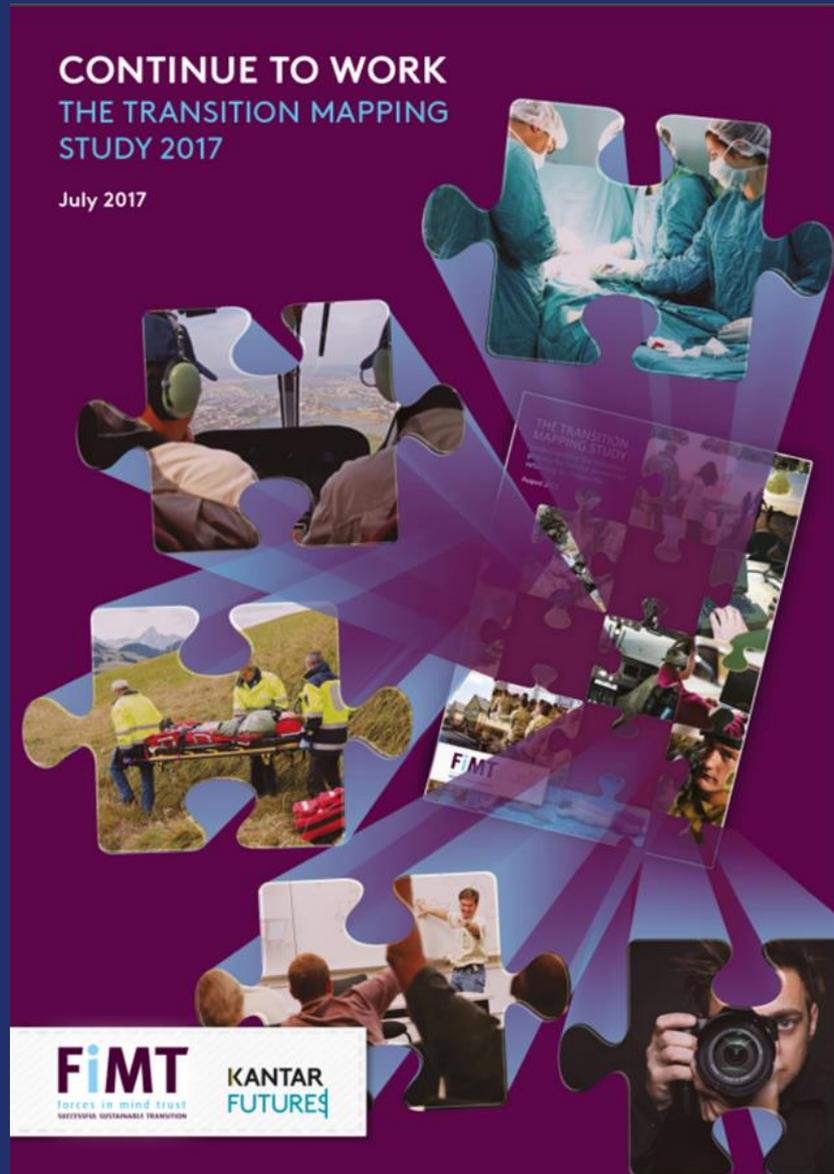


CONTINUE TO WORK: THE TRANSITION MAPPING STUDY 2017

EVALUATION REPORT

December 2017



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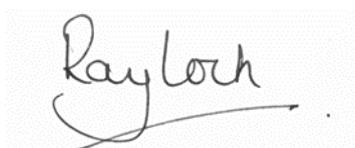
Foreword

When we published our Transition Mapping Study in 2013, as a Trust barely a year in operation, we knew little about the environment in which we intended to work. That seminal piece of work was well received, and arguably contributed a great deal to a movement that had already begun, namely improving the transition of ex-Service men and women, and their families, into civilian life. However, apart from our own (and considerable) internal usage, and the kind, possibly polite, words of many, we had no real measure of its impact. Thus, when we decided to commission a further transition study for publication in 2017, focused now on employment as we had other workstreams looking at the many other aspects of transition, we built independent evaluation in from the outset. This Report is the outcome.

I should first, and on behalf of the whole Trust, thank those who contributed to Arkenford's work, for their time and for their honesty. In a world where calls for feedback are ubiquitous, it was gratifying that so many of our stakeholders gave up their time to answer ours. This type of expert understanding is vital to us as we seek to influence policy makers and service providers in support of our aims, and from this report we can clearly identify where we have been successful, and should capitalise on it, and where we have been less so, and will adapt our approach.

Because the Transition Mapping Study 2017 focused on the employment aspects of transition, naturally the in-service provision of the Ministry of Defence and the Career Transition Partnership came under particular scrutiny and attracted a significant number of recommendations. Their feedback is therefore extremely helpful, and I can fully appreciate a slight sense of frustration at a lack of recognition for their progress that perhaps tinges some comments. Certainly we intended to pay due acknowledgement to the work that has been done on improving transition since our 2013 Study, and I am grateful that both the MOD and CTP have been willing to work with us on following up the 2017 Study beyond its initial publication.

Finally I should close with a comment on the credibility of the Transition Mapping Study 2017; I hope its independence is self-evident. The Study features both quantitative and qualitative research, and at Forces in Mind Trust we take great care to ensure that our reports present findings in a way that avoids the trap seen elsewhere of mixing the two methods. Too often we read in the work of others that 'many' veterans are this or that, when in truth 'many of the veterans we asked' would be a more honest representation. Such diligence is essential to our maintaining our credibility, and hence our ability to influence others in their decision making. So there is a place in our work for qualitative research, where the richness of lived experiences can best be found, and pathways can most accurately be identified. The argument on how large a sample needs to be before it reaches 'saturation' is one that has taxed considerably more expert minds than ours. We therefore take our advice from such experts, and in the case of the Transition Mapping Study 2017, and notwithstanding the stakeholder comments that follow, I am satisfied that the recommendations contained within the Report are based on sound evidence. Nonetheless, this evaluation has provided us clear guidance on how we as a Trust can become more effective. That aspiration is writ large on our future strategy, and I commit us here to its delivery.



Air Vice-Marshal Ray Lock CBE
Chief Executive, Forces in Mind Trust

Definitions & Abbreviations

2013 TMS – 2013 Transition Mapping Study

2017 TMS – Continue to Work: The Transition Mapping Study 2017

CTP – Career Transition Partnership

FiMT – Forces in Mind Trust

MOD – Ministry of Defence

ESLs – Early Service Leavers

Executive Summary

In 2013, the Forces in Mind Trust (FiMT) published and launched the 2013 Transition Mapping Study (2013 TMS). The study was commissioned to develop understanding of the transition process for Service personnel returning to civilian life.

In August 2017, FiMT published an update to their 2013 TMS report. The update report, entitled Continue to Work: The Transition Mapping Study 2017 (2017 TMS) had 3 primary objectives:

- To provide an understanding of how the impact of poor transition has changed in terms of cost and social impact.
- To provide a deeper understanding of issues related to skills transfer and the translation of these into post-transition employment.
- To provide a series of recommendations for supporting successful transition.¹

Arkenford were commissioned to provide an independent evaluation of both the 2013 TMS report and the latest 2017 TMS report. The findings of the evaluation of the 2013 TMS have been published by FiMT and are available online². This report presents the results of our evaluation of the 2017 TMS report and was conducted between September and December 2017.

This evaluation focuses on the following questions and was informed through in-depth interviews with key stakeholders and an online survey.

- What are participants' initial reactions to the 2017 TMS report?
- What is the relevance and perceived value of each section of the report?
- How is the stocks and flows model of transition understood?
- What is the relevance and perceived value of the report's conclusion and recommendations?

Evaluation participants were recruited from a range of academic, commercial, charity and government organisations. An emphasis was placed on recruiting participants from organisations supporting successful post-transition employment, in line with the focus of the 2017 TMS report.

Initial Stakeholder Reactions

Key Findings

- Overall reactions to the 2017 TMS report were positive.
- The report was recognised as valuable for bringing together and consolidating a breadth of information.
- The report provides a knowledge base for improving pathways into employment.

