



Post-Service Employment among ex-Service personnel and their partners

Research Summary

October 2024

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The Forces in Mind Trust (FiMT) Research Centre aims to ensure that evidence about the experiences and needs of Serving personnel, ex-Service personnel, and their families is at the heart of decision making so that it can inform and transform policy and practice to enable successful transition to civilian life post-Service. The FiMT Research Centre is run by a consortium of RAND Europe and the King's Centre for Military Health Research at King's College London, under a grant agreement with the Forces in Mind Trust until 2027. For more information: <https://www.fimt-rc.org>.



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■ Background and purpose



The FiMT Research Centre is committed to ensuring that ‘evidence is at the heart of decision making for the benefit of ex-Service personnel and their families’. One mechanism for achieving this objective is to produce research and policy summaries for each of the nine transition themes which organise the Research Centre.¹

These summaries aim to provide an accessible and robust synthesis of up-to-date research evidence, policy, and practice relevant to the specified theme of focus. It is intended that they be used by researchers, policy makers, and service providers to inform their work, thereby placing evidence at the heart of decision making for the benefit of ex-Service personnel and their families.

This research summary synthesises existing research evidence about United Kingdom (UK) ex-Service personnel and their partners’ employment in the civilian labour market and identifies potential areas for further enquiry. Drawing on existing academic and grey literature, it reflects critically on the following topics:

- Employment statistics, outcomes, and profiles

of ex-Service personnel.

- Employment barriers and facilitators.
- Experiencing the civilian labour market as an ex-Service person.
- Employment support needs of ex-Service personnel.
- The specific employment needs and experiences of partners of ex-Service personnel.

This document does not address current policy concerning the points above, nor does it comment on employment support provision to ex-Service personnel. These subjects are addressed in a separate Policy Summary ([Ribera-Almandoz and Keeling, 2024](#)).

A robust methodology was used to produce this summary, helping to ensure that its findings are both valid and credible (see Annexes A and B).

This summary has been subject to peer-review by two independent parties.

1 For details of the nine transition themes, see: <https://www.fimt-rc.org/themes>

Key Findings



Recent data from the Ministry of Defence and the 2021 Census shows that **most ex-Service personnel secure employment after leaving the UK Armed Forces, with employment rates closely aligning with those of non-veterans** after adjusting for differences in age, sex, and region.



Ex-Service personnel occupy roles that are largely similar to those of the non-veteran population, with the most common positions being in professional occupations, associate professional and technical roles, and managerial positions. In terms of industry, **ex-Service personnel are notably more represented in public administration and defence, as well as transport and storage, compared to their non-veteran counterparts.**



Evidence underscores that personal characteristics — **including gender, sexual orientation and gender identity, ethnicity, country of birth, age, neurodivergence, and individual resources such as confidence and self-reliance** — **influence the employment prospects** of ex-Service personnel, mirroring trends observed in the general population.



Common barriers to employment for ex-Service personnel include **lower educational attainment, lack of civilian work experience, adverse childhood experiences, pre-Service antisocial behaviour, rank and branch-related factors, early or involuntary discharge, mental and physical health conditions, challenges in skill and qualifications transferability, difficulties in adapting to civilian work culture, and geographical constraints.**



Employment facilitators include **adequate time for resettlement and the development of a new civilian identity, engagement with education and training during or after Service, strong transferable skills, effective and tailored career transition programmes, successful adaptation to civilian work culture, and the establishment of supportive social networks.**



Although perceptions of ex-Service personnel's skills and work ethic have become more positive, **negative stereotypes and misconceptions continue to contribute to discriminatory hiring practices.**



Despite securing employment shortly after leaving Service in most cases, emerging evidence suggests that **many ex-Service personnel may be facing some form of underemployment**, where their skills and qualifications are not fully utilised, their incomes fall short of expectations, and their aspirations are unfulfilled in their civilian roles. This can lead to feelings of overqualification and dissatisfaction, as their expertise is often perceived as undervalued in the civilian job market.



The partners of ex-Service personnel face significant employment challenges which have been largely overlooked. Frequent relocations while in Service, which disrupt their education and career progression, childcare responsibilities and employers' misconceptions, are common sources of instability.

Employment Outcomes and Statistics



On average between 15,000 and 16,000 people leave the Armed Forces (AF) each year in the United Kingdom (UK) (MoD, 2024a). According to the 2021 Census, approximately 1.85 million people residing in England and Wales have previously served in the AF. This population is notably aged, with over half (53.0%) being 65 years or older, and predominantly male, as women represent 13.6% of the ex-Service population (ONS, 2023a).² For those transitioning from the AF to the civilian workforce, securing a good job is often a primary concern (Ashcroft 2012). Employment is seen as crucial for successful resettlement, affecting other aspects such as housing, financial security, well-being, and social integration (Ashcroft 2012; Deloitte, 2018;

Fisher et al., 2021). There is, however, a noted lack of data concerning labour market outcomes, long-term patterns, and employment profiles of ex-Service personnel in the UK (Pike, 2016; Fisher et al., 2021).

