



Joining Forces

A holistic approach to the resettlement of ex-Service personnel


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Foundation

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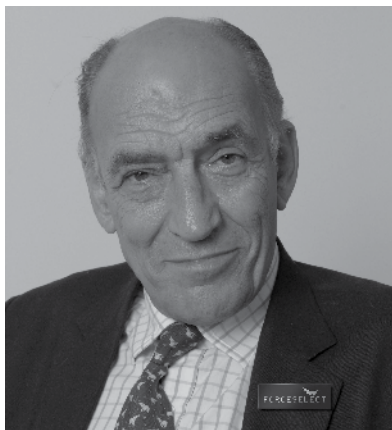
The **employment**
and **skills** group





Foreword	4
Note from the sponsor	5
Executive summary	6
A holistic approach to resettlement	10
Life in the Services	11
Getting ready for “civvy street”	14
Life after Service	17
Recommendations	20
Acknowledgements	24
Annexes	25

Foreword



General Sir Mike Jackson, Head of Trustees, ForceSelect Foundation

Regardless of how long – or short – your time in uniform has been, the transition back in to the civilian world from whence we all came is a daunting and potentially hugely unsettling experience. I know – I’ve done it! For those, like me, who serve a full career, there are a mass of hurdles to be cleared – hurdles which may well have been largely invisible to us throughout our Service life.

Housing is often something a Serviceman or woman has given little thought to while they have been serving. Health care will have been provided free of charge and very often quite literally on the doorstep. Whichever Service we have been part of will have given us first class training and education for the part we played in uniform, but that won’t necessarily be what’s needed for life outside – and simply having been on the move for the greater proportion of your adult life can play havoc with your credit

rating. Meanwhile, for the Early Service Leaver (ESL) the challenges can be just as serious. This report highlights the depressing numbers of those who leave the Services without qualifying for formal resettlement training who all too often fall through the cracks, ending up at best long-term unemployed and at worst on the wrong side of the law.

Of course getting this right is not only in the best interests of the individuals concerned, it also forms a critical part of the Services’ wider duty of care to their people. But it also goes much deeper than that. If we can mobilise a broad-based approach to improving the way in which our Service Leavers are resettled back in to the civilian world through a more joined up response from Government, from the Services themselves, and from those business partners who have the requisite skills and understanding to bridge the gap, the country can really capitalise on the investment that these fine men and women represent. But only if it can be fully realised.

So, I commend this report to you. Read the journey that Chris and Tom, our two fictional Service Leavers have made, hoist in the lessons that their experiences have highlighted and let us – together – set about improving the resettlement opportunities available for them and the many thousands like them, such that they and society as a whole can benefit.



Note from the sponsor



Gavin Freed, Chief Executive Officer, esg.

As a leading provider of vocational skills, Apprenticeships and employment services in the UK, we are regularly supporting ex-Service personnel to integrate back into society through enhancing skills, qualifications and finding Service Leavers sustained work. As a Work Programme Prime Contractor **esg.** supports over 15,000 people a year from some of the most deprived communities in the UK to enter sustained employment. **esg.** also delivers further education and vocational qualifications to support the learning and career progression of over 20,000 students, mostly 16-24 year olds, in our 13 training centres located across England.

All too often in our experience ex-Service personnel, especially younger Early Service Leavers, are at risk of becoming long term unemployed and falling between the cracks within society. **esg.** believes that Government has a bigger role to play to secure decent futures for all our Service Leavers. **esg.** believes

that special care should be given to those most vulnerable and at risk of becoming long-term unemployed.

As a social purpose company whose aim is to deliver tangible outcomes in education and employment, **esg.** welcomes the findings of this report. We hope that Government will re-examine the disparate and often inconsistent support available to Service Leavers through a multitude of agencies, for example the Career Transition Partnership, Jobcentre Plus and the Work Programme, the skills offer from Young Persons Learning Agency and Skills Funding Agency, the NHS, local authority housing services etc; and decide that a holistic “joined up” solution is the way forward in line with the recommendations of the **ForceSelect Foundation.**

esg. is working collaboratively with our partner ForceSelect, to develop leading edge solutions for Service Leavers looking for resettlement. ForceSelect is a specialist ex-military recruitment consultancy which has helped hundreds of Service Leavers find meaningful civilian employment. **Forceesg:** Training, Opportunity, Support - as our partnership will be known - unites the case management, unemployment and skills services of **esg.** with the Armed Forces recruitment expertise of ForceSelect. Our solutions will offer Service Leavers a resettlement package designed to meet the future demands and challenges that resettlement will bring over the coming years.

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Training Opportunity Support

Executive summary

The ForceSelect Foundation was established as a registered charity in June 2010 to fund smaller military focused charities at a time when many were finding it difficult to maintain their vital services; and to provide an independent view on issues arising for military Servicemen and women. A variety of fundraising events have been undertaken to date, with over £200,000 raised so far. The Foundation also receives a proportion of ForceSelect's annual profits.

The background to our report

With a stalling European economy, housing shortages and a difficult local jobs market especially for younger people, the environment for Service Leavers (SL) is more challenging than ever before. The ForceSelect Foundation has prepared this report to offer Government evidence-based solutions to some of the serious problems set to affect Service Leavers over the coming years. It is our intention through this paper, to promote the commissioning of a more robust resettlement service based on the highly individual needs of all Service Leavers and their families, local labour markets and the wider social context they will enter after leaving their career in the Armed Forces.

The Foundation has utilised the resources of ForceSelect, our sponsor **esg.**, and a range of stakeholders to provide data, views and research to inform this report. The Foundation has used a variety of tools to create a research methodology; primarily:

- Data from ForceSelect's database of over 6,000 Service Leavers
- In depth forums with a wide cross section of ex Ministry of Defence (MoD) personnel
- Detailed discussion with a group of 20 Early Service Leavers
- 1:1 interviews with Servicemen and women during their termination period

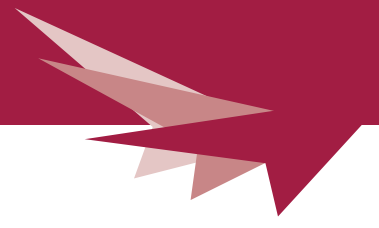
- Confidential telephone questionnaires with a sample group of 100 Service Leavers from Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines
- Supporting information from various documents and existing research papers

This research programme provided the Foundation with a detailed understanding of the common issues faced by Early Service Leavers (ESL), Service Leavers, long service personnel and their respective families. The collection of real life experience allied to the knowledge of the Foundation and the experience of ForceSelect has provided the backbone to this report. To illustrate the data we have collected, the report will focus on two fictional "life stories" of Tom and Chris – two Servicemen with different backgrounds, personal issues and length of service. These fictional journeys through a life in Service and subsequent transition to "civvy street" are the result of blending the most frequently recorded issues and common experiences discovered in our research for the main groups.

The report focuses on Tom and Chris' journey to civilian life in three identified phases:

- "Life in the Services" – Tom and Chris' time in Service
- "Getting ready for civvy street" – the activity during their termination period
- "Life after Service" – Tom and Chris' experience of their transition to civilian life

The report then provides the Foundation's response to the challenges of each of the above phases, as discovered by the research programme, and makes recommendations to Government on how to deal with them.



The main challenges facing our Service Leavers

1. Training and skills

The Foundation understands that vocational or “trade” training is a large part of life in the Forces and that the current system provides grants for accredited skills for Service personnel and for leavers. This is of course the correct policy and the uptake of vocational training should be encouraged for all in Service.

However based on our research, the Foundation must question if this policy is being applied in the right way.

The major questions raised by the research are:

- How can qualifications and training gained in Service be better aligned and translated to those recognised in the civilian world?
- Does the current system optimise the chances for Service Leavers of securing employment?
- Once in employment, does the reality of the job match the perceptions created whilst in Service?
- Is the plethora of courses available really linked to tangible employment opportunities?
- Could employers work in greater partnership with the Armed Forces to design job specific training programmes during the transition period?
- How employable are our Service Leavers from day one of their civilian life?

2. Redundancy and the local labour market

The Foundation knows that sustained employment is crucial to the effective transition back into civilian life for Service Leavers. With recruitment activity in the private sector slower than expected, a contracting public sector jobs market and forthcoming redundancies in the Forces; getting and keeping a job is going to

be more difficult for Service Leavers than ever before.

Whilst the Foundation understands that we are in unique economic circumstances and that Government has little choice but to cut public spending and rationalise departments, the redundancy of between 17,000 and 22,000¹ Armed Forces personnel over the next 4 years is unprecedented. This figure combined with the regular forecasted volume of Service Leavers means that we are expecting a total in excess of 90,000 leavers from the Forces over the next four years. When you take into account the challenges of our current economic environment; you understand the scale of the employment challenge faced by ex-Service personnel.