¹ Proposal from Kantar Futures to the Forces in Mind Trust – 20160824-FiMT_Proposal_TFC_Redacted Aug 16

² <http://www.fim-trust.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/20170119-2013-Transition-Mapping-Study-Evaluation-Report-FINAL.pdf>

- The report was regarded as less relevant where the participant’s role was not employment focused.
- Evidence-based research is valued but the representativeness of the qualitative data collection was questioned.
- Participants placed value on this type of research and in evaluating its usefulness.

The Relevance and Value of the Report’s Chapters

Key Findings

- The State of Transition chapter is regarded as an efficient and informative provision of a summarised update on initiatives and activities undertaken to support positive transition.
- There is appetite for greater disaggregation when reporting outflow numbers – particularly by gender, age and region.
- The cost modelling work is valued as a measure of progress and for informing strategic planning and setting priorities.
- Cost modelling identified poor transition related to family breakdown, harmful drinking and common mental health disorders as having a higher cost which led to the report’s focus on employment being questioned.
- The World of Work chapter provides an important emphasis on the soft skills required in the workplace.
- Qualitative perspectives reported in the Personal Journey chapters help identify influences of poor transition and add context to numbers.

Reactions to the Stocks and Flows Transition Model

Key Findings

- The stocks and flows model was perceived as easy to make sense of and combines different elements of the transition pathway.
- For some, the model is overly abstract and a step-by-step process was preferred.
- Participants questioned how the model could be practically implemented to improve transition.
- The importance of Service leavers ‘visioning’ successful transition was emphasised although it is recognised that this could be difficult for Service personnel to do.

The Relevance and Value of the Recommendations

Key Findings

- The recommendations were viewed as being appropriate, concise, well-constructed and providing a platform for increased work and focus for improving transition support and understanding.
- The recommendations would benefit from being included in the executive summary at the beginning of the report.
- Preparation was viewed as one of the most important recommendation themes, with an emphasis given on ensuring ‘permission to prepare’ is granted.

- The recommendations regarding enhancements to the CTP and resettlement process were all viewed as valuable and relevant, and able to stimulate wider debate regarding the current provision.
- Increasing the availability of work placements and promoting their value resonated clearly with participants.
- Looking at transition more holistically was supported because participants understood that poor or successful transition outcomes are influenced by co-dependent factors.
- Better training and more relevant courses were reported as being needed, particularly in terms of aligning skills and abilities to the commercial world.
- Participants agreed that further research is needed, particularly with regards to the uptake of CTP support.

Stakeholder Recommendations

Key Findings

- Clarify where responsibility for implementing recommendations lies.
- Increase knowledge sharing and dissemination of the benefits of employing ex-Service personnel amongst employers.
- Develop Service leaver database for tracking support provision and transition outcomes for all Service leavers.
- Consider producing additional update reports that focus on a different theme related to poor transition.
- Consider further research that identifies how many Service leavers re-join.
- Increase emphasis on the positive contribution made by ex-Service personnel transitioning to civilian life.

It is too early to identify how this report has been able to contribute to or shape policy development and service provision as this evaluation has been conducted during the first few months following publication. One measure of the report's success will be the extent to which the recommendations it makes are able to be acted upon, therefore enhancing transition knowledge and support provision.

When asked what success of the report would look like, it was noted by FiMT CE Ray Lock that it would be the recommendations being right and being acted on over time by relevant organisations, including the CTP and MOD. Our initial appraisal suggests that the recommendations were all considered as being on point. If each is examined to identify how it can be enabled and where responsibility to act falls, their achievement should be possible.

Introduction and Background

In 2013, the Forces in Mind Trust (FiMT) published and launched the 2013 Transition Mapping Study (2013 TMS). The study was commissioned to develop understanding of the transition process for Service personnel returning to civilian life. FiMT commissioned Kantar Futures (previously known as The Futures Company) to conduct the study which, at the time, included:

- Reviewing existing research on transition.
- Understanding how the transition process worked at that time.
- Researching how the current transition process was viewed by stakeholders and by recent Service leavers.
- Making recommendations on how to reduce the number of poor transitions.
- Developing a model that quantified the costs of poor transition to the UK as a whole.

In August 2017, FiMT published an update to their 2013 TMS report. The update report, entitled Continue to Work: The Transition Mapping Study 2017 (2017 TMS) had 3 primary objectives:

- Provide an understanding of how the impact of poor transition has changed in terms of cost and social impact.
- Provide a deeper understanding of issues related to skills transfer and the translation of these into post-transition employment.
- Provide a series of recommendations for supporting successful transition.³

Arkenford were commissioned to provide an independent evaluation of both the 2013 TMS report and the latest 2017 TMS report. The findings of the evaluation of the 2013 TMS have been published by FiMT and are available online⁴. This report presents the results of our evaluation of the 2017 TMS report and was conducted between September and December 2017.

Both evaluations included a focus on identifying the extent and way the reports have impacted on policy development and service delivery. However, the evaluation of the 2013 TMS was conducted three years after the report's publication during which time it had more potential to impact both policy development and service delivery. In contrast, the evaluation of the 2017 TMS report placed greater emphasis on initial reactions to its content and its potential to contribute to policy development and service delivery in the longer term, as it was conducted shortly after publication.

This evaluation focuses on the following key questions and was informed through in-depth interviews with key Stakeholders and an online survey.

- What are participants' initial reactions to the 2017 TMS report?
- What is the relevance and perceived value of each section of the report? Presented in 3 parts as follows:

³ Proposal from Kantar Futures to the Forces in Mind Trust – 20160824-FiMT_Proposal_TFC_Redacted Aug 16

⁴ <http://www.fim-trust.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/20170119-2013-Transition-Mapping-Study-Evaluation-Report-FINAL.pdf>

- Part 1: The Past – Focusing on the state of transition and measuring transition
 - Part 2: The Future – Focusing on the world of work and the personal journey
 - Part 3: What to Do? – Focusing on conclusions and recommendations
- How is the stocks and flows model of transition understood?
 - What is the relevance and perceived value of the report’s conclusion and recommendations?
Presented in 6 parts as follows:
 - Preparation
 - CTP and Resettlement Process
 - Employers
 - Beyond Work
 - Training and Learning
 - Research

Evaluation participants were recruited from a range of academic, commercial, charity and government organisations. An emphasis was placed on recruiting participants from organisations supporting successful post-transition employment, in line with the focus of the 2017 TMS report. A list of the organisations consulted as part of the evaluation is provided in the [acknowledgements](#) section at the end of the report.

This report first provides an evaluation framework that sets out the goals, inputs, outcomes, and impact related evaluation questions that were addressed. Each evaluation question is discussed in a separate section of the report. In addition, the evaluation collected feedback on the structure and layout of the report, the launch event, and priorities for supporting successful transition in the future. A conclusion is provided at the end that summarises the extent to which the 2017 TMS report has the potential to influence policy development and service delivery.

Evaluation Framework

The 2017 TMS report was produced by Kantar Futures. At its inception, Kantar Futures was tasked with developing a report that would deliver the primary objectives drawn from Kantar Futures’ July 2016 proposal to FiMT⁵ and summarised below.

To understand how the impact of poor transition has changed in the three years, in terms of cost and social impact, since the original report was commissioned, by updating the quantitative data and analysis in the transition model. If this suggests there have been significant shifts in costs, how should they be interpreted?

To gain a deeper understanding of issues surrounding skills transfer and the translation of this into post-transition employment. This can be thought of as falling into several areas:

- Skills acquired during Service that translate into usable skills in the civilian work environment, and how these are understood by the individual and by the prospective employer.
- Specific pre-transition training and qualifications undertaken as preparation for civilian life.
- More widely, workplace skills that are needed to fit into more fluid or informal civilian workplace cultures, and people’s experience of cultural adjustment (both following transition and in work experience attachments beforehand).
- In particular, we are likely to be interested in the employment “journeys” of transitioning personnel, and whether particular types of adverse events have a disproportionate impact on their experience of transitioning into civilian work.
- To identify recommendations that can be actioned by individuals and relevant stakeholders, as well as review recommendations from the original Mapping Study that are relevant to the 2017 TMS report’s focus on employment (broadly speaking).⁶

During the report’s development these initial objectives were further refined and presented in the published report as:

- Understand research around transition since 2013, and the institutional response to that research.
- Update the quantitative model of the costs of poor transition developed initially for 2013 TMS.
- Increase understanding of skills transfer and employment following transition.⁷

Drawing from the initial and final objectives of the report, the evaluation framework presented in [Table 1](#) overleaf has been developed to:

- Provide an overview of the goal of the 2017 TMS report.
- Map the associated objectives, inputs, activities, and outcomes related to the report achieving its goal.