Economic Activity and Employment Status

The 2021 Census provides new insights into the economic activity of ex-Service personnel aged 16 years and over in England and Wales (see Figure 1).

In England, the data show that ex-Service personnel have employment outcomes closely aligned with those of non-veterans, with employment rates of 40.7% and 39.8%, respectively, after adjusting

² The 2021 Census, which included a question on prior Service in the UK AF, indicates that a total of 1,853,112 individuals in England and Wales reported previous Service (representing 3.8% of usual residents aged 16 years and over). Among them, 1.4 million (76.3%) had served in the regular forces, 361,000 (19.5%) in the reserve forces, and 79,000 (4.3%) in both. It is important to note that the ex-Service population significantly differs from the non-veteran population in terms of age and gender. Women constitute 13.6% (251,400) of the ex-Service population, compared to 53.1% of the non-veteran population, while men constitute 86.4% (1,601,705). Additionally, over half of ex-Service personnel (53.0%, or 982,365) are aged 65 years and over, compared to 21.6% (10,080,950) of the non-veteran population (ONS, 2023a).

For a methodological note on the implications of using Census data and the potential impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the results, see ONS, 2022a; 2023b.



for age, sex, and region (ONS, 2024).³ Notably, ex-Service personnel are more likely than non-veterans of similar demographic characteristics to be employees (33.5% vs. 30.2%) and less likely to be self-employed (7.2% compared to 9.6%). **Unemployment rates, defined as those actively seeking work and available to start within two weeks, or waiting to begin a job already accepted, are nearly identical, at 1.6% for ex-Service personnel and 1.7% for non-veterans.** Economic inactivity rates, referring to individuals not in employment who are neither actively looking for work nor immediately available to start, also show minimal differences (57.6% vs. 58.5%), with a substantial percentage in both groups being inactive due to retirement (51.0% and 49.6%, respectively). **In Wales, the trends are similar, with 34.5% of ex-Service personnel being employees and 6.9% being self-employed, compared to 31.3% and 9.7% of non-veterans after adjusting for age, sex, and region.** Unemployment rates for both

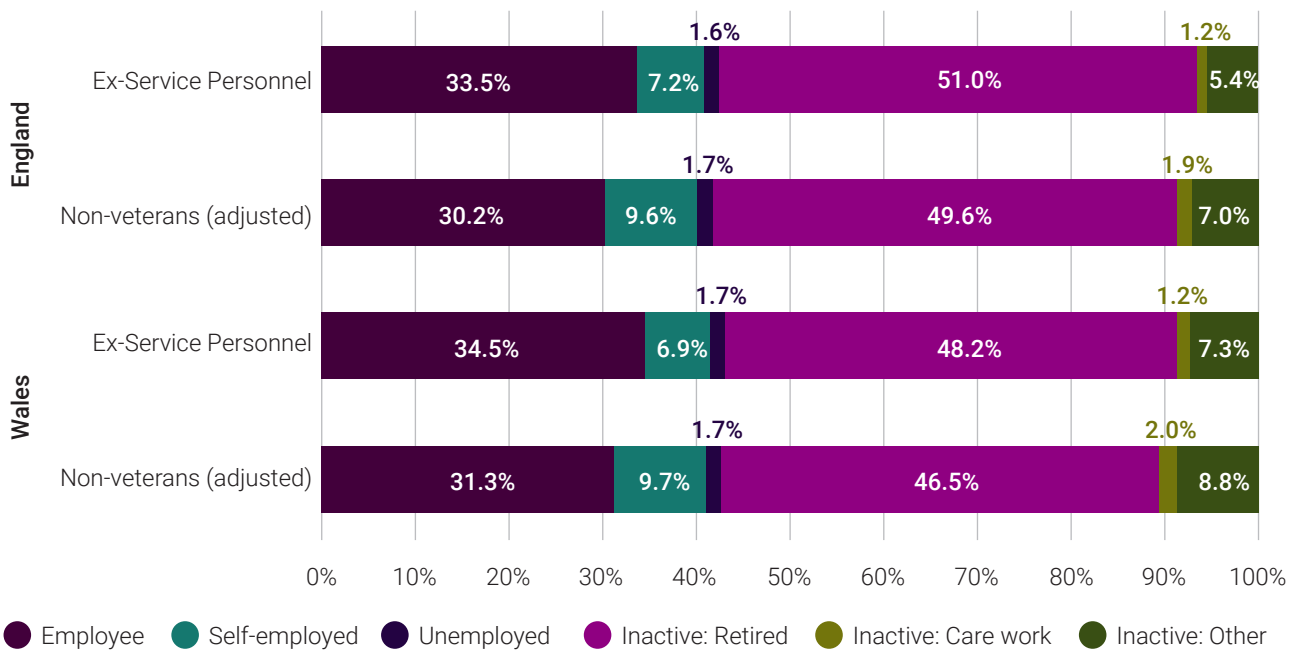
ex-Service personnel and non-veterans are 1.7%. Economic inactivity is only slightly lower among ex-Service personnel at 56.9% compared to 57.4% for non-veterans, with retirement being the main reason for inactivity (48.2% and 46.5%, respectively) (ONS, 2024).

