

FUTURE HORIZONS

A BRIGHT START IN CIVILIAN LIFE

Future Horizons Programme

Final Report



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Future Horizons Programme: Final Report

Introduction

This report draws to a conclusion the trial phase of the Future Horizons Programme (FHP) and considers 18 months of data from the Catterick cohort. This includes Early Service Leavers (ESLs) from both the Infantry Training Centre (ITC) and trained soldiers from units stationed within and around Catterick Garrison, North Yorkshire.

Following the successful findings published in the 12 month evaluation report [1], the MOD have made a commitment to roll the FHP out across all three services. The conclusions drawn in the 12 month evaluation report suggest that there should be a high degree of fidelity to the FHP model of service delivery. Given the differences in structure and function peculiar to aspects of the single services and between the different branches of the armed services, the roll-out of the FH Programme will have to take all of these nuances into account.

It is hoped that some of the observations made in this final report will contribute to the successful delivery of the FHP, so that ESLs have a mechanism of support when they leave Her Majesty's Armed Services.

Evaluation

This final report of the Future Horizons Programme at the ITC, Catterick Garrison, considers: the basic demographic characteristics; reasons for discharge; self-reported vulnerability concerns alongside numbers allocated to support levels. Final employment outcomes for the tracked ESLs are also reported.



Service audit limitations

This final evaluation piece and the two subsequent reports were undertaken as service audits. The evaluations are able to give us very useful information about the utility of the trial and the methodology used for working with ESLs through the period of transition. The methodology and design of the evaluation has not been able to provide us with a definitive answer as to whether the FHP was more effective in enabling employment outcomes for ESLs than a service as usual option. Nevertheless, the employment outcomes detailed in this report are very encouraging. A more detailed explanation can be found in the 12 month report [1].

Progress at end of Trial Period (August 2013)

Basic Demographics

The engagement rate for the FHP at Hook Company continues to be very impressive with only 8 soldiers declining to access the programme over the 18 months of operation. There has been a significant change in personnel in the Catterick team, so it can be assumed that the high engagement rate is not solely attributable to personality and is probably due to the way the FHP brief is included within the extant ESL briefing process.

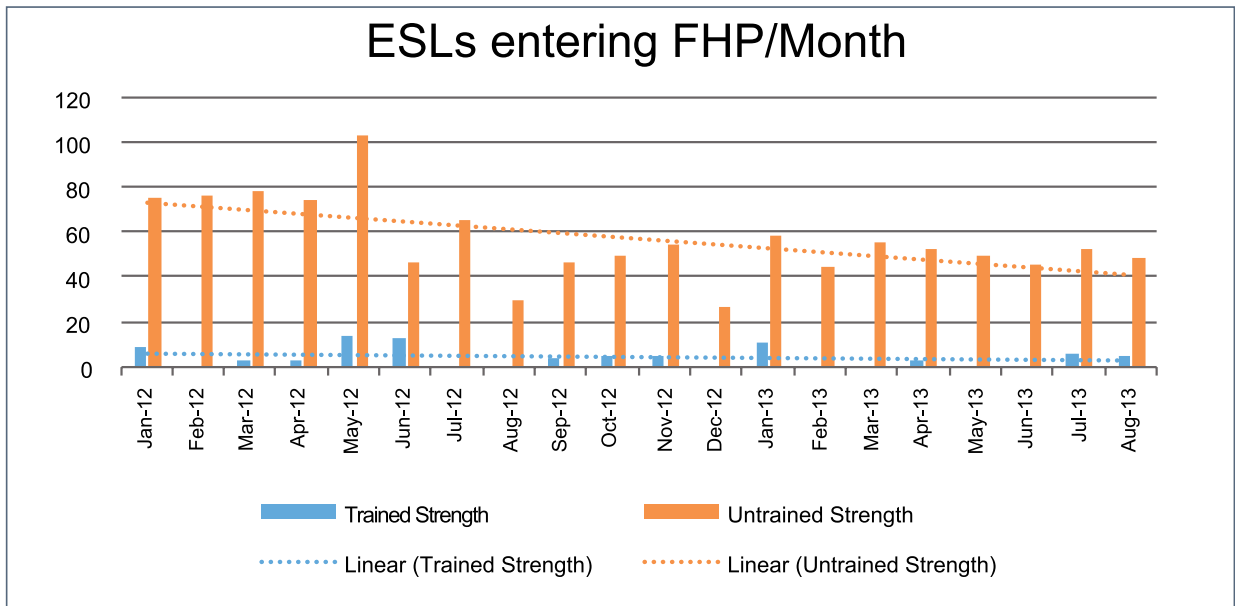
This is a positive message for programme roll out, as it indicates a continuation of a similar model of delivery. It will be useful for FHP to continue to monitor engagement, especially in establishments with smaller numbers of ESLs and a less robust delivery of ESL support than Hook Company.