Of course the outlook for employment varies dramatically between regions and in many cases between sub-regions. The familiar picture of a more attractive jobs market in the South East, higher GDP in the South West etc. is indeed true; however the regional perspective often does not paint the fullest picture, especially for Early Service Leavers. Like our Early Service Leaver Tom, these are often young men, in many cases from deprived wards² that sometimes offer a stark contrast to the regional average. These Service Leavers move back to their local areas where often jobs are not readily available and can easily slip into bad habits and worklessness. In the areas like the North East where Tom originates from, there has been a huge reliance on public sector jobs and this area, in particular, is where MoD recruits a significant proportion of Servicemen and women from the local community. Finding a new career will be increasingly difficult for Service Leavers across the UK, unless there is considerable expansion in private sector employment opportunity.

¹ Taylor, C. (2011) In Brief: Armed Forces Redundancies, Internal Affairs and Defence Section, House of Commons Library [online]. Available from: www.parliament.uk/briefing-papers/SN05951.pdf [Accessed on 5 December 2011]

² Gee, D. (2007) “Informed choice? Armed forces recruitment practice in the United Kingdom”, The Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust [online]. Available from: <http://www.informedchoice.org.uk/informedchoice/index.php> [Accessed on 19 November 2011]

3. Housing

Housing shortages are an issue for the whole of society, not just for military Service Leavers. However the pressure on ex-Service personnel with new build housing projects stalling, developments cancelled or oversubscribed social housing schemes, is mounting.

The Foundation found that the housing challenges faced by Service Leavers were wide ranging and included:

- Over a third of our surveyed Service Leavers hadn't made (or been encouraged to make) adequate financial provision for house purchase or rental deposit
- Many had issues with their credit score especially those serving abroad as the BFPO post code is not recognised; this then created difficulties with mortgage applications and private rental
- Many Service Leavers stated that they were not eligible to apply to housing associations
- Many Service Leavers reported that there was lots of external support from charities and hostels for those with drug, alcohol or mental health issues, but very little help available for those without these issues.

4. Welfare and families

Leaving the Forces is often as difficult for the family as it is the Service Leaver themselves. With the stress of job searching, loss of housing, loss of the immediate network of friends, children having to find new schools and the change in family finances – it is no wonder that many Service Leavers reported family break ups to our researchers.

The MoD does provide support through various welfare services in each of the Armed Forces. However this support is only available for each unit of the family whilst living 'on the patch'; when this support is no longer available it can cause major issues, including depression, anxiety and relationship breakdown.

There are numerous charities which specialise in supporting welfare issues for ex-Service personnel, however there is no "through the gate" service and it is often during the initial stages of the transition into civilian life where problems take root.

The Foundation found that the welfare challenges faced by Service Leavers were wide ranging and included:

- Over a quarter of Service Leavers surveyed stated that they experienced difficulties getting children into school
- The majority of Service Leavers stated that they were unsure of the benefit regime and their own entitlements once they had left the Forces
- Almost a third said they looked for work without the support of unemployment benefits, as they were too proud to sign on
- The majority of Service Leavers with families reported that their transition to "civvy street" put undue pressure on the relationship with their spouse



What's the way forward?

The ForceSelect Foundation believes that by making some adjustments and additions to the current system, not only can a better service be provided for Service Leavers, but this can create efficiencies across Government. We believe that an improved resettlement process for Service Leavers will reduce the Department for Work and Pensions' (DWP) welfare bills, local authority costs, reliance on NHS services, and Ministry of Justice (MoJ) expenditure.

The Foundation details its suggestions in the recommendations section towards the end of this document. Although the Foundation believes that improvement to the service is morally "the right thing to do", the report objectively argues that enhancing resettlement does actually provide not just a benefit for Service Leavers but for society as a whole. With this in mind, the Foundation does not see this issue being solely an MoD "dilemma";

although we understand that as the MoD is the major stakeholder then it must be the lead accountable body in the design of any future commissioning. The challenge is therefore a Government-wide issue. The ForceSelect Foundation believes that for frontline provision to be most effective Government must take a more holistic approach with the MoD working in partnership with the Department of Health (DoH), Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) to join up thinking and formulate the most appropriate strategies.



A holistic approach to resettlement

Based on our research, the ForceSelect Foundation believes that a more holistic or “cradle to grave” approach to resettlement is the best solution for Government. This would start whilst in service, provide support throughout the termination period and continue for a period into civilian life. To illustrate our findings the report below follows and comments on two fictional case studies of Servicemen and their experience of life in the Forces. Both life stories are blended from real life experience gathered in discussions, surveys and interviews with Service Leavers as part of our research programme for this report. Tom is a typical example of an Early Service Leaver and Chris is typical of a long-serving Non-Commissioned Officer. The report is structured into three phases that the Foundation believes are the critical stages for a holistic resettlement service:

- “Life in the Services” – Tom and Chris’ time serving in the Forces
- “Getting ready for civvy street” – their activity during their termination period
- “Life after Service” – Tom and Chris’ experience of their transition to civilian life

The Foundation uses its findings from its research programme to provide a commentary on the key points made in each phase by our two fictional Servicemen.



³ Ministry of Defence: ‘Analysis of socio-economic and educational background of non-officer recruits’ [Memorandum to the House of Commons Defence Committee, 2004], cited in House of Commons Defence Committee, Duty of Care, (Third Report of Session 2004-05), Vol 2, Ev 255-257

'Life in the Services'

Tom's Story



Tom was raised in the North East by his father. With a difficult childhood he finished school in 2002 with no formal qualifications.³ After hearing about a career in the Armed Forces at school, Tom decided to investigate further and visit the local recruitment office.

Tom liked the sound of all the training, the excitement of being in the Army and for the first time earning some real money. The recruitment officer told Tom that if he joined the Infantry he would get to do an Apprenticeship and perhaps other qualifications; so he'd have something to show for his time in Service. The recruitment process was straightforward; he completed a simple aptitude test, interview, and physical examination and was offered a place.

Tom was sent to Catterick for his basic training. He found the change to his daily routine hard at first, but after a while began to see real value in what he was learning. Having never received any real "life skills" training at school, he'd now learned how to take better care of himself. When he did have time off from training to leave camp Tom enjoyed the new-found freedom of being away from home life. He had cash to spend and had fun, going out with a new-found 'family'.

The next step was joining his regiment for pre-deployment training ready for active Service. His first tour would be six months in Afghanistan. This was a world away from training and the world he had left behind in North East England; extreme conditions and facing active combat. He was devastated to see two of his companions get injured, but this paled in comparison to witnessing someone from his Battalion die from his injury. He was relieved when he completed his first tour and could return to the UK. What he'd been through never left Tom's mind and when his second tour was announced he had real doubts about whether he could handle going back and he started to suffer from depression and anxiety. He'd also talked about marriage and settling down with his new girlfriend as she was keen for him to come back permanently to the North East.

Chris' Story



Chris grew up with his parents in the Midlands. He left school in 1985 with reasonable qualifications and an open mind about what to do next. After a year of working in a local factory he decided to follow in his father's footsteps and join the Forces.

Like Tom's experience, the recruitment process was simple enough. Unlike Tom, Chris' qualifications opened up a number of career paths within the Forces. He decided on joining the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers. The recruitment officer explained that after completing his basic training he would go on to train as a vehicle engineer.

Chris completed his basic training and REME recovery mechanic training. He sailed through the training programme and felt ready to take on more. Chris was pleased when he heard his Battalion was soon to be posted to Germany.

Chris enjoyed the posting in Germany, and also experienced tours in Cyprus, Northern Ireland, Bosnia and Iraq. Chris would often go back to the UK to visit family and friends who could all see how much he was enjoying military life. It was whilst on leave that Chris met his future wife on a night out in Coventry. During Junior Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) cadre, again back in the UK, he married his now long-term girlfriend and once Chris qualified as an NCO she moved with him into married quarters at his base in Germany. His wife found a job in a shop located on the base, and it wasn't long before they started a family. Over the next few years Chris and his wife had three children but sometimes she found it hard bringing up young children being so far away from her family network back in the UK. However the close-knit community on the base provided lots of practical support and meaningful friendships whenever Chris was away on tour.

ForceSelect Foundation's view:

Tom

Tom's story highlights some of the many positives of Service life, for example through basic training he gains life skills that he didn't have before and is able to look after himself and grow as a person. From team-building activities to more mundane tasks, these have had a positive effect on his early life in the Army. However, the Foundation feels that more support is needed in order to assist the number of Early Service Leavers (ESL) like Tom.

The current joining process has remained largely unchanged for a number of years. Whilst the focus of this report is the resettlement process, the Foundation believes that the connectivity between the recruitment process and Early Service Leavers like Tom is something that Government should explore more fully. The Royal British Legion states that it is younger ex-Service personnel encountering the biggest struggle with mental health issues. Their research drew attention to the recurring theme of "depression" and its interconnectedness with "unemployment and a lack of transferable skills" in the sample group taking part in the research.⁴ The Foundation welcomes the intentions of the New Employment Model project; however with almost a quarter of Early Service Leavers we surveyed stating that they had suffered or were suffering from some form of mental health issue such as depression, anxiety, and PTSD; we believe that some additional screening in the recruiting process would help the early identification of problems for Service Personnel.

