

Post-Service Employment among ex-Service personnel and their partners:

A synthesis of current policy and service provision

To help ensure that evidence is at the heart of decision making for the benefit of ex-Service personnel and their families, the Forces in Mind Trust (FiMT) Research Centre has committed to producing thematic research and policy summaries. These are intended to inform both policy and practice, as well as future research.

This synthesis summarises current employment policy and support provision for United Kingdom (UK) ex-Service personnel and their families in the civilian labour market. It was produced using a robust methodology, including a narrative literature review of academic and grey literature alongside stakeholder consultations. It was also subject to peer-review. Further information about the methodology used is provided in the accompanying full report.

Key Findings



Statutory employment support for ex-Service personnel is available across the UK. Policy initiatives like the *Veterans' Strategy Action Plan* (UK), the *Veterans Scoping Exercise - Employment* (Wales), and the *Strategy for Our Veterans - Refreshed Action Plan* (Scotland) enhance support cohesiveness.



Dedicated employment support is available through comprehensive resettlement and recruitment programmes, with the Career Transition Partnership (CTP) at the centre. Progress has been made in addressing devolved nations' needs, although concerns remain about service accessibility and effectiveness in Northern Ireland and Wales.



A growing number of programmes engage with the business community to establish structured employment pathways. An example is Op PROSPER, which seeks to create pathways to high-skilled roles in key sectors across the UK.



Limited evidence exists of robust evaluations of statutory and non-statutory employment support services. The new CTP contract presents a timely opportunity to integrate a comprehensive independent evaluation process.



A lack of publicly available longitudinal data on the employment experiences and trajectories of ex-Service personnel and their partners, including skills, career aspirations, and long-term outcomes, hinders the ability to tailor support effectively.



Despite numerous initiatives led by third sector and private organisations, there remains a need for a comprehensive directory to assist ex-Service personnel in identifying and navigating relevant support.



The employment needs of partners and families of ex-Service personnel are increasingly recognised, with initiatives aimed at capitalising on military family talent. However, the landscape of employment support for this group is often confusing, with potential for gaps and overlaps.



While initiatives like CTP Future Horizons and the Veterans' Career Development Fund support specific groups, evidence indicates that ex-Servicewomen, individuals aged 50+, Early Service Leavers (ESL), LGBT+ ex-Service personnel, those with health needs, and those from minoritised ethnic backgrounds continue to face significant employment barriers in the civilian job market.

Recommendations



Further efforts are necessary to map both statutory and non-statutory employment support services available to ex-Service personnel throughout the UK and to present this information in a comprehensive and accessible directory that is regularly reviewed and updated.



Regular, independent evaluations of statutory and non-statutory services are required to assess their impact and identify areas for improvement.



CTP and relevant government bodies should collect longitudinal employment data on ex-Service personnel, including quantitative and qualitative insights on employment experiences and career trajectories.



An exploration into what may be preventing certain groups of ex-Service personnel, as well as employers, from engaging with CTP and other available services is necessary. Investigating how factors affecting engagement—including geographical barriers—may also influence transition outcomes and comparing long-term employment results between users and non-users of CTP and other services would help identify and address potential disparities.



While there has been progress, further efforts could be implemented to ensure a more even distribution of support across the UK, particularly in Northern Ireland and Wales, with tailored strategies to meet the specific needs of each devolved nation.



Developing new tailored initiatives that address the unique challenges of ex-Servicewomen, those aged 50+, ESL, LGBT+ ex-Service personnel, those with health needs, and minoritised ethnic groups are essential to enable and support their access to sustainable and fulfilling employment.



Enhancing coordination and collaboration among statutory and non-statutory providers is required to create a more cohesive employment support network for partners and families of ex-Service personnel. Improving signposting and communication is necessary to ensure resources are accessible and easier to navigate.



The unique employment challenges faced by partners should be further explored to help develop tailored programmes and address potential gaps in provision, particularly for partners from diverse family structures, ethnic minorities, those of non-UK origin, and families of the wounded, injured, and sick.



Expanding the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) to be UK-wide could enhance effective communication and promotion of military-acquired skills to civilian employers, improving employment access and career progression.



It is essential to conduct research into the experiences, views, and long-term outcomes of ex-Service personnel engaging with private sector employment services and career placements.



Exploring cultural and identity challenges encountered during transitions is needed to better understand adaptation processes to civilian work environments and inform the development of targeted support and integration strategies.

This infographic summarises research from *Post-Service Employment among ex-Service personnel and their partners: Policy Summary*, available from <https://www.fimt-rc.org/policy-and-practice/employment>

FiMT Research Centre

forces in mind trust

The Forces in Mind Trust (FiMT) Research Centre aims to ensure that evidence about the experiences and needs of Serving personnel, ex-Service personnel, and their families is at the heart of decision making so that it can inform and transform policy and practice to enable successful transition to civilian life post-Service. The FiMT Research Centre is run by a consortium of RAND Europe and the King's Centre for Military Health Research at King's College London, under a grant agreement with the Forces in Mind Trust until 2027. For more information: <https://www.fimt-rc.org>.



The research centre is funded by Forces in Mind Trust, an independent UK Trust supported by the National Lottery Community Fund.

Published by the FiMT Research Centre on the 18th October 2024.

Authors: Dr Olatz Ribera Almandoz and Dr Mary Keeling (on behalf of the FiMT Research Centre)

Acknowledgements: We extend our sincere thanks to the organisations and individuals who contributed evidence and validated the initial findings for this summary. Special appreciation goes to Professor Nicola T. Fear and Ruth Harris for their valuable peer review. Any errors or inconsistencies which remain are our own.

© RAND Europe (2024)

Limited Print and Electronic Distribution Rights

This publication and trademark(s) contained herein are protected by law. This representation of RAND intellectual property is provided for noncommercial use only. Unauthorised posting of this publication online is prohibited; linking directly to its webpage on rand.org is encouraged. Permission is required from RAND to reproduce, or reuse in another form, any of its research products for commercial purposes. For information on reprint and reuse permissions, please visit www.rand.org/pubs/permissions.

RAND® is a registered trademark.