender and Service branch. Overall, over 90% of non-disabled veterans aged 18-64 years were employed, but just over half of disabled veterans were employed. The difference was slightly smaller for women than men, because the employment rate for the disabled was higher than for men, while that for non-disabled women was lower. The difference in employment rates between the disabled and non-disabled was smallest for the youngest veterans, and greatest for 50-64 year olds (34.9 per cent). The difference in employment rate was largest for Army veterans and smallest for Royal Air Force veterans.

¹² This appears to contradict the Royal British Legion survey. However, there are reasons why the two sources are broadly consistent with each other. First the APS covers a three-year period, while the Royal British Legion survey covers a single point in time. Secondly, the smaller sample size of the Royal British Legion survey means that there is greater statistical uncertainty regarding their estimates. Thirdly, while the APS aims to be representative of the population as a whole, it samples permanent residences and will therefore miss people in temporary or communal accommodation, who may be more likely to be out of work.

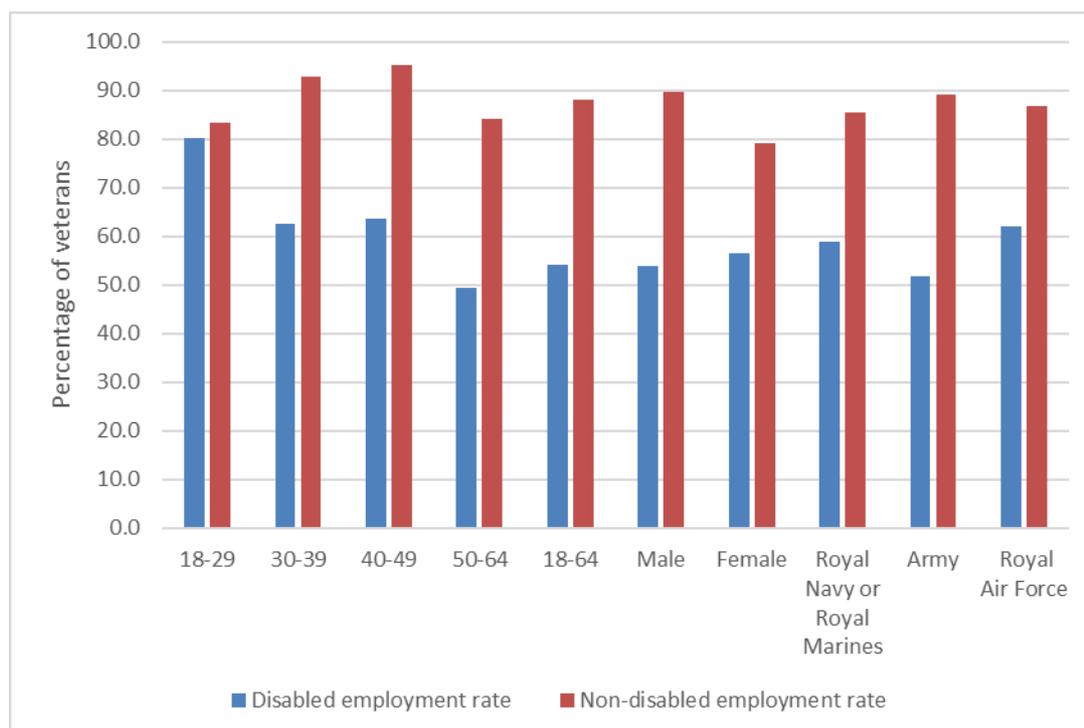


Figure 4.2 Employment rates for disabled and non-disabled veterans, 2016-2018

Source: ONS three-year Annual Population Survey, 2016-2018

Data are also available on the percentage of veterans in self-employment (see Appendix A, Figure A1). The percentage of self-employed veterans increased with age up to the age group 40-49 years, then fell slightly for older veterans. Men were much more likely to be self-employed than women. Veterans from the Navy or Marines were most likely to be self-employed and those from the Air Force were least likely to be self-employed.

The 2011 Census of Population presented data on 745,750 veterans of working age. Of these, 87.4% were economically active. There was an employment rate of 82.4% and an unemployment rate of 5.8% (see Appendix A, Table A1). Just over an eighth were economically inactive, the largest categories of inactivity being the permanently sick or disabled and the retired.

However, the latest MOD (2019) report presents 2017 data on the veteran population from the APS. It estimates the size of the veteran population to be 2.1 million, 1.45 million of whom were aged 65 or more. Amongst those aged 16 to 64 years:

- 79% were employed (males 81%, females 70%).
- 3% were unemployed (males 4%, females 2%).

Comparison of these different data sources suggest that veterans benefited from the improvement in economic conditions between 2011 (when the UK was emerging from the 2008-9 recession) and 2017. The detailed tables presented in this section are based on a larger sample than the MOD report and provide the average picture for 2016 to 2018.

The percentage of veterans economically active was highest for those with the highest educational qualifications and lowest for the most poorly qualified (with the exception of those who answered 'don't know' to the question). The percentage of economically inactive followed the reverse pattern (see Table 4.E). Those with no educational qualifications were markedly disadvantaged compared to all those with better qualifications. More than a third of veterans were not economically active, and their employment rate was two-thirds that of veterans with a degree or equivalent. The unemployment rate was lowest for those with a General Certificate of Education (GCE) A Level or equivalent, but nearly twice as high for those without qualifications. It is notable that (with the exception of those educated to degree level), employment rates for women were lower than those for men at each level of educational qualification. The difference in employment rates between the better qualified and the poorly qualified was also greater for women than for men.

Table 4.E Labour market indicators for veterans by highest educational qualification and gender, 2016-2018

Highest educational qualification	Employment rate (%)			Unemployment rate	Economic activity rate	Inactivity rate
	male	female	persons			
Degree or equivalent	85.4	84.3	85.2	3.2	88.1	11.9
Higher education	83.1	77.5	82.0	3.1	84.5	15.5
GCE A level or equivalent	82.8	71.8	81.7	3.0	84.2	15.8
GCSE grades A*-C or equivalent	82.8	66.3	80.4	3.7	83.4	16.6
Other qualification	77.9	47.6	76.0	4.5	79.6	20.4
No qualification	60.5	40.4	58.7	5.5	62.1	37.9
Don't know	91.8	79.3	91.2	0.0	91.2	8.8
All qualifications	81.6	71.9	80.3	3.4	83.2	16.8

Source: Three-year ONS Annual Population Survey, 2016-2018.

Most of those who were economically inactive but would like work were long-term sick, or looking after the family or home (relatively larger proportion for women than for men) (see Appendix A, Table A2). Army and Navy/Marines veterans were more likely than Royal Air Force veterans to be long-term sick. For those who do not want to work, the largest category was the long-term sick, followed by the retired and those looking after the home or family (this category was largest for women, those aged 30-39 years and Army veterans). The percentage long-term sick was highest for 50-64 year olds and Army veterans. The percentage retired was highest for 50-64 year olds, women and Army veterans.

Table 4.F Labour market indicators for veterans by region/nation of residence and gender, 2016 to 2018

Nation or Government Office Region	Employment rate (%)			Unemployment rate	Economic activity rate	Inactivity rate
	male	female	persons			
North East	79.9	75.2	79.3	3.7	82.3	17.7
North West	81.8	66.6	80.0	3.3	82.7	17.3
Yorkshire and the Humber	79.5	70.8	78.4	2.9	80.7	19.3
East Midlands	80.8	74.0	79.9	5.3	84.4	15.6
West Midlands	82.2	58.3	78.9	2.7	81.1	18.9
East of England	84.2	76.9	83.3	2.3	85.3	14.7
London	83.2	76.4	82.6	5.8	87.6	12.4
South East	84.7	84.1	84.6	2.1	86.5	13.5
South West	82.1	71.4	80.4	2.0	82.0	18.0
Scotland	78.7	72.1	77.9	5.2	82.1	17.9
Wales	78.7	75.7	78.3	2.5	80.3	19.7

Nation or Government Office Region	Employment rate (%)			Unemployment rate	Economic activity rate	Inactivity rate
Great Britain	81.6	72.8	80.5	3.2	83.2	16.8

Source: Three-year ONS Annual Population Survey, 2016 to 2018.

Employment rates for men were highest in London, the South East and East of England and lowest in Scotland and Wales (see Table 4.F). Female employment rates varied much more by nation or region within England, being highest in South East England and particularly low in the West Midlands. The percentage unemployed was highest in London, the East Midlands and Scotland. The percentage economically active was highest in London, the South East and East of England and lowest in Yorkshire and the Humber and Wales. The percentage economically inactive was lowest by far in London and South East England and highest in Wales, Yorkshire and the Humber and the West Midlands.

4.2.2.3 – Industrial Profile of Veterans Working

The industrial breakdown of employment for male and female veterans is presented in Table 4.G. Five industry sections (manufacturing, transport and storage, public administration and defence, construction and health and social work) employed 56.9% of veterans. Women accounted for under an eighth of all veterans in work. Over two-thirds (69.7%) of women worked in four industries: health and social work, public administration and defence, wholesale, retail and repair of vehicles and education. The female share of employment was highest in health and social work and education, while men formed the large majority of veterans employed in construction, transport and storage and manufacturing.

Table 4.G Employment of veterans by Industry and gender, 2016-2018, Great Britain

SIC 2007 Industry Section	Persons	Male	Female	Persons	% male
A Agriculture, forestry and fishing	2,847	0.5	0.0	0.5	100.0
B Mining and quarrying	6,327	1.2	0.0	1.1	100.0
C Manufacturing	80,203	14.5	6.5	13.6	94.9
D Electricity, gas, air cond supply	8,357	1.6	0.0	1.4	100.0
E Water supply, sewerage, waste	11,469	2.2	0.0	1.9	100.0
F Construction	62,280	11.7	1.6	10.6	98.4
G Wholesale, retail, repair of vehicles	52,551	8.5	12.0	8.9	85.4
H Transport and storage	69,471	12.9	2.7	11.8	97.5
I Accommodation and food services	12,284	1.9	3.5	2.1	81.7
J Information and communication	18,806	3.4	1.7	3.2	94.3
K Financial and insurance activities	12,980	2.3	1.5	2.2	92.8
L Real estate activities	3,605	0.7	0.0	0.6	100.0
M Prof, scientific, technical activ.	32,756	5.7	4.2	5.6	91.9
N Admin and support services	36,036	6.2	5.1	6.1	91.0
O Public admin and defence	68,893	11.4	13.8	11.7	87.2
P Education	31,521	4.6	11.9	5.4	76.0
Q Health and social work	54,052	6.4	32.0	9.2	62.2

SIC 2007 Industry Section	Persons	Male	Female	Persons	% male
R Arts, entertainment and recreation	12,518	2.3	0.8	2.1	95.9
S Other service activities	11,316	1.8	2.8	1.9	84.1
U Extraterritorial organisations	585	0.1	0.0	0.1	100.0
All industries (=100%)	58,8857	525,038	63,819	588,857	89.2

Source: Three-year ONS Annual Population Survey, 2016-2018.

The industrial breakdown of employment varied slightly by age group (See Appendix A, Table A3). The number of veterans in work increased as their age increased. For the youngest veterans, the largest industry sections of employment were construction, manufacturing, and wholesale, retail and repair of vehicles. The share of each of these in employment declined with increasing age. For the oldest workers, the largest industry sections of employment were transport and storage, manufacturing and public administration and Defence.

4.2.2.4 – Occupational Profile and Mobility of Veterans

The latest MOD (2019) report states that veterans were more likely than average to be working in *Process, Plant and Machine Operative* and *Associate Professional and Technical occupations* and less likely than average to work as *Managers and Senior Officials* and in *professional occupations*. They were also more likely than average to work in the *manufacturing, transport and storage and public administration and defence* industry sections. They were more likely than average to have General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) grades A*-C or equivalent as their highest educational qualification and less likely than average to have a Degree or equivalent.

The APS 2016-2018 dataset provides disaggregated data on occupational distribution of veterans (See Appendix A, Table A4). The largest occupational groups were *Transport and Drivers and Operatives, Corporate Managers and Directors, Business, Public Service Associate Professionals* and *Skilled Metal, Electrical, Electronic Trades*. There was a marked contrast in occupational specialisation between men and women. The largest occupations for men were *Transport and Drivers and Operatives* and *Corporate Managers and Directors*, but the largest occupations for women were *Administrative Occupations, Health Professionals* and *Caring Personal Service Occupations*. Women were much less likely than men to work in scientific, technical, skilled and semi-skilled manual occupations, but the percentage in business and administrative occupations was similar for both genders.

The percentage of veterans in all three Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) sub-major occupation groups *Corporate Managers and Directors, Science, Engineering, Tech Professionals* and *Transport and Drivers and Operatives*, increases with increasing age (See Appendix A, Table A5). The percentage in the largest occupations tend to be smaller for those aged 50 or more. The percentage working in *Skilled Metal, Electrical, Electronic Trades, Skilled Construction and Building Trades* and *Process, Plant and Machine Operatives* occupations declined with increasing age. The higher percentage of *Other Managers and Proprietors* in older age groups might indicate the greater importance of self-employment for older veterans.

By analysing data from the Census Longitudinal Study for England and Wales it is possible to explore occupational change between 2001 and 2011 of members of the longitudinal study that were veterans (see Table 4.H). As data are limited to members of the study, data should only be used to provide an indication of Veteran occupational change over time.

Table 4.H Occupational change for veterans in England and Wales, 2001-2011

SOC Major Group	2001	2011	Occupational mobility			
			Same	Changed	Upward	Downward
1. Managers and senior officials	162	135	55	107	0	107
2. Professional occupations	75	147	42	33	16	17
3. Associate professional	286	233	139	147	79	68

SOC Major Group	2001	2011	Occupational mobility			
			Same	Changed	Upward	Downward
and technical occupations						
4. Administrative and secretarial occupations	43	39	13	30	20	10
5. Skilled trades occupations	110	107	48	62	43	19
8. Process, plant and machine operatives	96	92	44	52	39	13
9. Elementary occupations	54	73	21	33	33	0
Total	826	826	362	464	230	234

Source: ONS ad hoc table derived from 1991-2011 Census Longitudinal Study data.

Out of 348,445 longitudinal sample members of working age (16-64 years) in 1991, 200,730 were employed and 1,832 of these were in the Armed Forces (0.9%). The number of these present and employed in censuses 1991, 2001 and 2011 was 890, 826 of whom were in SOC Major Groups 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8 and 9. The occupational data presented for veterans in 2001 and 2011 suggests a degree of occupational downgrading for officers (classified to SOC major Group 1), with two-thirds of those in Major Group 1 in 2001 moving to another Major Group by 2011. Clearly, not all veterans were in the Major Group associated with their rank in 2001, with skilled trades (Major Group 5) and process, plant and machine operatives (semi-skilled; Major Group 8) being large categories in 2001. Between 2001 and 2011, the numbers in Major groups 1 and 3 declined, the numbers in Major Groups 4, 5, and 8 remained broadly stable, but the numbers in both Professional (Major Group 2) and Elementary occupations (Major group 9) increased. A relatively high percentage of those in manual occupations achieved 'upward' mobility.

There is very limited information on employment history of veterans, but it is possible to identify the length of time in current job. Older veterans have spent longer in their current job, but job mobility is much higher for younger veterans (see Appendix A, Table A6). Two-fifths of 18-29 year olds had spent less than a year in their current job, compared with a fifth of 30-39 year olds and 19.9% per cent of 50-64 year olds. The percentage employed for 2 to 10 years was highest for 30-39 year olds, while nearly half of those aged 50-64 had worked for the same employer for more than 10 years. There was little difference by gender or Service, though RN or RM veterans were more likely than those from the Army or RAF to have spent long periods with their current employer.

4.2.3 – Available Data in the Future

With the publication of the 2021/22 Census data, there will be the potential¹³ to generate detailed local information on the employment and labour market characteristics of ex-Service personnel, which can be related to their demographic and socio-economic characteristics. Unfortunately, this dataset alone will not be able to answer questions about differences in employment experience by Service, branch, length of service or time period at which a veteran left the Armed Forces. It will be possible to identify differences in labour market experience between Officers and Other Ranks. However, it will not be possible to identify Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs), because they are grouped with Other Ranks.

In the longer-term, there is the potential for more detailed data to become available on a regular basis. The ONS is exploring the possibility of linking 2021 Census data with administrative data on veterans (e.g. the MOD Service Leavers Database). It is expected that this will form part of the gradual switch to using administrative data to replace data gathered in the Census and hence produce statistical data on a more regular basis. In Northern Ireland the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research organisation is similarly planning to link Census data with MOD administrative data. Whereas in Scotland, 2011 Census data was linked with the Veteran Leaver database, but it had a low success rate so reliable data could not be

¹³ If ONS give users of Census data the capability for designing their own tables (which is their current intention).

produced. Overall, linking data sets does provide the potential to explore veteran experience by other variables, such as length of service or branch. However, it is not clear how the socio-economic characteristics and labour market experience of veterans will be updated over time.

4.2.4 – Summary

There is limited publicly available data detailing the employment outcomes of ex-Service personnel. This information should be captured routinely by the ONS so that trends over time can be monitored and any subsequent interventions effectively implemented. The analysis of occupational change of ex-Service personnel over time suggests that much is going on. The literature review has evidenced that in countries where ex-Service personnel are tracked, data provide valuable insights into the experiences of these individuals in the labour market in the longer-term. To achieve this level of information, veteran questions would need to be re-introduced to the APS. Data could be made available through the nomis labour market information system and/or regular reporting undertaken by ONS.

It is recommended that the ONS should explore the potential for producing regular information on ex-Service personnel by linking the 2021 Census of Population, APS and administrative data (MOD Service Leavers Database). This would provide an opportunity to track ex-Service personnel in the civilian labour market. However, for more granular data the 2020 SOC would need to split the occupation codes relevant to the Armed Forces (namely SOC1161 and SOC3311) in order to allow NCOs/Senior Non-Commissioned Officers (SNCOs) to be identified. The ONS SOC 2020 extension enables data to be disaggregated by Service, but it is not known whether ONS data will be classified using the extension in the future. These changes would provide a more granular level of data, allowing differences to be identified and any interventions appropriately targeted.



Section 5 – Participant Profile

This section outlines who took part in the study; their demographic characteristics and background information.

Key Points:

- The study sample was largely reflective of the Armed Forces population with regards to the fact that the majority of ex-Service participants were: White; male; ex-Army; and/or Other Ranks.
- Spouses/partners were mainly White; female; and most had children.
- It was harder to access personnel who left the Armed Forces nine or 10 years ago compared with those who left more recently.
- Accessing the spouse/partner population of ex-Service personnel was particularly difficult.