The Foundation believes any additional assessment should not be used to filter out potential candidates like Tom, but should help inform relevant support Services available during their time in Service. With the cost of recruitment and training sitting at an estimated average of £25,000 per person for Armed Services personnel this could be a preventative measure to aid staff retention, reduce cost and support better resettlement.

The ForceSelect Foundation came across many ESL in our research that are in a similar position to

Tom, in that they joined the Armed Forces with no qualifications and left before they could pick up any additional accredited skills. Tom's experience is typical of an ESL, where apart from combat training, there is no time for vocational training or even employability skills in readiness for transition to "civvy street". Ironically, it is ESL that are eligible for the least support on leaving; however in the views of the Foundation, this is the group that needs it the most.⁵ The MoD has committed to giving Service personnel the "opportunity to gain nationally recognised civilian qualifications, in order to support them throughout their Service career and to prepare them for life after leaving the Service."⁶ Whilst for some Service Leavers it does a sterling job of this, for many engaged in our research it is a mixed story – 74% of Service Leavers who responded to a National Audit Office survey had gone from service into full-time employment⁷ – but the reasons behind the significant minority of those who do not find full time work, or even those who initially find work but fail to sustain this employment into the long-term, need to be addressed. Tom's story highlights this issue; ESL only have a limited amount of time for training and may not have had both time and guidance to gain transferable skills during time in service.



Chris

In contrast to Tom, Chris has had a full and very satisfying career in the Army with plenty of military training, leadership training and vocational training over his 20+ years of Service.

The MoD has made a lot of headway in vocational skills since NVQs were introduced into the Armed Forces. MoD states that “at any one time 11,000 soldiers will be on Apprenticeship with about 6,000 a year successfully completing a course”⁸ in the British Army alone. Over two thirds of Servicemen and women with a track record of vocational qualifications who took part in our research found that the practical application of their learning into a civilian setting was much more difficult than they thought it would be when they were in service. These Service Leavers typically stated that they did not find that their military qualifications were easily “transferable” to civilian employers.

Like many of our surveyed Service Leavers Chris became vocationally qualified during his life in service. With the overwhelming feedback from our questionnaires that Service Leavers feel a disconnection between the skills gained in service and civilian careers, the Foundation is anxious that more should be done for Servicemen like Chris to secure comparable civilian employment. The Foundation believes that training outputs need to align with the requirements of employers,⁹ which are specific to growth industry and/or sustainable local labour markets. “The military is the largest vocational training institution in the country”¹⁰ and the ForceSelect Foundation believes that Government should be able to guarantee that skills accumulated during service are absolutely transferable to comparable civilian jobs.



⁴ Rhodes, D., Pleave, N. & Fitzpatrick, S. (2006), “The numbers and characteristics of homeless ex-Service people in London: A review of the existing statistical data”, York, Centre for Housing Policy, University of York [online]. Available from: <http://www.britishlegion.org.uk/media/33475/homelessexserviceinlondon.pdf> [Accessed on 20 November 2011]

⁵ Fossey, M., (2010), “Across the wire: Veterans, mental health and vulnerability”, Centre for Mental Health [online]. Available from: http://www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/pdfs/Across_the_wire.pdf

⁶ The Ministry of Defence (2011) The Armed Forces Covenant: Today and Tomorrow (London: The Stationery Office)

⁷ National Audit Office (2007) Ministry of Defence Leaving the Services (London: The Stationery Office)

⁸ The British Army Archives (2009) Army apprenticeships provide firm foundations, Ministry of Defence [online]. Available from: <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.army.mod.uk/news/16533.aspx> [Accessed on 21 November 2011]

⁹ Mangum, S.L. & Ball, D.E. (1987) “Military Skill Training: Some Evidence of Transferability”, Armed Forces and Society, July, p.245

¹⁰ Ibid.

Getting ready for 'civvy street'

Tom's Story



Tom thought long and hard about his future, his girlfriend wanted him to get a job nearer to home, and he was extremely anxious about another tour. Whilst Tom enjoyed many aspects of life in the Armed Forces he decided he did not want another tour so decided to leave. He gave in his notice and began his resettlement.

As he hadn't served that long Tom was entitled to very basic support which didn't include access to the Career Transition Partnership (CTP). Tom received a resettlement briefing session. Tom felt the briefing officer didn't know much about the North East or the sort of jobs Tom would be suited to and advised him to go to Jobcentre Plus when he got back home.

Tom was given a leaflet on housing and told about a session he could attend to give him some additional advice. Unfortunately he missed this session, so was unsure about where to look for accommodation, especially as he wasn't sure where he would be working. He didn't think he was eligible for social housing so he made short term plans to sleep on the couch at his friend's house.

Tom spent what little time there was available to him looking for jobs, but there didn't seem to be any roles that he felt were suitable. As his termination period neared completion he didn't feel prepared or confident that he would find a job, Tom wondered why his opportunities seemed so limited.

Chris' Story



Chris had begun to think about the next phase of his life and leaving the Armed Forces. When redundancies were announced and the option of going voluntarily was made available to Chris he decided the time was right to leave, in order to spend more time with his family and return to the UK.

Chris would normally receive up to two years of resettlement but the period is shorter for those taking voluntary redundancy. He received the full resettlement package which included access to the Career Transition Partnership (CTP), a £534 resettlement grant, enhanced learning credits as well as time away from military duties to use for his civilian job training.

Chris attended a three day workshop with the CTP in Germany which covered CV preparation, how to research the jobs market, applying for jobs and interview techniques. Chris thought that whilst the workshop was useful, it didn't really help him to understand what jobs he should be applying for or how his skills would be transferable and attractive to employers. After taking advice from the Career Consultant who was assigned to him by CTP, Chris decided to take a PRINCE 2 course in project management as he was told this might enhance his chances of finding work.

Chris applied for some jobs back in the UK but found that his new PRINCE 2 qualification was not that useful and that employers were really looking for actual work experience. Chris started to get increasingly worried and anxious about moving back to the UK without a job.

¹¹ National Audit Office (2007) Ministry of Defence Leaving the Services (London: The Stationery Office)

¹² Ibid.

Forceselect Foundation's view:

Tom

Those who leave the Service prior to completing four years whether voluntarily or compulsorily are entitled to a reduced resettlement service which usually comprises a resettlement brief and interview where information is given on DWP and Jobcentre Plus (JCP). The Foundation's research found that, many ESL did not attend the resettlement briefing. Indeed additional research from ONS shows that when ESL were asked how they rated the briefing and interview, only 63 per cent said they had received it, and just over half (55 per cent) said that they found it useful.¹¹

Through its work with ex-Service personnel, ForceSelect knows that the main focus of all Service Leavers, regardless of time served, should be in securing lasting employment. However, from our research it is clear that there are many other issues to transition that all need to be solved to deliver effective resettlement. For ESL like Tom with little in the way of a support network back at home, finding somewhere to live is critical. National Audit Office statistics show that less than a quarter of Service Leavers who responded to their survey had their own home to go to. More worryingly, only 20% had private rented accommodation with the rest either living with relatives, staying with friends or in social housing.¹² Housing shortages are putting tremendous pressure on ex-Service personnel with housing projects stalling, or cancelled. In the case of many ESL, social housing schemes are often the routeway to accommodation; however many are oversubscribed and in the case of ESL difficult to access, as ex-Service personnel are not seen as "priority clients". Over three quarters of our Service Leavers engaged in the Foundation's research programme stated that housing was a critical issue for them during transition. Whilst housing advice is provided by the MoD's Joint Service Housing Advice Office to Service Leavers, many from our sample group (45%) were not aware that this was available; of this cohort over 70% were ESL. The

Foundation also found that of the ESL that received housing advice many were not financially equipped to purchase private rented accommodation or successfully apply for mortgages. Clearly there is a need for housing advice that engages all Service Leavers; however, this should be underpinned by better financial guidance during service to better prepare service men and women for the resettlement process.

Chris

Like many long Service personnel, Chris is reliant on the skills development and employment support delivered by CTP as the primary method of enhancing his employment opportunity. Entitlement for CTP is split into two categories:

- Those with four years' Service or more get access to the Employment Support Programme (ESP). This support is available six months prior to discharge and up to two years post discharge. Support is given on what services are available in the area the individual is resettling into as well as access to a comprehensive jobs database
- Those with six years' Service or more get access to the full resettlement service via CTP. This support commences up to two years prior to discharge and continues up to two years post discharge. Support includes a personal Career Consultant, employment workshops, training, Individual Resettlement Training Costs (IRTC) Grant of £534 to spend on courses as well as Graduated Resettlement Time (GRT) which allows up to 35 days (depending on length of Service) away from military duties to focus on resettlement



Chris had over six years of service, so he received the full package of support from CTP. Statistics show that the take-up rate for CTP by those eligible is 91 per cent whilst overall satisfaction in the junior rank is 46 per cent, who rated the resettlement support as very or fairly good.¹³ Although the CTP is widely accessed by those with six years' service or more, the statistics show that satisfaction with the delivery is lower than it should be considering the importance of the role. The feedback from our survey was mixed regarding the success of CTP for our Service Leavers; 75% of Service Leavers surveyed by the Foundation felt that the CTP did not meet their needs for resettlement. The main issues we found from our sample group were that CTP did not provide enough pastoral support, deliver enough "employability" skills, provide enough job related skills and for many there was no work experience placement provided. Like Chris, the majority of responses from our sample group of Service Leavers did not engage in a work placement during their termination period. In the Foundation's opinion a large proportion of the termination should be spent in work experience placements with actual employers. We feel that by providing work placements CTP would not only deliver real experience of work in a civilian setting as opposed to a classroom, but could also showcase the skills of a Service Leaver to recruiting employers.