⁵ Proposal from Kantar Futures to the Forces in Mind Trust – 20160824-FiMT_Proposal_TFC_Redacted Aug 16

⁶ Proposal from Kantar Futures to the Forces in Mind Trust – 20160824-FiMT_Proposal_TFC_Redacted Aug 16

⁷ http://www.fim-trust.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/FiMT_TMS_Report_2017_FINAL_PDF.pdf

Table 1: Evaluation Framework



Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation of the 2017 TMS report utilised a mixed-methodological approach for gathering feedback from key stakeholders. The evaluation methodology included a series of qualitative in-depth interviews and a short online survey. Participants from a range of academic, charity, commercial and Government organisations, directly or indirectly engaged with supporting successful transition, were invited to participate in the evaluation. This included a specific focus on stakeholders from organisations engaged with issues related to supporting successful employment as part of a successful transition.

Consent to participate was requested from all evaluation participants. The purpose of the evaluation was explained, and anonymity was assured where requested. Any direct quotations that are used in this evaluation have been reviewed and approved by the contributor when they requested to do so.

In-depth Interviews

The Arkenford evaluation team invited 37 potential participants from 35 stakeholder organisations. A total of 22 interviews were conducted between 12th October 2017 and 5th December 2017. Six of the participants interviewed for this evaluation reported being involved in a consultation to inform the report and nine attended the 2017 TMS report launch event at the Royal Air Force Club on 25th July.

Evaluation interviews followed a semi-structured discussion guide and were audio recorded when consent was given, and then transcribed for analysis. The semi-structured discussion covered the following main themes, in line with the evaluation framework (see [Table 1](#)):

- The participant's organisation and role
- Initial perspectives on transition and the 2017 TMS report
- The relevance of the report's content
- Reactions to the report's recommendations
- Contributory impacts of the 2017 TMS report
- Stakeholder recommendations

This evaluation was conducted shortly after the report's publication and launch. It was therefore too soon to evaluate how the report contributed to successful transition outcomes in the longer term. Rather, the focus was on understanding perceptions of the perceived value and relevance of the report's content and, where reported, identifying initial and anticipated contributions the report could make for supporting transition policy development and service delivery.

After giving their initial reactions to the report's content, evaluation participants were, when necessary, given verbal prompting on the focus of each of the report's chapters to assist their recall and response. This included a prompted review of each of the report's recommendations to evaluate their relevance and value.

Online Survey

A short online survey focusing on awareness and engagement with the 2017 TMS report was used to gather additional input. The survey was sent to 103 stakeholders who were not participating in an in-depth interview, from 79 organisations. Survey responses were collected between 15th November 2017 and 5th December 2017.

Analysis

The feedback provided by participants during in-depth interviews has been analysed against each of the evaluation questions set out in the evaluation framework. Where relevant, direct quotes have been used to provide examples of a specific point that has been reported as part of the evaluation. In addition, both the in-depth interview and online survey feedback has been used to identify areas where the report is regarded as having the potential to support policy development and service delivery.

Initial Stakeholder Reactions

In the first part of the evaluation interview, participants were asked to provide their initial reactions to the 2017 TMS report.

Key Findings

- Overall reactions to the 2017 TMS report were positive.
- The report was recognised as valuable for bringing together and consolidating a breadth of information.
- The report provides a knowledge base for improving pathways into employment.
- The report was regarded as less relevant where the participant’s role was not employment focused.
- Evidence-based research is valued but the representativeness of the qualitative data collection was questioned.
- Participants placed value on this type of research and in evaluating its usefulness.

The majority of participants interviewed for this evaluation had either heard about the report through the launch event or had received a copy of the report from FiMT. Overall, participants had a positive reaction to the 2017 TMS report and felt that it did not contain any surprises for them. In particular, positive comments were received about how the report brought a lot of information together and provides a useful resource for consolidating fragmented information, providing it in one place and making recommendations for future actions.



I think it's really good at bringing together lots of different information.

Danielle Fullwood, Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust



I think it's a good and useful exercise, consolidating some of the issues and how we might go forward.

Nick Everard, J1 Consulting



There was a reported paucity in UK based research into poor transition and the associated costs, which meant that American models were often referenced. Therefore, the 2017 TMS report was reported to help highlight the breadth of activities underway, and dispelled the perception that stakeholders were acting alone to support transition. The report also serves as a valuable reference, both in highlighting the work of others and providing references to data sources and information, such as the data sources underpinning the cost modelling provided in the report’s annex.

Reader understanding of the report’s objectives aligned with the objectives set out by Kantar Futures, in particular, the emphasis on providing a knowledge base on the world of work and personal pathways for transitioning personnel. The objectives of the report, summarised by one participant, suggest the report can contribute to efforts to improve employment related transition outcomes.



[The reports objectives are] ...to improve pathways into employment, through the services that the CTP provides or improving the education and qualifications that the Service leaver is able to gain through the Services in order to make them transferable to the civilian world.



Lucy Heaver, Naval Families Federation

When reflecting on the key recommendations the report provided, one participant responded that it highlighted the need to understand how to better support the employment needs of those who do not engage with the CTP process. This included the need to understand more about those who do not engage with the CTP from lower ranks, compared with those from higher ranks who may be able to draw on stronger networks and connections for supporting their post-Service employment prospects.

For some, the report's emphasis on employment was perceived as less relevant as it provided a less holistic perspective on transition compared with the 2013 TMS report. Where the focus on employment was perceived as less directly relevant to a participant's specific work, such as for those focussed on family issues, the report was still regarded as interesting and useful, and it made sure that the discussion of transition remained at the forefront.

For many, the 2017 TMS report was perceived as not really containing any surprises but played an important role in reinforcing what was already understood. It was recognised that condensing the breadth of information that the report covered was a challenge that the report had risen to, on the most part, successfully. However, it is important to note that feedback was received that the report was too long and that some of the information would have been better provided as annexes. In the words of one participant:



There is a lot to wade through.



Adrian Peters, CTP

Related to this was the perception that the report was overly academic and that it overly intellectualised issues relating to transition. However, this was offset by the more commonly stated need for evidence-based research upon which policy decisions could be influenced and grounded. One participant saw the report's direct objective as informing policy making to improve individual transition experiences.

In terms of putting the report into action, participants offered examples of actions stimulated or supported by both the launch event and the report itself, including knowledge sharing and business planning.



I wrote an internal memo to colleagues based on the notes I took during the launch event presentation, highlighting the need to engage more with those who the CTP programme does not reach. It prompted me to move further and faster.



Respondent from the health sector



We use the numbers on outflow trends because they are really attention grabbing. It would be useful if we could have these by geographic area.



Danielle Fullwood, Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust

Alongside the positive feedback received on the breadth of information covered by the report, a number of comments were made regarding the methodology that was used. Concern was raised about the mixed qualitative sample of recent Service leavers being too small and could therefore not be considered as representative by Service or rank. While the report does not claim that the sample of recent Service leavers is representative of all recent Service leavers and provides a discussion of the representation of the qualitative sample on page 17, the feedback highlights the value that stakeholders place on analysis that uses larger samples. This point was reinforced by participants discussing the importance of evidence-based policy making and their perceived limitation of the report in supporting this due to findings being based on a small qualitative sample.



I was surprised by the sample size of 20 for the qualitative work. It was quite low. Between 12,000 to 15,000 people a year discharge from military service.



Major Kevin Holligan, MOD

To continue to keep the topic of transition support on the agenda, in people's minds and to strive for change and progress, reports such as this are a vital contributor to achieving that goal. Everybody we spoke to agreed that evidence and research is key, and conversations and therefore change cannot take place without it.