5.1 – Survey Respondents

Of the 534 respondents:

- The majority were male (83.7%) and White (93.1%).
- 41.0% were aged 40 to 49 with just over a quarter being either younger (26.6% were 30-39) or older (27.9% were 50-60).
- 60.1% were ex-Army; 21.5% ex-Royal Air Force; and 18.4% ex-Royal Navy (including Royal Marines).
- 22.1% were Officers and 77.9% were Other Ranks.
- Their length of service ranged from 1 to 39 years with an average (mean) of 18.3 years. The most frequently cited length of service was 22 years (reported by 12% of the sample).
- Just under half of the sample were either from: the South West (18.0%); Scotland (13.9%); or the South East (13.5%). The rest were spread across the UK.
- In line with the study requirements, all participants had left the Armed Forces a minimum of two and a maximum of 10 years ago. There was a fairly even split by year between those who had left in the last eight years, but comparatively fewer had left nine or 10 years ago.
- The most frequently cited reason for leaving the Armed Forces was voluntarily (35.0%) followed by end of contract (34.1%). In total, 17.8% left due to ill health or injury.

A more detailed breakdown of demographic and background data tables can be found in Appendix B.

5.2 – Ex-Service personnel

In total, 42 ex-Service personnel were interviewed (31 males and 11 females). Most identified themselves as 'White'. Participants were drawn from across the three Services (the majority were Other Ranks) and were located throughout the UK. Thirty-seven were employed/self-employed (in a range of industries/sectors); five were unemployed. Just over half of the sample had left the Services early voluntarily. Most of the sample had received support from CTP or other sources on leaving (only nine said they received no support at all or were unsure).

5.3 – Spouse/Partners

Of the 19 spouses/partners of ex-Service personnel, the majority were: White; female; and most had children. The three Services and various ranks (Officers and Other Ranks) were represented in the sample, as were a range of geographical locations. Most spouses/partners were in paid employment (as was their spouse/partner). Most said their spouse/partner had left the Services early voluntarily.



Section 6 – Time in Service and Resettlement Support on Employment Outcomes

This section of the report explores what impact a person's time in service (including their education, training and experience), and any support received during resettlement, had on their initial employment decisions and in turn their longer-term employment outcomes.

Key Points:

- Ex-Service personnel believe that the military provided them with the 'soft' skills to secure employment in the longer-term, but support with the development of business skills (e.g. commercial, marketing, finance) was felt to be lacking.
- Survey findings reveal that resettlement support was not viewed by ex-Service personnel to be particularly helpful in securing employment in the short-term (45.9%), and even less so in the longer-term (23.9%).
- Those who were better prepared to leave, with fewer decisions to make at the point of leaving, often fared better longer-term.
- Ex-Service personnel reported mixed views on whether decisions made during resettlement impacted on their civilian career/employment outcomes in the longer-term.
- Survey findings reveal a disconnect between what many ex-Service personnel intended to do on leaving the Armed Forces compared with what they actually did in both the short and longer-term.
- A number of demographic and background factors (that are predetermined at the point of leaving) appear to make transitioning to a civilian environment more challenging in both the short and the longer-term.

6.1 – Impact of Military Life

Survey respondents identified a number of skills, gained from their time in the military, that they felt helped them with employment in the longer-term. The top five most highly rated were:

1. Team working (79.4%).
2. Communication skills (78.5%).
3. Organisational skills (74.7%).
4. Decision making skills (74.2%).
5. Leadership skills (70.0%).

A number of additional skills were identified that survey respondents felt would have helped them to secure/retain employment in the longer-term. These skills attracted less consensus than those felt to aid employment, however, the top three rated were:

1. Commercial skills (47.6%).
2. Marketing skills (44.2%).
3. Financial awareness (44.2%).

What is interesting to see from this data is that ex-Service personnel clearly feel that the Armed Forces equipped them with essential soft skills but not business-related skills (e.g. commercial, marketing and finance skills) needed to obtain a job longer-term and which tend to only be available to personnel undertaking specialist posts in the military. This is further echoed in the interview findings. Those who said that military life had prepared them for civilian employment typically cited the 'soft skills' they had obtained during their time in service (confidence, communication skills, resilience, team working and strong work ethic) as evidence. A few also cited the qualifications, or trade, they had obtained during their Service which they had transferred into their civilian jobs.

In broader terms, many ex-Service personnel felt that military life had not prepared them for civilian life and employment because military personnel are "sheltered" and in a "bubble" and the lifestyle is very different to a civilian environment. Many described themselves as being "naïve" with regards to this, requiring significant adjustment to changing responsibilities both in and outside of the workplace.

"Life in the military is just sheltered. You don't understand how sheltered you are. I joined when I was 16. I had a roof over my head, three square meals a day. Every penny was mine to squander as I liked. I had no responsibilities. You turn up and the right place at the right time and you're good."

"You are cloistered in the military, there is very little chance of redundancy... You are always paid, fed, and housed somehow."

6.2 – Resettlement and Transition Support

6.2.1 – Support and Resettlement Activities

The vast majority of survey respondents said that they received some type of employment support during their resettlement out of the Armed Forces. Only 16.9% of participants said they received no support at all¹⁴ (see Table 6.A).

Table 6.A Resettlement support received

	Number	%
Support from CTP	281	52.6
Support from CTP and other sources	113	21.2
I did not receive any support	90	16.9
Unsure if received support or not (from any source)	30	5.6
Support from other sources (e.g. military charities, civilian career advisors)	20	3.7
Total	534	100

During the interviews ex-Service personnel cited a range of resettlement courses and activities that they undertook before leaving. Most frequently cited were CV writing, CTP workshops and access to ELC. Access to further education and training courses were viewed positively. However, it was noted by a few participants that the courses they wanted to do were not available to them, perhaps suggesting that wanting to do something outside of the perceived norm presents a challenge.

Whilst some felt the level of support was insufficient on leaving the military: *"You walk out the door and the door slams shut behind you. You turn around to ask a question and it is gone"*; a strong minority felt that it is not solely the responsibility of the military to prepare people: *"You can't expect the military to do everything... need to be self-motivated"*.

6.2.2 – Helpfulness of Support Longer-Term

Survey respondents were asked how helpful the support they received was in assisting them to secure employment in both the short and longer-term. Whilst 45.9% of respondents said it was helpful in the short-term (24.9% said it was unhelpful), only 23.9% said it was helpful in the long-term (30.3% said it was unhelpful).

When asked what types of support were helpful/unhelpful in the longer term, participants' responses were mixed; none of the types of support were rated particularly highly by the majority of participants (see Table 6.B¹⁵). The two most helpful forms of support in securing and retaining employment in the longer-term, according to survey respondents, were 'careers advice and guidance', (46.7% said it was helpful) and 'funding for further education and/or retraining' (41.4%). However, around a quarter to a third of participants felt that all forms of support were actually unhelpful longer-term. This would suggest that perhaps the type of support on offer is not what ex-Service personnel perceive they need to help them secure a job longer-term, or maybe other forms of support become more important over time.

Table 6.B Helpfulness of support received at resettlement upon securing and retaining employment longer-term

	Very helpful/helpful %	Neither helpful/unhelpful %	Unhelpful/very unhelpful %
Careers advice and guidance (such as help with thinking about employment)	46.7	28.3	25.0

¹⁴ This may be due to support not being offered or the respondent not taking up the support available.

¹⁵ Please note, Table 6.B excludes 'don't know/no opinion' responses and only relates to respondents who received these forms of support

	Very helpful/helpful	Neither helpful/unhelpful	Unhelpful/very unhelpful
opportunities, job search, CV and application writing)			
Mentoring and/or coaching	28.2	43.7	28.2
Information on employment opportunities	37.5	33.6	28.9
Information on education and/or training opportunities	38.7	35.3	26.0
Funding for further education and/or retraining	41.4	34.2	24.4
Information on becoming self-employed or setting up own business	15.0	52.6	32.4
Training on becoming self-employed or setting up own business	11.9	54.2	33.9
Links to local networks of veterans	24.6	38.3	37.1
Links on information on local support (such as from charities)	23.3	43.6	33.1

When explored further in the qualitative data, the findings indicate that most ex-Service personnel do want some form of resettlement support, but what is currently being offered (by CTP) is not meeting the needs of all. Although some participants had positive things to say about the support received (*"couldn't fault it"*), or have succeeded without formal support, more of the sample expressed negative views. Participants felt that the support offered to them was *"too generic"* and not tailored enough to individual needs and circumstances. In more extreme cases it was felt to give a *"false impression"* of civilian employment and where they might expect to find themselves.

"The advice/information is misleading. You are led to believe you are better than you are..."

"Resettlement try their hardest...But they need to manage Service leaver's expectations. You find that most civilians don't know what you do/don't care what you did. At present, [when leaving] you are made to feel that you will be 'feted' and people [come to] think they are 'owed' a job. They expect a job and respect and it's not there."

When asked what would have been useful, ex-Service personnel said more information about the employment market, information (including signposting) on specific industries and understanding what qualifications employers are looking for/recognise. Having greater support with mental health and the emotional side of leaving was viewed as essential. Some ex-Service personnel felt that more opportunities for companies or ex-military personnel to come back and speak to people about their own experiences would also have been useful. Many felt that resettlement should take into account the *"whole person"*, their circumstances, and not just focus on employment during resettlement. This suggests a need for more individualised support which is tailored to an individual's needs. Those who face greater challenges (and a more complex transition) at the point of leaving should be provided with more targeted support.

Whilst it would appear that more needs to be done, it is important to note that some participants left the Armed Forces 10 years ago and in that time resettlement support will have undoubtedly changed and developed. That said, it is also important to be aware of the fact that discontentment with resettlement remains a persistent issue that has been reported continually by ex-Service personnel in other research studies (e.g. Lyonette et al., 2018). The findings here suggest that, for some, the support offered is not perceived to be enough to help ex-Service personnel secure employment in either the short or the longer-term and should be addressed.

6.3 – Preparing to Leave

It is evident from the interviews with ex-Service personnel and the spouses/partners of ex-Service personnel that some individuals were more prepared to leave the Armed Forces than others. A component of preparing to leave was having the time to resettle. However, several participants felt that they were not given enough time by the military to prepare to leave.

“...the military invested years to turn me into a military person but spent only weeks turning me back into a civilian”

Others who cited a lack of time for this activity noted their own part in this. With the benefit of hindsight these ex-Service personnel acknowledged that they left it too late to resettle and apply for jobs and should have started preparing to leave much earlier than they did. Often this was because they were still putting their job in the Armed Forces first. Sometimes this was because they were in denial about leaving, but in other cases the attitudes of others around them were a barrier (unsupportive managers not allowing them time off for resettlement courses or peers viewing them as *“a bad guy for leaving”*). It is likely that these factors, that relate to both the individual and the organisation, interact to inform behaviour at the point of leaving, as illustrated below:

“I had left the Armed Forces after having felt disgruntled with the way my career was managed. This compulsion to leave as quickly as possible coloured my decision-making ability. I needed more time for self-reflection, more time to understand the job market, and essentially more time to address my blinkered view of the commercial world. I was in an operational role until 4 weeks before my leaving date. This meant it was difficult to job search and even more difficult to prepare myself mentally.”

These findings are in line with the those of Ashcroft’s (2014) report into veterans’ transitions, which highlighted preparation and planning, and the mind-set of the individual, as essential to a successful transition.

In addition, the findings from the interviews indicate that some individuals who were better prepared in terms of their domestic situation found the transition easier as they were able to focus their attention on getting a job. Ex-Service personnel who already lived in their own accommodation in the areas they intended to settle had to make fewer decisions at the point of leaving. This meant greater focus could be placed on seeking employment and more informed decisions could be made that placed them in a better position to succeed longer-term.

6.4 – Decisions Made During Resettlement

Survey respondents were asked to what extent they thought the decisions they made during resettlement in terms of their career choices, where to live, resettlement course etc. impacted their ability to find the ‘right type’ of civilian career/employment in the longer-term. Responses were mixed; 25.8% felt it had a positive impact; 29.8% a negative impact; 33.9% neither a positive nor negative impact; and 10.5% no impact at all.

Breaking this data down by different groups revealed that Junior Non-Commissioned Officers (JNCOs) were most likely to feel that the decisions made during resettlement had a negative impact (34.6%) compared with Officers (21.2%). Army personnel were most likely to report a negative impact (33.6%) and the Royal Air Force the least likely (20.9%) (27.6% of Royal Navy respondents reported a negative impact). Those who did not have employment support during resettlement were also comparatively more likely to say their decisions had a negative impact (40.0%) compared with those that had some form of support (from CTP and/or other sources) (25.6%).

Some stakeholders felt that decisions made by ex-Service personnel during resettlement had a *“massive impact”* on their longer-term employment outcomes. Geography and where to settle the family was thought to have greatest impact. However, other stakeholders thought that these choices were reversible and perhaps did not matter as much as might be anticipated. The findings from the interviews with ex-Service personnel further support this, with views being mixed.

In many cases the decision about where to live came prior to finding a job. Moving back to the town/city where they (or their spouse/partner) had grown up, or moving to be closer to extended family, was frequently mentioned. Whilst not true for all ex-Service personnel and some had been prepared to (or did) relocate for the right job, across the sample, geographical location was typically top priority. This is important to note because location will have a bearing on employment outcomes. Deloitte (2018) found that decisions about where to live impacted on the earning potential of ex-Service personnel, with some areas being much lower than others. This was further echoed by the interviews in this current study. Some ex-Service personnel mentioned limited job opportunities, or lack of availability of work in certain industries near to or in their local area. Whilst some were willing to travel, changing priorities, e.g. wishing to work closer to home after time spent away from family when in the military, informed decisions relating to how far they were willing to commute.

"I had done my commuting, driving up and down motorways...nothing was worth that pain. It was about making a choice...putting my family before a wage. I changed my priorities and outlook. I don't feel it has held me back."

In the short-term, what did pose more of a challenge for some ex-Service personnel was that resettlement did not always take place in the location where they intended to settle. This proved a greater challenge when the person was living overseas or intended to move to a different part of the country. The main problem they faced was not understanding the labour market in their local area. However, for most there was no indication that this had a significant impact longer-term. Findings from the interviews further revealed that in some cases personnel who had already secured employment before they left did not engage with all the resettlement opportunities on offer to them, or they undertook very specific activities/courses which later did not align with what happened. As shown in Section 6.5 – there is sometimes a disconnect between what ex-Service personnel intend to do and what happens in reality. This suggests that there may be some benefit to keeping an open mind and taking available opportunities. However, it is noted that this is likely to be challenging. Those personnel who were fixed on what they wanted to do before they left, or had firm plans in place, did acknowledge that they were not open to advice (*"I had a pretty blinkered approach"*) and did/would not have listened to what others had to say. Encouraging personnel to keep an open mind at the point of leaving, highlighting the evidence that not all plans come to fruition, may be needed.

6.5 – Change in Employment Plans over Time

Survey findings reveal a disconnect between what ex-Service personnel planned to do on leaving the Armed Forces compared with what they actually did when they first left. For example:

- 79.2% of respondents said they intended to be in full-time, paid employment, compared with 64.2% who actually did this when they left.
- Fewer personnel (6%) set up their own business compared with those who planned to (10.5%).
- One fifth (21.5%) of participants intended to undertake further training and studying but only 18.4% did this on leaving.

Instead, more respondents reported working part-time, volunteering or taking a career break than originally intended. This is perhaps not surprising seeing as a subset of ex-Service personnel revealed at interview that they did not know what they wanted to do when they first left.

For those personnel who provided comment in the survey on why they did not do what they planned to do, a number of factors were cited. Most commonly, respondents cited difficulty finding work, or work in their industry of choice. Lack of experience or qualifications and ill health (including injury and mental health issues) were also mentioned. Some respondents said that a need for an income influenced their plans, leading them to take work/the first available job open to them. This included some ex-Service personnel who intended to set up their own business but struggled due to lack of immediate return on investment or felt they lacked the required knowledge, skills and ability to get their business up and running. Where plans to study or train changed this was often due to associated costs or lack of time. For some, changing family circumstances (e.g. divorce, family health, location moves) impacted plans. Unexpected job opportunities were mentioned by a minority. Some respondents simply said that they felt unprepared, did not feel resettlement provided them with what they needed, or did not know what they wanted to do. It was evident, from the comments, that for the majority, these changes were often a result of plans not coming to fruition and often resulted in compromise.

Changes in plan were not only short-term. A number of survey participants also reported that they were doing something different to what they had intended to longer-term. Reasons given were largely similar to those given in the short-term with regards to a lack of experience, health and family factors impacting. However, new issues also emerged. Some participants indicated that they did not fit, or feel their values aligned with those of the organisation they were working for, or felt opportunities for progression and job satisfaction were limited. COVID-19 and redundancy forced some participants to change their plans. In other instances a need for job security and/or placing priority on earning a reasonable salary over desired employment choices were also reasons given. For those that expressed a positive change, this tended to be that opportunities came up that they had not initially thought were open to them.

It is clear to see that plans change over time. Decisions made at the point of leaving can change and ex-Service personnel are often required to adjust their intentions in line with their experiences. This suggests that longer-term employment support might be needed in line with these continual changes. This is discussed in more detail in Section 7 –

6.6 – Expectations Surrounding Initial Employment

Survey respondents were asked to what extent the first job they had on leaving the Armed Forces met the expectations they had before leaving (see Table 6.C). Whilst more respondents said that various components of their job either met or exceeded their expectations, over a third said that these factors did not meet their expectations. Specifically, more survey participants said the following three factors did not meet their expectations, than met or exceeded them:

1. Ability to maximise my potential (55.7%).
2. Opportunity for career progression (51.2%).
3. Overall job satisfaction (50.0%).

Table 6.C Extent to which some job components met expectations

	Exceeded expectations	As expected	Did not meet expectations	N/A did not have any expectations
	%	%	%	%
Salary	22.4	39.5	35.2	2.9
Work life balance	14.3	45.9	36.1	3.6
Opportunity for career progression	7.4	35.0	51.2	6.3
Level of seniority	8.6	45.7	38.7	7.0
Ability to work in the industry of my choosing	9.7	50.3	33.7	6.3
Ability to use my academic/vocational qualifications	8.1	39.1	44.3	8.4
Ability to use my skills and experience	16.3	43.2	37.1	3.4
Ability to maximise my potential	14.3	26.2	55.7	3.8
Overall job satisfaction	13.9	33.0	50.0	3.1

A number of stakeholders noted that sometimes there is a “mismatch” between the expectations of ex-Service personnel and the reality of the job market, often in terms of salary (with ex-Service personnel expecting to earn more on leaving). They also felt that for some there can be a mismatch in terms of where they think they should sit within the organisation (in terms of management level), with some feeling that they should enter at a more senior position. This varied view of expectations was supported by the interview findings. Some ex-Service personnel described being surprised by a variety of aspects of the civilian job market when they first left, salary being one of them. Some participants described not taking roles or leaving them because of the salary. Conversely, others (often those opting to retrain) left the Armed Forces fully expecting to take a reduction in pay and start at the bottom. Ex-Service personnel who left with a pension were often more accepting of a reduction in salary or were not looking to earn as much as they would have been if they had not had their pension.