The Foundation understands that the CTP is an outsourced service that operates within the terms of its contract. Whilst satisfaction with the service is not high enough in our opinion this is not the fault of the provider, but the design of the contracted service. The Foundation believes that the future of the CTP should be to focus on the recruiting needs of industry rather than on skills brokerage from a menu of courses. The Foundation also feels that a service more akin to "welfare to work" programmes (a contracted out programme

from DWP to support the long-term unemployed) would perhaps be relevant. In these programmes highly individual "action plans" are drawn up between advisor and client, with all aspects of the participants journey to the labour market listed and acted upon for example housing, mental health in tandem with employability. In addition to service design, eligibility should not be a "reward" for long service but a requirement; the Foundation considers that the cost of Service Leavers not transitioning effectively far outweighs any added expenditure for an enhanced resettlement service. Based on the findings of our research programme, we believe that the potential amassed cost of a Service Leaver not transitioning successfully – be that through benefit payments and JCP time, housing costs, health services, FE colleges, local authority interventions and police time – would be significant.



¹³ National Audit Office (2007) Ministry of Defence Leaving the Services (London: The Stationery Office)

Life after Service



Tom's Story



Tom left the Service and returned to Gateshead, moving into the front room of his friend's house. He really wanted to get a place with his girlfriend but he didn't have the savings to put a deposit down on a rental property. He did enquire about supported housing but did not qualify as he wasn't classed as homeless.

The local labour market was tough and after a few months Tom had no option but to sign on at the Jobcentre. He didn't really want to rely on benefits but with no money he had no option. When he spoke to an advisor at his local JCP office he found he wasn't eligible to join the Work Programme because he hadn't been claiming benefits for long so he kept looking for jobs in the papers and online in the jobcentre.

Tom failed to understand why after completing all his military training he still couldn't find a job he felt matched his experience and wasn't paid at minimum wage.

Tom struggled to come to terms with his situation and became disillusioned with the lack of support available to him as no-one seemed to understand his problems. He started spending more time with his old friends drinking which helped take his mind off his problems but caused arguments between him and his girlfriend.

Tom started to feel very angry and this feeling would manifest itself strongly when he was drinking. Fights became a regular occurrence for Tom and he started to get a reputation with the local police. He was consistently broke and so after eight months being unemployed he got involved in petty crime to bring some extra money in. He often felt completely isolated and didn't know where to go for help.

Chris' Story



Chris not only needed to find a new job, he had to find a home in the UK and move his family from Germany. He couldn't get approval for a mortgage as he didn't have a big enough deposit or a credit history due to living abroad. Chris was shocked when at first hand he saw how difficult the housing market was back in the UK with a shortage of affordable homes in the areas that they wanted to settle in.

Chris and his family decided to relocate to the South East where he believed he had a better chance of finding work. They managed to rent a small house with his savings and he continued to look for work, but for the first time in years he felt completely out of his comfort zone. Chris' wife found that finding good secondary schools in the area was very difficult. Those with a good reputation were already full as the kids were joining part way through the year. So the family had no choice but to opt for a secondary school known as one of the worse performing in the area, and not the ideal choice for the family. Chris continued to access the CTP but feeling that he needed more activity, he also canvassed a plethora of recruitment agencies.

The family's savings started to dwindle and after six months they started to miss rental payments which led to heated arguments between Chris and his wife. After a few more months of no work and increasing isolation from his wife, his marriage started to fall apart.

Chris' family had to move out of the rented house and his wife took the kids away from the South East. The pressure soon became too much for Chris to bear. Things had gone from bad to worse and Chris wasn't used to asking for any help. However a friend suggested he meet with an advisor from a Forces charity – they provided him with accommodation and started some counselling. Thanks to the charity, Chris is starting to rebuild his life and reconnect with his family.

ForceSelect Foundation's view:

Tom

Tom's story is not uncommon amongst ESL, especially those leaving the Army. His experience shows that when you leave the Services as an ESL (under four years of service) the level of support you receive can often be insufficient and leave you unprepared for finding work. A high proportion of Early Service Leavers that took part in our research programme struggled to find a permanent full-time job and many had changed jobs a number of times. Living hand to mouth like this provides no real financial security and does little to boost the confidence of our Service Leavers. It would not be uncommon for Tom, over the next few years at least, to spend much of his new life in a "revolving door" of benefits. From our research it is clear that Tom could quite easily fall into a trap of relying on the benefit regime with intermittent temporary or informal work¹⁴ breaking up his time on Government handouts.

In addition to support from MoD, external agencies such as JCP offer a range of back to work services to unemployed people like Tom. However, like Tom, access to DWP's flagship recruitment service, the Work Programme, is not available to ex-Service personnel on Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) unless they have been continuously out of work for 12 months. When you consider that ex-offenders on JSA returning from prison can access Work Programme from day one of release, the Foundation does not believe this is a fair deal to any Service Leaver, early or otherwise.

In a similar position to where he was at the start of his journey, Tom found himself with few qualifications for work. His military training does

not really transfer to many civilian employers and Tom's lack of employability skills means that he found it very difficult to promote his experience to recruiting organisations. This lack of employability such as a quality CV, interview technique, communication skills and work experience, combined with his own perceptions of comparable employment and wage expectation, means that Tom is disconnected from the realities of his local labour market. Because of this disconnection, Tom decides to supplement his lifestyle with some petty crime. Although we accept this is not typical behaviour for ex-Service personnel, there are still a significant number of Service Leavers with criminal records. With up to 20,000 veterans in the criminal justice system, including an estimated 8,500 Service Leavers currently serving a prison sentence, Tom's petty criminality could easily lead to more serious offences. This is backed up by the Howard League for Penal Reform findings on ex-Service personnel entering the criminal justice system who find themselves "in custody at least a decade or so [after leaving service]".

Chris

Like many of the Service Leavers we interviewed, Chris fails to secure appropriate housing on leaving the Services. Chris lived in married quarters in Germany, which provided a great support network for his family in times when he was deployed. The downside to this is, like many in his position, there was no need to buy a home and military rent is a fraction of the cost of private rented accommodation or mortgages in the UK. The Foundation believes that increased awareness of the housing market and financial management must become an integral part of life in service to aid eventual resettlement.


¹³ Katungi, D. et al. (2006) "People in low-paid informal work: Need not greed", The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (Bristol: The Policy Press)

¹⁴ Rhodes, D., Pleace, N. & Fitzpatrick, S. (2006), "The numbers and characteristics of homeless ex-Service people in London: A review of the existing statistical data", York, Centre for Housing Policy, University of York [online]. Available from: <http://www.britishlegion.org.uk/media/33475/homelessexserviceinlondon.pdf> [Accessed 20 November 2011]

¹⁵ Iversen et al. (2005) "Goodbye and good luck: the mental health needs and treatment experiences of British ex-Service personnel", *The British Journal of Psychiatry*, Vol 186, p.482

¹⁶ Gale et al. (2008) "A psychological treatment programme for traumatised ex military personnel in the UK", *Community Housing and Therapy*, United Kingdom, p.121

¹⁷ Nicholson, L. (2010) "Picking up the pieces: (re)framing the problem of marriage breakdown in the British Armed Forces", A Doctoral Thesis. Restricted access until 8 January 2015. A Doctoral Thesis, Loughborough University [online] Available from: <http://hdl.handle.net/2134/6343> [Accessed on 20 November 2011]



While his wife had wanted to return their family to the Midlands, Chris had made the decision to move to the South East in the hope of better chances of finding a job, a similar circumstance in many of the lives of long-serving former personnel who took part in our research programme. Chris took full advantage of the service that CTP offers to find work. The CTP manages two recruitment agencies; Regular Forces Employment Association and the Officers Association to broker employment opportunities for ex-Service personnel. Similar to Chris' experience our researchers found that CTP users had a mixed view of the service, with the majority of respondents stating that in the end they sourced their own employment opportunities or networked with other agencies to secure work. In addition, the CTP service applies only to Service Leavers and is not available to ESL who are a large proportion (up to 50%) of the leaving population. Even though Chris chose an area where there should be a better chance of finding work, he still had difficulties in finding employment. While his skill set offered experience and a myriad of qualifications from the Army, employers were looking for work experience which he did not have. Like many Service Leavers engaged in our research Chris was under the impression that certain roles would provide a wage to support a comparable lifestyle to that he had experienced in the Army. As with many Service Leavers we interviewed, this view was unrealistic in practice.