These findings align with the ONS Annual Population Survey (2016-2018), indicating higher economic activity and employment rates among ex-Service personnel aged 18-64 years living in Great Britain compared to the general working-age population, alongside lower unemployment rates (Fisher et al., 2021). The latest Career Transition Partnership (CTP) data further supports this, showing that among UK Service leavers who engaged with a billable CTP service⁴ and reported their employment outcomes, 89% were successfully employed within six months of exit from Service, 4% were unemployed, and 7% were economically inactive (MoD, 2024b). These figures reflect only those who accessed CTP

³ To ensure comparability between ex-Service personnel and non-veterans, non-veteran data are adjusted using weighted estimates to reflect the demographic profile of ex-Service personnel, accounting for differences in age, sex, and region. These adjustments address demographic differences, such as the older age and male skew of ex-Service personnel, to isolate the effects of military Service from other demographic factors (ONS, 2024).

⁴ "Billable" services refer to those for which Right Management invoices the Ministry of Defence (MoD) for payment. Service personnel are not obligated to use these billable CTP services; however, they can access CTP support up to two years before and two years after their departure from the Service.

Figure 1. Economic activity status of ex-Service personnel vs. non-veteran population aged 16 years and older in England and Wales (Census 2021)



Source: Authors' elaboration with data from the Office for National Statistics – Census 2021 (ONS, 2024).

billable services and provided their employment outcomes within the initial six months following discharge, meaning they do not encompass the entire population of Service leavers wishing to enter the civilian workforce or capture longer-term employment trends.⁵ When comparing these more recent data sources with earlier studies, such as the Royal British Legion (2014) and previous CTP data (MoD, 2024c), there is some indication of a gradual improvement in employment rates for ex-Service personnel over the past decade. Nevertheless, the absence of consistent longitudinal data on long-term employment trajectories makes it difficult to confirm this trend or ensure that comparisons across datasets accurately reflect changes over time.

The 2021 Census data reveals gender disparities in the employment outcomes of ex-Service personnel (see Table 1). Ex-Servicewomen aged 16 years and older in both England and Wales are more

likely to be employed and less likely to be self-employed than their male counterparts, a trend that mirrors broader employment patterns within the general population. Although unemployment rates are similar for both genders, ex-Servicewomen have lower rates of economic inactivity related to retirement, partly due to their younger average age compared to ex-Servicemen, while they experience higher inactivity rates related to caregiving responsibilities (ONS, 2024).

Compared to adjusted data for non-veteran women, ex-Servicewomen have slightly higher employment rates in both England (47.6% for ex-Servicewomen versus 43.8% for non-veteran women) and Wales (47.1% versus 43.4%) respectively. In contrast, the employment rates for ex-Servicemen are similar to those of their non-veteran counterparts, at 39.7% versus 39.2% in England and 40.4% versus 40.6% in Wales.

5 In the period 2022-2023, out of 16,453 eligible AF Service leavers, 11,427 (69%) utilised a billable CTP service, and 9,708 (59%) reported their employment outcomes six months post-Service (MoD, 2024b).

Table 1. Employment and economic activity status of ex-Service personnel vs. non-veteran population aged 16 years and older in England and Wales (Census 2021)

ENGLAND						
	Ex-Service Personnel			Non-Veteran Population (Adjusted Percentages)		
	Women	Men	Total	Women	Men	Total
Employee	42.4%	32.1%	33.5%	38.2%	29.0%	30.2%
Self-employed	5.3%	7.5%	7.2%	5.5%	10.2%	9.6%
Unemployed ⁶	1.8%	1.6%	1.6%	1.9%	1.7%	1.7%
Inactive: Retired	39.7%	52.8%	51.0%	38.8%	51.3%	49.6%
Inactive: Care work	3.7%	0.8%	1.2%	6.6%	1.1%	1.9%
Inactive: Other	7.2%	5.1%	5.4%	9.0%	6.7%	7.0%
Total	235,450	1,502,355	1,737,805	23,484,400	20,784,795	44,269,195
WALES						
	Ex-Service Personnel			Non-Veteran Population (Adjusted Percentages)		
	Women	Men	Total	Women	Men	Total
Employee	42.4%	33.2%	34.5%	38.5%	30.1%	31.3%
Self-employed	4.8%	7.2%	6.9%	4.9%	10.4%	9.7%
Unemployed	1.6%	1.8%	1.7%	1.6%	1.7%	1.7%
Inactive: Retired	38.3%	49.8%	48.2%	38.0%	47.9%	46.5%
Inactive: Care work	3.6%	1.1%	1.4%	6.0%	1.4%	2.0%
Inactive: Other	9.4%	7.0%	7.3%	11.0%	8.5%	8.8%
Total	15,950	99,375	115,325	1,303,240	1,140,840	2,444,080

Source: Authors' elaboration with data from the Office for National Statistics – Census 2021 (ONS, 2024).