Reports and evidence are vital because we wouldn't go around asking for change if the evidence didn't point to it being an improvement.



Andy Pike, The Royal British Legion

Publishing evidence-based reports do not just stimulate conversations for change but provide the framework and clarity of approach to present the case for change. As one person we spoke to commented, the report lends weight to their arguments and helps refine their strategy and approach – it actually helps them get their “foot through the door”.



The report lends credibility to the message we're trying to get across and adds to it. If I can give an MP or MSP a copy of the report and say here's some key issues you will want to address and influence, they will take that at face value, particularly if its cited that there's other reports that back up the broad findings.



Anonymous

The consensus amongst those we spoke to was that publishing evidence and reports such as the 2017 TMS report is a valuable use of resources and money. Whilst the value of the report in terms of impact and actions stimulated is unclear at this stage, participants noted that the report was valuable and relevant to all involved in enhancing the transition process, not just those focussing on employment.



I think the structure of producing models and reports and re-evaluating them to assess whether or not they are still relevant is really good practice.



Louise Briggs, RAF Families Federation



A lot of people might say ‘Why are we doing this when we should be investing into front line services’, but I think that’s a little short-sighted because we need to have a business plan, to know why we’re doing what we’re doing. Everything we do in the NHS is evidence based, and if you don’t have evidence for it you don’t do it. There has to be a balance with the cost versus the value, and in this instance, I would say there could be more done to make sure people know where this report is.



Danielle Fullwood, Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust

Dissemination and promotion of the report was viewed as being vital for the report to achieve its full value. At this stage, knowledge of the report is in its infancy, it is not as widespread as the 2013 TMS and people were keen to point out that more should be done to advance the understanding and importance of the 2017 TMS report.

The Relevance and Value of the Report’s Chapters

Key Findings

- The State of Transition chapter is regarded as an efficient and informative provision of a summarised update on initiatives and activities undertaken to support positive transition.
- There is appetite for greater disaggregation when reporting outflow numbers – particularly by gender, age and region.
- The cost modelling work is valued as a measure of progress and for informing strategic planning and setting priorities.
- Cost modelling identified poor transition related to family breakdown, harmful drinking and common mental health disorders as having a higher cost which led to the report’s focus on employment being questioned.
- The World of Work chapter emphasised the importance of ‘soft skills’ required in the workplace.
- Qualitative perspectives reported in the Personal Journey chapters help identify influences of poor transition and add context to numbers.

The State of Transition

Participants reported that the update on the State of Transition was valuable for bringing together a summary of initiatives and actions since the publication of the 2013 TMS. It was suggested that there were no other such summaries and having the information in one place was both efficient and informative.

Only one participant that we spoke to was able to make a comment about the specific details of Chapter 1 of the 2017 TMS report. They found this chapter to be very interesting and useful, especially where they had not already heard about some of the changes to the support available to service leavers. For example, the extension of the support available to early service leavers (ESLs) has had an impact on how this particular participant’s programme is run. They felt that they had previously been taught to see ESLs as the most vulnerable or in need of the most help. However, with the changes that have been made in the last few years for ESLs as outlined in the 2017 TMS report, they felt that the assumption that ESLs leavers have not had enough support now needs to change.

Moving forward, this participant would like to see more information about changes, research and activities around the area of transition, such as in a regular newsletter. They work in an organisation with a flexible program, so the more information they have available about new research and activities, the more they can do to help leavers.



In the programme as a whole we concern ourselves with people who are most vulnerable or labelled as such. Therefore, the implication that an early service leaver has had less support now needs to change with the knowledge that they are getting more help. We don’t need to do as much development or hand-holding - that’s the kind of info we need to pass on.



Danielle Fullwood, Guy's and St Thomas’ NHS Foundation Trust

Measuring Transition and The Cost Model

Evaluation participants were asked to discuss their thoughts on the updated cost model presented in the 2017 TMS report. Overall, the cost model and associated research notes were viewed positively. Even when regarded as not of direct use to their work and/or organisation, it was still noted as being interesting to understand. A key benefit of providing cost modelling data was that it provided a figure to quote, especially for charities, when seeking investment from Government and other sources.



It's a useful figure to have from a charity perspective, if you're going to try to get funding from other sources. Public bodies question why they should invest, and the figure provides granularity, it helps us articulate better when we try to get grants to support our own work.



Captain John Lavery, The White Ensign Association

The service outflow numbers and updated cost model were also seen as valuable for understanding how the cost of unsuccessful transition had changed since the 2013 TMS. The cost model was seen by some as a measure for judging progress over the last four years.

The outflow numbers and trends were also reported as being complementary to the cost model because, if organisations can show that there are large numbers of people leaving, it helps them to build a business case. It was mentioned by two participants that it would be useful to also include the geographical dispersal of service leavers. This would enable national organisations to carefully consider the structure of their resources and better target their support to particular areas around the country. Through targeting areas where leavers are resettling, organisations can look at getting leavers into support earlier and prevent problems further down the line.

By demonstrating what the cost of poor transition is, overall and in each of the different elements of poor transition, participants stated that they can show investors that there is a problem which needs to be solved. This provides a concrete figure for organisations who are offering transition support initiatives, which in turn helps to prove to investors that their work is worthwhile.

It was also mentioned that the cost model helps to reinforce objectives internally within the organisation. One participant mentioned that it was interesting to think about how the work they are currently doing might contribute to reducing the number of poor transitions and how it impacts on the cost figure. Another added that the model could be used to look strategically at what the priorities are when it comes to helping people transition, and from this an organisation’s priorities can be realigned to meet these needs.

Discussion of the cost model also raised the question of why the report chose to focus on employment when family breakdown, harmful drinking and common mental health disorders were represented on page 40 as constituting larger elements of the cost of poor transition when compared with unemployment. The report’s focus on employment is addressed in the report’s foreword which highlights that earlier work had identified training, skills, and employment as being critical to success and that FiMT have already begun making inroads into other areas, such as housing health and wellbeing and the

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criminal justice system⁸. It was also suggested by one evaluation participant that employment was a critical pathway for limiting poor transition costs in other areas, thus justifying the focus.

One concern raised was that the cost of unsuccessful transition could become the main focus of the study, something that was also raised during our evaluation of the 2013 TMS. There was a worry that if the entire focus of transition turned to getting the cost figure down, then the underlying causes might not be fully addressed. It was suggested that financial cost was not the only cost of poor transition and each issue also came with a social cost.



Personally, I’m more interested in the social cost, so the impact of transition on families and what it would cost them in terms of mental health, physical health, family unity and well-being.



Kate McCullough, Army Families Federation

One participant commented that they were unsure what difference the cost model could make on a day-to-day basis and they questioned whose responsibility it was to act on these figures.

It was also noted that through the cost modelling, the report placed emphasis on the negative aspects of transition. It was suggested that attention should be drawn to the fact that the elements of poor transition only affect a minority of transitioning personnel and that many transitions are successful. This theme of negative reinforcement emerged during a number of evaluation interviews where some felt it was important to highlight the positive economic and social contributions made by transition personnel to avoid creating or reinforcing negative stereotypes.

⁸ 2017 TMS p2

The World of Work

The chapter focusing on the World of Work was seen as providing a useful breakdown of the issues related to successful Service leaver employment and delivered a single well-articulated piece that brought these together. The commentary on how the world of work has evolved over recent decades was well received and perceived as a useful summary, although providing a contextual summary, it was questioned by some in terms of who it was targeted at and who could act on this type of information.

It was also mentioned that it provided an important emphasis on the soft skills that were required to be successful in the civilian workplace. When preparing for transition and future employment it was noted that Service personnel should place equal value on how their military experience has helped develop their soft skills alongside the qualifications and practical experience gained during Service.



It is these [soft] skills that Service men and women have acquired during their military careers, that are most in demand by commercial employers. The hard bit is helping the Service leaver to understand where their individual strengths and soft skills lie, to present them in the language of a commercial employer, along with the supporting evidence.