Chris' family struggled to find suitable schools following a lifetime of private schooling abroad. According to Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association (SSAFA) Forces Help there are around 60,000 dependents of serving UK personnel of which only around 7,500 receive Continuity of Education Allowance (CEA), designed to mitigate disruption to education of children of serving personnel. However, CEA regulations are being tightened which, coupled with the changing structure of operations and increase in intermittent

mobility would mean families crossing in and out of eligibility. This combined with CEA funding not keeping pace with the increase in Independent School fees, means that the system is not working as well as it should. More needs to be done to ensure that families can access the education provision they need.

Eventually the stress of their financial situation caused Chris' marriage to break down; in turn Chris' mental health then began to suffer. This account, whilst an extreme example, is supported by both our research and by York University and the Royal British Legion which revealed that it is ex-Service personnel, between the ages of 16 to 44 years of age, who struggle the most with mental health issues.¹⁵ The Foundation believes that a support service alone is not enough; a shift in culture is required. During Service, personnel can speak to their Welfare Officer, but from our research it is clear that many do not access help available to them, because of the "stigma" associated with asking for assistance.¹⁶ This extrapolates into life after service and is compounded by the common belief people won't understand "what they've been through". It seems that this fear is not unfounded, Dr Andrew McCulloch, Chief Executive of the Mental Health Foundation agrees that "most GPs and consultants have little or no experience of this [working with the specific needs of ex-Servicemen]".¹⁷ Chris doesn't seek help and ultimately this isolates him from his family and his life is in a downward spiral. It has been reported that marriage breakdown of British Armed Forces personnel is twice the civilian average;¹⁸ this is an alarming figure when you consider the importance of functional families to people in and after leaving Service. Almost all of the former Service personnel who took part in our research programme stated that their family or personal relationships were pivotal in supporting the transition back into civilian life.

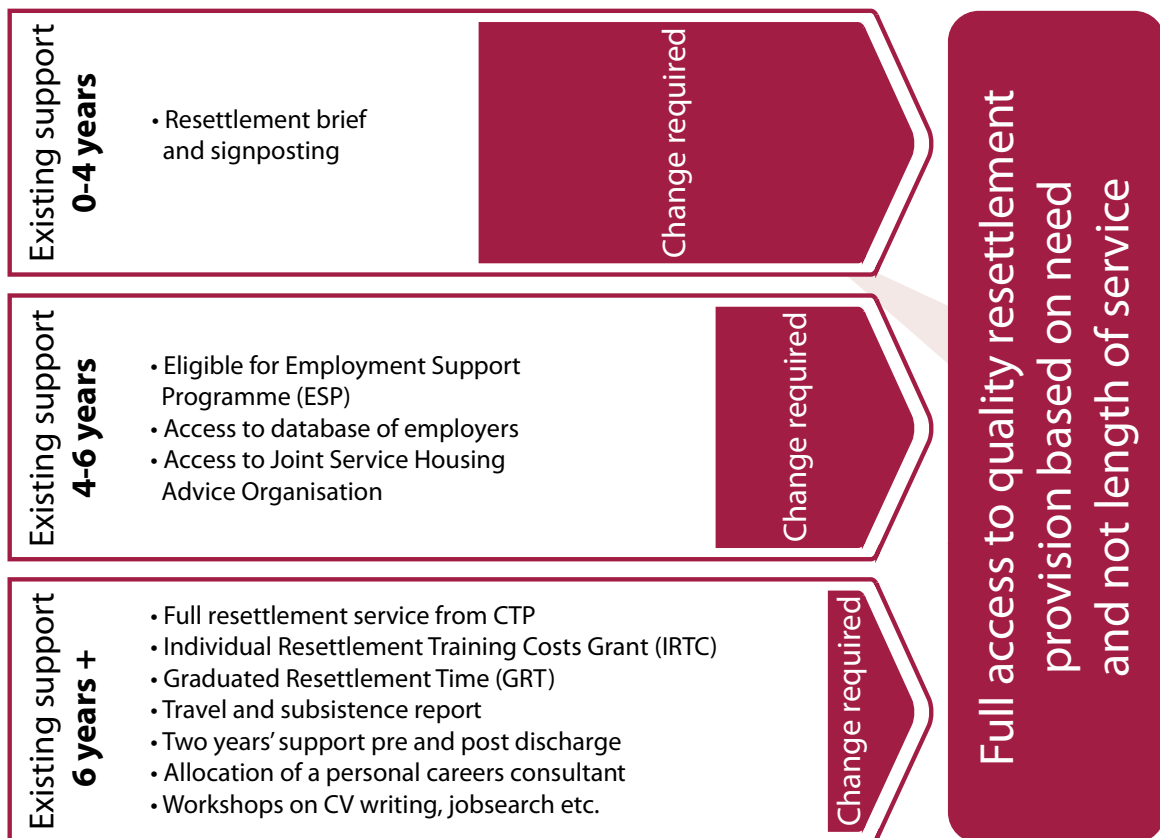
Recommendations

All of our recommendations are sourced from the programme of research undertaken by the Foundation over the last few months. Whilst we accept that there is some very good practice and excellent case studies to demonstrate that for many Service Leavers the current resettlement process has worked well; our research pointed to common issues/gaps within the service and also included the views of Early Service Leavers who are not covered by existing provision.

The Foundation believes that the resettlement process should be based on the individual needs of Service Leavers not on length of Service, programmes should be highly personalised and

involve multiple stakeholders in the delivery of specific interventions. This service is very different to the current CTP provision and therefore would require a significant change control process to current contract terms which maybe too difficult to implement in the short to medium term. The Foundation recommends that the application of some/all of these recommendations could be Pathfinder projects commissioned by MOD to both service providers and internal departments to trial initiatives and report back findings. After this period the collected findings could then result in a new commissioning and procurement for an enhanced service to manage resettlement for all Service Leavers.

Volume of change required to current resettlement process





1. Life in Service

1.1 We are aware that the MoD is one of the biggest providers of Apprenticeships in the country. However the qualifications offered, whilst accredited, are not reflective of labour market demand and are not easily transportable to the civilian world. We recommend that Government reviews its Services training with industry bodies, sector skills councils and large scale employers. We also recommend that employers should be encouraged to endorse “sector specific” vocational training on offer in the forces to provide a passport for qualifications into civilian life e.g. Microsoft UK could endorse Forces ICT training; Siemens could endorse engineering training; Hilton Hotels could endorse catering training etc. These endorsements would act as recognisable quality or kite marks when discussed at interview between Service Leavers and recruiting employers.

1.2 Whilst external careers advice is delivered in the Forces, there is no personal development planning (PDP) for life outside of service. We recommend that PDP should be introduced for Service personnel. This should be delivered by trained advisors able to reference the civilian work environment. These advisors should adopt a case management approach to their clients, signposting them if necessary to expertise and interventions from third sector organisations and other public service providers. We recommend regular PDP meetings with all Service personnel at six monthly intervals.

1.3 To keep Servicemen and women up to date with how life is changing in the UK outside the military environment, we propose the delivery of annual workshops. These would provide information on local labour markets and on topics such as pensions, social security and housing. These sessions would provide many potential Service Leavers with quality information enabling them to make more informed choices.

2. Getting ready for civvy street

2.1 The PDP advisor should now be more involved with the Service Leaver to create a plan of action for the termination period to enable effective resettlement. With monthly meetings and a timed action plan in place the advisor should guide the Service Leaver to the most appropriate interventions, some of which are listed below.

2.2 Greater partnership with employers is, in the Foundation's opinion, pivotal to the success of the resettlement process. During the termination period for service leavers, the Foundation recommends that employers co-design with service providers dedicated skills pathways to employment on the "outside". These employers should also offer extended work placements for between 3 and 6 months. These employers will then receive well trained candidates, ready for work, with relevant experience and will guarantee interviews for all engaged in the programme.

2.3 The Foundation recommends that every Service Leaver who hands in their notice or is at risk of redundancy receives an employability skills package relevant to their individual needs. The skills programme should follow an assessment process and be part of their individual action plan. We expect that this programme could be between 1 and 8 weeks of classroom based training. Modules on offer could include; Literacy and Numeracy, Communication skills, CV writing, Job Search techniques, Interview skills, Administration skills, Basic IT skills, Self Employment etc. This training package should be a mandated activity but would flex in programme length according to needs or modules taken.

2.4 We recommend that the CTP is re-designed to include all Service Leavers and that training brokerage is linked to employment opportunities only, not qualifications. We recommend that CTP becomes a "through the gate" service provider who would take over from the PDP advisors at point of transition and pick up the action plan.

2.5 We recommend that peer mentoring is introduced at this stage of the individual's journey. Veterans could share their experience of resettlement and offer first hand guidance to other Service Leavers. Mentors should be trained and accredited in peer mentoring.