Whilst some factors, such as salary, are evident on starting a new job other factors do not present themselves immediately. Assessing whether a job offers career progression and the opportunity to maximise potential can only really be assessed over time, in the longer-term.

6.7 – Demographic and Background Factors

The data suggest that a number of background and demographic factors, (such as age on leaving, length of service etc.), can have a direct or indirect impact upon employment outcomes longer-term.

6.7.1 – Age on Leaving

Age on joining the Armed Forces alongside the stage of life/career at which personnel left was perceived by some to impact on success. Whilst in the minority, ex-Service personnel who had a civilian job or career before joining the Armed Forces commented that their transition back to civilian life was perhaps easier than those who joined the military at a very young age and had not experienced anything else. It was evident that those who had joined with no, or little prior experience of civilian employment had to adjust to a greater extent.

It was apparent that some ex-Service personnel made a conscious decision to leave at a certain age or after a certain length of service, so that their employment outcomes were not detrimentally impacted. There was a sense from some that had they left earlier/later it might have been easier/harder for them. Whilst there was variation between respondents as to the 'right age' to leave, decision-making was underpinned by a desire to still be considered 'employable'.

"It is better to get out in your 30s than in your 40s or 50s...more flexibility and more jobs available."

"I was coming up to 29 years of age, I felt it was a good time to leave – I was young enough to be trained."

Whilst it is not possible to determine from this data whether ex-Service personnel are any more or less likely than their civilian counterparts to face 'ageism' in the civilian employment market, it may be more challenging for some to establish themselves in a new industry, market place or role at a later point in their life.

6.7.2 – Length of Service and Reason for Leaving

Those who had served full careers and were leaving at the end of their contract, or for medical reasons, rather than of their own accord, also appeared, in some instances, to have found the transition more difficult because they did not want to leave and many had become institutionalised. There was a lack of acceptance of the change in many instances and difficulties adjusting to civilian life. Stakeholders largely agreed, stating that military personnel who had served for a long time (becoming insulated from the outside world) were more likely to be institutionalised. They felt that these individuals had built up their identity in the Armed Forces and as a result found it hard to transition because of this loss of self-identity. For these individuals, forming a new identity was a longer-term challenge.

6.7.3 – Rank

Closely related to age, is rank. Where this was explicitly mentioned in interview data, ex-Service personnel felt that rank does not hold much, if any, meaning to civilian employers as they have little or no insight into the military.

"There are stereotypes – of an Army person, a soldier, a 'shouty Sgt Major'."

"Too many civvies think it's about running around with a gun."

"Civilians don't understand rank."

As such, rank was not felt to impact upon employment outcomes, in either the short or the long term in regards to the opportunities made available to them from employers. The exception to this may be for very senior personnel, for whom status/position may facilitate entry into roles of equivalent standing; however, this is based on limited data and would need further investigation, for example, socio-economic status may underpin this relationship. There was also a suggestion that rank may have an indirect impact in that CTP support varies according to whether someone is an Officer or a Junior or Senior NCO, e.g. the type of jobs or roles that Service personnel are directed to. Moreover, there were comments from a minority that suggested that (military) in-role training and external employment programmes were perceived as favouring Officers.

"I didn't get a lot (for my rank and trade) whereas Officers get chartered management and degrees."

"Feel their military programmes are geared to senior ranks."

This may impact upon longer term employment outcomes by limiting the opportunities available to certain ranks and so better preparing Officers for employment, though further research would be needed to fully explore this relationship.

As rank signalled status within the military this could set expectations for some about seniority of role in a civilian workplace. When this (and associated pay) was not achieved this could be hard to psychologically adjust to, as well as creating challenges for the ex-Service person as they felt they were underemployed and underutilised. Whilst there was evidence that ex-Service personnel were able to move up in an organisation, being a more senior rank may impact the extent to which 'starting over at the bottom' is palatable in the short and long term.

"I am older than the graduates and more experienced, but they are senior to me...I do not have an office anymore. It's the sort of thing that can affect your status. It really hurt my ego. I used to command a Squadron, I had commendations, then I was putting PowerPoints together. I was very frustrated and angry, being tasked with things beneath me."

6.7.4 – Mental Health and Physical Injury/Illness

Whilst some ex-Service personnel left with mental health issues, it is evident from the interviews that sometimes these issues manifest sometime after leaving the Armed Forces. Difficulties in the civilian work place, including challenging working relationships or having unreasonable demands placed upon them, were associated with reports of anxiety, stress and depression. For some, poor mental health was temporary, whereas there was a suggestion that ill health attributed to time in service, tended to be more persistent. More generally, a loss of confidence was very much evident amongst respondents who struggled to find work, or work that was in line with what they hoped for which could "chip away" at them. This impacted decision-making, sometimes leading to Service personnel applying for roles below what they were capable of.

For those leaving due to medical discharge, most typically physical injury, there was a sense of their military career being suddenly cut short, with little time for preparation for civilian employment. These injuries curtailed their plans in the military and as civilians.

6.7.5 – Financial Situation

Some personnel could not afford the reduction in salary that was offered to them, and whilst they were willing to start over and take a pay cut, financial commitments meant they could not take work below a certain wage. The need to bring in an income to cover mortgage and bills meant that some ex-Service personnel took a job just for the income, regardless of whether it was the 'right type' of job for them.

"I had lots of let-down letters. But I needed a job and to pay the bills. I didn't care if the job was relevant to my skills."

For some ex-Service personnel this persists over time and the need to have an income continues to take precedence over job satisfaction, although there remains a limitation on the level of pay cut they can afford to take.

"I just want to find a job now, I will start over again if the money is there, start right from the bottom. But I am not happy to start off as a 16/17 year old kid on an apprenticeship of £11k."

Some personnel referenced their pension and how this meant they did not have to seek a role on leaving (or in the longer-term) that had as high a salary as they would otherwise need. For these ex-Service personnel, there was a sense that they could work in a role that had comparatively lower pay than they had received in the military, as well as reducing the urgency that some respondents felt to find work.

"I knew that I could add in my pension so didn't need the same salary [as in the military]."

"Having a pension has also been a really good benefit and helps a lot as you know bills will be paid."

6.8 – Summary

The findings from this section indicate that time in service and support during resettlement do impact on the longer-term employment outcomes of ex-Service personnel. Whether this impact is favourable (or not) will largely depend on four factors related to the serving person: their individual characteristics; actions taken; personal circumstances; and support on leaving. Often these factors are interlinked with, for example, actions taken (such as not engaging with the resettlement process) being driven by personal circumstances (believing they have already secured a job). In addition, some of these factors are clearly within the control of the individual, whilst others are not (namely resettlement support). Making sure that personnel take the time to resettle and make the most of the courses and opportunities available to them is essential. The fewer decisions (i.e. housing, where to live) the individual has to make at the point of leaving the more focus they can place on finding and securing employment. That said, it is important to note that a 'good' or 'bad' initial transition is not the only pre-determinant of success longer-term. Many of the decisions made are reversible. In fact re-planning is a key feature of the experience of many ex-Service personnel as their situation changes and evolves over time. This is discussed further in the next section of the report.



Section 7 – Longer-Term Employment Outcomes

Having explored the impact of resettlement on longer-term employment outcomes, this section of the report explores other factors that are shown to have an impact longer-term. It is divided into two sections:

1. Securing and Maintaining Employment Longer-Term.
2. Reasons for Outcomes Experienced.

This is with the aim of answering the following questions:

1. What happens to ex-Service personnel employment-wise in the longer-term?
2. What factors impact this and why?

Key Points:

- The majority of personnel are in employment in the longer-term, working in a variety of industry sectors.
- Despite this, 60.1% of survey respondents reported experiencing unemployment or economic inactivity at some point since leaving the Armed Forces.
- Across the sample, 44.7% of respondents said that they had held more jobs than expected since leaving the military.
- Ex-Service personnel reported mixed views regarding whether they have found the 'right type' of civilian career/employment for them in the longer-term.
- Overall, 33.6% of ex-Service personnel said that their career progression was slower than their civilian counterparts; 26.1% about the same; and 22.8% faster.
- Over half of respondents said they had to obtain additional qualifications (55.1%) and/or take roles that they were over-qualified for to secure or maintain employment in the longer-term.
- Many of the key challenges faced in securing employment in the longer-term are similar to those faced in the short-term: translating skills and experience; employer perceptions; and challenges adjusting to a civilian workplace.
- A significant challenge for many is the detachment from the Armed Forces. For many this period of adjustment is prolonged.
- Those who fare better longer-term tend to be those that are able to adapt to a civilian workplace or continue to work in Defence-related roles.
- The longer-term employment outcomes for ex-Service personnel vary considerably by individual.

7.1 – Securing and Maintaining Employment in the Longer-Term

The first half of this section outlines the employment outcomes for ex-Service personnel at least 24 months after leaving the Armed Forces (and up to 10 years). It looks not only at whether personnel continue to be in employment in the longer-term, but explores satisfaction with this employment, whether it is meeting their expectations and if they are progressing as hoped. It also looks at whether personnel feel that they have managed to find the 'right' job for them in the longer-term.

7.1.1 – Current Employment and Industry Sector

In the longer-term, the vast majority of survey respondents (81.4%) reported being employed in some capacity at the time of the survey. Employment was in a wide-range of industries, with the top five comprising: transport and storage (8.6%); information and communication (8.4%); public administration and Defence, compulsory social security (7.7%); human health and social work activities (6.9%); and construction (6.2%).

Stakeholders noted that interest in certain sectors will often *"run in trends"* (also mentioned by a couple of ex-Service personnel). They acknowledged that certain sectors or organisations are well known to ex-Service personnel (e.g. BT Openreach or Barclays); they will often be familiar with the organisation and/or will know people who work there. Comparatively, some sectors, according to stakeholders, appear to be of less interest to ex-Service personnel, such as retail, customer service, food/catering. This is despite some of their skills directly mapping across (i.e. chefs). Stakeholders commented that this might be because some of these employment sectors are low-skilled and/or poorly paid.

7.1.2 – Periods of Unemployment

Despite most personnel being employed, periods of unemployment were reported by survey respondents. Overall, 60.1% of survey respondents reported that they had experienced unemployment or economic inactivity at some point since leaving the Armed Forces (40.2% had not). Mostly commonly, this was for less than six months (23.5%). However, nearly a quarter (22.3%) of respondents said that they had experienced longer-term unemployment, defined as unemployment for 12 months or more, (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2021) or economic inactivity.

Survey and interview data indicate that the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in some personnel losing their jobs, but interview data also indicates that periods of unemployment occurred across the duration of an individual's career, so is not isolated to the initial period of transition or due to the pandemic only. Whilst the interviews with ex-Service personnel indicate that some participants planned to be economically inactive at points (for example to go travelling, to spend time with family), not all did. This suggests that additional support may be needed in both the short and longer-term to support ex-Service personnel. For example, educating personnel during resettlement about job stability in the civilian labour market; and raising awareness of the resources and support that ex-Service personnel can access in the longer term, should they find themselves out of work.

7.1.3 – Finding the 'Right' Job

Previous research suggests that nearly half of newly hired veterans in the US leave their first post-military job within the first year (Maury et al., 2014). In the current study, only 20.8% of respondents reported having held just one job since leaving the Armed Forces. The majority of survey participants (78.3%) reported having held between one and four jobs with 19.6% having held more than four. Across the sample, 44.7% of respondents said that they had held more jobs than expected. One third of the sample (33.3%) said the number of jobs was in line with what they had expected. This was most likely to be observed amongst respondents who had held one or two jobs. Respondents who had held three or more jobs were more likely to say that this was more jobs than they expected.

"[I] expected to find a stable long lasting career with one employer."

"I thought I would get one job and stick to it."

In order to secure or maintain employment in the longer-term over half of survey respondents said that they had to obtain additional qualifications (55.1%) and/or take roles that they were over-qualified for (53.6%). A number of ex-Service personnel said during interview that they wanted to do something different after leaving the Armed Forces so opted to retrain and try something new. However others had to retrain because they were unable to secure employment longer-term in their chosen area.

When asked whether they have now found the 'right type' of civilian career/employment for them in the longer-term, responses were mixed. In total, 44.5% were satisfied that they had attained this whilst 37.1% were dissatisfied. The rest were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied suggesting that perhaps even more of the sample were not fully satisfied with their current employment longer-term. Survey data suggests that those who left the Armed Forces voluntarily were more likely to report being satisfied that they had found the 'right type' of job for them in the longer-term (60.4%) with those leaving due to ill health reporting the lowest level of satisfaction (29.8%). Differences according to rank and Service were also noted. Officers were most likely to say they had found the 'right type' of job (53.4%) compared to SNCOs (47.6%) and JNCOs (36.4%). Approximately half of Royal Air Force (53.0%) and Royal Navy (50.0%) respondents said they had found the 'right type' of job, compared with 39.8% of Army respondents.

7.1.4 – Meeting Expectations

Survey respondents were asked to what extent their current job met the expectations they had before leaving the Armed Forces. As with their first job, most respondents said that various components of their job either met or exceeded their expectations, including the factors cited as unmet in their first job (maximising their potential, opportunity for career progression and job satisfaction). However, it should be noted that a large proportion of respondents still felt that their current job did not meet their expectations in terms being able to maximise their potential (42.5%) or provide opportunity for career progression (42.4%).

This would suggest that for some, finding a job that maximises their potential and allows for career progression may take longer to achieve, beyond the initial resettlement/transition period.

7.1.5 – Speed of Progression

Research by Deloitte (2016) found that *"more than half (53%) of organisations that have employed veterans say they tend to be promoted more quickly than their workforce in general"* (p6). Stakeholders in this study agreed, suggesting that ex-Service personnel stay longer and progress quicker within an organisation compared with their civilian peers.

"As soon as they've got a foot in the door, they can work their way up."

However, responses from ex-Service personnel themselves were mixed: 33.6% of ex-Service personnel said that their career progression was slower than that of their civilian counterparts; 26.1% about the same; and 22.8% faster. Findings from interviews with ex-Service personnel were equally mixed. Some indicated challenges progressing their career, whilst for others this was not a priority.

The evidence presented above suggests most ex-Service personnel maintain employment longer-term (even if it is not continuous, or involves numerous jobs). However, some are not satisfied with this; employment is not always the 'right job', maximising their potential and providing opportunities for career progression in the longer-term.

7.2 – Reasons for Outcomes Experienced

This section explores the factors that impact longer-term and the reasons why some individuals are perhaps more satisfied with their employment than others. It is important to note that many of these factors are inter-related and may be more or less relevant according to an individual's circumstances.

7.2.1 – Understanding the Job Market

7.2.1.1 – Translating Skills and Experience

Stakeholders felt that the biggest challenge ex-Service personnel face is translating their skills and communicating them clearly via their CV or application form. It was felt that ex-military personnel are not always very good at explaining their experience in a way that civilian employers will understand; they struggle to translate their knowledge, skills and experience to a civilian environment. Some can struggle to identify specific achievements and CVs can end up being a list of things they have done rather than key achievements. Others struggle to achieve the right balance between military/civilian content on their CV, using too many military acronyms that civilian employers may not understand.

Findings from ex-Service personnel suggest that for some (but not all) this problem persists longer-term. In some cases this is because they did not receive the help and support they needed at the point of resettlement so their ability to translate their skills and experience longer-term remains a challenge. As ex-Service personnel are not always willing (or know where) to seek support (see Section 7.2.6 –) this issue remains unaddressed. There can also be some resistance, from a minority, who have an expectation that it is the employer's responsibility to understand them and their military experience. Ex-Service personnel with civilian qualifications or transferable skills did not face the same challenges as their counterparts. Often it was easier for them to obtain work initially and then continue to maintain this longer-term.

It was evident from the interviews with spouses/partners of ex-Service personnel (and from some interviews with ex-Service personnel themselves), that many were instrumental in helping the ex-Service person to understand where their skills and experience might fit in to a civilian environment. In particular, helping with CVs.

7.2.1.2 – Selling Themselves

There was some indication from the interviews with ex-Service personnel that the challenge is not only translating military experience in a way that was meaningful to a civilian environment but also experiencing discomfort or difficulties 'selling' themselves.

"Military people can also play down their achievements and can be self-deprecating which doesn't work in a competitive market place."

"It is difficult mapping my military experience to civvy speak... 'I only managed a platoon' 'but that's 30 guys'."

"In the Army you do 'remarkable things' but these are often not appreciated and difficult to sell."

In other instances, it was evident that the strong team ethos in the military meant ex-Service personnel struggled during job interviews to evidence what they did as an individual, and focused upon the team; 'we' instead of 'I'. This is something that takes time to understand and adapt to.

Some stakeholders said that the inability to understand their skills in relation to the civilian job market can prevent some ex-Service personnel applying for jobs because they do not think they have the skills or qualifications required for the role. This was also supported by the interview findings.

"I started to limit myself in terms of my applications. I didn't understand the jargon, I was not sure if I was qualified, so you feel 'I won't bother'...So you don't send out your CV and you don't understand and you feel that you don't fit."

Stakeholders also noted that ex-military personnel can sometimes under-sell themselves and therefore end up applying for roles below their capabilities. This was supported by both the interviews with ex-Service personnel and spouses/partners. There were some ex-Service personnel (and spouses/partners) who in hindsight felt that they (or their spouse/partner) had sold themselves short and taken roles that were not commensurate with their skills and experience when they first left. For some this did not have a significant impact longer-term and they were able to be promoted, for others it took/is taking longer to progress their civilian career as a result, having started in a more junior position.

7.2.1.3 – Retraining

As highlighted above ex-Service personnel with transferable skills or civilian qualifications typically found it easier to translate these to a civilian environment. Equally, individuals looking to continue their military trade/career in a civilian environment, or work in a Defence-related, or adjacent profession, also found the transition often easier in both the short and longer-term. In fact, some ex-Service personnel moved back to (or were seeking to move back to) Defence-related roles later in their career because of the perceived better match between their values and those of the organisation. A common language, shared understanding and familiar culture made this a smooth transition for many. As one spouse/partner explained:

"...it has not been a big jump as [he is] still working with the same systems, language, rules"

Not all individuals wanted to continue their military trade/career in a civilian environment and numerous individuals described retraining on leaving. For some this was because they wanted to do something different, for others it was out of necessity (needing to retrain because they did not have transferable skills). What this essentially means is that a cohort of individuals are starting a second career on leaving. For some this was evidenced to be the right decision. Despite having to start in a more junior position and/or take a pay cut initially, it resulted in better prospects and opportunities than were available to them in the military, and in the longer-term. In other instances, retraining or trying to find work at a later age presented challenges, both pressure to succeed (*"my last chance at a second career"*) but also a realisation that they were sometimes behind their civilian counterparts in terms of career progression. This was not always perceived to be a negative, but could sometimes lead to a sense of being 'at the bottom', or of having to 'start again'. It was evident that this caused some discomfort for some ex-Service personnel where they started at a level in the organisation that was not equivalent to that of their military role.