Andrew Jackson, SaluteMyJob

The Personal Journey

The qualitative perspectives provided by Service leaver interviewees, including the myths and mixed messages about civilian life, were reported as providing an important understanding of how individual service leavers differ in what they think they know about transition and how they may approach it. These perspectives were considered important for understanding the influence of pre-conceptions on poor transition and were considered complementary to quantitative analysis of employment related transition outcomes, measured over time. It was noted though that it is important not to generalise qualitative perspectives as representative of all Service leavers.



It was nice to have the qualitative bit, albeit from a very small cohort, we have a great deal of quantitative data, the challenge is to get to the so what behind it ... there's stuff in there I found really useful in a qualitative sense and it added to my view of the world.



Adrian Peters, CTP

Reactions to the Stocks and Flows Transition Model

Key Findings

- The Stocks and Flows Model is mostly perceived as easy to make sense of by showing the interaction of different elements of the transition pathway.
- For some, the model is overly abstract and a step-by-step process was preferred.
- Participants questioned how the model could be practically implemented to improve transition.
- The importance of Service leavers ‘visioning’ successful transition was emphasised although it is recognised that this could be difficult for Service personnel to do.

Approximately half of evaluation participants were familiar with the Stocks and Flows Model when asked about it. The model was in general positively received and seen to be a good approach to understanding transition. Most interviewees found the model straightforward and easy to make sense of. For some, however, there was a feeling that it was an abstract idea and it took some effort to fully understand all the different components of the model and how they interact with one another. The stock aspect was clear for the majority of participants, but for others, a structured step-by-step process rather than a cycle would have been valued more. The model was noted as particularly useful for those looking to understand transition for the first time.



The most useful part is mapping transition. It brings a complex and confusing subject together in a helpful way, in a single, well-articulated piece.



Andrew Jackson, SaluteMyJob

The model was regarded as a relevant way of looking at the transition process. There was a consensus that the model had got it right in terms of the three stocks that contribute towards a successful transition. In particular, there was strong agreement that the institutional resources were extremely important and relevant to transition. For example, there is a need to help leavers with translating and transferring the skills they have acquired during their time in the Services, and to reinforce the value of those skills to Service personnel – an area in which is perceived by some participants to be lacking at present.

It’s worth noting that participants readily talked about the stocks element of the model, and unanimously agreed with and understood how these contribute to successful transition. Many also picked up on the vision component and liked the emphasis on the leaver themselves, but none explicitly offered any discussion points on the performance or framing cycle.



I remember from when I left the services myself, articulating that longer-term vision and getting some focus into your job search is quite difficult to do. If you haven’t got that vision it makes the transition journey difficult, you’re just going one step at a time without any objective.



Nick Everard, J1 Consulting

Although the model was generally acknowledged to be interesting, relevant and a good approach to understanding transition, many participants asked how it could be implemented and how it would be

Continue to Work: The Transition Mapping Study 2017 Evaluation – The Stocks and Flows Transition Model

used to make improvements and changes. This approach puts a focus on the leaver themselves. Participants felt that it is important that the leaver has a vision for their future when transitioning and agree with this aspect of the model, although some asked how simple it is for the leaver to have a clear idea of what they would like for their future.

One participant also questioned who this model is aimed at. They asked whether it should in fact be the leaver thinking about themselves using this model when they start transition process, or is it the responsibility of the programs and initiatives? There was a feeling that in many cases, once the leaver has reached such programs, it might be too late for them to really benefit from looking at transition in this way.

The Relevance and Value of the Recommendations

Participants were asked to comment on the recommendations outlined in the report. Due to the proximity of this evaluation to the report’s publication it was not possible to ascertain details of specific actions stimulated by the recommendations. We therefore asked participants if the recommendations would influence their strategies or workstreams in the future and most of the feedback received focused on the relevance, clarity and practicality of the recommendations.

Key Findings

- The recommendations were viewed as being appropriate, concise, well-constructed and providing a platform for increasing focus and activities that improve transition support and understanding.
- The recommendations would benefit from being included in the executive summary at the beginning of the report.
- Preparation was viewed as one of the most important recommendation themes, with an emphasis given on ensuring ‘permission to prepare’ is granted.
- The recommendations regarding enhancements to the CTP and resettlement process were all viewed as valuable and relevant, and able to stimulate wider debate regarding the current provision.
- Increasing the availability of work placements and promoting their value resonated clearly with participants.
- Looking at transition more holistically was supported because participants understood that poor or successful transition outcomes are influenced by co-dependent factors.
- Better training and more relevant courses were reported as being needed, particularly in terms of aligning skills and abilities to the commercial world.
- Participants agreed that further research is needed, particularly with regards to the uptake of CTP support.

Reviewing the Recommendation Themes

The report contains six Recommendation Themes, listed below, which were reviewed by and discussed with participants.

Preparation	CTP and Resettlement Processes	Employers
Beyond Work	Training and Learning	Research

Overall Reaction to the Recommendations

All of the recommendations listed in the 2017 TMS report were viewed as being appropriate, concise, well-constructed and providing a platform for increased work and focus for improving transition support and understanding. A number of participants commented that due to the recommendations specific

focus on the world of work, skills transfer and post-service employment, some were not directly relevant for them. However, the majority view was that all the recommendations sought to enhance positive transition, which by default meant they were relevant to everybody working to achieve that goal.



All the things which are there are things we are considering or have considered or wish to take forward. I don't think there's any particular recommendations that we wouldn't want to do. I think we will be doing all of them, why wouldn't we want to?



Major Neil Lewis, MOD

For some, the recommendations were viewed as one of the most important aspects of the report. Having sector-wide recommendations, grouped thematically and consolidated in one place, provides both a useful point of reference and targets to work towards for those specifically involved in enhancing transition provision. For others, who only engage with Service personal at a later stage in the transition journey, seeing recommendations that can and have influenced the support provision influencing that journey is valuable.



It is very useful to see what is being asked of the people before us who are responsible for the first part of resettlement transition. The fact that we often don't know what's included in that and that we're not involved in that in any way, means you're not there for the beginning of their journey, and you must pick things up halfway along. It's good to understand what recommendations are made to the organisations before us.



Danielle Fullwood, Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust

The recommendations were also viewed as sensible and logical, and whilst not easy to implement, simply being written concisely alleviates the possibility of confusion and misinterpretation. The recommendations provide a challenge for current and planned activities to meet. They should therefore be reviewed over time to identify the contribution of the 2017 TMS report on progress where it is made.

It was commented that given the importance and value of the recommendations, they should have been moved further forward in the report, rather than being distributed throughout the report and summarised at the end. The executive summary was mentioned as the most obvious place for this summary of recommendations and would be much more useful to those looking to review the key findings and headlines of the report, especially for those who may not take the time to review the whole report.

Whose Responsibility?

Another view was that whilst the recommendations define the *what to do*, they do not take things further by outlining the *how to do*. This is intrinsically linked to the wider question participants had regarding where responsibility for implementation lies and therefore whether these recommendations are achievable.

It is clear in many instances where responsibility for implementation of the recommendations lies, where, for example, the CTP and employers are directly referenced. However, sometimes it is not explicitly clarified which raises concerns over what happens next.



Absolutely they're all relevant, but I come back to the question of whether they are achievable. They are great actions, but what it doesn't say for most recommendations, is who is going to be responsible for doing that.



Captain John Lavery, The White Ensign Association

The question of responsibility arose during our evaluation of the 2013 TMS and has been raised again regarding the 2017 TMS report. In our evaluation report of the 2013 TMS we wrote how a number of participants commented that the report did not set out where the resource, time and money to carry these recommendations forward needed to come from. These same concerns have also been raised again whilst evaluating the 2017 TMS report. If responsibility is not clarified, participants questioned how achievable the recommendations really are.

How practical the recommendations are to implement was also questioned. For example, in the instance of advancing the exposure to the working world through placements (recommendation 3.1), this was something that participants agreed with and would like to see but questioned how practical it is to implement given the duties and responsibilities of Service personnel. Who decides, and at what point and for how long, to sanction personal attachments is a decision that was noted as being influenced by operational requirements.