3. Life after Service

3.1 The challenges which exist for those leaving the Forces, as evidenced in our research, include the prohibitive cost of housing, the restrictive eligibility for renting from a local housing association and inadequate financial provision for buying or placing a rental deposit on a property. The Foundation is aware that there are many void MoD properties empty across the UK. We recommend that the Government explores the possibility of short-term tenancy rental and licensing agreements of unused MoD housing stock for the Service Leavers.

3.2 Armed Forces Covenant should be mandated across all Local Authorities to encourage the availability of affordable housing to Service Leavers.

3.3 We suggest that CTP's "through the gate" support continues for up to six months after leaving service. In addition CTP would deliver advice and guidance for benefit eligibility and claims, housing, finance or debt, health services etc. CTP should also deliver a full employment service to include referral to Work Programme, master vendor for recruitment agencies and direct linkage with employers engaged in the wider MoD programme (see above recommendations).

3.4 For the duration of this stage of the journey, the Foundation recommends that the peer mentoring scheme continues, calling on ex-Service personnel to further support those undergoing the same resettlement challenges as they once did.

Acknowledgements

The subject of resettlement provision for ex-Service personnel is a well-debated one and as a result there is a significant amount of literature already available on the topic, largely focused on solutions to help the MoD, the employer, the labour market or the Government as a whole. In the compilation of this report, the Foundation has focused on the individual and we wanted our findings, and therefore our recommendations, to be centred on the Service Leaver. To this end, we conducted a number of interviews with groups or on a one-to-one basis to provide us with the insights and first-hand knowledge needed to generate our proposed solutions and we thank all of those who took part in these sessions. However, we would specifically like to thank the following people for giving their valuable advice, information or skills to this project, or for simply acting as support during the drafting and development of our thinking:

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Annex 1: Methodology and research

Aims of the study

This section outlines the research methods used in order to understand the issues faced by Service Leavers as they transition into civilian life. National statistics recorded by the MoD showed that of the approximate 22,000 personnel leaving military service each year, a significant proportion are not equipped with the basic information, skills and expectations of civilian life. They do not have full-time employment or secure, sustainable accommodation. Other evidence from the Howard League for Penal Reform has shown that even those who leave and initially have a successful transition, can still encounter problems a number of years down the line and while it is difficult to get an exact figure, by adding up the number of ex-Service personnel currently in prison it is clear that more needs to be done to prevent these numbers being added to by future Service Leavers.

In light of current figures, and the redundancies on the horizon, which could see an incremental 17,000 to 22,000¹⁹ personnel leaving service in the next two years, this report sets out to identify and understand the issues facing former Service Personnel. By combining this research with the wealth of experience which ForceSelect has in working with those who do not make a successful transition, solutions to these problems could be formulated. Through this understanding a number of recommendations came to light, for both systemic and more immediate challenges linked with the upcoming redundancy tranches, which the ForceSelect Foundation believes are essential if the vast numbers of future Service Leavers are not to overwhelm the service currently in place.

Research methods

A number of data collection tools were used to ascertain the main reasons behind an individual encountering a difficult transition into civilian life. To establish the causes, such as any potential gaps or inefficiencies in the provision currently in place, the data collection process included:

- Interviews with former Armed Forces personnel
- Interviews with ForceSelect mentors and recruiters
- Focus group including members of the first tranche of redundancies beginning February 2012 and other Service Leavers in their resettlement programme
- Case study collection of certain individuals to gain more in-depth insight into their experience of leaving Service
- Anonymous questionnaires sent to the ForceSelect database of former Armed Forces personnel
- Anonymous telephone interviews with the ForceSelect database of former Armed Forces personnel
- Supporting information from existing research

With empirical evidence for the numbers of Service Leavers that encounter problems in returning to civilian life already in the public domain, the aforementioned methods were chosen to elicit in-depth individual qualitative evidence to understand the reasons that underpin the statistics. To ensure an understanding of each individual's journey, from a holistic standpoint, the majority of questions asked were open questions to paint a picture of the individual's experiences before, during and after Service, to be responded to with a free text answer. It was important to use open questions to encourage discussion.

¹⁹ Taylor, C. (2011) In Brief: Armed Forces Redundancies, Internal Affairs and Defence Section, House of Commons Library [online]. Available from: www.parliament.uk/briefing-papers/SN05951.pdf [Accessed on 5 December 2011]

Samples

Focused samples of individuals directly relevant to the report topic were selected; those who require help when leaving the Services. These were taken from ForceSelect database of 6,000 Service Leavers. The cohorts examined included Early Service Leavers, those who had been in Service for nearer to the 22 year retirement age, across all three Services, but with two-thirds having left the Army to reflect the makeup of the annual Service Leavers split across the three Services.

A small number of Service Leavers who classed themselves as having a successful transition into civilian life were also included to identify any issues they faced and how they overcame them.

Presenting the evidence

Due to the nature of the qualitative data collected and the importance of placing the individual at the centre of any future reforms, the evidence garnered is presented in the report through two fictional stories of Service Leavers. Their life experiences before, during and after Service are representative of the experience of those sampled, and drawn from recurrent themes in the majority of the answers that were analysed. While the individual story of each Service Leaver who took part in the research is different, common trends were identified and these were threaded into the stories of "Tom" and "Chris" which feature in the "A holistic approach to resettlement" section earlier in the report.

The topics highlighted by the experiences of the two characters are strengthened through accompanying supplementary research from a wide range of sources. They included Government body publications, peer-reviewed journals, research papers from relevant organisations ranging from University research centres commissioned by the MoD to bodies with a vested interest, and other experts in their relevant field whether it is the Royal College of Psychiatrists for the subject of mental health and so on.

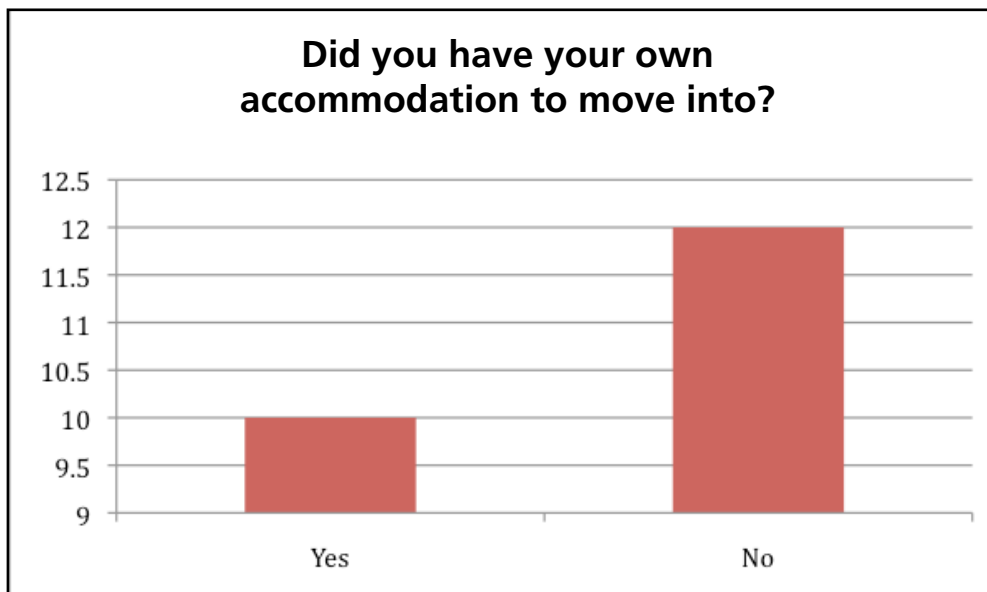
Two tales

The rationale behind using two fictional stories as the framework for presenting evidence was developed to accommodate the distinct packages of support in place for Service Leavers which are time-dependent on length of Service. Taking both the Early Service Leaver and full Service routes enabled both situations to be played out and was the optimum solution to represent the diverse range of individuals in the sample with a simple and straightforward approach.

Annex 2: Electronic questionnaires and telephone surveys: A cross-section of the results

Housing question:

Did you have accommodation to move into after Service? If not, what was your experience of obtaining housing when leaving Service?



A number of the surveyed Service Leavers had not made or been encouraged to make adequate financial provision for housing. This resulted in a number of those who responded failing to secure appropriate housing on leaving. Some also found they were not eligible for help from housing associations.