As Figure 1 shows there has been a gradual fall in the number of ESLs entering the programme over the 18 month period: given the continued high engagement, this is solely attributable to the reduction in ESL numbers coming through the Hook Company system and has no association with the delivery of the programme.

¹Using a non-validated 9 item vulnerability measure, developed by RBLI and adapted for the programme

²Hook Company is unique within the British Army: its primary objective is to ensure the smooth transition of ESL and medically discharged soldiers out of the ITC and back into civilian life. Hook Company started the centralisation role of dealing with ESLs in 2006, partly in response to the recommendations set out in the Blake Report into the deaths of soldiers at Deepcut Barracks and partly to manage the large numbers of ESLs who leave the Infantry annually.

Figure 1



Throughout the duration of the Future Horizons Programme (9 January 2012 - 31 August 2013), 1249 ESLs have engaged with the programme. Only 8 soldiers have opted not to register with the programme – an engagement rate of >99%.

Table 1 summarises the basic demographic details for the ESLs on the programme. There are a number of points of interest to note. Of the 1249 ESLs in the programme only 2 were female and they were from the trained strength. The average length of service for untrained ESLs remains similar to the 12 month report at 125 days, with a number of untrained outliers skewing the distribution slightly (11 years + for AWOL). The mode remains the same as the 12 month report at 47 days.



Table 1

		Trained		Untrained	
n=		93		1156	
Age on enlistment					
	Max	31		34	
	Min	15		16	
	Mean	20		21	
	Range	16		18	
Length of service (days)					
	Max	3839		4122	
	Min	136		3	
	Range	3703		4119	
	Mean	1193		125	
	Median	1138		75	
	Mode	1152		47	
Ethnicity					
			%		%
	Asian	0	0.00	9	0.78
	Black	4	4.30	13	1.12
	Mixed	1	1.08	9	0.78
Heritage					
	White	88	94.62	1105	95.59
	White Irish	0	0.00	20	1.73
Reason for Discharge					
			%		%
	DAOR	0	0.00	710	61.42 (65.38) ¹
	DOE	0	0.00	37	3.20 (1.38)
	RFAS	20	21.51 (17.31)	245	21.19 (18.62)
	SNLR	73	78.49 (82.69)	94	8.13 (9.66)
	UFAS	0	0.00	70	6.06 (4.97)

As with the 12 month report (>97%), the ethnicity data shows an overwhelmingly White (95%) ESL population.

Reason for discharge data shows us that the majority of untrained ESLs entering the programme (61%) took discharge as of right (DAOR). Over the past 12 months there has been a slight change in the number of untrained ESLs who have been released from army service (RFAS) up from 18.6% to 21%. The majority of trained ESLs were required to leave the Army (n=73, 78.5%) as their services were no longer required (SNLR).

As the data suggests there are a number of outliers that skew the untrained ESL distribution (n= 1156, mean: 125.32, SD: 188.54). Applying a calculation that considers a distribution of 6 SDs from the mean any ESLs who fall outside of a 1256 day parameter should be identified as outliers, for the untrained ESL population this only represents 3 soldiers. All trained ESLs fall within 6 SDs from the mean.