Occupations and Industries

The 2021 Census data reports on the occupation⁷ and industry distribution of employed ex-Service personnel living in England and Wales aged 16 years and over who are in employment. Overall, **the most common roles are professional occupations (16.4%), such as teaching, information technology,**

and nursing and midwifery professionals. These are followed by associate professional and technical roles (15.7%), which include sales, marketing, and welfare associate professionals, as well as managerial, directorial, and senior official positions (15.1%) (see Figure 2). After adjusting for age,

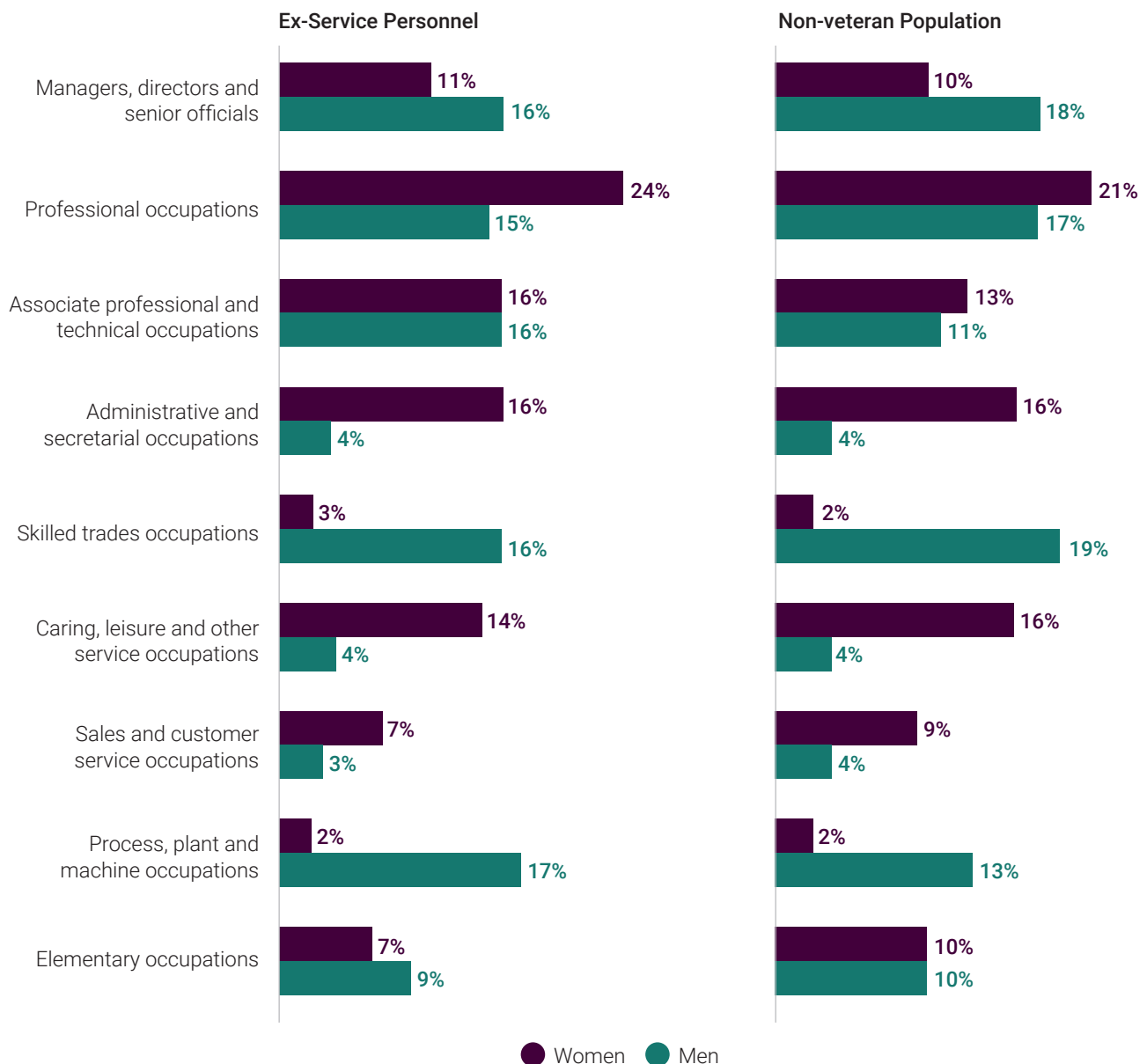
⁶ In the 2021 Census, unemployment refers to individuals who are actively seeking work and are available to start within two weeks or who are waiting to start a job that has been offered and accepted. In contrast, economic inactivity includes those who did not have a job between 15 March and 21 March 2021 and who did not actively look for work between 22 February and 21 March 2021, or who were unable to start work within two weeks (ONS, 2024).