A snapshot of the comments on housing:

"I was given no housing support and moved in with my parents." Three years of Service, left six months ago

"No support so I moved in with my parents." Nine years of Service, left two and a half years ago

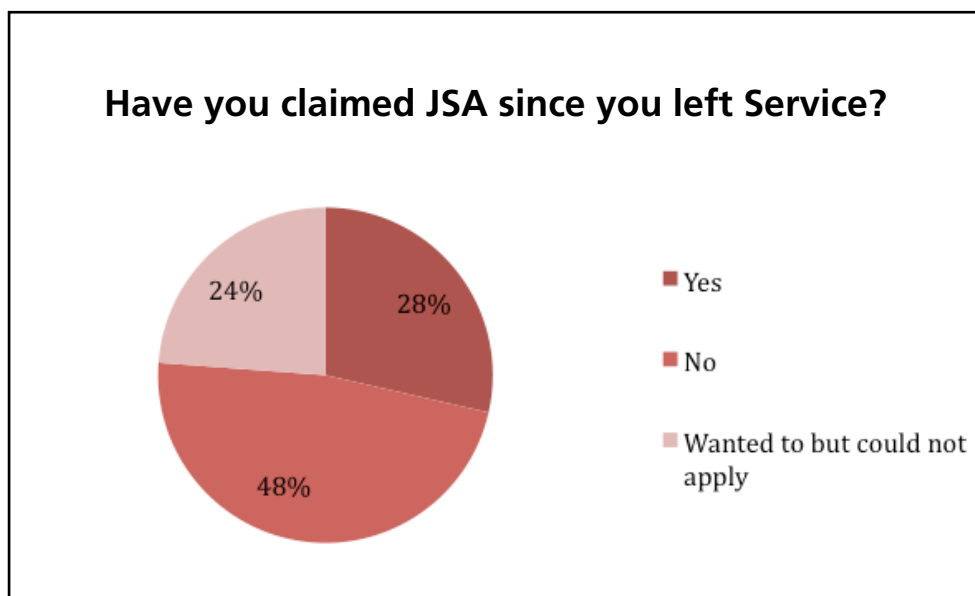
"Because I moved in with my parents I was not provided with any support in finding housing except for a link to a website." Eight years of Service, left less than a year ago

"I had no accommodation on leaving and have only very recently been assigned a nice council house – it was hard work getting it though." Five years of Service, left one year ago

"What I'd like to see is more personal housing needs and stability planning which is very important, then preparation and knowledge about civilian life challenges and expectations." Five years of Service, left three years ago

Welfare benefits question:

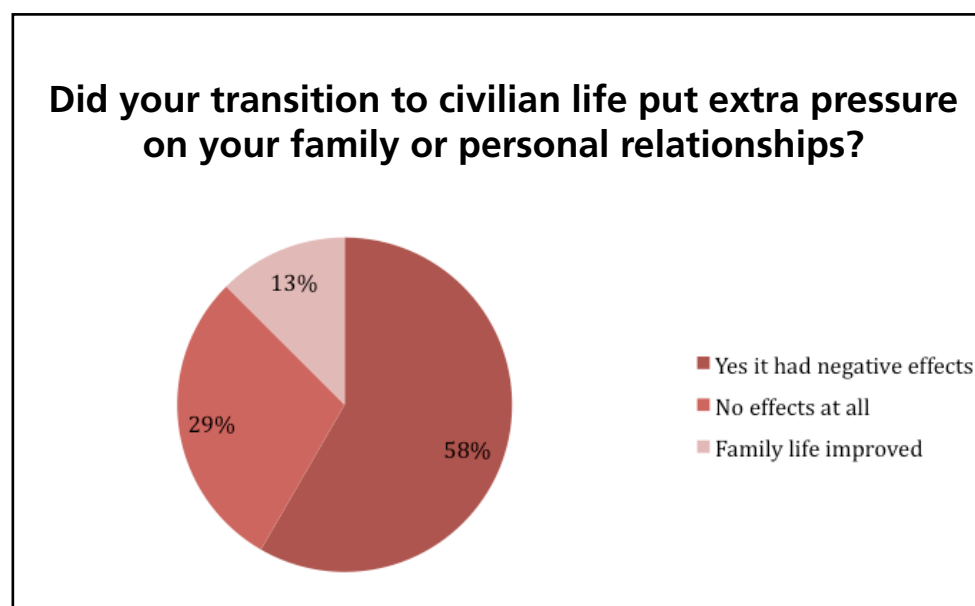
Have you had to claim any benefits since leaving Service?



The majority of Service Leavers that took part in the research stated that they were unsure of the benefit regime and any entitlements. Additionally, almost a third said they looked for work without the support of unemployment benefits due to a sense of pride that the forces had instilled in them.

Family and personal relationship question:

Did your transition to civilian life put extra pressure on your family or personal relationship?





The majority of Service Leavers with families reported that their transition to “civvy street” put undue pressure on the relationship with their spouse or partner, and many Service Leavers reported family break ups to our researchers.

A snapshot of comments on the affects of transition on family life:

“The injury that I got in Service means my family now have to look after me so my being discharged has had a massive effect on them.” Five years of Service, left 10 years ago

“I have become an impatient person and I expect a lot from people, my civilian relationships suffer because of this, my finding the transition hard has had a knock on effect on my family.” Two years of Service, left a year ago

“The main thing that caused issues was the drop in income once I had left Service.” 22 years of Service, left 18 months ago

“My family are doing ok, they say I have changed though, that I seem defeated.” Six years of Service, left six months ago

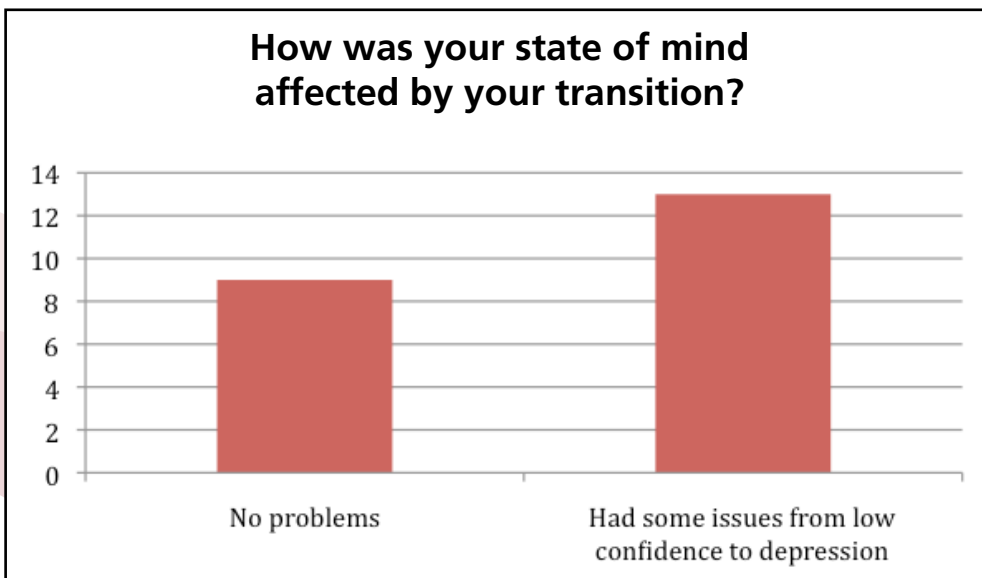
“My leaving Service ruined my marriage.” Five years of Service, left one year ago

“Yes, I am divorced as a result!” Seven years of Service, two weeks left of resettlement phase

Mental health question:

How was your state of mind affected by your transition?

“After leaving the Army I had a lot of problems readjusting to life outside and this also affected my personal life.” Four years of Service, left three years ago



Almost a quarter of the ESL, that took part stated that they suffered or were suffering from some form of mental health issues, whether it was low confidence, anxiety, depression, or post traumatic stress disorder, combined with those of longer Service this made almost two thirds.

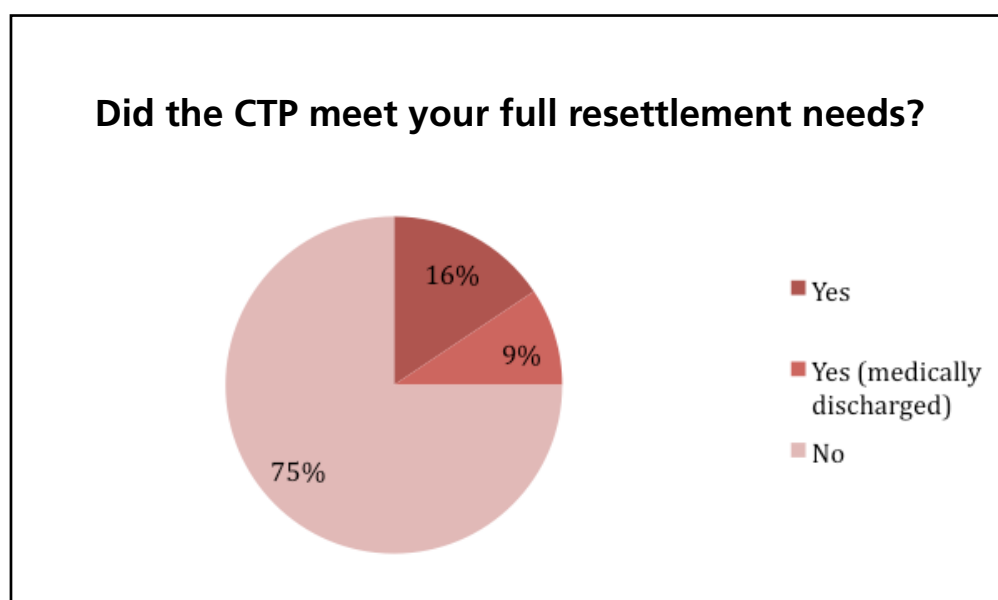
“It was quite hard if I’m honest, everything is so different, the social life, the discipline, the timekeeping.” Five years of Service, left one year ago

“I was alright but had really low confidence once I’d transitioned back into civilian life.” Eight years of Service, recently left Service

“I’m gutted I had to leave the Forces, I miss it every day. It’s seriously affected my confidence and I’ve had depression as a result.” Two years of Service, left one year ago

Resettlement service question:

Did the CTP meet your full resettlement needs?