Individuals who were able to take a cut in pay were more likely to find starting a second career easier. For others starting a second career proved far more challenging, the effects of which were felt longer-term. In a few cases there were examples of personnel retraining a number of times in order to continue to maintain employment. Whilst the ability to re-train and adapt is beneficial, a lack of focus or continual retraining is likely to mean that these personnel will not progress in their chosen field. Whilst for some this will not be a problem because they are not looking to progress their career (those nearing retirement age or leaving with a pension) for others this may hold them back. It would appear that stage of life/career on leaving (often related to age) impacts in both the short and longer-term.

7.2.1.4 – Adjusting Expectations

Often personnel said that their expectations of civilian employment had changed over time and, often in line with a number of other factors. Individuals who thought they were *"high end"* or *"quite a catch"* and were surprised not to get job offers had to readjust their expectations in terms of the jobs they applied for. Others had comparatively modest expectations but still struggled to get work in line with these. For some individuals this meant re-prioritising what was important to them. This often meant putting things like work-life balance, job satisfaction and challenge, or wanting a job with *"meaning and purpose"* higher up their list of priorities. Sometimes these changes aligned with changes in circumstances, such as considering retiring or starting a family.

7.2.2 – Employer Perspective

Most stakeholders felt that ex-Service personnel can be disadvantaged because of the processes of hiring and the perceptions that civilian employers have. The Human Resources process was felt to disadvantage Service leavers. Human Resources or hiring managers (or the systems they use) do not always recognise the values and skills of Service leavers or struggle to understand the knowledge, skills and experience as presented on their CV. Sometimes ex-Service personnel are excluded early on in the process because they do not have the civilian qualifications required for the job. One stakeholder commented that they felt employers could/should do more to support ex-Service personnel during this process. Another questioned why employers should *“bend over backwards”* to provide support.

Stakeholders commented that whilst some employers will say at a strategic level that they engage with and support ex-Service personnel, the message is not filtered down through the rest of the organisation to those responsible for recruiting people. Many managers were felt to be *“risk averse”* and perhaps do not want to take *“a punt”* on someone ex-military especially if that person has no commercial experience. It was felt that some employers have a fixed view of what ex-Service personnel can do/offer or have reservations about employing them because of the well-known ‘mad, bad and sad’ narrative of ex-Service personnel and the heightened awareness (but lack of understanding) of issues such as PTSD. It was noted that for smaller companies, this may be a particular worry. In addition, employer location was also felt to have an impact on appetite for employing ex-Service personnel. For example, in areas where there is a large population of serving personnel and therefore more veterans (i.e. near military bases), employers are more familiar with them and often more *“military-friendly”*.

According to stakeholders, many of the challenges Service leavers experience on joining a civilian organisation were felt to reduce over time and once they have gained some work experience. Stakeholders said that once ex-Service personnel have secured a civilian job many find it easier to progress within the organisation or get another job. In part this was felt to be because employer *“prejudice”* reduces over time as ex-Service personnel come to be seen *“less and less as ex-military”*. A number of ex-Service personnel agreed, saying that this was indeed their experience.

“You have to be able to say the Army was in the past as soon as you can...Employers will ‘nod and clap’ but don’t really want Army people; they want decision-makers, and those able to adapt. They are not interested in a military background.”

“Businesses are not interested in the tour you did in Iraq several years ago, they are interested in what you can do for the business/organisation now.”

The importance of the first job, even as a stepping stone, was noted. There was evidence from survey comments, that the first job was viewed in this way by some ex-Service personnel and not expected to be a job for life.

“On leaving the Services and speaking with friends who had previously left Service it was obvious that most did not stay in the first role that they got on leaving, but the first role was seen as getting started and gaining experience out from the Armed Forces which helped on CVs.”

Many stakeholders felt that the biggest challenge for Service leavers is still getting their *“foot in the door”*. Interviews with ex-Service personnel partially support these findings, indicating that gaining employment in the short-term does indeed pose the bigger challenge. However, findings from ex-Service personnel and spouses/partners indicate that some of these challenges persist longer-term. The *“mad, bad and sad narrative”* and negative experiences of working with ex-Service personnel continues to pose a barrier to some individuals longer-term.

“The company he is with now interviewed him three times because he is ex-military. They said they had not had good experiences with ex-military people before.”

7.2.3 – Encountering a Civilian Workplace

7.2.3.1 – Mismatched Values

According to stakeholders, adapting to a civilian workplace can be a challenge for some ex-Service personnel. One of the biggest frustrations is often related to work ethic and standards. Ex-Service personnel are used to working until the job is done and can struggle with civilians that do not do the job ‘properly’ (in their opinion) or follow the rules. Whilst many felt that this is something they get used to over time, it is not always something they are comfortable with. Ex-Service personnel are also used to military authority and can find a more *“laid-back”* management style difficult to get used to. It can also take time for some ex-Service personnel to work out what is appropriate in terms of language and banter in the civilian workplace. It was felt that the longer an individual has been in the military, the more challenging it can be to adapt.

Challenges with mismatched values were borne out in the interviews and free text comments in the survey with ex-Service personnel and spouses/partners reporting many of the issues described above. Many were frustrated by the perceived negative behaviours and attitudes of those they worked alongside, even, in some cases, years on.

"He was shocked by how disrespectful people were to supervisors and managers."

"Office politics, cattiness, unprofessional behaviour."

"Having joined [the military] at 18, I was unaware of the difference in management style and leadership in a corporate environment."

For some, practical challenges presented themselves. Whilst it was clear how to progress their career in a military environment, in the civilian sector it was felt to be more ambiguous. Some personnel commented that doing a good job in the military would be recognised (and rewarded), whilst this was less evident in civilian employment.

"I found it difficult when I left as I got a job and realised that people have to put in more than what they get out, whereas in the military if you worked hard it would be recognised – you would get promotion."

"In the military, it was about if you were good enough to lead – if you were, you were pushed. In civvy street it is about who you know."

The process of finding a role and/or industry that was right for them was, for some, a process of trial and error and learning from experience.

"[I] wasn't expecting to get it right first time."

"I felt as if I would be content with a change from the Armed Forces and that the change of environment would be enough to satisfy my need to leave. This was not the case and [it] has taken three jobs to get myself into the correct industry, aligned to my mindset and with like-minded people."

"It took me a long time to learn more about the types of jobs and industries out there and what I like and didn't like doing and what I'm good at."

Finding a job that provided them with a sense of purpose and value was important to many ex-Service personnel. Often there was a sense that military Service was a vocation and that many civilian roles were 'just a job'.

7.2.3.2 – Lack of Job Security

For some, a lack of job security, or certainty, in the civilian workplace was a surprise. Numerous participants described being made redundant, fired or reprimanded for inappropriate behaviour. For some, this led to changes in expectations and attitudes towards the likelihood of gaining permanent employment.

"My expectations of a permanent job have changed."

A lack of job security is likely to be at odds with their prior experience of employment in the Armed Forces, which is viewed by many as a secure job. In fact, data from the Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey (2021) shows that 85.0% of serving personnel cite job security as the top factor influencing their intention to stay in the Armed Forces, remaining the top factor since 2019. Over a third (36.5%) of respondents to this study's survey said that having job security was a marker of successful employment in the longer term (ranked sixth overall). Indeed, there was indication (from both the interviews and survey data) that, for a minority, an initial expectation of having just one role was driven by the duration (and stability) of military Service.

"As we served for so long, 24 years, I thought employment would be similar."

"I was in the military for 12 years and believed on leaving I would secure a role and stay within that position for a long period."

Whilst job security and continuity of employment may not be important to all ex-Service personnel, it is evident that lack of security resulted, in some cases, in readjusted expectations and/or employment plans. It suggests that ex-Service personnel should be made aware that a civilian workplace can come with less job security than they have been used to and they may need to prepare themselves both financially and psychologically to experience these challenges. For those for whom job security is a key priority, understanding of how job security can vary between different employment sectors may also be of benefit.

7.2.3.3 – Knowing When to Move On

Often ex-Service personnel described going *"above and beyond"*, working extra hours or staying until the job was done. Whilst there are benefits to this strong work ethic it is also evident that there were times when this did not serve them

well. Examples of ex-Service personnel not being able to say no to additional tasks and becoming over-burdened and stressed were evident as were examples of ex-Service personnel continuing to try to meet unachievable or unrealistic goals. This 'can do' attitude meant that some personnel stayed in jobs/roles for longer than they should have done when it might have been better for them to have left, or to have reconsidered their workload or responsibilities. This tendency impeded some individuals' progression towards a role that is in sustainable and in line with their expectations, as well as creating dissatisfaction with their employment.

7.2.3.4 – Adapting to a Civilian Environment

The data gathered indicate that adapting to a civilian workplace is a key factor in determining the success of longer-term employment outcomes of ex-Service personnel. Data from this study would suggest that personnel tend to fall into one of three groups:

1. Those who adjust well relatively quickly.
2. Those who never fully adjust.
3. Those who adjust over time (ranging from those who fully adjust to those who simply are accepting of their situation).

The majority of those interviewed could be described as belonging to the third category. For these individuals the adjustment period is often far longer than two years. Within this group some reach a point in which they are thriving in a civilian workplace, some reach contentment whilst others would be best described as simply accepting their situation.

"He left nearly five years ago and it's only now in the last 12 months he feels settled and better about leaving."

Individuals who adjusted well to the civilian workplace tended to be those continuing to work in a Defence arena, or related area, as the adjustment required was far less. The organisation's values matched their own and they were working alongside like-minded individuals in an environment that was familiar to them. Instances where individuals subsequently moved from a Defence-adjacent environment sometime after leaving the Armed Forces also show difficulties with transition. This would suggest that it is the move away from a Defence-related environment, not just time since leaving, that has an impact.

For many participants adjustment continued far beyond the two-year point. This was often because personnel moved jobs multiple times to different organisations with different cultures. Consequently, the adjustment period was extended as each workplace brought new and different challenges. It was particularly challenging for personnel who described their values as not matching those of the organisations. Those who thrived longer-term were those who learned to adjust and adapt to the civilian workplace. However, for many this was not easy. For some this meant lowering their expectations. One participant described having to *"surrender [their] values"* over time to *"cope"* with working in a civilian job.

Whilst there is a role to play for ex-Service personnel, employers could also provide extra support to help ex-Service personnel settle into their civilian role if needed.

7.2.4 – Acceptance of a Civilian Identity

A significant challenge for many was accepting that they had left the Armed Forces and this persisted beyond the initial transition period. Whilst some cohorts were more likely to be affected by this (those who had served longer or did not leave of their own accord), this issue was pervasive across the sample. Even participants who, on the face of it, had successfully transitioned into civilian employment found the detachment from the Armed Forces and their loss of identity to be a challenge longer-term (although the extent of that challenge varied between individuals).

Many missed the camaraderie, sense of purpose and general *"hustle and bustle"* of military life, and viewed their civilian employment to be far less rewarding in comparison. Some went as far as to say they regretted leaving (or having to leave) the Armed Forces and wished they had stayed in longer (or could go back) as civilian employment did not live up to their expectations. These participants were often still struggling to settle into civilian employment even over the longer-term. One spouse commented how she missed the Armed Forces community herself and therefore could only imagine how much harder it must be for her partner.

It is evident from the interviews that those who fared better in the longer-term accepted that they were leaving, formed a new civilian identity and had forged new (civilian) networks. Whilst many still felt a sense of loss, this did not form such a large part of their identity and there was a stronger sense of acceptance of the change. Stakeholders felt that those who struggled more tended to be those who had been reliant on the Armed Forces for support (e.g. living in a married quarter, using boarding school allowance etc.). This is supported by evidence from the interviews. Individuals who had been less dependent on the military, both financially and emotionally, found the transition easier in both the short and longer-term.

Arguably, individuals who are more dependent on the military while serving experience a greater degree of change and so may be subjected to more stressors in a short space of time, the impact of which takes longer to overcome.

The impact of this loss of identity and detachment from the Armed Forces on the ex-Service person should not be underestimated. Equally, the continued negative impact on the family is also apparent.

"It was almost a grieving; a loss of the organisation and the institution."

"Eighty per cent of his conversation is still about the Army. His face lights up when he talks about it."

In many cases the family suffered longer-term too. Examples of marriages or relationships breaking down or spouses/partners 'bearing the brunt' or having to 'pick the pieces' after the Armed Forces was evident.

"[The impact of leaving] weaves its way through the whole family."

Some spouses/partners felt that families should have access to the same information and help as their military partner and to be part of the conversation. This is in keeping with findings from the Ashcroft (2014) review of veterans' transition, which identified inclusion of the family during resettlement as crucial to a successful transition. The findings of the interviews suggest that there may be a continued need for provision of support and information for the wider family beyond this initial point, as some issues may take time to manifest and/or may be triggered by events further down the line.

7.2.5 – Loss of Confidence

Not understanding the job market, negative experiences with employers and challenges adjusting to civilian employment for some (but not all) resulted in a loss of confidence. Those individuals who struggled to maintain employment longer-term or were still trying to find the 'right' type of job often began to lose confidence in their abilities. This often happened over time, as rejections continued, or could be a result of a singular event, such as a redundancy.

"It got to a point where I did not want to risk the rejection."

"He applied for lots of jobs in the first instance. He took it very personally when he did not hear back from his applications."

This loss of confidence was sometimes associated with behavioural changes in terms of job seeking behaviours. Whilst in some cases this enabled the individual to 'protect' themselves, in others it prevented them from looking for opportunities to progress in role, or from continuing to seek employment in line with their skills and experience. This was often because they did not want to risk further rejection or to have their expectations 'not met' again.

7.2.6 – Seeking Support

Overall, 39.8% of survey respondents reported seeking employment related support two years after leaving the Armed Forces. When asked why, the most frequently cited reason (40.6%) was to improve their job application skills (e.g. CV writing, interview skills). However, other factors were also marked by many including:

1. Advice on networking (32.1%).
2. Gaining additional qualifications (28.3%).
3. Retraining (23.6%).
4. Moral support (23.1%).
5. Unable to find/access the information I needed myself (22.6%).
6. Building confidence (19.8%).

Of those who sought support, feedback was varied. Some had excellent experiences of seeking and obtaining support from Service charities leading to positive employment outcomes. Others described experiences of people not returning their calls or being unable to help them.

Of those individuals who said they did not seek support, 59.6% said they did not need it. However, 23.6% said they did not know where to go to get support and 15.1% said they did not feel able to ask for support. Some spouses/partners also experienced similar challenges, reporting that they did not know where to go to get help once their spouse/partner had left the military, which left them feeling alone.

Similar responses were elicited from the interviews with ex-Service personnel. Despite the number of Service charities, there appears to be a lack of awareness of what support is available to ex-Service personnel. Often participants described having to seek this information out themselves, accidentally coming across a charity or being made aware of them by peers. Coupled with this there is a well-documented stigma or shame to seeking help within the military population, particularly with regards to mental health issues. Whilst seeking support with employment appears to be less stigmatised,

and participants were making use of military charities as well as some CTP services, based on participant feedback, seeking support is still an issue for a strong minority.

"You can have a fear or shame of asking for help"

Interestingly, there was also a view from some that they did not feel it was right for them to use these support services because there were others who needed them more than they did. This was often because although they did need the support, they perhaps did not recognise it. It is possible that part of the challenge is accepting help from a charity and the negative connotations associated with the term charity.

Spouses/partners often felt that there is a lack of support for ex-Service personnel once the person has left the organisation (*"he was just cut off"*).

This suggests there is a need for better signposting to support services as well as enabling or encouraging support seeking behaviour in ex-Service personnel. The Veterans' Gateway¹⁶, launched in 2017, is an online resource that draws together a range of organisations and support services and directs veterans and their families to the services most appropriate to their need(s). It is suggested that awareness of this resource is increased amongst Service leavers as well as the veteran community, including families. However, engendering an attitude or culture of help seeking behaviour needs to start before individuals leave the Service so that individuals actively seek out the support available, as and when it is needed.

7.3 – Summary

The findings from this section indicate that most ex-Service personnel maintain employment longer-term, even if it is not continuous, or involves numerous jobs. However, some ex-Service personnel are not satisfied with this employment; it is not the 'right job' for them, maximising their potential in the longer-term. It would seem that many of the challenges that ex-Service personnel face on initial transition continue. Challenges with securing and maintaining employment, using their knowledge, skills and experience, overcoming employer perceptions and acclimatising to a civilian workplace persist. Within these, two key themes emerge: 1) expectations; and 2) adaptability. Unrealistic expectations about the job market or lack of awareness of the reality of civilian employment can be overcome by ex-Service personnel adapting in line with their experiences as well as expectations being managed during resettlement. Individuals who are able to adjust or adapt to these challenges fare better in the longer-term. Equally, individuals who do not have to make such significant adjustments in the first place (because they find employment in Defence-related or adjacent companies) also fare better longer-term, as long as they have a degree of continuity in their working environment and culture and skill sets. For some who struggle, a loss of confidence is evident, which can have a further detrimental impact upon job seeking behaviours and associated decision-making. Whilst various employment support services exist (and are made use of) some personnel are not aware of them, or willing to access them. Sometimes support can be informal and left to the spouse/partner longer-term. For some ex-Service personnel, the challenge of transition can be significant, placing additional strain or pressure on relationships or on their wellbeing. More needs to be done to address this.

The idea that transition ends at an arbitrary point in time (two years after leaving, when support from Defence ceases) is not supported by the data. For many ex-Service personnel the adjustment period is far longer, and differs according to the individual and complexity of their situation. Whilst some are able to accept the losses that detachment from the military represents, for others it can impede progression. Moreover, demographic and background factors remain constant. This would suggest that longer-term support is required and should be made available for ex-Service personnel beyond the two-year point. It should be recognised that needs and expectations change over time, and, with any career or employment, finding suitable work may be a process of trial and error rather than a given on leaving.

7.4 – Case Studies

The following four case studies introduce a series of individual studies of ex-Service personnel who were interviewed as part of the research. Each of them exemplifies particular issues faced by ex-Service personnel in the longer-term. They outline some of the challenges that the individuals faced (outlined in Sections 6 and 7 of the report) and provide an overview of their expectations through to their longer-term employment outcomes.

¹⁶ <https://www.veteransgateway.org.uk/>

7.4.1 – Case Study 1

Background and current circumstances

A former Army Corporal, in his forties, who left the Armed Forces voluntarily in 2013. He is currently unemployed and has “*lost count*” of the number of jobs that he has had since leaving. These have mainly been short-term jobs via agencies.