A closer look at reactions to each Recommendation Theme

1 Preparation

1.1 Ensure that policy on transition across all three Services clearly outlines the duty of the Chain of Command to support effective planning and preparation, beyond providing information and encouragement. Ensure that this policy is applied consistently, universally, visibly and measurably.
(Chapter 4)

1.2 Create and consistently apply an explicit right of ‘permission to prepare’ among transitioning personnel to ensure that they are not disadvantaged by operational requirements.
(Chapter 4)

1.3 Create a formal process of exit and post-resettlement interviews in order to improve insight and analysis and improve organisational learning about the experience of the transition process.
(Chapter 1)

Preparation was viewed as one of the most important recommendation themes. The majority of participants saw this as being a vital part of the transition process and the importance of ‘permission to prepare’ was emphasised. It was also commented that there may be a tension between the Service leaver and the Service, given that successfully preparing for transitioning into the civilian world and workplace may be perceived as more important for the Service leaver than the Service itself. It is in the Service leavers interest to be as fully prepared as possible.

‘Permission to Prepare’ was viewed as key to ensuring more successful transitions. It was felt that from the Service side, the importance of preparation and the benefits of engaging with the provisions available, needs greater emphasis and formalisation.



Management permission to prepare for transition is key. One way of measuring this might be to incentivise leaders by recognising and rewarding management for an increase in the uptake of the support available for their people.



Insights Manager, The Poppy Factory

Participants commented that they had dealt with many ex-Service personnel who had said that they did not have that formal permission to engage with the transition process, and that in some cases it was only granted with very short notice before they left the service. The explicit right of permission to prepare therefore received strong support from the participants we spoke to.

It was felt that the type of preparation that is needed requires further clarification. It was commented that for a Service leaver, transitioning is not just about understanding what tangible skills they have and how they can be applied to the civilian workplace. Mental preparation was viewed as equally important to skills transfer, both in terms of adjusting to the shock of leaving the Service and feeling confident about what they can contribute to an employer.



It's key here that if serving individuals feel that they're not 'worth much' when they get outside, the preparation they need to do is as much about mental preparation.



Respondent from the health sector

The recommendation regarding the duty of the Chain of Command was viewed positively and one that if sufficient support and provision was put in place for, would have benefits for all involved in the transition process. It was commented that levels of engagement with the transition process and when this engagement starts, varies by Service from the perspective of both the Service leaver and the Chain of Command. A uniformed, joined-up approach with set timescales and milestones would be invaluable to ensuring that as much support as possible is provided and engaged with. The effectiveness of this approach would enable the wider transition process, applicable across all Services, to be reviewed and enhanced moving forwards.

Creating a formal process of exit and post-resettlement interviews was also commended. It was noted that this should become standard practice and would provide a further valuable source of feedback regarding the whole transition process.



Referring to exit interviews, I think that's a good idea only if the results are communicated properly. If lessons learned were communicated back to middle management and senior management to improve awareness and lead to further improvements...



Insights Manager, The Poppy Factory

2 CTP and Resettlement Processes

2.1 Add a visioning component to the transition processes to help leavers focus on the type of civilian they plan to become, beyond work.
(Chapter 4)

2.2 Improve the capabilities of resettlement officers and CTP personnel to handle less typical requests that may involve a bigger career change.
(Chapter 4)

2.3 Increase the provision of virtual and distance learning and training options in the CTP to smooth out regional differences in provision.
(Chapter 4)

2.4 Provide a maternity extension to CTP entitlement periods so women who leave and have children are not disadvantaged.
(Chapter 4)

The recommendations regarding enhancements to the CTP and resettlement process were all viewed as valuable and relevant, and able to stimulate wider debate regarding the current provision. It was felt that incorporating the recommendations would enhance the CTP and resettlement offer available to Service leavers and would further improve engagement with the CTP process. It was also commented that some of the reasons for the lack of engagement with the CTP process are still not fully understood and require further research.



I think these recommendations are all relevant, but alongside this is the question of what is the added value of that CTP process? How many people who were left to their own devices would've got there without the CTP, how many not getting into a job versus getting a job. These figures are the mark of success.



Respondent from the health sector

One interesting perspective was offered, stemming from the recommendation regarding helping the Service leaver focus on the type of civilian they plan to become. It was said that this thought should be at the forefront of the whole transition process but is not promoted or referenced enough across the Services or via the CTP offering, possibly affecting wider engagement with the entire resettlement process. Whilst the Service leaver should always be focusing on what they are seeking to achieve post-Service, whether that has been established or not, transition guidance and support should be made mandatory. This would ensure all Service leavers, regardless of Service or rank, those who understand how their military skills transfer into the civilian world and those who would perhaps need the most support adjusting to the civilian world, would receive and engage with transition support.



I understand the argument that you have to take responsibility for your own future, but it happens to be probably the most vulnerable ones who most need the assistance who don't avail themselves of it. I think it [the CTP process] should be mandatory unless you are actively excused from it, and the more vulnerable people suffer because they don't have the organisational skills or whatever to put themselves on it.



3 Employers

3.1 Provide greater exposure of services personnel and those in transition to civilian workplaces, through short personnel attachments. (Step Into Health is a possible template.)
(Chapter 4)

3.2 Provide more opportunities, both formal and informal, for employers and transition organisations to engage on the broader commercial benefits of hiring Service leavers.
(Chapter 4)

Both of the recommendations listed here were well-received by the consultancies involved in the recruitment of ex-Service personnel and they would advocate and support their implementation, however the challenge of introducing these is acknowledged. Increasing the availability of work placements and promoting their value, as listed in Chapter 4, resonated clearly with the majority of participants. However, from the perspective of those specifically involved in the recruitment chain, the recommendation did not clearly identify where responsibility to establish and oversee these placements lies, nor the structure these initiatives would take. It was also commented that operational responsibilities and duties would impact and take precedence over any placement opportunities.

Promoting the benefits of ex-Service personnel to commercial employers was discussed as being of great value. Employers would view the range of skills that ex-Service personnel can offer which would provide them with a pool of candidates they may not have previously considered. For the Service leaver, it would help overcome the difficulties some face in recognising how transferable their skill set is. Rather than the recognition and promotion of their skills coming from the Service side alone, it could also come from the employer's side. This may help overcome the uncertainty of the direction the Service leaver may take in the civilian world and alleviate some of the confidence issues they may have regarding their value to employers.



I think increased engagement is great in principle, I think at the moment it is, on balance, not very well executed. It's opening up new opportunities with new companies, that's what takes hard work and I don't think the current system is very proactive in that regard.



Nick Everard, J1 Consulting

4 Beyond Work

4.1 Measure successful transition more 'holistically', for example by incorporating additional dimensions in KPIs of transition success.
(Chapter 1)

Looking at transition more holistically was supported because participants understood that poor or successful transition outcomes are influenced by co-dependent factors. For some, this recommendation linked directly back to the cost model which outlined the individual elements relating to the cost of poor transition. It was commented that work is already being done to create a holistic policy for all transitioning personnel. With focused reviews on all contributory elements taking place, bringing these elements together is the challenge given that they are not mutually exclusive.



We are looking at a holistic transition policy. We are doing a lot of stuff, we just haven't tied it all together in an overarching policy. This will hopefully help us to identify duplication of effort, and more importantly identify gaps which need to be plugged. There's an example of something we're going to be doing. But we need to measure it – how do we measure successful transition?



Major Neil Lewis, MOD

Exactly how successful transition is measured is something that participants felt could be challenging. Given the inter-connected nature of the factors affecting transition outcomes, success in one aspect, such as finding employment does not mean that somebody will not struggle with another element.



They need to be looking at the holistic aspects of transition, but that is always going to be a bit of a problem because how can you measure those?



Lucy Heaver, Naval Families Federation

5 Training and Learning

5.1 Aspire for all those who have completed Phase 2 training to leave with A*-C grade GCSEs, or their future equivalent, in maths and English.
(Chapter 4)

5.2 Establish a clear process for informing all of those who qualify for learning credits and help with funding for courses what their entitlement is and how it can be exercised.
(Chapter 4)

5.3 Extend transition training on business budgeting and management, and self-employment skills, to ensure that leavers are more business literate.
(Chapter 4)

The recommendations regarding training and learning were seen as being aspirational and achievable, and any advancement in the training courses available and qualifications attained in service was viewed positively.