⁷ Occupations are classified according to the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) for the UK. For a description of the types of roles included in each category, see: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/industryandoccupationenglandandwales/census2021#occupation>

sex, and region, **these trends closely mirror those of the non-veteran population**, with ex-Service personnel showing a slightly higher tendency to work in associate professional and technical roles, as well as in process, plant, and machine operative positions (include road transport drivers and process operatives). Conversely, they show a slightly lower tendency to work in skilled trades, such as construction, food-related, hospitality, and agricultural trades. These findings are consistent with earlier research based on 2017 Annual Population Survey (APS) data, which indicated

no significant occupational differences between veterans and non-veterans (MoD, 2019). In terms of industries, **ex-Service personnel are notably more likely to be employed in public administration, education and health (28.2% vs. 21.9%), particularly in areas related to public administration and defence (11.6 vs. 5.9%) compared to the non-veteran employed population. They also have a higher likelihood of working in transport and communication (14.6% vs. 11.9%), while they are less likely to work in distribution, hotels and restaurants (14.3% vs. 18.5%)** (see Figure 3).

Figure 2. Current occupation of ex-Service personnel vs. non-veteran population aged 16 years and older and in employment in England and Wales, by gender (Census 2021)

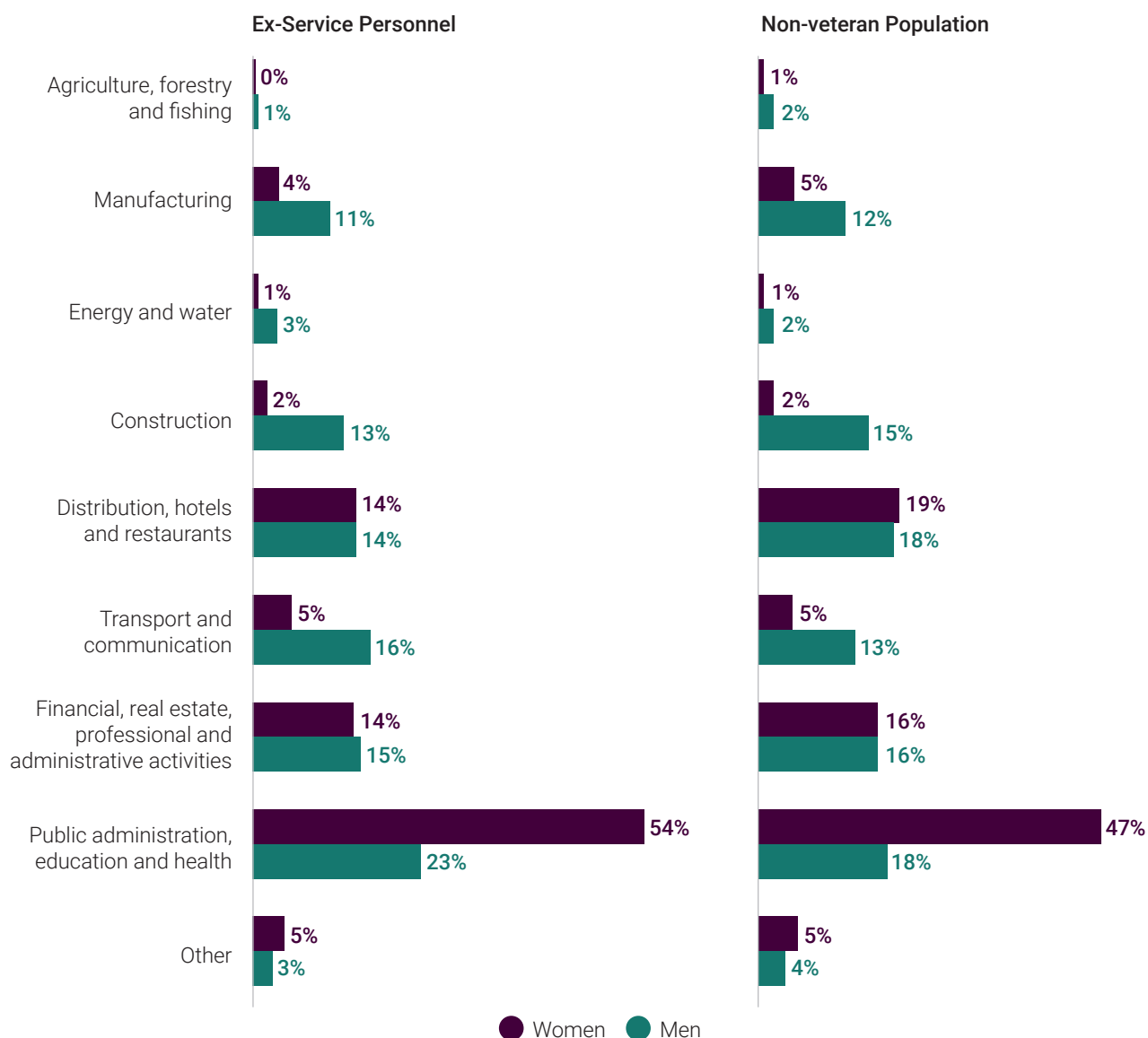


Source: Authors' elaboration with data from the Office for National Statistics – Census 2021(ONS, 2024).

