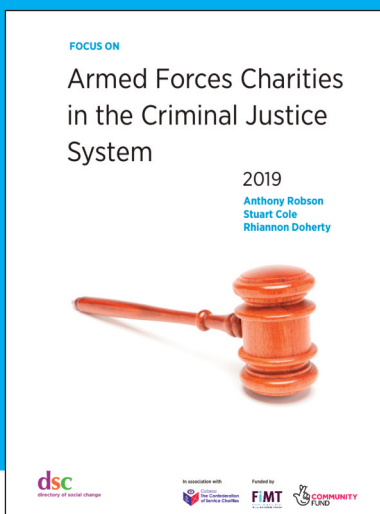


Armed Forces Charities in the Criminal Justice System

When transitioning from the Services, the vast majority of individuals return to civilian life without issue and are in-fact less likely than their civilian counterparts to commit criminal offences (Phillips, 2014).

It is estimated that around 2-4% (1,832) of the prison population are ex-Service personnel (Royal British Legion, 2011; DASA, 2010; MOJ, 2018), and although this is a relatively small percentage, for those who do come into contact with the criminal justice system, armed forces charities provide a wide variety of support ranging from peer support in prisons to accommodation following release.



DSC's latest *Focus On* report provides an overview of the support delivered by armed forces charities for members of the armed forces community who come into contact with the criminal justice system.



Methodology

- DSC maintains a database containing information on over 1,888 armed forces charities.
- To identify armed forces charities which provide support for criminal justice, researchers conducted keyword searches of DSC's database in addition to the three charity regulator websites: (CCEW, OSCR and CCNI).¹
- Data was gathered via the extensive examination of charities' individual annual accounts, website content and where available impact reports.
- To bolster this data, DSC also conducted a survey, which achieved a 48.4% response rate.

Key findings

Level of provision

In total, 31 charities were identified as providing support to individuals in the criminal justice system, which represents around 1.6% of all armed forces charities in the UK (Focus On: Sector Trends, 2019).

During the previous year, at least 3,200 beneficiaries accessed criminal justice support. This figure is significantly less than the number of individuals accessing armed forces charities' support for mental health (n≈10,000), housing (n≈12,000), education and employment (n≈35,000), and physical health (n≈250,000).

Armed forces charities dedicated at least £4.5 million to criminal justice support within the last year. Again, this is significantly less than the amount that armed forces charities dedicated to education and employment (£26 million), mental health (£28 million), housing (£40 million), and physical health (£103 million).

Range of services

DSC found that charities respond to the differing needs of beneficiaries by directing support to specific stages of the criminal justice system. Charities provided support from the arrest and police custody stage (15 charities), to supporting individuals while in prison (13 charities, across 54 prisons), through to preparing individuals for and following release (25 charities).

Charities were found to undertake a wide variety of services to support individuals in the criminal justice system. Services ranged from accommodation to mental health support and peer support through mentoring.

Criminal justice support extended beyond ex-Service personnel, as 12 charities were found to provide support to families of ex-Service personnel in the criminal justice system. Common support for families included finance and debt support (25.8% of charities), peer support (16.1%), and education and employment support (16.1%).



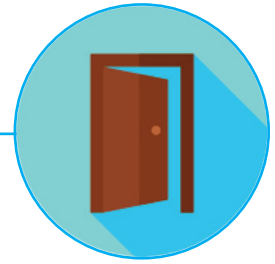
15

15 armed forces charities provide support following arrest



13

13 armed forces charities provide support while in prison



25

25 armed forces charities provide support following release

¹ Charity Commission for England and Wales, Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator, Charity Commission for Northern Ireland.



92%

92% of charities benefit from partnerships



84%

84% of charities partner with other armed forces charities



53%

53% of charities partner with mainstream charities

Conclusions and recommendations

The armed forces charities sector often comes under fire for containing too many charities. However, of the approximately 1,888 armed forces charities registered in the UK, only 1.6% provide support for individuals in the criminal justice system.

Charities recognise the importance of education and employment in fostering successful re-integration into society following prison, as 51.6% of charities provide education and employment support following release from prison.

When analysed further, DSC found charities operated at different stages of the criminal justice system. As 15 charities provide support during police custody, and 13 charities provide support while in prison. Additionally, 25 charities provide support following release from prison, and 12 charities provide support to families of offenders in the criminal justice system.

Foster collaboration

Cross-sector collaboration should be encouraged in order to help with referrals, alongside the sharing of valuable expertise and resources.

Initiatives such as the Cobseo Veterans in the Criminal Justice System Cluster and Project Nova serve as great examples of collaboration. As these illustrate how, multiple organisations across a range of sectors such as armed forces charities, mainstream charities, government departments, and police constabularies work together to address the needs of ex-Service personnel and their families in the criminal justice system.

Explore wider provision

Many mainstream charities work alongside armed forces charities in delivering support to individuals in the criminal justice system. An example being Sacro's partnership with Poppyscotland to deliver their Veterans' Mentoring Service. Additionally, several mainstream charities bring their expertise of the criminal justice system to the Cobseo Veterans in the Criminal Justice System Cluster.

DSC recommends that research should be conducted on the extent mainstream charities support ex-Service personnel and their families in the criminal justice system.



About the report

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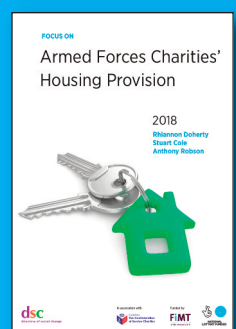
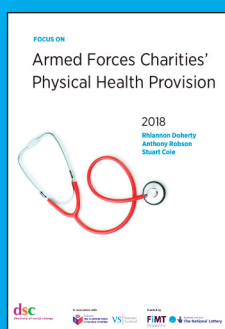
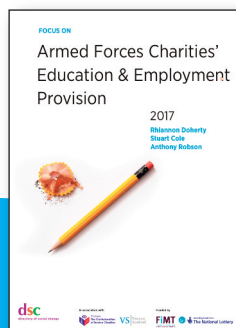
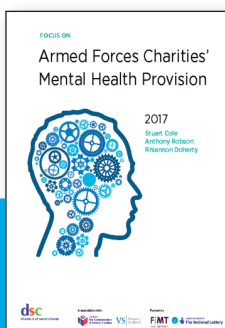
This publication is the sixth thematic report, as part of DSC's Focus On series, which explores the work of armed forces charities.

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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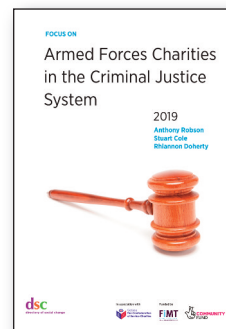


About DSC

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, 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



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