Figure 2

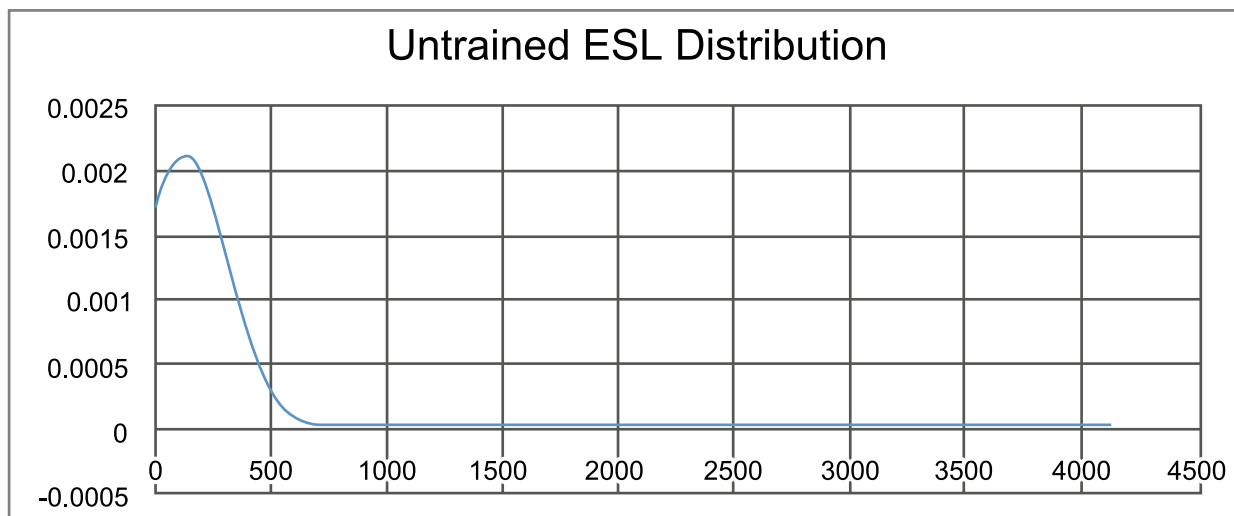
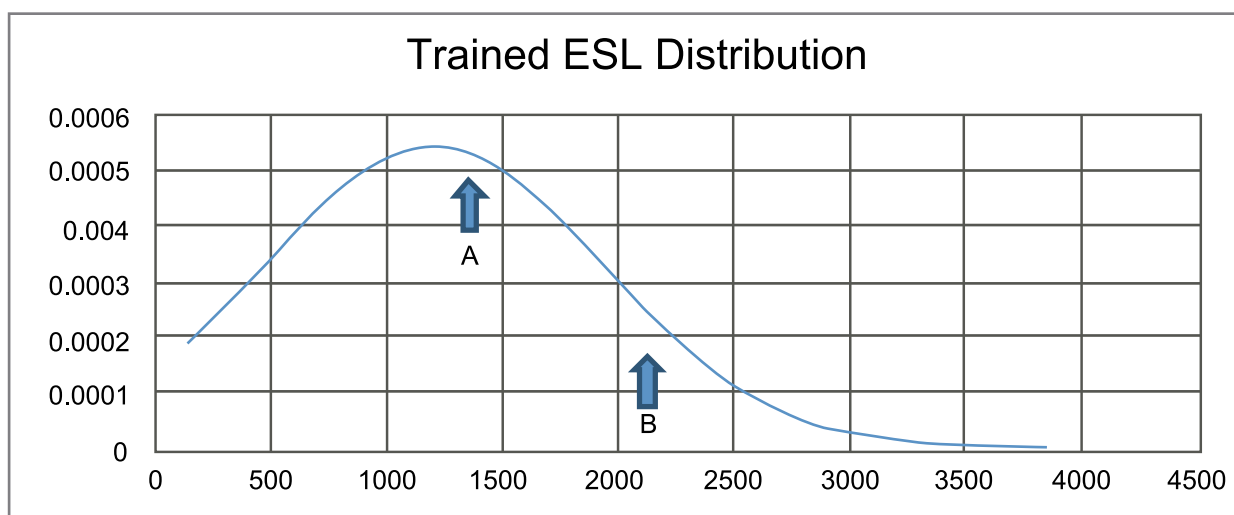


Figure 3



For the trained ESLs points A and B are of interest. Point A, 1460 days (4 years), represents the point at which the ESLs would normally be entitled to a basic level of CTP support. In the Catterick trained cohort 14 soldiers fell within this category. All ESLs within the distribution to the right of Point B, 2190 (i.e. 6 years + service) would normally expect enhanced transition support in accordance with JSP 534 [2]. 9 soldiers fell within this parameter.

Further, more detailed, analysis would need to be constructed to determine if the needs of these trained ESLs were any different from what would normally be expected.