Aspirations on leaving the Armed Forces

He had seen some friends from the Army leave the military and “*land on their feet*” so he felt that the “*grass might be greener*” on the outside. He also wanted to prioritise his family, as he had spent time away from home when in the military, which he felt had a detrimental impact upon his relationship at the time. He had hoped to do something similar to what he had done in the military but his skills were not transferable.

Support received

He did not have CTP support. He was not told about what to do if “*things do not go well*” on leaving. He went to career fairs but found that the job opportunities available were niche or required different qualifications. He has not used his ELC as it was his understanding that he would have to pay towards these. He could not afford to do this as he was in debt at the time. He would have liked to use his ELC to allow him to re-trade. He has also sought support in the longer term, from CTP and from military charities.

Challenges experienced

He does not feel that being ex-Forces has helped him to find work and he has experienced some skill fade since leaving the Army. Some employers have been unsympathetic to his circumstances. For example, he was sacked from a job when he took time off to care for his critically ill partner. He also lost another job when he had to collect his child from school. His experiences have knocked his confidence and additionally he has had to manage mental health problems, for which he has received some support. However, this limits what work he can do and yet the Job Centre can put him forward for work that is not suitable for him. He then ends up back at the Job Centre and it is a “*vicious cycle*”. COVID-19 has further impacted him as he had to be available for childcare during the day.

Things that helped

He feels the Army has taught him how to deal with the pressure of situations such as interviews. His military experience, including going away on tours, has helped to build his confidence and he is able to multi-task and prioritise.

Longer term outcomes

He is in his mid-forties now and feels that this makes it harder to deal with his lack of job stability. He has had one job that he enjoyed but the work was seasonal and required him to stay away overnight. He has not been able to find a salary in line with his expectations and he wants a job that he enjoys and is rewarding and gives him the opportunity to progress. He would like to be able to afford to take his family on holiday. In hindsight, he feels that he should have stayed in the military for as long as he could have or have settled elsewhere, where job opportunities were better.

7.4.2 – Case Study 2

Background and current circumstances

A former Army Colonel, in his fifties, who left the Armed Forces voluntarily. He is currently employed and in the same role as he had on leaving the military in 2014, working as a Chief Executive Officer in an organisation that benefits from his Defence experience.

Aspirations on leaving the Armed Forces

He did not have any firm plans on leaving. However, he knew that he wanted to work closer to home as he had commuted for the last two years of his service in the Army and had spent time away from home when on tour. He left the Army without a job as he felt that if he waited for the “*perfect*” role employers would not wait for him to work out his notice period.

Support received

He did project management qualifications as part of his resettlement. He also made contact with a Service charity for a one-to-one interview, but had found his current job by this time, which had been advertised online. He has not felt the

need to seek support in the longer term as he feels that he does not need it and has learnt about the civilian job environment from his experiences.

Challenges experienced

He has not experienced any barriers to employment since leaving, though he feels that if he had not got his current job he may have felt a bit unprepared for the civilian world. He also said that it took a while to adjust to not being in the military and to stop saying *"I used to be in the Army"* when asked about what he does.

Things that helped

He feels that a certain amount of *"luck"* was involved in finding his current role. However, he had relevant skills and qualifications and the management and leadership requirements played to his strengths. He learnt confidence and the ability to think on his feet from his time in the Army. He lived outside of camp for some time, having bought his house early on in his military career, and he feels this helped with his transition, as did having support from his family.

Longer term outcomes

He finds value and purpose in his role and has a good work life balance. His salary exceeded his expectations and whilst, as Chief Executive Officer, there is no room for him to progress, he enjoys the responsibility and being able to make decisions. He feels that he left the Army at the right time as he had had a *"good run"* and progressed beyond where he thought he would.

7.4.3 – Case Study 3

Background and current circumstances

A former Royal Navy Leading Rating, in his thirties, who voluntarily left the Armed Forces in 2016. He has had three roles in total, in engineering, since leaving. Whilst he was unemployed at time of interview, he was waiting to start a new job that he had been offered.

Aspirations on leaving the Armed Forces

He did not have specific plans but felt he had a number of options open to him. He had hoped to be able to match his military wage but he was able to achieve a comparatively higher salary in his first role. He felt that he was young enough to be retrained on leaving.

Support received

He received guidance from CTP on CV writing and did a number of courses that he feels were beneficial. He re-engaged with CTP after leaving, attending employment fairs and has had further support from a military charity.

Challenges experienced

He was made redundant from his second role (along with others) but had anticipated this and had started to look for work. He was able to find another job but had a difficult relationship with his manager; then the COVID-19 pandemic occurred and he took some time off sick for mental health problems and was then sacked. Whilst he was an engineer by trade in the military, he felt he lacked the necessary experience to be a civilian engineer and this knocked his confidence, which was further eroded by the redundancy. There are limited industries where he is geographically located, which further restricts his job opportunities. He has also found it difficult adjusting to the civilian work environment and feels there is a lack of team ethos. He lost his support network on leaving the military though he is unsure if this has impacted his employment. He feels that it is only recently that he has come to terms with civilian life.

Things that helped

He feels that he interviews well and that his length of time in the military is a positive on his CV.

Longer term outcomes

Despite his challenges, he feels that he left the Armed Forces at the right time but just chose the wrong company to go into. He feels this has had a negative impact on the roles he has been able to get since. He has struggled working with civilians but his new boss, in his forthcoming job, is a veteran and he feels this will help. He hopes for a role that gives him a reasonable salary and allows him to go home each night and a job where he feels that he fits in and allows him to get his confidence back.

7.4.4 – Case Study 4

Background and current circumstances

A former Army Lance Corporal, in his thirties, who left the Armed Forces voluntarily in 2011. He initially worked in a warehouse and then studied at university part time whilst working in a variety of jobs. He now works for the Emergency Services, as he had planned.

Aspirations on leaving the Armed Forces

He wanted to do something different to what he had been doing in the military. He had considered force protection but did not want to spend time away from his family. After considering several options he decided to retrain to work in the Emergency Services. Whilst he is now doing the role that he wanted to, in hindsight, he feels he was a bit *“naïve”* and expected to *“walk into [the role] a lot quicker”*. He had expected to start at the bottom but the salaries were a shock alongside the higher cost of living outside of the Army.

Support received

He did not use resettlement as he did not know how. He did a short CV writing course but did not find it useful. He used his ELC to help fund his university study, but he only realised he could do this after speaking to a friend. He does not see himself using support from military charities in the future as he feels others *“need it more”* and he tends to *“sort things out”* himself. There is support from his employer to fund him to do a master's degree.

Challenges experienced

He does not feel that he has experienced many barriers to employment but he had to learn to adapt his manner to the civilian environment and feels that life in the Army is not the real world, but a *“bubble”*. When he left he initially felt he did not have lots of transferable skills and felt *“years behind everyone else”*. He also said that he lost his social life on leaving the military. He split from his partner and this created additional pressure to pay for more by himself. The move from married accommodation to private accommodation on leaving increased the need for him to find a job and take *“any work available”*.

Things that helped

His work ethic and professionalism from the Army has been a benefit, as has his reliability; *“turning up, doing the job, having standards”*. He was used to having responsibility and having *“difficult conversations”* from his time in Defence. He has progressed to a position that normally requires many more years' experience and he feels that things have gone well for him in his current position. He has *“life skills”* and he feels that these have been a huge advantage too.

Longer term outcomes

Overall, he feels that he left the military at the right time, though he would have liked to have had a few more years of Service. He thinks his career expectations were a little low at the start and he did not have the confidence to highlight his strengths. It took him a few years to realise he could progress and he is now planning his career in the long term. He was initially focused upon money, but now that he is earning more, money feels less important and he wants to spend time with his children and to enjoy work. The period of adjusting to civilian life took him about five years.

7.4.5 – Case Study 5

Background and current circumstances

A former RAF Aircraft Technician in her thirties, who left the Armed Forces at the end of her contract in 2013. On leaving, she initially worked and studied overseas and then returned to the UK to retrain. Once qualified and in role, she found the job did not provide her with the autonomy she needed, and she moved into a temporary role within local government from which she was able to progress to head of department. From this role she was able to secure a more senior post in another organisation.

Aspirations on leaving the Armed Forces

She made her decision to retrain some years before she left the military and undertook a degree, paid for by the military, in preparation. She knew the salary the job would attract and felt there was a *“clear pathway”* for progression. Whilst she had covered the costs for the re-training, she had to rely upon family for financial support whilst she studied.

Support received

During her time in Service she was supported by her Station Commander who helped her to identify her strengths and weaknesses and provided her with opportunity to develop some of her soft skills prior to leaving. She had support to secure funding for her degree which helped to *"open doors"*. As she had plans prior to leaving she only used the CTP *"a little"*, though she feels she could have benefitted from their support further down the line when things did not initially work out. She would have liked advice on adapting her CV to the civilian job market and completing application forms. She had not realised how much support was out there for veterans in the longer-term.

Challenges experienced

She was told by a recruitment consultant that she had no relevant experience and would have to start work earning around £14k. She took this advice at *"face value"* and took a low paid temporary job, before securing another role with a higher salary. Since leaving the RAF she has not always been stretched in her roles and has struggled to sell herself during interviews and to think of how her military experience translates. She has also found that she is not good at saying *"no"* to things at work, as she would never have said no when in the military. She feels that being female has been a barrier to progression at times and has seen other women being bypassed in the workplace.

Things that helped

In addition to the support from her Station Commander prior to leaving, her experience of working with senior ranks whilst in the RAF has helped her when working with senior personnel in her civilian employment. She has also taken on tasks and tried to make herself indispensable. Building relationships and her reputation and having a *"can do"* attitude has helped her to progress quickly. Her partner has helped her to be more ambitious and has provided a *"civilian"* perspective.

Longer term outcomes

She hopes to continue to progress and develop in her career. She will seek out support if needed. She has felt *"conflicted"* at times about her decision to leave the RAF, as whilst it was the right time to leave for her family, she sometimes misses the military. However, she feels that her position and salary now are better than they would have been if she had remained in the Armed Forces.



Section 8 – Perceived Barriers and Facilitators to Successful and Sustainable Employment

This section of the report investigates the perceived barriers and facilitators to longer-term employment of ex-Service personnel.

Some of the challenges and enablers ex-Service personnel face with regards to longer-term employment have been alluded to in earlier sections of this report. This section now reports on the key barriers and facilitators specifically identified by ex-Service personnel when asked.

Key Points:

Key perceived barriers to successful and sustainable employment include:

- A lack of relevant qualifications/experience and problems translating skills.
- Negative employer perceptions.
- A lack of support (from the Armed Forces and employers).
- Physical and mental health challenges.
- Poor cultural fit in a civilian organisation.

Key perceived facilitators to successful and sustainable employment include:

- Having relevant skills, qualifications and experience.
- Individual traits (confidence and self-reliance).
- Support from family and friends.
- Networks.

8.1 – Barriers

Survey respondents were asked to choose the five barriers (from a long list of options) that are, or have been, the greatest challenges to securing and/or retaining employment in the longer-term. The top five barriers selected were:

1. Lack of relevant experience (33.3%).
2. Lack of relevant qualifications (30.3%).
3. Lack of support from Armed Forces transition services (26.8%).
4. Negative attitudes from potential employer/employers (24.7%).
5. Lack of Armed Forces champions in civilian organisations (23.4%).

Despite being the top five, it is important to note that most were selected by only around a quarter to a third of the sample, suggesting a lack of consensus. This leads to the conclusion that the barriers may well vary according to individual circumstance and context.

Some of these findings were also echoed in the interviews with ex-Service personnel and spouses/partners who cited the following barriers:

- **Lack of experience:** Not having relevant experience was a barrier for some as it was clear that employers often wanted “...*someone who can hit the ground running*”. In particular, a lack of commercial experience was an issue for many.
- **Translating skills:** Numerous participants cited challenges with either not having the right qualifications or skills or having challenges translating their skills and experience to civilian employers.
- **Employer perceptions:** Employer perceptions of what a member of the Armed Forces is like was felt to be a barrier for some ex-Service personnel. Either they had no knowledge or they had a negative view of the military. Either way this often led to perceptions that employers did not fully understand or appreciate what ex-Service personnel are capable of.

In addition, two other key barriers were cited by participants:

- **Poor person-organisation fit:** Having to adapt to a civilian workplace and way of working was a barrier for some ex-Service personnel. Understanding what is acceptable behaviour and language in the workplace was one challenge. Other individuals struggled with a perceived different work ethic of civilians. Often ex-Service personnel had a mentality of ‘stay until the job is done’, which was not always shared by their civilian counterparts. A lack of job security and the potential to be sacked was also raised as a concern by some who had experienced this

first hand. A mismatch between personal values and the values of the organisation were also cited as a barrier resulting in individuals feeling that they did not 'fit'. For some this developed over time and was not obvious on initially joining an organisation.

- **Physical and mental health challenges:** Illness or injury resulting in an inability to work negatively impacted the longer-term employment outcomes of some participants who struggled to either find or maintain work due to periods of sickness and subsequent absence from work.

8.1.1 – Addressing Barriers

These barriers point to the need for more support from the MOD and civilian employers in the longer-term. However, perhaps part of the challenge surrounds the expectations of ex-Service personnel regarding the level and type of support from the MOD and employers. Whilst the MOD has a key role to play in preparing and equipping personnel to leave, their role is not to find employment on behalf of that individual. As shown with other aspects of longer-term employment sometimes the expectations of ex-Service personnel do not match reality. It could be suggested that Defence needs to do more to manage the expectations of those leaving and make it clear what resettlement does and does not offer.

A lack of relevant qualifications, experience and transferable skills are arguably the responsibility of both the MOD (to make sure personnel leave equipped with useful skills and qualifications) and ex-Service personnel (to ensure they obtain appropriate qualifications during their time in service and maintain these qualifications or retrain themselves on leaving) to address. Experience can only come with time and whilst harder to resolve, it is not impossible. Greater opportunities for serving personnel to work in industry before they leave could be provided. This could take the form of six-monthly work placements, which would allow personnel to build up their commercial experience as well as gain experience in specific roles or with employers of choice.

8.1.2 – Impact of COVID-19

Another challenge noted by some participants was the COVID-19 pandemic, which started at a similar time to the research. The research team used this opportunity to gather data from ex-Service personnel to find out what impact this was having on their employment. Positively, 62.1% of survey respondents said that their employment status was not impacted by the pandemic, at the time of survey completion. However, 31.3% of survey respondents said that the pandemic had negatively impacted them with many experiencing: redundancy; furlough; a reduction in working hours; and a decrease in earnings.

Monthly estimates of the percentage of the UK workforce on furlough, between March 2020 and January 2021 range from 8.3% to 28.8%. During the period in which the survey was open (October to December 2020) between 8.3% and 13.4% of the UK workforce had been furloughed compared with 12.3% of ex-Service personnel responding to this survey. This is perhaps not surprising considering that some of the industries/sectors or types of role were those most impacted by COVID-19.

The global pandemic has had (and is likely to continue to have) a significant impact on the employment of many. How this will affect ex-Service personnel should be closely monitored going forward, not only in terms of their employment but also the impact on their mental health. Consideration should be given to the type of support required to help ex-Service personnel. This need is already recognised by the veterans CHECK study, run by Kings College London, which is currently exploring the impact of the pandemic upon veteran wellbeing, including assessment of impact upon employment¹⁷.

8.2 – Facilitators

Survey respondents were asked to choose the five enablers (from a long list of options) that have helped the most with their employment in the longer-term. The top five facilitators were:

1. Self-confidence (51.1%).
2. Having relevant skills (40.3%).
3. Having relevant experience (33.1%).
4. Support from family, friends or local community (33.0%).
5. Having relevant qualifications (31.1%).

These findings are largely supported by the interview data:

¹⁷ <https://www.kcmhr.org/veterans-check/>

- **Traits and attitudes:** Confidence was mentioned frequently as an important quality which helped ex-Service personnel to maintain employment in the longer-term. This was alongside other traits such as being resilient, persevering, having a positive attitude and a good work ethic.
- **Skills, qualifications and experience:** Having developed relevant and appropriate skills, experience and qualifications during their time in the military (or afterwards) that enabled them to maintain employment after leaving.
- **Family support:** Support from family and friends (including support with childcare to enable them to work) was viewed as a key enabler to maintaining employment. This also included the absence of “*domestic pressures*” or life events, such as divorce, which allowed the ex-Service person to focus on their career.

Two additional factors, not cited in the survey, were also mentioned by participants as helping to facilitate their employment longer-term:

- **Networks:** Networking and having access to a military network were deemed essential in terms of generating job opportunities in the short and longer-term.
- **Luck:** A strong narrative around luck featured in many of the interviews. Numerous participants referred to themselves as being lucky (as did spouses/partners). These participants were typically (but not always) those who had a smooth transition into employment and had not encountered too many challenges along the way. This often involved personnel finding an employer who was a good match for them initially.

It would appear that ex-Service personnel view a combination of the right traits, relevant skills and support from others as key facilitators in helping them secure and maintain employment in the longer-term. Qualifications and experience are both key facilitators and barriers to longer-term employment success. This highlights the importance of getting these two factors right, alongside relevant skills.

Interestingly, the barriers cited largely relate to external factors whereas the key facilitator (self-confidence) is internal to the individual. Within psychological theory, the extent to which people believe they have control over their outcomes as opposed to external factors impacting them is called locus of control. This concept, developed by Rotter (1966), asserts that those with an internal locus of control believe their actions drive outcomes whereas those with an external locus of control perceive external events as having greater impact. Here it would seem that an external locus of control is being applied to the barriers, suggesting these are outside of the control of the individual. In comparison the key enabler is internally focused suggesting that success is down to the individual. The challenge this presents is that if ex-Service personnel feel the barriers are outside of their control, and they are unable to do anything about them, they may not seek to try by changing their behaviour, or reaching out for help.

8.2.1 – Greater Access to Support

Aside from facing disadvantage as a group it was also noted, by stakeholders and some ex-Service personnel, that ex-Service personnel also have a number of advantages in finding and maintaining employment compared with others. This includes the transition and resettlement support they receive, access to a large and powerful military network, a plethora of military charities, support programmes and Armed Forces champions embedded in large organisations. It was questioned, by a couple of the stakeholders, what other cohorts (even with the exception of graduates) get this level of support in finding employment?

“People in civvy street don’t get this kind of support”

The view that military personnel are a unique cohort in regards to the support they receive after leaving the Armed Forces, was voiced by a minority of ex-Service personnel.

8.3 – Summary

Ex-Service personnel believe they face a number of barriers in achieving successful and sustainable employment. A lack of relevant qualifications, skills and experience remain persistent issues for many. Alongside this, some ex-Service personnel feel that a lack of support (both from the Armed Forces and potential employers) is a problem. However, a lack of consensus in barriers identified by survey respondents leads to the conclusion that these barriers vary according to individual circumstance and context.