Gender disparities within this group are evident and generally reflect wider trends in the English and Welsh workforce. These differences are indicative of the ***differential job specialisations within the British AF, where women have tended to be employed in roles commonly understood as “female” in their civilian labour market equivalents, particularly administrative, service-related, and medical occupations*** (Woodward & Duncanson, 2016). 2021 Census data confirms that ex-Servicewomen are overrepresented in administrative and secretarial occupations (15.9% vs. 3.8%), caring, leisure and other services (14.4%

vs. 4%) and professional occupations (24.4% vs. 14.9%) compared to their male counterparts. They are also more likely than ex-Servicemen to work in the public administration, education, and health industries (54% vs. 23.3%). In contrast, ex-Servicemen are more likely to be employed as process, plant and machine operatives (17.2% vs. 2.3%) and skilled trades (15.8% vs. 2.5%) than women, as well as to work for the transport and communication (16.4% vs. 5.4%), construction (12.8% vs. 2.3%), and manufacturing industries (10.9% vs. 4%), reflecting trends observed in the non-veteran population.

Figure 3. Current industry of ex-Service personnel vs. non-veteran population aged 16 years and older and in employment in England and Wales, by gender (Census 2021)



Source: Authors' elaboration with data from the Office for National Statistics – Census 2021 (ONS, 2024).

Employment Barriers, Vulnerabilities, and Facilitators



Personal Characteristics



There are **gender**-related disparities that reflect trends observed in the general population. **Evidence indicates that ex-Servicewomen, who account for 13.6% of the ex-**

Service population, face greater challenges in securing employment than their male counterparts, resulting in higher rates of economic inactivity when adjusted for age (Pike, 2016; Grand-Clement, 2019; Parry et al., 2019; Flynn & Ball, 2020; Fisher et al., 2021; MoD, 2024b). The 2021 Census data indicate that, while ex-Servicewomen have similar unemployment rates to men, they are significantly more likely to be employed in part-time roles (38.2% vs. 15.6% of ex-Servicemen). Contributing factors include greater caregiving responsibilities and other personal commitments, which may require a higher degree of job flexibility and affect ex-Servicewomen's perception that their job search is more challenging than that of men (RBL, 2014; Deloitte, 2018). Additionally, **despite being more likely than ex-Servicemen to**

hold Level 4 qualifications or above (34.9% vs. 25.6%), ex-Servicewomen are less represented in high managerial, administrative, and technical positions (10.1% vs. 15.8%) (ONS, 2024). Ex-Servicewomen tend to undervalue their own skills and qualifications, which can lead to self-deselection from skilled positions, highlighting the need for a better understanding of these dynamics and for tailored employment support that fosters confidence in their capabilities (Parry et al., 2019).



The impact of **sexual orientation and gender identity** on the employment trajectories of ex-Service personnel remains underexplored. Notably, 1.5% of ex-Service personnel in the 2021 Census identify as LGBT+ (ONS, 2024). Recent UK studies suggest that **efforts to conceal sexual identity—often made to gain acceptance—alongside historically discriminatory policies, stigma, and prejudice, have negatively affected feelings of belonging and restricted employment opportunities for LGBT+ personnel after Service** (Etherton, 2023; Osborne & McGill, 2024). Anecdotal evidence

highlights ongoing hardships affecting employment, including mental health struggles and isolation from military communities and traditional support services (Paige et al., 2021). The 2021 Census data confirms higher unemployment rates among economically active LGBT+ ex-Service personnel compared to those who identify as heterosexual or straight (5.6% vs. 3.7%), along with slightly higher rates of part-time employment (20.8% vs. 18.2%), disparities which align closely with those found in the wider population (ONS, 2024).



Ethnicity and country of birth also influence the employment trajectories of ex-Service personnel.

2021 Census data shows that the vast majority of the ex-Service population identifies as white (96.4%), with 94.2% being UK-born. It further reveals that **black ex-Service personnel experience the highest unemployment rates among economically active groups, followed by those from mixed or multiple ethnic backgrounds, other ethnic groups, and Asian ex-Service personnel (8%, 6.3%, 6.2%, and 5.6%, respectively)** (ONS, 2024). **Interestingly, these rates are slightly lower compared to non-veteran counterparts with similar demographic profiles.** However, they contrast with the 3.7% unemployment rate for white ex-Service personnel, highlighting ongoing challenges for ethnic minority ex-Service personnel.⁸ **Additionally, black, Asian, and minority ethnic (BAME) ex-Service personnel are more likely to be employed in part-time roles (22.8% vs. 18.9% for white ex-Service personnel) and are overrepresented in elementary occupations, with underrepresentation in skilled trades** (MoD, 2024b; ONS, 2024). **For non-British citizens, transitioning to suitable civilian employment can be further complicated by intersecting social identities as migrants, foreign nationals and often as ethnic minorities, which can magnify challenges related to prejudice, discrimination and racism** (Adeoti et al., 2022). This group present unique employment barriers, such as unfamiliarity with the UK job market, limited recognition of overseas-acquired skills by UK employers, immigration status



Age-related challenges impact employment outcomes, affecting both the youngest and oldest cohorts of ex-Service personnel.