³12 month reported figures in brackets

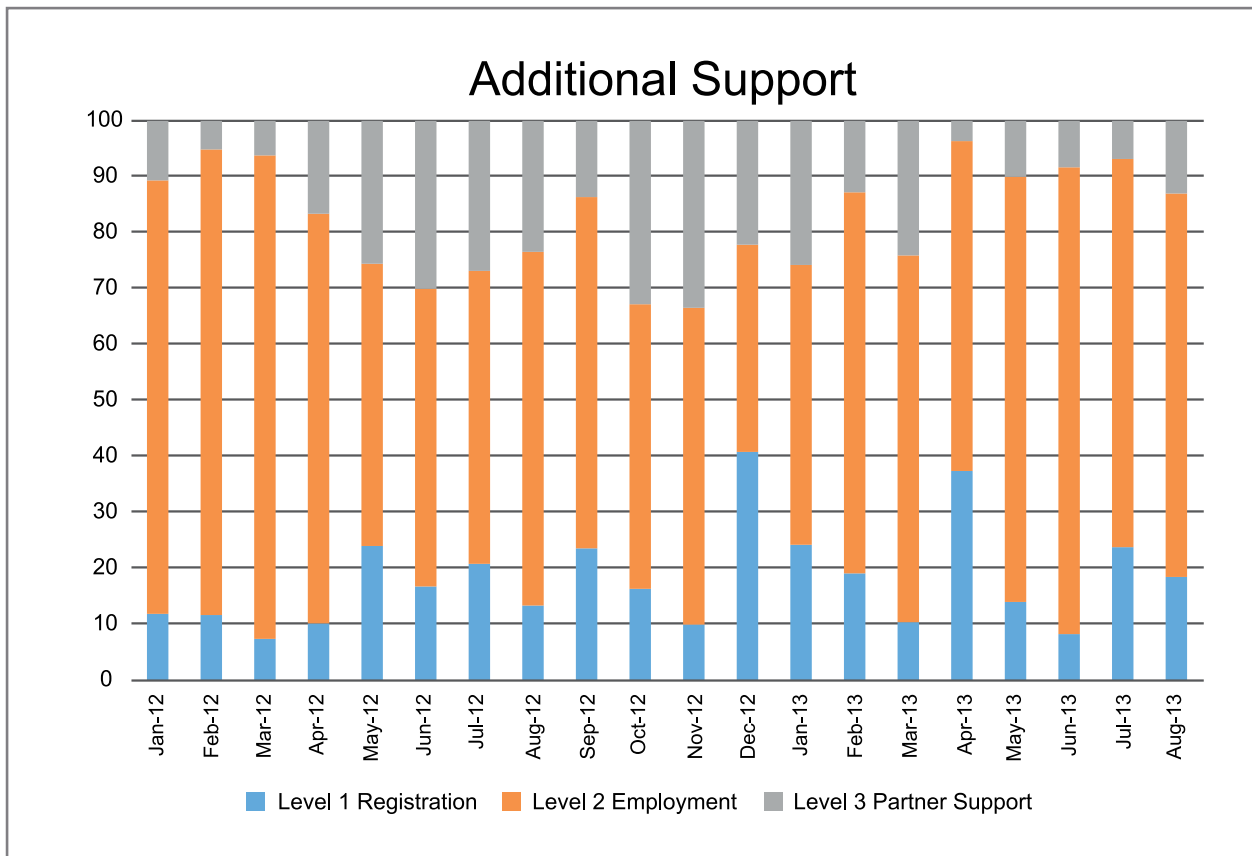
Progress and Support

The process associated with the Future Horizons Programme is detailed in the 12 month report and will not be covered in this document.

One important aspect of the process is the FHP ESL interview and the allocation to support levels. Risk and vulnerability are covered in the next section. Figure 4 below illustrates the percentages of ESLs who are assigned to different levels of support at the point of interview. Support provision and the needs of the ESL are dynamic and can change over the period of engagement with the programme.

The percentages of ESLs who are determined to be in need of support from a partner organisation at interview has fallen over the period of the trial. Consideration may need to be given to why this is the case and whether this is the right point to make this judgement.

Figure 4



Risk and Vulnerability

In an effort to identify areas of vulnerability, FHP worked with the Royal British Legion Industries (RBLI) to adapt a vulnerability questionnaire used by the RBLI. The questions are set out in Table 3. The adapted version of the questionnaire is not validated and there are some issues about its sensitivity and appropriateness for the Infantry ESLs. Nevertheless, all of the ESLs completed the questionnaire and we have been able to draw some inferences from the data. A comparison of VAQ responses is graphically illustrated in Figure 5.