The majority - 75% - of the Service Leavers who took part in the research said that the Career Transition Partnership (CTP) did not meet their full resettlement needs. However, of the 25% who had positives to say, 9% of those were medically discharged and were extremely happy with their resettlement service. It must also be noted that some expressed a wish that they had been eligible for more support and a proportion stated that they didn't "bother" to use the CTP provision available to them, so promotion and uptake of the service is also an issue.

Of those who were unhappy, some had served for five years or more so qualified for full CTP support. None of the responses from our sample engaged in a work placement during their termination period.

A snapshot of comments on the CTP:

“CTP provided some training around interview skills and CV building, but this was limited and did not cover any type of vocational training.” Five years of Service, left two years ago

“I completed an HR qualification through the CTP but it wasn't much use to me when finding a job. Many potential employers thought I was over-qualified but lacked commercial experience.” 22 years of Service, left one 18 months ago



“Took part in a one day workshop on CVs – it was useful but as I wasn’t entitled to any more, that was the only help I got from the CTP.” Five years of Service, left one year ago

“No post-Service careers support was provided for me. I signed up to a number of recruitment agencies.” Three years of Service, left six months ago

“My CTP employment consultant provided minimal support. I was not impressed by the Service.” Nine years of Service, left two and a half years ago

“When I go for interviews the feedback I get is that I’m over qualified but with no real experience.” Seven years of Service, two weeks before the end of resettlement period

“Careers guidance isn’t great. I think it’s down to the individual to take the initiative. It also didn’t help that in my unit one careers officer was responsible for 600 personnel.” Six years of Service, left six months ago

“I received no help and was told to go to Jobcentre Plus.” Five years of Service, left eight months ago

“Resettlement courses should be explained better.” 13 years of Service, left two years ago

“The resettlement course doesn’t really expand on common sense issues. You are told you will need a CV. Quest and other magazines mainly aimed towards Army or Marines offering jobs in security, plumbing, aerial erecting, driving etc. No real help to Aircraft or other technical trades.” 22 years of Service, just left the Services

However, it is important to highlight that those Service Leavers who were medically discharged felt extremely happy with the resettlement service they had received.

A quote from a medically discharged Service Leaver:

“CTP provided extensive support during and after resettlement including completion of IT qualification.” Five years of Service, left 10 years ago

How effective was the careers guidance during your time in the Service?

“Very limited careers guidance and support.” Five years of Service, two years ago

“I did not find the careers Service good enough.” 22 years of Service, left six months ago

“I did not receive any careers guidance during my time in Service.” Six years of Service, left six months ago

“I was only provided with a link to RightJob, I applied for a job a few weeks ago but haven’t heard back since.” Eight years of Service, left less than a year ago

Work after Service question:

Once you had left did you need additional help to find work? If so what was your experience?

A high proportion of ESL and SL struggled to find permanent full time work, and many had changed jobs a number of times.

A snapshot of comments on work after Service:

"I was made redundant a few years ago and since then I've only found temporary jobs."

Five years of Service, left 10 years ago

"I've spent some time claiming JSA, I've currently got a part time job and I'm studying."

Five years of Service, left two years ago

"Since I left the Service six months ago I have had temporary job roles."

Three years of Service, left six months ago

"Thought I would get a job with the police so I didn't make the most of the CTP, when that job fell through I took a few dead-end jobs. I was on benefits for a while but I've now started my own fitness company." Five years of Service, left two years ago

"I'm unemployed and finding it hard." Four years of Service, left nine years ago

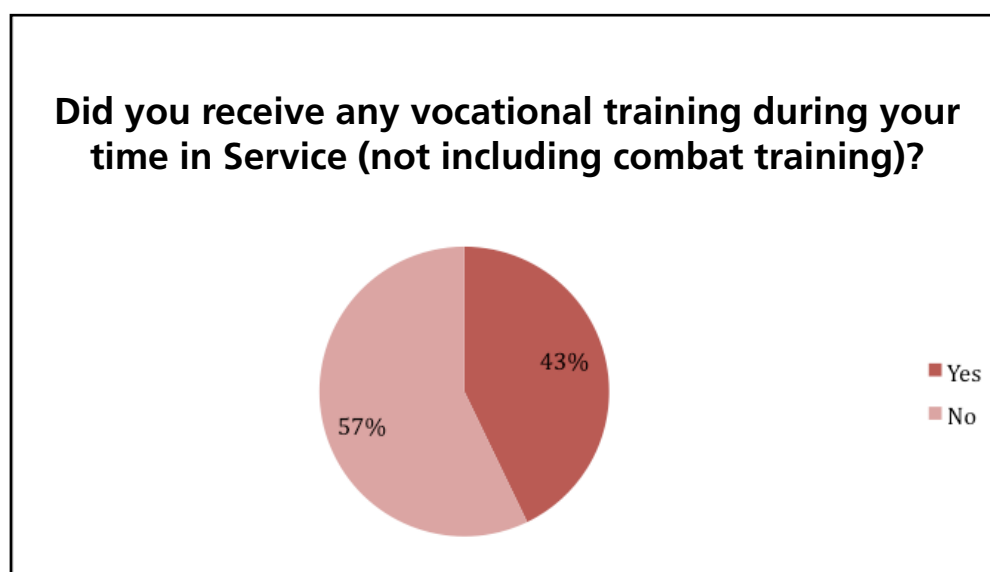
"I found a temporary job through a recruitment agency, but this is due to end soon so I'm not sure about the future." Five years of Service, left two years ago

"Since getting out I have struggled to find my place in the "civvy street". Work is hard to come by and mostly short term. My financial standing is not the best as I mostly have to live hand to mouth but I get all my bills paid on time and in full." Four years of Service, left three years ago

Vocational training question:

Did you receive any vocational training during your time in Service (not including combat training)?

Over half of the survey group responded that they did not receive vocational training during Service.





Annex 3: Focus groups and 1:1 interviews: A cross-section of the results

Topic 1: Financial management support or guidance

From our focus group which included some of the first tranche of redundancies due to leave in February 2012 we heard about people having issues getting credit such as a mortgage, private rental with issues stemming from commercial banks not recognising BFPO numbers. Those who were stationed abroad also had particular problems.

A snapshot of comments on financial management support:

“I really struggled to get a mortgage, my BFPO wasn’t recognised by the bank.” 29 years of Service, due to leave in February 2012 as a WO1 in the Army

“I’m not just leaving my job, I’m leaving my home and community back in Germany. Finding a new job, house and relocate my whole family has been a lot to deal with especially from abroad. I didn’t receive enough financial and housing advice.” 24 years of Service, two months left of voluntary redundancy period, WO2 in Army

Topic 2: Children and families

In the focus group when we brought up the topic of family, all those with a family said these personal relationships were pivotal in supporting the transition back to civilian life, and further to this during life in Service for operational performance.

Over a quarter of Service Leavers surveyed stated that they experienced difficulties getting children into school – this information was garnered from our focus groups, 1:1 interviews and in depth talks with the team of mentors from ForceSelect.

Topic 3: Accessing support during Service

The focus groups also revealed a stigma associated with asking for help.

“If they did have a problem, they had to go to welfare, now for any young soldier to go to welfare, it’s a massive black mark, being a welfare case. Or he can go to the Padre. Same again. Same label.” 24 years of Service, left nine years ago as a WO1 in the Royal Marines

Topic 4: Work after Service

Some Service Leavers found they had to move to where they had a better chance of finding work – this point was raised by those in focus groups and in 1:1 interviews.

“I had to move down to London to try and find work rather than go back to where my family is originally from.” 24 years of Service, two months left of voluntary redundancy period, WO2 in Army

Expecting a comparable wage was considered unrealistic by the majority of the focus group.

“As a WO2 you get advised to look for civilian jobs at around £40,000 per year, comparable to the wage you’ve been on. But I found that in the civilian world they don’t pay that much for the type of role that my skills transferred to.” 24 years of Service, two months left of voluntary redundancy period, WO2 in Army

Topic 5: Support after Service

Our research with veteran mentoring experts ForceSelect discovered that while there is lots of help for those with many issues, there is not enough support offered to those who just need a little help.

“A Special Forces veteran who I met recently was unable to access the help he required – this left him homeless. He wasn’t able to access support from the charities he was referred to because he didn’t have drug, alcohol or mental health issues. This is something I keep coming up against with the veterans that I work with.” Rachel Deakin, Head of Mentoring, ForceSelect





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