The reverse of some of these barriers were felt to aid successful and sustainable employment (i.e. having relevant skills and experience, support from family and friends). However, a key facilitator was felt to be traits related to the individual, such as self-confidence. When assessing barriers and facilitators it would seem that many ex-Service personnel apply an

external locus of control to the barriers, suggesting these are outside of their control. In comparison the key enabler is internally focused suggesting that success is down to the individual. If ex-Service personnel feel the barriers are outside of their control, and they are unable to do anything about them, they may not seek to try by changing their behaviour, or reaching out for help.



Section 9 – Definition of Success

This section of the report explores what successful employment looks like for ex-Service personnel in the longer term.

Key Points:

- What constitutes success changed over time for some individuals (46.4% said their definition of employment success had changed since they left the Armed Forces; 53.6% said it had not).
- For some ex-Service personnel, intrinsic rewards (such as being valued, enjoying their job, contributing) and the impact upon their personal life (achieving work-life balance) take on greater weight than extrinsic rewards (pay and status) over time.
- However, there were mixed views with regards to whether ex-Service personnel felt successful in terms of their civilian career/employment (47.5% said they felt successful; 28.1% unsuccessful).
- A definition of successful employment in the longer-term has been developed as part of this study, which comprises of the following five components: pay and reward; work-life balance; intrinsic reward; cultural fit; and job design and nature of work.
- Specifically: *Successful longer-term employment is extrinsically and intrinsically rewarding. It is a good fit with the skills/qualifications/experience of the ex-Service person as well as their values. It allows them to balance work and non-work time appropriately. It is also subject to change over time.*

9.1 – What does Success Look Like?

Survey respondents were asked to indicate what success meant to them. The top five factors rated as indicative of success in civilian employment, in the longer-term, were:

1. Receiving enough money to maintain family and lifestyle (67.8%).
2. Enjoying work (67.6%).
3. Achieving a work-life balance (57.7%).
4. Being able to progress at work (45.3%).
5. Being challenged at work (41.9%).

This partially aligns with findings from previous studies that have defined a successful transition into civilian employment (in the short-term) as being: happy and content with their situation; having enough money; enjoying work; and having a good work-life balance (Lyonette et al., 2018). Where the findings differ is around factors relating to the importance of progress and challenge at work. It would seem that whilst some components of short-term success apply in the longer-term, there are other elements which perhaps become more important over time. It would also suggest that there may be a need to change jobs/roles in order to meet these changing needs.

9.2 – Do Ex-Service Personnel Consider Themselves to be Successful?

When asked whether the ex-Service person felt successful in terms of their civilian career/employment, there were mixed responses; 47.5% said they felt successful; 28.1% felt unsuccessful; and 24.3% felt neither successful nor unsuccessful. This would suggest that some personnel have been unable to achieve all the components of what they consider to be successful employment in the longer-term. This in part may be linked to the fact that some participants have not been able to detach themselves from their military Service and struggle to see civilian employment in the same way, as military Service is the yardstick by which all other employment is judged (as also supported by Cooper et al, 2017).

"Time in the Army was successful employment."

"I am happy where I am...but I don't have the same job satisfaction that I had when I was in the military. I can't explain it...I have experienced things that civvies will never experience...I felt like I was doing something, part of something bigger, [when I was in the military]."

However, free text comments in the survey suggest that feeling unsuccessful is, in addition, related to a number of other factors including: ongoing difficulties finding work/being out of work; loss of status (*"Working at the bottom in admin from leaving as a WO2, this is not success"*); and lack of progression or opportunity for this (a *"dead end job"*). A mismatch

between their skills and capabilities and the work they are actually doing or want to do; low pay and low job satisfaction were also evident. For some, it was clear that these were enduring issues.

Survey data further suggests that perceptions of success vary according to rank. More than half of Officers (53.4%) and SNCO's (52.4%) said they felt successful, compared to 39.2% of JNCOs. Perceptions of success also varied according to Service, with respondents from the Royal Air Force being most likely to report feeling successful (57.5%) followed by respondents from the Royal Navy (50.5%) and the Army (43.0%). The reason for leaving the Armed Forces may also be related to longer-term outcomes. Perceptions of success were comparatively greater amongst ex-Service personnel who left voluntarily (61.1% said they felt successful) compared to those who left at the end of their contract (44.1%) or due to ill-health or injury (34.0%).

9.3 – Changing Perspective of Success

Survey respondents were asked whether, in terms of employment, their definition of success had changed since they left the Armed Forces. Overall, 46.4% of respondents said yes and 53.6% said no. Examination of free text comments by those who reported a change in definition suggested that many initially valued pay, promotion/progression and status, with some indication that the value placed upon rank and promotion within the military informed this view. Comments indicated a number of factors that changed in respondents' definitions of success, including a greater focus upon work-life balance and time with family; finding enjoyment in their job and 'being happy', doing a 'good job' at work and being valued and recognised for their contribution, as well as doing work that aligned with their values. For some, it was being happy 'with less'. To a lesser extent, respondents reported their expectations rising, for example, realising they could achieve more than they initially thought, earn more money, and expand their career horizons.

Conversely, some respondents indicated a significant negative impact upon what success meant to them. For example, success meant just 'surviving' or 'just having a job'; with comments showing that some did not realise how hard it would be; felt they were not able to progress and reach their potential; or felt reduced satisfaction and loss of worth.

Findings from the interviews with ex-Service personnel added further support to these findings.

"[The definition of success] has changed over time. It was about money and getting a job. It changed after my first two jobs. I wanted a job with satisfaction and meaning."

"My measure of success has changed. I want to feel as if I could be proud to talk about my job, be comfortable with it, and earning a 'decent amount'. Success is more about [the job] being 'personally rewarding'."

It was also evident from the interviews with ex-Service personnel that in a minority of cases there was a disconnect between what people *said* they wanted from civilian employment and what they *really* wanted. Whilst a few reported wanting a 'nine to five' job with no responsibilities, in reality the lack of challenge this brought often left them feeling disillusioned with their job.

It would appear that for some, intrinsic rewards (being valued, enjoying their job, contributing) and the impact upon their personal life (greater work-life balance) take on greater weight than extrinsic rewards (pay and status) over time. This may suggest that people value different things at different stages of their life. As a result, the jobs personnel initially seek when leaving the Armed Forces may not continue to be a 'good fit' in the longer-term.

9.4 – Definition of Success

One of the aims of this research was to better understand how 'successful employment' is defined in the longer-term. In particular, to explore the wider measures of this and what this might mean in relation to ex-Service personnel. This is with a view to assessing whether there is a more comprehensive metric for measuring employment success in future research/studies.

Understanding longer-term success requires consideration of what a quality job looks like more generally. A review of the literature on measuring and understanding the quality of a job (in a civilian environment) revealed that a number of different measures exist, however, there are synergies between them. For example, Irvine et al. (2018) identified seven dimensions of good work:

- **Terms of employment:** job security, minimum guaranteed hours, sufficient hours.
- **Pay and benefits:** actual pay, satisfaction with pay.
- **Health, safety and psychosocial wellbeing:** physically-safe working environment, good mental wellbeing.
- **Job design and nature of work:** use of skills, control/autonomy, opportunities for progression, sense of purpose.
- **Social support and cohesion:** peer support, good relationship with line manager.

- **Voice and representation:** trade union membership, employee information, employee involvement.
- **Work-life balance:** control over working time, paid overtime.

Research by Wright et al. (2018) suggest six key dimensions of job quality:

- **Pay and other rewards:** objective aspects such as wage level, type of payment (for example, fixed salary, performance pay) and non-wage fringe benefits (such as employer-provided pension and health cover) and subjective aspects (such as satisfaction with pay).
- **Intrinsic characteristics of work:** including objective aspects (such as skills, autonomy, control, variety, work effort) and subjective aspects (such as meaningfulness, fulfilment, social support and powerfulness).
- **Terms of employment:** including objective aspects (such as contractual stability and opportunities for training, development and progression) and subjective aspects (such as perception of job security).
- **Health and safety:** including physical and psychosocial risks.
- **Work-life balance:** including working time arrangements such as duration, scheduling and flexibility, as well as work intensity.
- **Representation and voice:** including employee consultation, trade union representation and employee.

Whilst the terminology varies and the information is presented slightly differently there is a significant amount of commonality in what comprises a quality job between the two models. Applying these frameworks to the data gathered during this study it is clear to see there is some overlap between what ex-Service personnel want from work in the longer-term, and what is deemed to be successful employment more generally.

Data from the survey and interviews suggest that earning enough money to live and/or being satisfied with their level of pay, is an important component of success for many ex-Service personnel, but certainly not the only one (or often not the priority). The demands of military life mean that many ex-Service personnel often seek a comparatively greater level of work-life balance in their civilian job than they experienced in the military. However, many still want to find a role that provides them with the opportunity to use their skills and qualifications and to be challenged and able to progress, if desired. Many want employment that allows them to feel as though they are making a difference and are doing work in line with their values (which are often informed by military Service). Finding an environment that is a good fit for them and provides them with a sense of camaraderie and social support is key as these components are often missing when they leave the Armed Forces. However, it is also important to note that the concept of success for many is not static and changes in line with changing personal circumstances or, more often, based on the reality of finding and settling into civilian employment. Intrinsic reward factors and the impact upon personal life often take on greater weight than extrinsic rewards over time.

Based on the information gathered the research team suggest that successful employment in the longer-term for ex-Service personnel comprises of the following key components.



Pay and reward:

- Having enough money to maintain family and lifestyle.
- Satisfaction with pay.



Work-life balance

- Achieving a balance between work and family life.



Intrinsic reward

- Undertaking work that is meaningful and provides challenge, job satisfaction and fulfilment.



Cultural fit

- Good person-environment fit.
- Match between personal values and those of the environment (organisation).



Job design and nature of work

- Opportunity to use qualifications, skills and experience (both hard and soft skills).
- Opportunity to progress and develop as required.
- Job security.



Social support

- Good relationships at work and a sense of camaraderie and social support.

Based on the above information, the following definition of success is proposed:

Successful longer-term employment is extrinsically and intrinsically rewarding. It is a good fit with the skills/qualifications/experience of the ex-Service person as well as their values. It allows them to balance work and non-work time appropriately. It is also subject to change over time.

It is not suggested that additional factors identified in other job quality measures are irrelevant to ex-Service personnel; they just do not feature significantly in their narrative and what they want from work in the longer-term.

It is important to note that not all components will carry equal weighting and are likely to vary based on individual circumstances and need. For example, whilst pay will be of less importance to some (i.e. those who have left with a full pension), for others (perhaps those with a mortgage and young family) this will have increased importance. In addition, the relevance or importance of these factors are also likely to change over time in line with the changing expectations (or personal circumstances) of ex-Service personnel.

9.5 – Summary

As noted in the introduction, previously accepted metrics for measuring success (e.g. whether the individual is in employment) are limited in nature and fail to take into consideration broader issues. Whilst most ex-Service personnel remain in some form of employment in the longer-term, there are pockets of discontentment with the 'quality' of the work itself. For a sizeable minority, success is something that they feel they have still not attained.

The evidence indicates that key components of what constitutes success persist over time. For example, having enough money to maintain their lifestyle is viewed as important to many in both the short and longer-term. However, other factors change and become more important longer-term. This includes the importance of intrinsic factors such as undertaking work that is valued or is meaningful. For many, this changing definition of success is associated with changes in circumstance or adjusted expectations in line with the reality of civilian employment.

Drawing upon the civilian literature of dimensions of job quality, a definition of longer-term employment success for an ex-military population is proposed:

Successful longer-term employment is extrinsically and intrinsically rewarding. It is a good fit with the skills/qualifications/experience of the ex-Service person as well as their values. It allows them to balance work and non-work time appropriately. It is also subject to change over time.

This definition identifies the importance of matched values, challenging or meaningful work and an opportunity to progress, if desired, which are key components of success in the longer-term. Whilst not all components will carry equal weighting; they will vary based on individual circumstances and will fluctuate over time; all are key components of success.



Section 10 – Cause and Effect Analysis

In the previous section a definition of successful longer-term employment was outlined. In this section of the report attention is turned to the factors impacting, or causing, *unsuccessful* employment in the longer-term.

Key Points:

- Ten key categories (and numerous sub-categories) were identified as determining, or having an impact on, unsuccessful employment in the longer-term.
- Many of these factors are interlinked, subject to change over time, not always within the individual's control and will combine in different ways, and with varying consequences.
- Whilst some factors are likely to be weighted more heavily, the absence of other factors could have a moderating effect and lessen the impact of others.

10.1 – Key Causes of Unsuccessful Employment

Findings from the literature review, employment statistics, online survey and interviews have been drawn together, analysed and represented in an Ishikawa diagram (see

Figure 10.1). Overall, 10 key categories were identified as having an impact on the employment outcomes of ex-Service personnel in the longer-term:

- **Demographic variables:** factors relating to age, gender, ethnicity etc.
- **Service background:** such as Service, rank etc.
- **Mental and physical health:** factors such as illness, injury, disability, mental health.
- **Resettlement support:** resettlement support received and satisfaction with this.
- **Employer perceptions:** attitudes of employers to ex-Service personnel.
- **Qualifications, skills and experience:** factors relating to transferable skills and experience, civilian equivalent qualifications etc.
- **Job seeking behaviour:** approach to job-seeking.
- **Adapting to civilian employment:** challenges adapting to a civilian environment and new working relationships.
- **Detachment from the military:** issues around loss of identity, status and camaraderie.
- **Wider factors:** wider issues relating to the job market etc.

Within these categories a series of sub-categories, or underlying variables that underpin the main category, were identified.

The factors can be split broadly into two groups: intrinsic factors, those pertaining to the individual (including their mental and physical health, demographic variables); and extrinsic factors, those situated at an organisational or environmental level (transition support and employer perceptions). This means that some factors are within the control of the ex-Service person (such as their qualifications or job seeking behaviours) whilst others are not (their age or gender).

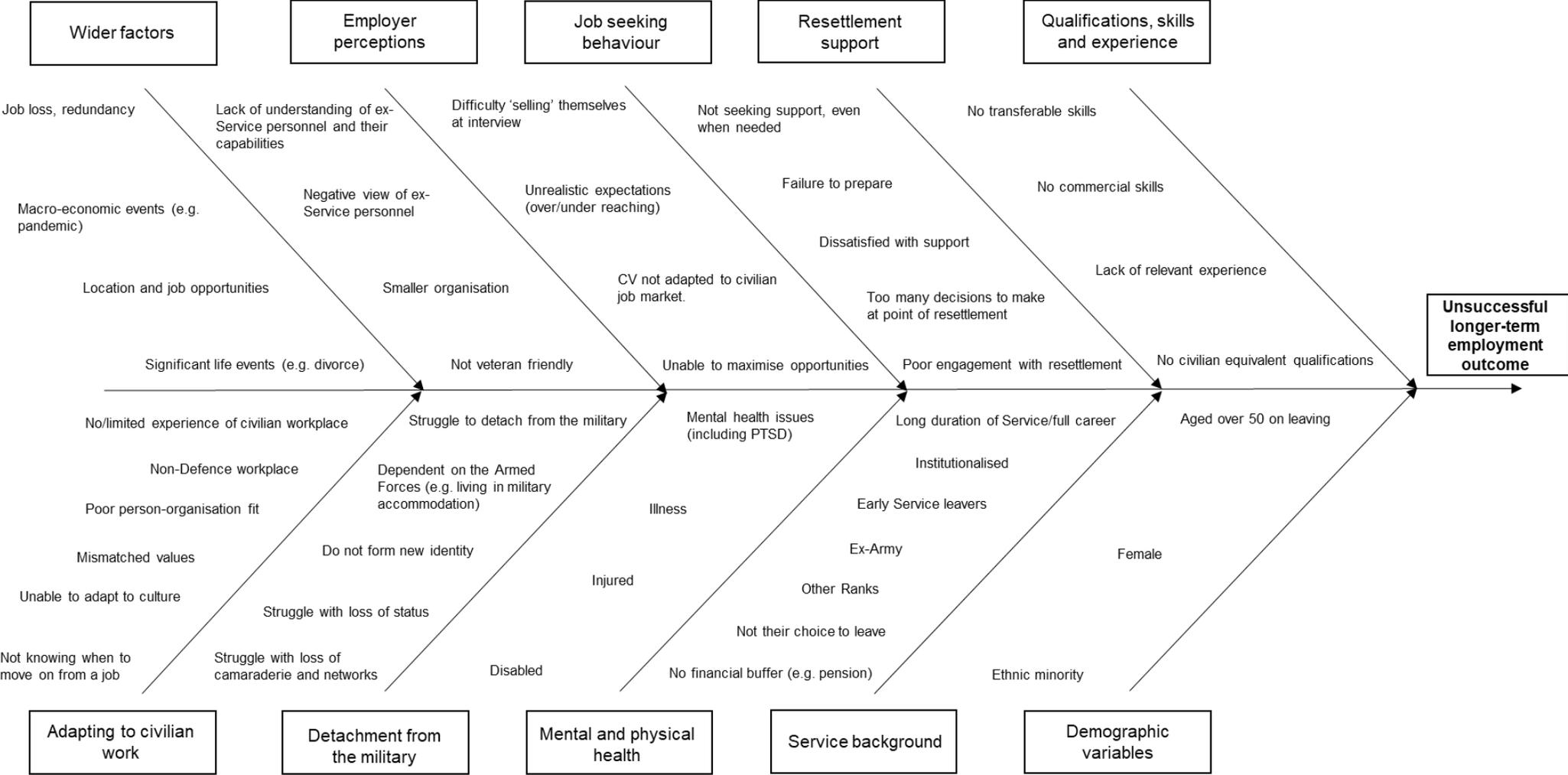


Figure 10.1 Factors causing unsuccessful longer-term employment outcomes

10.2 – Relationship Between Factors

The variables are likely to interact in a number of different ways and with varying consequences. These are captured in more detail in Table 10.A.