Table 2: Value-Added Questions

1	I want to get a job as soon as possible
2	I have transferable skills I can use
3	I'm confident that I'll get the job that I want
4	My health doesn't prevent me from getting on in life
5	I have a safe and secure place to live
6	My disciplinary record won't prevent me from achieving my goals
7	I don't tend to get anxious or worried
8	I don't often overdo it on drink or drugs
9	I don't have caring responsibilities for others

Figure 5

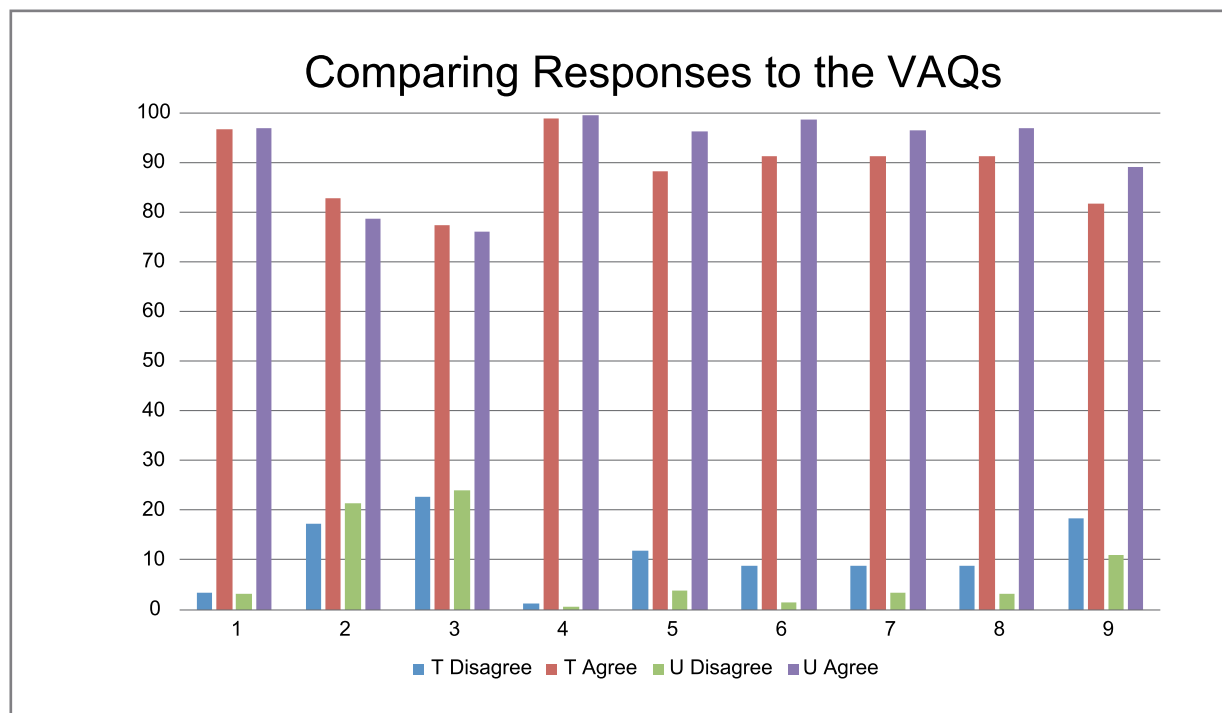


Figure 5 shows the percentage of trained (T) and untrained (U) ESLs who responded to the value-added questions (VAQs). For ease of analysis the responses were aggregated into agree and disagree statements.

Similarly to the 12 month report, the value added questions 2 and 3 show that there is anxiety amongst both trained and untrained ESLs as to whether or not they will be able to get the job that they want and also have transferable skills. However the overall percentages have dropped as the sample size has increased with 18% of trained and 21% of untrained ESLs feeling that they didn't have transferable skills (compared to 25% and 32% in the 12 month report) and 21% of trained and 22% untrained not being confident of getting the type of work they wanted when they transitioned out of the Infantry, (compared to 31% and 33% in the 12 month report).

Other interesting observations can also be drawn from these data. Comparing the responses given between trained and untrained ESLs, shows that there are significant differences between the responses for questions 5 – 9. Student t-test results show a 95% probability that there is a difference between the two groups in their responses to Qs 5-9 ($t(1247) = 1.962, p < 0.05$). In each case the trained soldiers expressed more concerns than untrained ESLs about accommodation, their disciplinary record, becoming anxious, use of substances and having caring responsibilities. This may well be an area that warrants further investigation.