During our evaluation of the 2013 TMS, one participant commented that seeing what the proportion of personnel leaving the Services with GCSE Maths or English was would be interesting, as there was a belief that these numbers were still low. It was commented that seeing this issue focused in the form of a recommendation in the 2017 TMS report was very pleasing and adds to the traction behind that aspiration. Driving that aspiration through reinforcing the importance and value of what attaining these grades can mean in terms of not just acquiring a job but also retaining one was noted as key.

“*Research shows that on average Service leavers have education levels below what most employers would expect literacy and numeracy levels to be. Literacy and numerical skills are important for somebody getting into a job after they leave, for job retention, and the quality of the job they can get. So, it would be fairer to upgrade educational attainment and futureproof them for a competitive job market.*”

Insights Manager, The Poppy Factory

That is not to say that achieving this recommendation will be straightforward, as operational constraints may affect delivery, regardless of the provisions available. An individual's length of service may also affect the attainment of GCSEs in Maths and English, as the constraints of their time in service may determine the amount of training received. The mindset of the individual is also mooted as a potential barrier to obtaining these grades.

“*If they've had a reasonable career of 10 years plus, a lot of people when they leave they will have this, or should have it, if not there's something wrong. If we are talking about infantry, or someone who has only been in service for 2 or 3 years, it could be a bit of a big ask. If soldiers have had 11 years of state education which didn't given them that, how are we going to give them that when they're doing a full-time job?*”

Major Neil Lewis, MOD

It was commented by some that Service personnel may obtain a job where responsibilities fall below what they were doing in service. Increased education regarding learning credits, how they are used and the benefits of using them is an important and practical recommendation but alongside this, it was noted that is not just about looking to fill in the gaps regarding skills but also about more structured and detailed training regarding skills they *already* possess and how they are transferable.

It was also reported that establishing clearer guidelines regarding training courses and learning credits to increase engagement does not actually go far enough. Alongside this, better training and more relevant courses are needed, particularly in terms of aligning skills and abilities to the commercial world. Doing so would provide Service personnel with the best possible start in civilian employment. It was also commented that this key point should be the responsibility of not just the Service, but also those employers who support the recruitment of ex-Service personnel.



A lot of emphasis is put on the military and how they need to align their qualifications more to civilians' workplace, but there is a responsibility on us to assist with this and make it as easy as possible; this is something that we should be picking up and doing.



Danielle Fullwood, Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust

6 Research

6.1 Research those who do not register for CTP support, to establish their reasons for not registering, or the circumstances in which they have not registered.
(Chapter 2)

6.2 Research those who register but do not use billable CTP services to establish the reasons for not taking up these services.
(Chapter 2)

6.3 Research economically inactive leavers to establish the extent to which economic inactivity is a positive choice, and the possible circumstances in which it is not.
(Chapter 4)

6.4 Conduct qualitative research into life and work satisfaction among leavers over one to three years to understand its impact on successful transition.
(Chapter 4)

6.5 Conduct research among senior NCOs to identify the extent to which they may be an at-risk group after transition.
(Chapter 4)

Participants agreed that further research is needed, particularly with regards to the uptake of CTP support.



Absolutely, spot on. We need to understand why, in 2015-16, nearly 30% of those eligible (some 5,000 Service leavers) did not access CTP services.



Andrew Jackson

This was reported as something that the MOD and CTP are currently looking at, so they can better understand the reasons for non-participation. It is hoped that further research will provide insight into the specific circumstances that cause ex-Service personnel to either not start or reject CTP support once started. It was commented that some of the reasons for not registering support are known, but these are very topline and the deeper motivations behind them need further understanding. In addition, a breakdown of the actual number of people not engaging is needed and this information then requires disseminating to all involved in the sector.



There's another example of where we're already on the case, and a recommendation like this does help us to say that we need to find out these figures. We're doing more and more work in that area to try and identify the exact number of people that don't register. The stats will give you a figure, but we're doing a lot of work to look at if this number is really accurate or is it less?



Major Neil Lewis, MOD

The specific research topics the recommendations identify were welcomed and if conducted, would provide valuable information for understanding the post-transition difficulties some personnel may suffer. This could then be used to guide changes to policy and the support currently available.

Research into Service leavers post-transition, as recommendation 6.4 outlines, is viewed positively. It is understood that this would help the Services, charities and support providers identify those individuals most in need of support and guidance.



There is a requirement for further carefully targeted research, because there are holes in our understanding. Some of the recommendations are really powerful but without the genuine collaboration of the MOD and others, we'll never get into the detail that is really needed to get the answers that will benefit everyone.



Adrian Peters, CTP

Stakeholder Recommendations

Key Findings

- Clarify where responsibility for implementing recommendations lies.
- Increase knowledge sharing and dissemination of benefits of employing ex-Service personnel amongst employers.
- Develop Service leaver database for tracking support provision and transition outcomes for all Service leavers.
- Consider producing additional update reports that focus on a different theme related to poor transition.
- Consider further research that identifies how many Service leavers re-join.
- Increase emphasis on the positive contribution made by ex-Service personnel transitioning to civilian life.

During the evaluation a number of recommendations were offered for further enhancing transition knowledge, action and change and how this report, and others, can contribute to this process.



Just giving people the knowledge to change things, does not necessarily achieve the change that you want. Reports like this are a first and necessary step but no more.



Respondent from the health sector

A common theme raised during the evaluation interviews was the need to clarify where responsibility fell for ensuring reports such as the 2017 TMS report are utilised and its recommendations implemented. This question was also raised by participants during the evaluation of the 2013 TMS and whilst both the 2013 TMS the 2017 TMS report are viewed as important contributors for supporting successful transition, responsibility for action needs clarity.

Increased knowledge sharing and collaboration between organisations involved in the sector was one suggestion to help ensure more progress in supporting successful transition. The NHS initiative Step Into Health is held up as a success story when it comes to supporting employment outcomes for Service personnel and their spouses/partners, with designated teams and structures in place to administer this support. However, there was a reported gap in disseminating knowledge about this type of programme to other industries and to Service personnel themselves. Therefore, a focus on developing these dissemination channels and networks is viewed as an important and beneficial future priority.



People are running these programmes across industries and we should be sharing our experiences and learning with each other a little more. We often find that people are going to more than one insight day, they may be interested in the NHS but also might go to Network Rail etc. We're often helping the same people and therefore it would be good to have a list of contributors, email addresses or programme names across sectors so we could get in touch with each other and share this.



Danielle Fullwood, Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust

One of the recommendation themes listed in the 2013 TMS was “Tracking the right things”, and key comments related to this recommendation concerned a perceived lack of knowledge regarding the employment status of Service leavers. A suggestion was put forward that those supporting successful transition would benefit from a single military population database, through which Service personnel’s transition preparations and post-service outcomes could be recorded and monitored.

This idea and the benefits of such a tool, was raised by one participant during our evaluation of the 2017 TMS report. If this database existed it would enable the sector to track the transition status of people, identify where help and resources may be needed, identify *early* those who needed help and resources, and provide positive examples of successful outcomes. All of which could help contribute to more successful transition outcomes and reduce the overall costs of unsuccessful transition as outlined in section 2.4 of the 2017 TMS.

Of all the elements that feed into the reports’ Cost Model, it was employment that became the specific focus of the 2017 TMS report. This led some people to ask if further focused reports on each individual theme that is listed as contributing to the cost of unsuccessful transition, would be forthcoming.



According to 2017 TMS report it has been identified that the three biggest cost factors contributing to unsuccessful transition are family breakdown, harmful drinking and mental health - and if those factors are the most expensive aspects to transition, then I would recommend those issues are looked at: how can they be minimised and how can the cost be brought down in order to improve successful transitions.



Lucy Heaver, Naval Families Federation

Revisiting these themes and exploring change and progress, as this report has done regarding employment, since the 2013 TMS was published, was viewed as something that would be beneficial to the sector as a whole.