Table 10.A Relationship between factors

Issue	Explanation
Factors are likely to be interlinked.	Many of the categories and sub-categories are likely to be closely linked or inter-related. For example, (in the background factors category) an individual who has served for a certain length of time is also likely to be a particular age, rank and at a certain stage in their career, as well as their life.
Some factors will impact or determine the outcomes of others.	For example, qualifications, skills and experience held are likely to drive job seeking behaviour.
Factors are likely to combine in different ways and with varying consequences.	For example, the impact of someone having a physical injury, not leaving the Armed Forces of their own accord, having no transferable skills and struggling to detach themselves from the military is likely to be significant compared with someone who faces only one of those challenges. That said, whilst 'ticking more boxes' is liable to increase the likelihood of an unsuccessful outcome it is not a guarantee. It is anticipated that some factors will act as moderators, which lessen the impact of others. For example, having access to financial resources could offset some of the other challenges an individual faces either directly (e.g. provision of a financial safety net) or indirectly, by driving decision making (e.g. an individual takes a job that is not aligned with their values as they need the income).
The influence/relevance of some of these variables is subject to change over time.	For example, it could be the case that someone has far fewer challenges initially but the occurrence of a wider environmental factor (i.e. a global pandemic) causes a number of other factors to then present themselves (i.e. being made redundant) which leads to difficulties job seeking and challenges with employer perspectives.
The weighting of individual factors are likely to vary.	Not all factors will carry the same degree of impact with some having a greater impact on employment outcomes than others. For example, having a mental health condition is likely to have a far greater impact on employment outcomes than someone simply being ex-Army.

10.3 – Summary

A series of factors have been identified which, when present, increase the likelihood of an unsuccessful longer-term employment outcome for ex-Service personnel. The more factors that apply, the more likely an individual is to be unsuccessful in the longer-term. However, facing fewer challenges is not necessarily a guarantee of success. Some factors likely hold greater weight, whilst others will act as moderators, which may lessen any negative impact. In addition, the interconnected nature of many of these factors make them difficult to tease apart. Whilst a useful starting point, it is suggested that the framework should be tested/evaluated to assess its applicability and better understand how some of these challenges interact with each other.



Section 11 – Conclusions

Evidence from this study indicates that most ex-Service personnel maintain employment over time (even if this involves numerous jobs and/or periods of unemployment). However, it is also clear that not all ex-Service personnel are satisfied with their civilian job or career. Many (but not all) feel that they have not found the 'right job' for them in the longer-term; one which maximises their potential or provides them with opportunities to progress. Whilst some described themselves as successful, others did not.

For some ex-Service personnel, the definition of what constituted success changed over time, with intrinsic rewards and the impact upon their personal life taking on greater weight than extrinsic rewards (such as pay and status). Often this definition of success changed in line with changing personal circumstances or, more often, was re-calibrated based on the reality of finding and settling into civilian employment. With the benefit of hindsight, some ex-Service personnel reported that their expectations of the civilian job market and civilian employment did not match the reality.

What is evident from the data is that many of the challenges that ex-Service personnel face on initial transition persist beyond the two-year point. Challenges with securing and maintaining employment, overcoming employer perceptions and adapting to a civilian workplace persist. Moving between organisations (either through choice or necessity) often meant starting the process again. For many participants the adjustment period into civilian employment was far longer than two years, with a range of outcomes: from those who fully adjusted and could be described as thriving in a civilian workplace; to those who reached contentment; to those who would be best described as simply accepting their situation; and then to those who are unemployed and still seeking work.

Individuals who seemed to find the adjustment easier were those working in Defence-related or adjacent roles. A common language, shared understanding and familiar culture required less adaptation. Others who fared better were those who formed a new civilian identity or at least accepted the loss of their old military one. Adapting to a civilian environment is key. For many though, the biggest challenge longer-term was accepting that they were no longer a serving member of the Armed Forces. Detachment from the military was a significant challenge, even for those who, on the face of it, had successfully transitioned into civilian employment.

Any definition of success is likely to vary from person-to-person (to an extent) and change over time. However, in terms of defining what successful employment looks like for ex-Service personnel longer-term, the evidence from this study points to the following suggested definition: *It is extrinsically and intrinsically rewarding. It is a good fit with the skills/qualifications/experience of the ex-Service person as well as their values. It allows them to balance work and non-work time appropriately.* This definition moves beyond the simple metric of whether the individual is employed or not and (after further testing) should be considered for use in future research.

In terms of predicting *who* is more likely to be successful (or not) longer-term there are a series of factors, at both an individual and organisational/environmental level that influence this. As highlighted through the cause and effect analysis in Section 10 – , the fewer 'boxes' a person can 'tick' the more likely they are to be successful longer-term. However it is not a guarantee of success; some factors likely hold greater weight than others including unforeseen issues (such as a global pandemic or significant life events), which are likely to have a significant impact. Equally, it is likely that some factors will act as mediators which lessen the impact of others. The interconnected nature of many of these factors make them difficult to tease apart. However, what is evident is that some groups face greater challenges (and a more complex transition) at the point of leaving, thus making them more likely to experience unsuccessful employment outcomes longer-term. These groups include, females, ethnic minorities, wounded, injured and sick, older Service leavers etc. However, it is not only demographic and background factors that determine whether someone will have a more challenging transition. Other factors such as unrealistic expectations, no transferable skills and an inability to adapt to a civilian environment etc. also impact. This points to the need for tailored support for certain groups of individuals.

Finally, it is evident from this study (and others) that ex-Service personnel should not be treated as a homogenous mass; the experiences across this cohort are varied and nuanced. It is too simplistic to divide ex-Service personnel into two groups: those who are successful and those who are not successful. Of course these extremes exist, but for many the truth lies somewhere in the middle. Instead, success should be viewed along a continuum rather than as a dichotomy.



Section 12 – Recommendations

Based on the findings from the study, a series of recommendations have been made. In order to effect change, a collaborative approach is suggested, requiring action from Defence/Government, ex-Service personnel, employers, and Service charities. Further research is also suggested.

Recommendations are based on the premise that whilst support is needed longer-term (beyond two years) for *some* personnel, the better the support received by *all* personnel whilst in-Service/at the point of leaving *less* support will be needed by *fewer* ex-Service personnel longer-term.

These recommendations are grouped under the following headings:

- During Service.
- Resettlement support.
- Longer-term support.
- Monitoring longer-term employment outcomes.
- Future research.

12.1 – During Service

- Service personnel should seek out and make the most of opportunities to upskill/reskill whilst serving. This is to ensure that they have developed transferable skills or gained (civilian recognised) qualifications to make them attractive to potential employers. This will require Service personnel to keep abreast/develop awareness of the changing civilian job market so they can understand where their skills and qualifications fit in. In addition, getting personnel into this mindset of through-life learning, development and retraining (potentially more than once) will better prepare them for this possibility on leaving and during their civilian employment.
- The MOD, with support from the Office for Veterans' Affairs and relevant professional membership bodies, should ensure that military qualifications gained during time in service are aligned to equivalent civilian qualifications (if not already). This information should be made readily available in a Qualifications Matrix showing the civilian equivalents of each military qualification. The research team are aware that work is already being undertaken by Defence to address this. The Command Paper (Defence in a Competitive Age, MOD, 2021) has stated: *"To ensure that [Service personnel] can make effective use of the skills and qualifications they acquire in the military, we will undertake a review within the next 12 months into the professional accreditation of career courses"* (p35). Alongside this, signposting Service personnel to relevant training, to help address any gaps in qualification and accreditation in civilian employment, would further enable the serving person to understand the actions they need to take on leaving, including the associated time frames and costs.
- The MOD/CTP should bring together a community of employers who are part of the Employment Recognition Scheme¹⁸ to provide work placements for Service personnel during Service, not just two years prior to leaving. This could take the form of six-monthly work placements. Specifically, serving personnel should have work placements with civilian employers within their individual training plans, building knowledge for transition and innovation within the Armed Forces. This could be modelled on existing schemes for apprentices/graduates that employers currently offer. This will allow Service personnel to understand what the environment is like and help them to gain commercial skills and experience of civilian employment. It could also help personnel to set realistic expectations from the start and improve employer perceptions of military personnel.
- Related to the above recommendation, Defence should produce and introduce an employer package that helps employers understand rank, qualifications, experience and how military skills and experience might transfer to a civilian workplace. Wider consideration of how veterans are depicted in the media and efforts by Defence to correct inaccuracies may further enhance how veterans are perceived by society and, indirectly, by employers (Ashcroft, 2014). This is recognised by the Cabinet Office's Office for Veterans' Affairs intention to develop a communications plan to address how veterans are perceived (HM Government, 2020). Plans for dissemination of the employer package should also be included in this in order to identify target organisations and any follow up activities to embed learning.
- Transition out of the Armed Forces should start far earlier in the career of a serving person and should be supported by the Chain of Command. This should be tied into an existing life skills programme so that military personnel can acquire the skills they need for leaving throughout their military career. This should include active

¹⁸ The Employment Recognition Scheme recognises employers who have gone above and beyond their covenant pledges in providing 'exceptional' support to the Armed Forces community and defence. <https://www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk/support-and-advice/businesses/>

consideration of what success looks like, what their values are, as well as making an assessment of the complexity of transition that Service personnel could face when they leave. Ashcroft's (2014) recommendation to introduce a Personal Development Plan for Service personnel at the end of basic training, including consideration of longer-term future needs and associated actions required will help to instil this focus. This could be supplemented by a requirement for military personnel to develop and update their CV after each role change during their period of Service. This could help to embed the practice and develop understanding of how to translate military skills and experience into 'civvy speak'. It would also reduce the challenge of creating a CV for the first time at the end of Service.

- Defence should endeavour to make it possible for Service personnel to establish a life outside of the military (house, geographical location etc.) prior to leaving. Reducing the number of changes that need to occur on leaving would reduce the degree of stress or adaptation required and would allow the individual time to focus their efforts on their employment decisions. For this reason preparation for leaving should begin as early as possible. The MOD's housing policy has recently been amended to allow ex-Service personnel to stay in military accommodation for up to 12 months after discharge (HM Government, 2020) which may further provide a period of continuity during the period of transition.
- Spouses/partners of serving personnel should be supported, by the MOD, to enter employment throughout military Service to reduce risks of financial hardship (and family breakdown) at the point of leaving. Service personnel may face pay decreases or additional expenditure at the point of leaving (e.g. if moving out of military accommodation). The provision of greater stability for the entire family during Service, by enabling spousal employment and career development, could help provide financial resilience during a period of increased costs. Removing or reducing known barriers (such as childcare challenges and frequent moves) which prevent spouses/partners from seeking employment would help. This could also be supplemented with guidance in the form of advice on debt and taxes for Service personnel and their spouses/partners.

12.2 – Resettlement Support

- There are additional resettlement offerings that if provided could help ex-Service personnel both in the short and longer-term. Based on this research it is suggested that CTP should offer introductory modules/training on commercial, marketing and financial skills as part of the resettlement package. In addition, career counselling for those that struggle to identify what role or industry they wish to work in or are unsure of what options are available to them would be useful as would financial advice and support, and access to mentoring. Also, it was not uncommon for Service personnel to do something different to what they had planned on leaving. Raising awareness of this via CTP workshops may help manage expectations, as well as providing suggestions for 'next steps' should an individual find themselves in a different situation than expected. Finally, to enhance what is offered it is suggested that resettlement should occur in the location in which the Service person intends to live after leaving the Armed Forces.
- Better expectation management is required at the point of leaving with regards to the civilian labour market and the realities of a civilian workplace. This includes understanding differences in culture; job security, and career progression as well as setting expectations about pay and level of seniority (both over and under reaching). Wider impacts, such as perceived loss of status and military identity, should also be addressed to account for the impact upon the whole person. The opportunity for Service leavers to engage with military personnel who have left the Armed Forces (and been in the civilian labour market for over two years) is needed. These personnel should represent a range of transition experiences and employment outcomes. Testimonies and first-hand experiences of changing expectations will bring to life the aforementioned challenges faced. Understanding the steps taken (or not taken) by ex-Service personnel to address their challenges may further help to encourage help-seeking and understanding of adaptive and maladaptive coping strategies.
- Service personnel should take responsibility and ownership of their own resettlement. They must fully engage with the resettlement process, maximising the use of the resources available to them. This includes engaging with CTP which should be mandatory for all Service leavers. The Services should endeavour to stress the importance of preparation and uptake of resettlement activities to both the Service leaver and their Chain of Command to 'normalise' the act of leaving and counter the narrative of this period being perceived as an act of disloyalty. Resettlement activities should take some priority over their job during the last years of Service. For example, Service leavers could be allowed one day a week for resettlement activities during this time period.

- Service personnel should be provided with support at the point of resettlement that is tailored to their individual needs, rather than just based upon their rank. Whilst Service personnel must take ownership of their resettlement, there is also a need for more tailored support. Whilst some groups have already been identified as needing additional support (e.g. wounded injured sick, early Service leavers), which they receive/are directed to via a combination of CTP and the Defence Transition Services, there are other groups who are currently being missed. There are other individuals who face greater challenges (and a more complex transition) at the point of leaving, thus making them more likely to experience unsuccessful employment outcomes. These groups include, females, ethnic minorities, older Service leavers etc. However, it is not only demographic and background factors that determine whether someone will have a more challenging transition (as shown by the cause and effect diagram in Section 10 –). These individuals who need additional support should be identified via a Support Needs Index tool (see the first recommendation under Future Research, Section 12.5 –) and provided with tailored resettlement support.
- At the point of leaving Service personnel should be signposted to the Veteran’s Gateway to ensure that they are aware of the range of Service charities and the support available to them after they leave. Coupled with this, an attitude or culture of help seeking behaviour needs to start whilst still in Service. Ex-Service personnel should feel able to seek support (employment-related or otherwise) if and when needed.
- Spouses/partners of ex-Service personnel should be involved in the transition process. Information on the process and the support available for both the serving person and their spouse/partner (relevant to employment but also wider concerns such as housing, finance and welfare) should be provided by Defence directly to the spouse/partner.

12.3 – Longer-Term Support

- The UK should consider taking a similar approach to other nations who provide their ex-Service personnel with continued support after leaving the Armed Forces (not just two years post Service). The research team suggest that Defence reviews the models used by other Five Eyes nations to assess their feasibility and applicability to a UK audience and to evaluate the impact of the initiatives upon outcomes. It is highly unlikely that all personnel will need continued and significant support but the findings from this research indicate that some do and this should be made available. Given financial and practical constraints, a solution which involves the provision of support from a number of different parties (such as, Service charities, Veterans Gateway, Armed Forces champions) but is led by Defence is likely to be the best solution. This does not mean taking ownership/responsibility away from the individual, instead it means putting in place a support structure for a minority of people to use if/when required.
- Ex-Service personnel require assistance (from Service charities and employers) with adapting to a civilian workplace. This should include providing support to ex-Service personnel, in the form of coaching and mentoring, but also educating employers on how to best support military personnel in the workplace longer-term. A key challenge here will be to convince employers to invest time and effort in improving their awareness. This may be particularly pertinent for roles and industries which have a high level of competition for jobs and ready access to a supply of suitably qualified and experienced personnel already. Highlighting what makes Service personnel stand out from their civilian counterparts, and identifying those industries where their knowledge, skills and experiences are most valued is of relevance here. Translating this into CVs and job applications will be key, so that these key knowledge, skills and experiences are picked up during the selection process.
- Support from with overcoming a loss of identity and emotional detachment from the Armed Forces is needed. Again this could take the form of coaching and/or mentoring to provide ex-Service personnel with the opportunity to talk through their experiences with someone outside of their family and who understands what they are going through. Establishing an alumni association or a recent Service Leavers network that is focused upon employment and related challenges could also be another way to address this.
- Given some issues may emerge over time and can be triggered by events some years after leaving, emotional and practical support for the spouses/partners of ex-Service personnel, who often bear the brunt of the challenges that ex-Service personnel face, is needed. This may be delivered via Service charities in addition to public health and social care providers and is likely to involve information on how to support someone struggling with mental health issues.
- Service charities should consider the type of support required (and that they are able to offer) post COVID-19 (e.g. support with reskilling, retraining, emotional support etc.). The last 18 months will have had a significant

impact on the ability of Service charities to fundraise, and is likely to persist with continued focus on fundraising for the National Health Service. This may pose a risk to the support they can offer at a time when increased support with finding employment, reskilling and mental health is likely to be needed. Monitoring the output of current COVID-19 studies will help to inform next steps. In addition, Defence may need to consider the role they play in supporting ex-Service personnel longer-term if Service charities are not able to continue to provide the level of support they were previously because of COVID-19.

12.4 – Monitoring Longer-Term Employment Outcomes

- Publicly available data detailing the employment outcomes of ex-Service personnel should be captured routinely to enable trends over time to be monitored, problems identified early and any subsequent interventions effectively implemented and evaluated. The Office for Veterans' Affairs may be best placed to lead this given its role in co-ordinating functions of the UK Government and collaboration with organisations in the veteran sector. This output from the analysis should be easily accessible to personnel working in the area of veteran employment. Specifically, it is suggested that:
 - The ONS should re-introduce the veteran questions to the Annual Population Survey.
 - The veteran questions in the APS should be used by the ONS to create quarterly or annual labour market tables for veterans and distribute them via nomis (the ONS's free service providing access to official UK labour market statistics)
 - The ONS should explore the potential for producing regular information on ex-Service personnel by linking the 2021 Census of Population, Annual Population Survey and administrative data (Service Leavers Database).
 - The ONS should revise the 2020 Standard Occupational Classification to split the occupation codes relevant to the Armed Forces in order to allow NCOs/SNCOs to be identified. This would provide a more granular level of data, allowing differences to be identified and any interventions appropriately targeted.
- The 'soft' employment outcomes of ex-Service personnel (i.e. satisfaction with work) should also be gathered and monitored on a continual basis by the Office for Veterans' Affairs. It is suggested that an online veteran attitude/employment survey is established to do this. Data from a sample of all veterans (beyond the two year point) should be gathered on an annual basis. This data should be reported in the public domain (like the Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey) and could be used to update the Governments Veterans' Strategy (HM Government, 2020).

12.5 – Future Research

- The definition of success and the cause and effect ('fishbone') analysis proposed by this research (see Section 10 –) should be tested and evaluated. Further data collection and subsequent analysis using statistical techniques to determine the factors that best predict employment outcomes should be conducted in order to refine the fishbone model. An assessment of how the definition of success (developed during this research) applies across the community of ex-Service personnel should be further explored. This should be with a view to developing a Support Needs Index tool which enables early identification of those Service leavers that need greatest support to ensure they receive it.
- More research in this area is needed. Specifically, a longitudinal study of ex-Service personnel (and their families) should be conducted to fully understand employment outcomes (and wider challenges) in the longer-term. It is evident from the literature that there is a gap in knowledge when it comes to understanding the longer-term employment outcomes of ex-Service personnel in the UK. Although this study has taken an important step forward in addressing this gap, a longitudinal study would allow changes over time to be captured and would avoid any misremembering by participants. A longitudinal study would also enable the Office for Veterans' Affairs to measure the success of any new initiatives and whether the Strategy for Our Veterans Employment goal has been achieved.