Employment Outcomes

Employment outcomes are based on figures supplied by the CTP/FHP tracking team.

Table 3: Employment and Training Outcomes

Start Figure	1067	
No Response (Attrition)	90	8%
Sample Figure	997	92%
Employed	556	56%
Education	139	14%

As reported in the 12 month report, there was concern that there would be a high level of attrition. This concern has again proven to be unfounded at the 18 month point. Over the period of the programme tracking rates have improved from a post-transition engagement of 84% at 9 months to the current level of 92%. This level of engagement is considerably better than anticipated. Although not specifically tested, this high engagement could be due to a number of different factors:

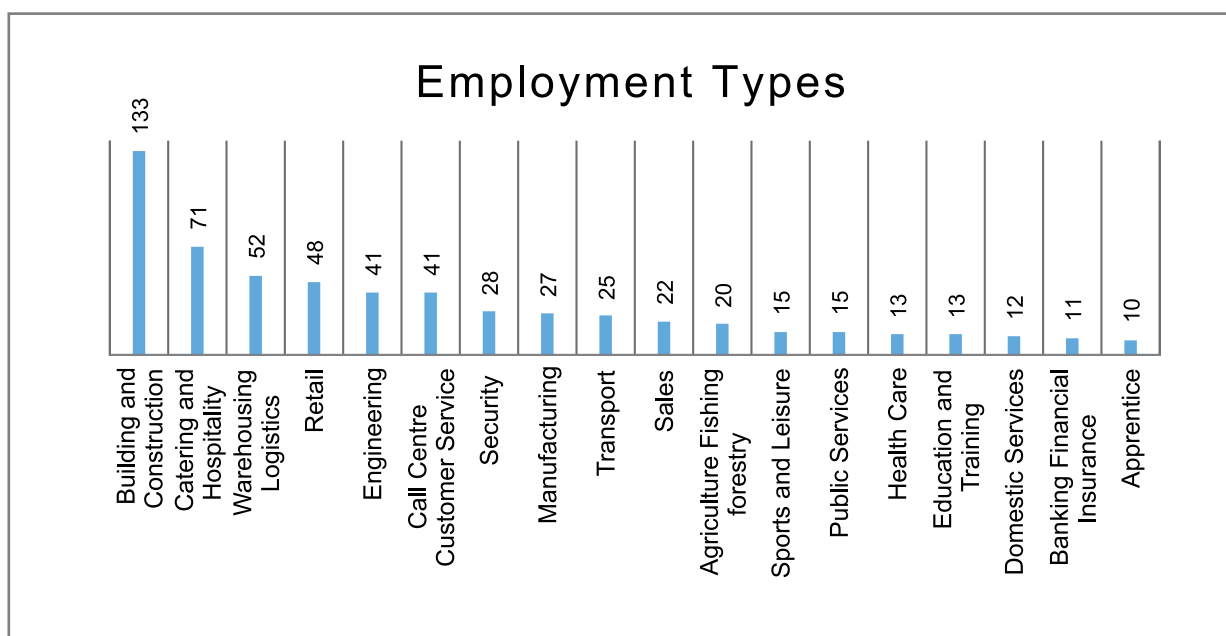
- Dedicated FHP tracking team
- Tracking process that encourages a persistent and determined approach
- Use of social media and mobile networks

The Future Horizons Programme uses social media to help maintain a high level of engagement with the ESLs participating in the programme. It has a dedicated Facebook page which is updated on a regular basis.

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At the time of writing, 70% of the ESLs who have been tracked over time are in employment or training. There are no employment outcomes data available for infantry ESLs, so we are unable to make any comparisons. In its 10th annual review, the CTP report on numbers of ESLs known to the DWP [3] and those claiming JSA. The CTP report shows 64% of Army ESLs in employment after 6 months. Although for these data there is differentiation between the three Services, there is no further differentiation within Services. Given what we know about the demographic characteristics of Infantry recruits [4] it is extremely encouraging that the Future Horizons Programme outcomes have exceeded the reported baseline data for the ESL population across the whole Army, especially in the current economic climate.

