

Armed Forces Charities’ Education and Employment Provision

Military service undoubtedly provides many with training, skills, experience and useful employment. But it may also involve sacrificing career advancement or opportunities for educational achievement.

For many service leavers, the transition to ‘Civvy Street’ comes with significant challenges, one of which is securing sustainable employment. While 71% of employers are willing to hire ex-Service personnel, only 39% are willing to hire someone with no industry experience,¹ and many individuals struggle to translate their military experience into civilian language and gain industry experience.

Forces charities play a pivotal role in helping ex-Service personnel and their families access education and employment support. New research from DSC provides a comprehensive overview of UK forces charities making education and employment provision.



Methodology

- DSC maintains a database containing information on over 1,200 armed forces charities.
- To identify forces charities which make provision for education and employment, systematic keyword searches of DSCs database were conducted in addition to searches on three charity regulator websites: (CCEW, OSCR and CCNI) and charities' websites.²
- Data was gathered via the extensive examination of annual accounts, website content and charity regulator information.
- To bolster our data, DSC also conducted a survey, which achieved a 59% response rate from charities identified within this report.

Key Findings

Level of Provision

In total, 78 charities were identified as making provision for education and/or employment, which accounts for 6.5% of all armed forces charities in the UK.

Over 35,800 beneficiaries' accessed education and/or employment support from forces charities within the last year, of which at least 22,300 were supported into employment and 3,300 gained qualifications.

Charitable services catered to the needs of the wider armed forces community, with 86% of charities supporting Veterans, and over 60% supporting serving personnel, spouses/partners and dependents.

DSC estimates that forces charities spent at least £25.6m, on employment and education provision within the previous year.³

Range of Services

Charities deliver a broad range of education and employment services, many of which support qualifications. Vocational training was the most common type of education support, delivered or funded by 44% of charities. This was closely followed by transitional support, provided by 35% of charities.

The most common education service was grants to individuals, whereas the most common employment service was signposting. Higher level career orientated awards, such as degrees, diploma, NVQ and BTEC were the most popular types of qualifications supported.



43.6%

provide vocational training



34.6%

provide transitional support



30.8%

provide academic support

¹ Deloitte (2016) Veterans' Work: Recognising the potential of ex-Service personnel, London.

² Charity Commission for England and Wales, Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator, Charity Commission for Northern Ireland.

³ Conservative estimate based on DSC's own findings, See Doherty R., Cole s. & Robson A., (2017) Armed Forces Charities Education and Employment Provision; DSC, London.

Collaboration & Evaluation

Two thirds (66%) of charities experienced benefits of collaboration; three-fifths (59%) partnered with other charities and over one third (36%) partnered with businesses. Yet, only one-fifth (21%) engaged with government initiatives or statutory bodies to deliver employment support.



66%

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Conclusions and recommendations

In mapping the diverse range of mental health provision available from forces charities, this report has largely debunked the perennial myth that 'there are too many service charities'. Only 78 charities deliver education and/or employment support in total, and even fewer (N=32) are 'primary providers' of education/employer support i.e. this is their main charitable remit.

Accreditation was rare, 70% of charities did not have accredited programmes and 68% did not employ accredited staff. Whilst accreditation is not always applicable to provision being made by these charities, DSC recommends that education and training providers implement recognisable forms of accreditation.

DSC also recommends extending opportunities for partnership. Whilst there was extensive evidence of cross-sector collaboration, engagement with statutory schemes was low (21%) and 13% of charities experienced significant barriers to forming partnerships.

Half of all charities could not provide data on employability outcomes and three quarters did not provide data on qualification outcomes. DSC recommends that all charities show commitment to monitoring service outcomes and conducting impact reports so as to better inform sector practice and collaboration.

About the report

DSCs armed forces research continues to be generously funded by Forces in Mind Trust.

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About DSC

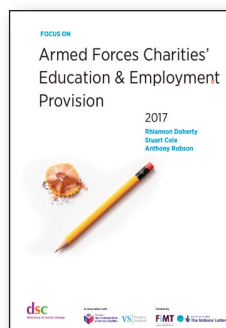
The Directory of Social Change (DSC) has a vision of an independent voluntary sector at the heart of social change.

We help independent charities, voluntary organisations and community groups to achieve their goals by:

- Providing practical tools that organisations and activists need, including publications, training courses, and conferences. and research
- Acting as a 'concerned citizen' in public policy debates, Leading campaigns and stimulating debate on key policy issues
- Carrying out research and providing information to influence policymakers

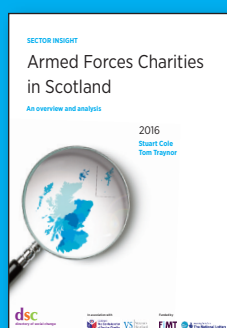
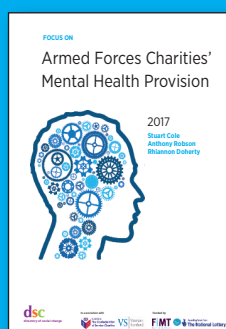
This publication is the first of six thematic reports, to be delivered during 2017-2019 as part of DSC's Focus On series, which illuminates the armed forces charity sector.

The series follows on from DSC's two Sector Insight reports, UK Armed Forces Charities, 2014 and Armed Forces Charities in Scotland, 2016.



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scole@dsc.org.uk

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