This is a notably aged population, with only 3.7% of ex-Service personnel between the ages of 16 and 29 years, in stark contrast to a substantial 26.1% falling within the 50 to 64 age range, and an even larger proportion of 53% aged 65 and over (ONS, 2024). Research indicates that those who leave Service at a young age tend to show higher unemployment rates (Burdett et al., 2021) and are less likely to report effectively using their acquired skills in their civilian jobs (Pike, 2016; Fisher, 2021). **Younger Service leavers, which often overlap with Early Service Leavers (ESLs) who served less than four years, are also at higher risk of unemployment and economic inactivity due to poor health** (Hendrikx et al., 2020). Census 2021 data reflects this vulnerability, with the highest unemployment rates observed among the economically active youngest cohorts, peaking at 29.1% for those aged 16 to 19 years and gradually decreasing to 11.5% for those aged 20 to 24 years, and 5.1% for those aged 25 to 29 years (ONS, 2024). These rates exclude those who are economically inactive due to education or other reasons. Conversely, **older ex-Service personnel, particularly those leaving after age 50, often report challenges in securing employment post-discharge, leading many to accept short-term positions or lower-skilled roles** (Flynn & Ball, 2020). These challenges are exacerbated by limited civilian employment experience, inadequate CV writing skills, a lack of confidence in negotiating employment terms and salary, difficulties navigating modern job-seeking practices and experiences of ageism and negative stereotyping (Ashcroft, 2012; Flynn & Ball, 2020). Census 2021 data aligns with these findings,

⁸ This data is further supported by the latest annual CTP report, which reveals contrasts in employment rates six months after leaving Service, with non-UK and UK black, Asian, and minority ethnic (BAME) Service leavers being overrepresented in unemployment compared to white Service leavers (14%, 9% and 3%, respectively) (MoD, 2024b).

showing that while unemployment rates stabilise at 2.9-3.3% for those aged 35 to 54 years, they increase again for economically active older cohorts, reaching 4.7% for those aged 60 to 64 years, mirroring trends seen among non-veterans with similar demographic characteristics (ONS, 2024).



Neurodivergent ex-Service personnel encounter distinct challenges that can hinder their pursuit of meaningful and fulfilling careers, a topic that has received

limited attention to date. Some neurodivergent individuals can struggle with social interaction and transition periods, which can deprive them of the stability and predictability they seek in employment (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, 2018; Allen et al., 2023). Recent findings indicate that neurodivergent ex-Service personnel may be hesitant to disclose their conditions to employers or request reasonable adjustments, with challenges further exacerbated by negative stereotypes, recruitment processes, and HR practices that favour neurotypical candidates (Allen et al., 2023). Nevertheless, neurodivergent ex-Service personnel often possess valuable skills which remain underexplored, including higher cognitive functioning, strong systematisation and analytical abilities, and exceptional multitasking and creative thinking—qualities that offer significant advantages in both employment and entrepreneurial settings (Allen et al., 2023).



Personal resources and attributes are key to successfully navigating the transition to civilian life and employment.

Qualitative research indicates that qualities like determination, confidence, self-reliance, and resilience are highly valued in the civilian workplace and contribute to successful transitions and long-term employment prospects for ex-Service personnel (Kantar Futures, 2017). Studies show that early acceptance of military discharge, formation of a new civilian identity, and construction of new social networks are associated with improved employment outcomes (Fisher et al., 2021). Developing soft skills and reinforcing confidence and adaptability while still in Service can enhance the chances of a successful transition (Kantar Futures, 2017; Fisher et al., 2021).

Additionally, ***allowing time to resettle and prepare for civilian life, along with support in developing a new civilian identity and accepting the loss of the old military one, is essential for successfully entering the civilian workforce*** (Kantar Futures, 2017; Parry et al., 2019; Fisher et al., 2021; Serfioti et al., 2022). However, while personal resources and attributes are recognised as important, there is limited research on their impact on employment experiences and the long-term success of ex-Service personnel in transitioning to civilian work.

Pre-Service Background



Research suggests that **ex-Service personnel who experienced socio-economic disadvantages prior to joining the AF often encounter greater difficulties during and after**

their transition to civilian life (Iversen et al., 2005; The Centre for Social Justice, 2014; Pike, 2016; Kantar Futures, 2017; Duel et al., 2019; Fellows et al., 2020). **Factors such as poor numeracy and literacy skills, coming from low socio-economic backgrounds, and entering Service at a young age can contribute to poorer transitions** (Fisher et al., 2021). **Lack of pre-Service civilian work experience is also highlighted as a key factor impacting post-Service employment** especially for those who joined the AF directly after leaving education (Deloitte, 2018). Even ex-Service personnel aged 50 years and over with prior experience in the civilian workforce often encounter challenges re-entering an evolving job market, having to compete with peers with sector-specific expertise and younger candidates willing to accept lower wages (Flynn & Ball, 2020).



Evidence indicates that ex-Service personnel tend to have lower educational attainment compared to their civilian counterparts, with a notable disparity in the attainment

of degree-level qualifications (Pike, 2016; MoD, 2019). This educational gap is especially pronounced among those who joined the UK AF at a young age, who may have missed opportunities for further or higher education, or civilian work experience. This issue is more prevalent within the Army and among Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs), who generally have lower literacy and numeracy skills and often come from more deprived areas (Pike, 2016; Duel et al., 2019).