One interesting question raised from the report was that with given that large number of people who have unsuccessful transitions, is it known how many of these people then re-join the Service? Do some people, whose transition process is already underway, ‘turn back’ and sign back on for longer? If so, what are the motivations and triggers for re-enlisting? Although re-enlisting is not an indication of failed transition, this was suggested as an area for future research as gathering feedback from those that do re-enlist would deepen understanding of knowledge, perceptions, and personal decision-making during the transition process.



It may be that it’s not a significant number, but I know that it does happen, but there are people who leave and then re-join, we should understand how and why that happens. Why do people do that? Do they go through a process? Do people do that because they get scared, or they realise it’s their preferred thing to do?



Louise Briggs, RAF Families Federation

Feedback received during the course of the evaluation of the 2013 TMS highlighted the limited emphasis on examples of successful transition experiences. This is still viewed as a gap in the transition knowledge base and links with the perception that there is not enough focus on the ‘good’. With relevance to the 2017 TMS report, there are not enough positive/successful case studies from the employers’ or from the

Service leavers' point of view. A recommendation for future reports is for more credence to be given to the positive stories of transition, in balance with the focus on the understanding poor transition.



There are some great success stories among people who transition from the military to commercial life. I understand the reason for it to read on the negative side, on the problems people encounter, but I don't think you should lose sight of the immense number of successful transitions that do happen.



Nick Everard, J1 Consulting

Reviewing the Report Structure, Design and Layout

Evaluation participants were asked to provide feedback on the structure of the report and the way information was set out and presented.

Participants commented that the recommendations were arguably the most important part of the report and in addition to being illustrated throughout the document and brought together in a chapter towards the end they should all be part of the Executive Summary. It was suggested that time constraints meant people would not be able to read the whole document, and the Executive Summary is more likely to be read. Not having the recommendations listed here may mean people simply do not see them.

Opinions were mixed regarding the preferred format of the report. A number of participants preferred the format of a larger report and having a hard copy to read through and place on the shelf alongside other relevant reports. The ability to 'pick and flick' with a hard copy of the report is valued, as is being able to bookmark or highlight areas of the report that are relevant to enable easy future reference. However, some participants placed preference on just having a digital copy of the report that could be searched for key words and terms.

Given the amount of detail in the report and the depth of the information provided, there was a request for a summarised facts and figures document. This was suggested by some as being useful for their own internal dissemination as well as helping increase the overall resonance of the report. The slides used for the launch event were also mentioned as a useful resource for summarising the key points.



Being able to pull out some of the key slides; the availability of something like a key facts and figures document which is easily accessible, can help form part of our constructive presentations.



Respondent from the health sector

Overall the signposting, chapter headings and layout were well received. Pages were not deemed to be too busy, which helped readers digest the information as well as allowing different parts of the report to breathe. The graphics and visualisations used in the report were also well received.



I like the models that they have used, it's a good way of visualising the transition journey, and I've been looking at how I could potentially use some of their models and adapt them to my own reports.



Lucy Heaver, Naval Families Federation

2017 TMS Report Launch Event Feedback

Of the people we interviewed, approximately one third attended the launch event of the 2017 TMS report, almost all of whom agreed that holding a launch event was a positive, important and valuable thing to do.



I thought the presentation was very well done; I think it was presented well so that people walked away with nuggets in their mind but also enough to incentivise people to read the report in more detail.



Insights Manager, The Poppy Factory

The structure of the event, the presentations given, and the subsequent question and answer session were reported as complementing each other. Participants placed great value on being able to learn about the report through this type of event. The key messages were succinctly outlined and were reported as having resonance and making the report easier to digest. For some, the launch event guaranteed engagement with the report; one person we spoke to who is new to the sector commented that the event brought them closer to the document and enabled them to understand the document and its relevance.

The launch event stimulated further reading and conversations, not just regarding the report itself, but of the sector and wider issues regarding transition. This was viewed as important for reaffirming the need for further support and research into transition. The value of introducing and disseminating reports through events like this and the networks they help forge should not be understated.



Being with likeminded individuals and talking reports through is really important. We don't have that much research so it's worth sharing it this way; if there is research of this kind, for all involved in the area, having that event goes hand in glove.



Liz Price, SSAFA

Concluding Comment

The 2017 TMS report has provided a well-received breadth of understanding of the changes in transition support provision since the publication of the 2013 TMS, the costs associated with poor transitioning and understanding of employment perspectives for Service personnel transitioning into civilian life.

It is too early to identify how this report has been able to contribute to or shape policy development and service provision as it has been conducted during the first few months following publication. One measure of the report's success will be the extent to which the recommendations it makes are able to be acted upon, therefore enhancing transition knowledge and support provision.

When asked what success of the report would look like, it was noted by FiMT CE Ray Lock that it would be the recommendations being right and being acted on over time by relevant organisations, including the CTP and MOD. Our initial appraisal suggests that the recommendations were all considered as being on point. If each is examined to identify how it can be enabled and where responsibility to act falls, their achievement should be possible.

End Notes

Since the Transition Mapping Study 2017 was published in July 2017, FiMT has continued to work with the MOD and other key stakeholders to take the report's recommendations forward. Below are just some examples of the work FiMT has undertaken in response to both the specific and more general recommendations and stakeholder feedback discussed in this evaluation report.

Stakeholder Recommendations: Key Findings

*1 Clarify where responsibility for implementing recommendations lies.
(TMS 2017 Evaluation recommendation).*

FiMT will encourage future report authors to consider how recommendations can be implemented and who should be responsible for their implementation.

*2 Increase knowledge sharing and dissemination about the benefits of employing ex-Service personnel amongst employers.
(future work recommendation).*

FiMT co-funded a piece of research, 'Veterans work: recognising the potential of ex-Service personnel', with Deloitte and the Officers' Association to help improve employers' perceptions of Service leavers and we continue to work with employers and their umbrella bodies to try and improve perceptions. FiMT is also currently in discussion with the MOD with the aim of assisting in the commissioning of a piece of work on the general perception of veterans, including employers' perceptions.

*3 Develop a Service leaver database for tracking support provision and transition outcomes for all Service leavers.
(future work recommendation).*

FiMT is aware of a number of databases, such as CTP's database and case management systems (CMS), for tracking support provisions and outcomes for Service leavers. At the moment there does not seem to be further merit in establishing an additional database.

*4 Consider producing additional update reports that focus on different themes related to poor transition.
(future work recommendation).*

FiMT is currently funding a series of reports with the Directory of Social Change (DSC) which examine the landscape of military charities that provide support around transition themes. Three reports have already been published (Armed Forces Charities' Mental Health Provision, Armed Forces Charities' Education & Employment Provision and Armed Forces Charities' Physical Health Provision) and more are in the pipeline throughout 2018 and 2019.

*5 Consider further research that identified how many Service leavers re-join.
(future work recommendation).*

Whilst this would certainly be interesting, it is not currently within FiMT's remit.

*6 Increase emphasis on the positive contributions made by ex-Service personnel transitioning to civilian life.
(TMS 2017 Evaluation recommendation).*

This is linked to the work being undertaken under (2) above, which is currently being considered in collaboration with the MOD.

General Learning

7 Addressing the use of qualitative data concerns.

(Initial Stakeholder Recommendations, Key Findings - TMS 2017 Evaluation recommendation).

It was noted in this evaluation that some stakeholders discounted the qualitative research over concerns of representativeness and robustness. FiMT will consider how these fears may be allayed in future reports, perhaps with a clarification in the methodology.

8 Clear recommendations.

(The Relevance and Value of the Recommendations, Key Findings - TMS 2017 Evaluation recommendation).

Going forward FiMT will ensure that recommendations are contained within the executive summary of a report.

Acknowledgements

We would like to express our thanks to the following organisations who were consulted during this evaluation:



A copy of the Continue to Work: The Transition Mapping Study 2017, can be found here:

http://www.fim-trust.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/FIMT_TMS_Report_2017_FINAL_PDF.pdf

For more information on the Forces in Mind Trust, please go to:

<http://www.fim-trust.org/>

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