Whilst many of these recommendations are new, others are not. Problems persist, and whilst activity is underway to mitigate some of them, issues remain unresolved. This may be because the responsibility lies with multiple organisations; or no one is being held to account. In addition, resource constraints and practical challenges in tracking and contacting veterans act as barriers. In order to drive change, organisations (and individuals within them) need to 'sign up', prioritise and agree objectives and goals, and be made accountable for their actions. It is suggested that one way to do this would

be to identify and assign an owner for each recommendation. This should be someone who is in a position of influence who is enabled to make decisions and facilitate the change, but can also be held accountable. The UK Governments' Veterans' Strategy Action Plan (HM Government, 2020) outlines a number of commitments to be achieved by end of 2021, including target dates and allocation of a lead for each target. This action plan should be updated post 2021 with the recommendations made in this report. Progress over the next 10 years should be monitored and reported on an annual basis with evaluations conducted to establish any barriers or facilitators to implementation as well as the outcomes associated with the actions taken.



Section 13 – References

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Appendix A – Employment Statistics Additional Data Tables

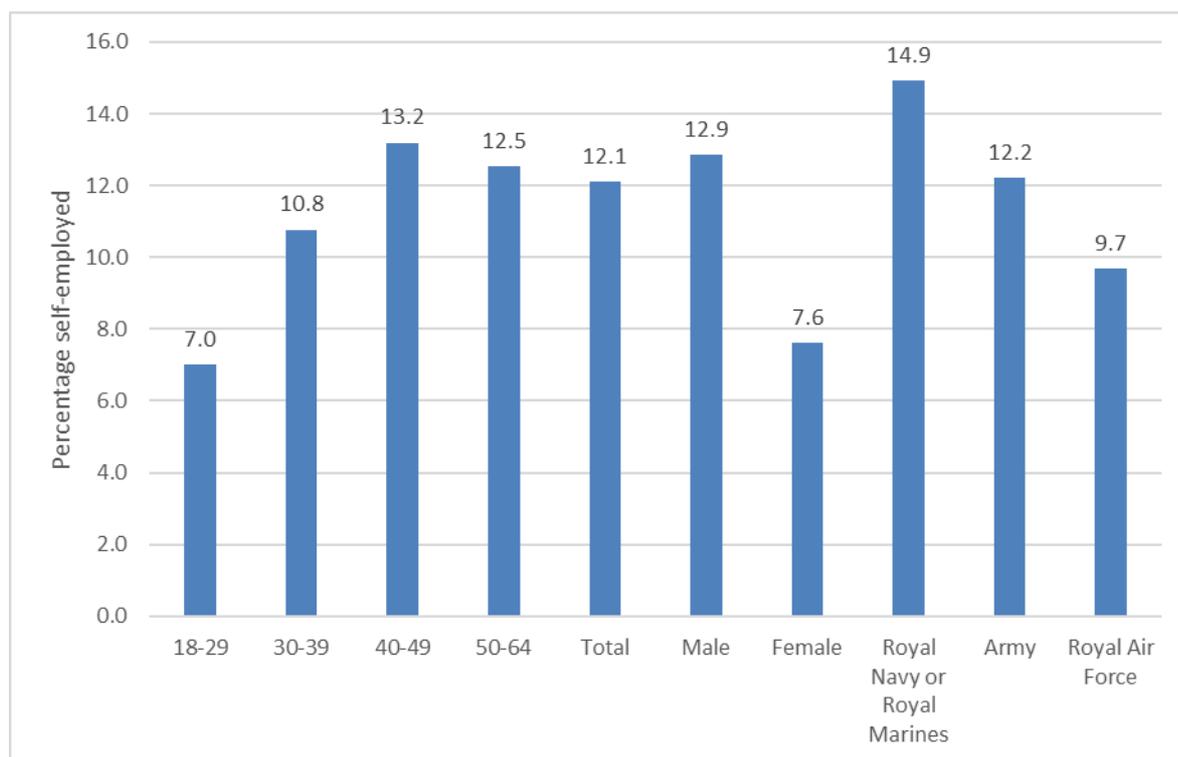


Figure A1: Percentage self-employed by age, gender and Service

Source: ONS three-year Annual Population Survey, 2016-2018.

Table A1: Economic activity of working age veterans in England and Wales using Census data as of 27 March 2011

Economic activity	Number	Rate
All veterans of working age, 2011	745,750	
Economically active	652,110	87.4
In work	614,480	82.4
Full-time employee (excluding full-time students)	475,635	
Part-time employee (excluding full-time students)	46,810	
Self-employed (excluding full-time students)	87,720	
Unemployed (including full-time students)	37,630	5.8
Full-time students, in employment	3,830	
Full-time students, self-employed	485	
Economically inactive	93,630	12.6
Retired	33,605	
Student	4,355	
Looking after home/family	9,225	
Permanently sick/disabled	38,270	
Other	8,175	

Source: 2011 Census of Population

Table A2: Breakdown of economic inactivity (column percentage of all veterans for each group)

	Age group					Gender		Service		
	18-29	30-39	40-49	50-54	18-64	Male	Female	Navy/Marines	Army	RAF
All economically inactive	12.1	10.0	9.9	24.3	18.3	17.0	25.9	19.2	18.8	15.9
<i>Not seeking but would like work</i>										
Looking after family/home	-	-	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.6	1.6	-	0.7	-
Temporarily sick or injured	-	-	-	-	0.2	0.2	-	-	-	-
Long-term sick	-	1.8	2.5	3.5	2.9	2.9	2.5	3.0	3.2	1.6
Not yet looking	-	-	-	0.3	0.2	0.2	-	-	-	-
Retired	-	-	-	0.3	0.2	0.2	-	-	-	-
Other reason	-	-	-	0.4	0.3	0.3	-	-	0.3	-
<i>Not seeking, and do not want work</i>										
Looking after family/home	-	2.2	1.4	1.8	1.8	1.3	4.6	1.4	1.9	1.2
Temporarily sick or injured	-	-	-	0.3	0.2	0.2	-	-	-	-
Long-term sick	-	2.9	3.0	6.4	4.8	4.9	4.1	3.2	6.0	2.6
Does not need job	-	-	-	1.3	0.8	0.6	1.7	1.1	0.6	0.9
Retired	-	-	-	7.7	4.5	3.9	8.0	6.6	3.7	6.3
Other reason	-	-	-	0.4	0.4	0.4	-	-	0.4	-
Economically inactive (000s)	7.0	11.6	20.8	123.9	163.2	129.5	33.8	29.6	82.7	22.0

Source: ONS three-year Annual Population Survey, 2016-2018 (weighted to population)

Table A3: Employment of veterans by Industry section and age group, 2016-2018, Great Britain

SIC 2007 Industry Section	Persons	% of employment in age group			
		Aged 18-29	Aged 30-39	Aged 40-49	Aged 50+
A Agriculture, forestry and fishing	2,847	0.5	0.7	0.6	0.4
B Mining and quarrying	6,327	0.0	1.9	1.5	0.7
C Manufacturing	80,203	14.8	15.2	13.4	13.1
D Electricity, gas, air cond supply	8,357	2.7	1.1	1.9	1.1
E Water supply, sewerage, waste	11,469	1.2	2.4	2.0	1.9
F Construction	62,280	16.0	15.0	9.7	9.0
G Wholesale, retail, repair of vehicles	52,551	12.3	10.5	7.4	8.8
H Transport and storage	69,471	7.5	10.9	9.6	13.7
I Accommodation and food services	12,284	7.6	1.4	1.6	1.9
J Information and communication	18,806	1.6	2.1	3.7	3.4
K Financial and insurance activities	12,980	2.3	2.6	2.6	1.9
L Real estate activities	3,605	0.0	0.2	0.7	0.8
M Prof, scientific, technical activ.	32,756	1.0	3.9	6.0	6.4
N Admin and support services	36,036	5.2	5.6	6.2	6.3
O Public admin and defence	68,893	10.4	8.8	13.6	11.7
P Education	31,521	2.1	5.6	5.5	5.6
Q Health and social work	54,052	10.2	8.0	8.6	9.7
R Arts, entertainment and recreation	12,518	3.4	1.7	2.8	1.7
S Other service activities	11,316	1.4	2.2	2.0	1.9
U Extraterritorial organisations	585	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.0
All industries (=100%)	588,857	38,078	88,481	156,250	306,048

Source: Three-year ONS Annual Population Survey, 2016-2018.

Table A4: Employment of veterans by occupation and gender, 2016-2018, Great Britain

SOC sub-major groups	Persons	Male	Female	Persons	% male
Corporate Managers And Directors	57,986	10.0	9.1	9.9	90.4
Other Managers And Proprietors	16,047	2.7	2.8	2.7	89.4
Science, Engineering, Tech Professionals	35,154	6.5	2.1	6.0	96.4
Health Professionals	15,225	1.2	14.5	2.6	41.7
Teaching And Educational Professionals	10,640	1.6	3.5	1.8	79.9
Business, Media And Public Service Professionals	23,781	3.9	5.0	4.1	87.1
Science, Engineering, Tech Associate Prof	15,329	2.9	0.0	2.6	100.0
Health And Social Care Associate Professionals	8,487	1.2	3.4	1.4	75.6
Protective Service Occupations	29,300	5.3	2.2	5.0	95.4
Culture, Media And Sports Occupations	7,306	1.4	0.0	1.2	100.0
Business, Public Service Associate Prof	50,342	8.5	9.1	8.6	88.9
Administrative Occupations	25,210	2.9	16.0	4.3	61.2
Secretarial And Related Occupations	3,163	0.1	4.1	0.5	19.7
Skilled Agricultural And Related Trades	5,313	1.0	0.0	0.9	100.0
Skilled Metal, Electrical, Electronic Trades	45,484	8.7	0.0	7.8	100.0

SOC sub-major groups	Persons	Male	Female	Persons	% male
Skilled Construction And Building Trades	31,299	6.0	0.0	5.3	100.0
Textiles, Printing And Other Skilled Trades	11,019	1.9	1.4	1.9	92.3
Caring Personal Service Occupations	20,543	2.4	13.2	3.5	60.5
Leisure, Travel And Related Personal Services	5,664	1.0	0.4	1.0	95.9
Sales Occupations	13,814	1.9	5.9	2.4	73.8
Customer Service Occupations	6,216	1.1	0.8	1.1	92.2
Process, Plant And Machine Operatives	24,702	4.7	0.0	4.2	100.0
Transport and Drivers and Operatives	69,240	13.1	0.4	11.8	99.7
Elementary Trades and Related Occupations	8,977	1.7	0.0	1.5	100.0
Elementary Administration And Service Occupations	46,087	8.0	6.3	7.9	91.6
All occupations (=100%)	586,328				89.5

Source: Three-year ONS Annual Population Survey, 2016-2018.

Table A5: Employment of veterans by occupation and age group, 2016-2018, Great Britain

SIC sub-major groups	Persons	% of employment in age group			
		Aged 18-29	Aged 30-39	Aged 40-49	Aged 50+
Corporate Managers And Directors	57,986	1.2	8.3	11.0	10.9
Other Managers And Proprietors	16,047	0.0	1.4	2.4	3.6
Science, Engineering, Tech Professionals	35,154	2.2	6.6	7.0	5.8
Health Professionals	15,225	1.5	2.4	2.9	2.7
Teaching And Educational Professionals	10,640	0.0	1.0	2.5	1.9
Business, Media And Public Service Professionals	23,781	1.2	3.2	4.9	4.2
Science, Engineering, Tech Associate Prof	15,329	2.3	3.6	2.7	2.3
Health And Social Care Associate Professionals	8,487	3.0	0.4	1.8	1.4
Protective Service Occupations	29,300	6.8	6.2	7.5	3.2
Culture, Media And Sports Occupations	7,306	2.2	1.2	1.7	0.9
Business, Public Service Associate Prof	50,342	7.9	9.8	9.6	7.8
Administrative Occupations	25,210	5.2	3.6	3.6	4.8
Secretarial And Related Occupations	3,163	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.9
Skilled Agricultural And Related Trades	5,313	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.2
Skilled Metal, Electrical, Electronic Trades	45,484	11.4	10.1	7.8	6.6
Skilled Construction And Building Trades	31,299	9.4	7.2	5.3	4.3
Textiles, Printing And Other Skilled Trades	11,019	1.0	0.9	1.9	2.2
Caring Personal Service Occupations	20,543	4.9	4.4	3.2	3.2
Leisure, Travel And Related Personal Services	5,664	0.0	0.2	0.6	1.5
Sales Occupations	13,814	4.4	2.4	1.7	2.4
Customer Service Occupations	6,216	1.4	1.2	1.2	0.9
Process, Plant And Machine Operatives	24,702	7.7	6.0	3.4	3.7

SIC sub-major groups	Persons	% of employment in age group			
		Aged 18-29	Aged 30-39	Aged 40-49	Aged 50+
Transport And Drivers And Operatives	69,240	9.3	10.9	10.3	13.1
Elementary Trades And Related Occupations	8,977	4.4	2.4	0.9	1.3
Elementary Administration And Service Occupations	46,087	12.5	6.7	4.7	9.2
All occupations (=100%)	586,328	38,535	86,359	154,890	306,544

Source: Three-year ONS Annual Population Survey, 2016-2018.

Table A6: Length of time working for current employer (column percentages for each group)

Length of time with current employer	Age group					Gender		Service		
	18-29	30-39	40-49	50-54	18-64	Male	Female	Navy/ Marines	Army	RAF
Less than 3 months	12.6	6.6	3.3	2.2	3.8	3.9	3.4	2.8	4.3	4.6
3 months but less than 6	9.2	5.1	5.8	3.3	4.6	4.4	6.1	3.0	5.7	3.7
6 months but less than 12	17.6	8.7	7.0	5.4	7.1	7.2	6.7	6.6	8.1	4.5
1 year but less than 2	21.4	15.7	10.1	7.3	10.2	9.8	13.3	11.5	9.9	11.1
2 years but less than 5	29.1	27.9	21.8	17.0	20.6	21.0	18.3	19.1	21.6	21.9
5 years but less than 10	8.8	20.3	16.6	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.3	17.3	16.2	18.0
10 years but less than 20	0.0	15.6	26.2	26.9	23.3	23.4	22.9	24.5	22.2	24.5
20 years or more	0.0	0.0	9.1	21.2	13.6	13.7	13.0	15.2	12.0	11.6
Total (000s)	47.2	101.0	183.9	366.5	698.6	604.8	93.8	120.3	338.5	110.6

Source: ONS three-year Annual Population Survey, 2016-2018.



Appendix B – Demographic and Background Data

Below is a more detailed breakdown of demographic and background data tables from the online survey, outlining the number (N) and percentage (%) of ex-Service personnel who responded to each item.

B.1 – Service background

Table B1: Service at time of leaving

Service	N	%
Army	321	60.1
RAF	115	21.5
Royal Navy	82	15.4
Royal Marines	16	3.0
Total	534	100.0

Table B2: Rank at time of leaving

	Officers		SNCO/NCO/Other Ranks		Total
	N	%	N	%	N
Army	71	22.1	250	77.9	321
RAF	27	23.5	88	76.5	115
Royal Navy	17	20.7	65	79.3	82
Royal Marines	3	18.8	13	81.3	16
Total	118	-	416	-	534

	N	%
Officers	118	22.1
SNCO/NCO/Other Ranks	416	77.9
Total	534	100.0

Table B3: Year of leaving the Armed Forces

Year of leaving the Armed Forces	N	%
2010	20	3.7
2011	43	8.1
2012	77	14.4
2013	66	12.4
2014	54	10.1
2015	62	11.6
2016	70	13.1
2017	65	12.2
2018	77	14.4
Total	534	100.0

Table B4: Length of service

Length of service (years)	N	%
1	2	0.4
2	2	0.4
3	2	0.4
4	5	0.9
5	13	2.4
6	25	4.7
7	20	3.8
8	25	4.7
9	26	4.9
10	15	2.8
11	6	1.1
12	26	4.9
13	16	3.0
14	9	1.7
15	12	2.3
16	16	3.0
17	20	3.8
18	14	2.6
19	11	2.1
20	9	1.7
21	12	2.3
22	64	12.0
23	31	5.8
24	42	7.9
25	23	4.3
26	10	1.9
27	11	2.1
28	11	2.1
29	8	1.5
30	8	1.5
31	4	0.8
32	5	0.9
33	2	0.4
34	4	0.8
35	5	0.9
36	3	0.6
37	5	0.9
38	5	0.9
39	5	0.9
Total	532	100.1

Table B5: Reason for leaving

	N	%
Left early voluntarily	187	35.0
At end of contract	182	34.1
Left early because of ill health or injury	95	17.8
Other	44	8.2
Left early because of redundancy	26	4.9
Total	534	100.0

B.2 – Demographic profile

Table B6: Gender

	N	%
Male	447	83.7
Female	67	12.5
Not Specified	20	3.7
Total	534	99.9

Table B7: Age

Age	N	%
18-20 years	0	0
21-29 years	19	3.6
30-39 years	142	26.6
40-49 years	219	41.0
50-60 years	149	27.9
Not specified	5	0.9
Total	534	100.0

Table B8: Ethnic group

Ethnicity	N	%
White	497	93.1
Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups	9	1.7
Asian/Asian British	4	0.7
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	14	2.6
Other Ethnic Group	1	0.2
Not specified	9	1.7
Total	534	100.0

Table B9: Location

Location	N	%
Scotland	74	13.9
Northern Ireland	10	1.9
Wales	14	2.6
North East	45	8.4
North West	43	8.1
Yorkshire and the Humber	33	6.2
West Midlands	36	6.7
East Midlands	46	8.6
South West	96	18.0
South East	72	13.5
East	20	3.7
London	23	4.3
Not specified/prefer not to say	22	4.1
Total	534	100.0

Table B10: Highest qualification

Qualifications	N	%
No qualifications	7	1.3
1-4 O levels / CSEs /GCSEs (any grades) Entry Level, Foundation Diploma	27	5.1
5+ O levels (passes) / CSEs (grade 1) / GCSEs (grades A-C*), School Certificate, 1 A level / 2-3 AS Levels / VCEs, Higher Diploma	18	3.4
2+ A levels / VCEs, 4+ AS levels, Higher School Certificate, Progression / Advanced Diploma	11	2.1
NVQ level 1, Foundation GNVQ, Basic Skills	7	1.3
NVQ level 2 Intermediate GNVQ, City and Guilds Craft, BTEC First / General Diploma, RSA Diploma	32	6.0
NVQ level 3, Advanced GNVQ, City and Guilds Advanced Craft, ONC, OND, BTEC National, RSA Advanced Diploma	63	11.8
NVQ level 4-5, HNC, HND,, RSA Higher Diploma, BTEC Higher Level	103	19.3
Degree (e.g. BA, BSc)	105	19.7
Higher Degree (e.g. MA, PhD, PGCE)	90	16.9
Professional qualifications (e.g. nursing, teaching, accountancy)	25	4.7
Apprenticeship	5	0.9
Other vocational / work-related qualifications	38	7.1
Foreign qualifications	2	0.4
Not specified	1	0.2
Total	534	100.2

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