Figure 6



The types of employment undertaken by the ESLs has also been analysed. Figure 6 shows the top 18 most frequent types of employment for the ESLs on the programme. These data are dynamic and change over time. There have been some interesting shifts in employment types since the 12 month report, with considerably more ESLs finding work in the building and construction sectors. This area of employment was ranked 4th in the previous report with warehouse work ranked 1st.

⁴ <http://www.facebook.com/www.futurehorizons.org?fref=ts>

Observations

The Future Horizons Programme provides ESLs with the opportunity to engage with transition support that was hitherto not available to them. The employment outcomes, low attrition rate and levels of satisfaction shown by the participants is testament to the success of the programme. The decision by the MOD to roll this programme out across all service must be commended.

There are though a number of areas that policy makers may wish to consider as this programme is developing and the future of the CTP contract is decided:

The Heterogeneity of the ESL Population

Most academic work to date has focused on the mental health needs and substance misuse amongst the veteran population. This is comprehensively captured in research by the King's Centre for Military Health Research [5]. There have been a number of recent policy reports that have highlighted issues regarding transition support [6], mental illness [7] family issues [8] and vulnerability [9]. However, there is very limited literature focused on the social needs of veterans, apart from work on unemployment [10] and homelessness [11].

Overall, there is a lack of evidence to establish the level of social needs in the wider veteran population and whether or not social needs are more prevalent in the veteran population compared to the civilian population. Where literature is available this tends to pre-screen for particular needs, such as mental illness and is therefore not representative [12].

There is very little literature relating specifically to ESLs and when ESLs are discussed little attention is paid to the heterogeneous nature of the population. Within the FHP, ESLs could be categorised into a number of different types depending upon length of service. These are set out in Table 4 below. It is worth reflecting briefly on the types, as this may have some bearing on the support made available.

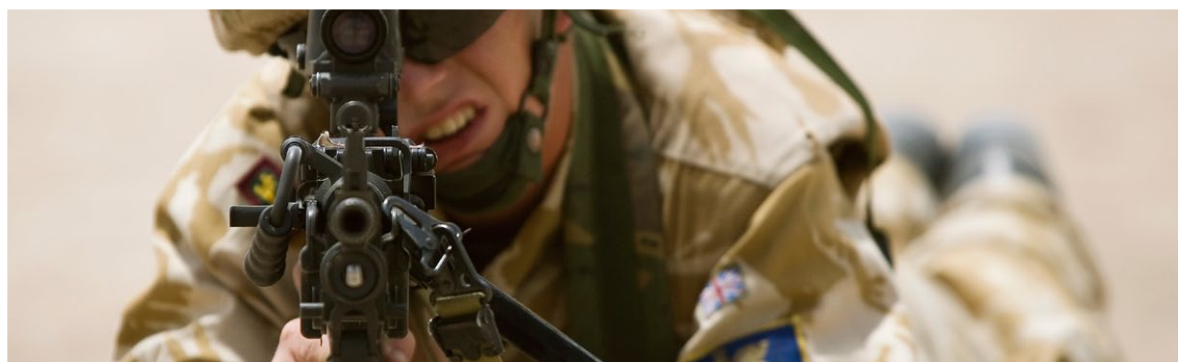


Table 4

SL types	LOS	Comment
Untrained	Mode 47 days; Average 125 days	This includes the outliers detailed below
Untrained outliers	n=207 ESLs have served longer than the 182 days basic training (mean: 403, SD: 510).	n=207 ESLs have served longer than the 182 days basic training (mean: 403, SD: 510). Outliers are defined as those who exceed the 26 weeks allocated for combined Phase 1 and 2 training, but are still ESLs. There is a very large range in this group (3939 days) as a number of ESLs were detained as AWOL and returned to the ITC for processing (see distribution above)
Trained <4 years	n=69, range 1323 days, mean: 873, SD: 373	These are soldiers who have left before 4 years and would not have been entitled to a resettlement package under the current arrangements
Trained >4 years	n=24, range 2378 days, mean: 2113, SD: 721	This group includes a number of soldiers who have served >10 years and would have been entitled to equivalent transition support.

As Table 4 shows there is enormous variation in the length of service within and between the different groups. It is though a possibility that there will also be a difference in needs of these discrete groups. This may benefit from additional analysis as the number of ESLs passing through the FHP increases.

18 of the >4 year cohort left as SNLR. The level of anonymous basic analysis within this report only allows us to speculate that these soldiers failed routine drugs testing. Were there offences to be more serious (with a period of detention at the MCTC, Colchester), the ESLs would have received a comprehensive package of support on discharge, a service which has received a favourable evaluation report from HM Inspector of Prisons [13]. It is arguable that there is considerable inequity in the current system of provision and a potential perverse incentive to commit more serious offences, although this hypothesis has not been tested.

Statistical analysis has shown us that there is a difference in self-reported vulnerability using the RBLI non-validated 9 item vulnerability tool. The tool provides us with a crude measure and there remain questions about the sensitivity. However, significant differences have been identified between trained and untrained ESLs, with trained ESLs identifying more needs in the areas of housing, mental health, substance misuse and caring responsibilities.

Determining Need

The FHP's main focus has been on employment focused support, and it has proven to be successful in achieving this goal. However, how should the other needs and potential vulnerabilities of ESLs also be considered? Can targeted support be provided without access to the appropriate assessment of need?

The FHP currently uses the RBLI 9 item vulnerability tool (as detailed above). Although there are concerns about its sensitivity, its utility has proven to be in acting as a useful guide for discussion and decision-making. As such, it is recommended that the tool (or a variant of it) continues to be used within the programme. As the FHP initial assessments are time limited, a more comprehensive framework tool for assessment, such as HARDFACTS⁵, would be difficult to apply.

If any further research on the identified needs of ESLs is proposed then consideration should also be given to exploring other validated and more sensitive measures that could be used across the ESL transition pathway.

Programme Engagement

The programme has made good use of mobile phone text messaging, the internet and social media to encourage continued engagement. It is important that there is a continued drive to use such technologies, particularly if the programme is to succeed in working across military establishments with a much lower frequency of ESLs. Remote registration and assessment should be explored and developed as an integral element of the growth of the programme.



⁵HARDFACTS: a bio-psycho-social assessment and review tool used in the MCTC and Recovery Centres

Conclusions

The FHP has continued to perform beyond the initial expectations of the trial. Engagement of ESLs with the programme at Catterick remains very high (>99%) and employment outcomes exceed CTP reported outcomes for ESLs across the whole of the Army (70% vs. 64%): a very encouraging outcome given the current financial climate.

However as the programme is rolled out across all three services FHP need to consider adapting the model used in Catterick to local circumstances. Consideration also needs to be given to ensuring that access to the programme is as equitable as possible, particularly for those ESLs exiting abroad or through bases/units where there are low frequencies of ESLs and consequently no permanent FHP presence. The use of online or telephone registration would provide extra opportunities for engagement, but would require the necessary technology to be made available. Remote registration and assessment should be explored and developed as an integral element of the growth of the programme.

Consideration should also be given to adapting unit standing orders and broader policy (JSP 575) to enable 1st line resettlement staff to be fully aware of the new FHP services and the option to register all ESLs onto the programme.

Finally, there is a high probability that Lord Ashcroft's veterans transition review will consider the range of elements that contribute to a positive transition experience. Employment is but one of these factors. Whilst both trained and untrained ESLs have concerns about transferable employment skills and the availability of suitable employment, this brief analysis has shown significant differences in other areas of potential risk: housing, mental health, caring, substance misuse etc. More work needs to be undertaken to establish the longer term outcomes for the ESLs within the FHP with the aim of informing better, more effective service delivery for the most vulnerable service leavers.



Glossary

CDT – Compulsory Drugs Testing

CET – Central Employment Team

CIPP – Context, Input, Process, Product

COBSEO – Confederation of British Ex-Service and Service Organisations

CTP – Career Transition Partnership

DAOR – Discharge as of Right

DOE – Defect on Enlistment

DWP – Department for Work and Pensions

ESL – Early Service Leaver

FHP – Future Horizons Programme

FiMT – Forces in Mind Trust

ITC – Infantry Training Centre

JSP – Joint Service Publication

MCTC – Military Correctional and Training Centre

MOD – Ministry of Defence

RCT – Randomised Controlled Trial

RFAS – Released From Army Service

RFEA – Regular Forces Employment Association

SEC – Specialist Employment Consultant

TRBL – The Royal British Legion

SNLR – Services No Longer Required

UFAS – Unfit for Any form of Service

UIO – Unit Interviewing Officer

UWO – Unit Welfare Officer

VAQ – Value Added Questions

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