Engagement with education and training, whether during Service or later in civilian careers, is identified as beneficial for improving post-Service employment outcomes (The Centre for Social Justice, 2014; Burdett et al., 2021). **Strategies such as ensuring appropriate education and support to obtain qualifications, aligning military qualifications with the National Qualifications Framework, and expanding apprenticeships are vital for long-term employment improvement** (Kantar Futures, 2017; Fellows et al., 2020).



Similarly, **adverse childhood experiences—including various forms of abuse, neglect, exposure to domestic violence, parental separation, and substance abuse**

within the household—can significantly impact the employment prospects of ex-Service personnel, perpetuating vulnerabilities and behavioural issues into adulthood (Duel et al., 2019). Research indicates that high levels of childhood adversity are linked to early departure from the military, diminished quality of life and well-being, financial hardship and difficulties in securing stable employment post-Service (Buckman et al., 2012; Burdett et al., 2021). Additionally, childhood antisocial behaviour is associated with a higher likelihood of claiming unemployment benefits (Burdett et al., 2019). A survey of 4,292 ex-Service personnel estimated that 35.1% experienced medium to high levels of childhood family adversity, while 16.7% exhibited childhood externalising or antisocial behaviour (Burdett et al., 2021). As the challenges stemming from such early experiences may only become fully apparent long after leaving the Armed Forces, there is an urgent need for updated research that captures the current landscape of these vulnerabilities and their effects on long-term employment outcomes.

In-Service Factors



Evidence suggests that **rank and branch affect the ability of ex-Service personnel to secure civilian employment**. Research indicates that **private-equivalent ranks are**

more likely to claim unemployment benefits compared to NCOs, who in turn, show a higher propensity than Commissioned Officers (COs) (Burdett et al., 2019). Additionally, **available data**

reveal that former Army personnel experience higher unemployment rates six months after leaving Service compared to their Royal Navy and Royal Air Force (RAF) counterparts (MoD, 2024b), although disparities in unemployment rates among the different branches may not persist in the long term (Burdett et al., 2021). Ex-Army personnel are also less likely to report having found the ‘right job’ within two to ten years after leaving the AF (Fisher et al., 2021). This disparity is partly attributed to the technical nature of Naval Services and RAF roles, which offer more readily transferable skills to civilian occupations (Burdett et al., 2019). However, underlying pre-Service characteristics such as the lower socio-economic backgrounds and educational attainment of Army recruits compared to the other branches, may contribute to these observed differences (Pike, 2016; Wang et al., 2022). While research on the effects of deployment to conflict zones on civilian employment remains limited, existing studies indicate that negative impacts are not evident. Earlier investigations focused on deployments to the Gulf or Bosnia and more recent analyses concerning Iraq or Afghanistan have not established an association between deployment and adverse employment outcomes (Iversen et al., 2005; Burdett et al., 2021).



Further, those who experience early or involuntary departure from the AF, including medical or administrative discharges, encounter challenges in securing

employment both immediately and in the long term (Fisher et al., 2021; MoD, 2024b). ESLs, in particular, encounter heightened transition difficulties, attributed to factors such as limited networking opportunities, unpreparedness for civilian life, and reduced resettlement provision (Woodhead et al., 2011; Ashcroft, 2014; RBL, 2014; Carolan, 2016; Caddick et al., 2017; Hendrikx et al., 2020). Moreover, pre-existing disadvantages and mental health issues, which sometimes contribute to early disengagement from Service, can also complicate access to civilian employment and in-work progression (Buckman et al., 2012). Those receiving a medical discharge and facing significant barriers to employment can access CTP Assist, a programme offering tailored support to facilitate their transition, as noted in the accompanying policy summary (Ribera Almandoz & Keeling, 2024).

However, available evidence indicates that those having received medical discharge remain the most at-risk group for unemployment and financial difficulties, especially for individuals whose temporary inability to work leads to disrupted careers (Flynn & Ball, 2020; Burdett et al., 2021).

Further research is necessary to comprehend the diverse experiences and needs associated with each discharge type, and to explore internal variations within these groups.



Mental and physical health conditions, whether acquired during Service or not, significantly impact employment outcomes (Ashcroft, 2016; Pike et al., 2016; Deloitte, 2018;

Lyonette et al., 2018a; Burdett et al., 2019; Fisher et al., 2021). Research shows that among treatment seeking ex-Service personnel, a higher number of physical health issues is linked to unemployment, with over two-thirds (69%) of this group not working due to illness (Hendrikx et al., 2020). A crucial distinction should be drawn between those who are ill but able to work and those whose illness prevents them from working. Census 2021 data confirms that **18.8% of ex-Service personnel reporting poor health and 9.9% of those identified as disabled under the Equality Act are inactive due to long-term sickness or disability**, compared to less than 0.5% of those in good health or not considered disabled. **Among those who remain economically active, 8.2% of ex-Service personnel in poor health and 6.5% of those classified as disabled under the Equality Act are unemployed**, compared to 3.4% of those in good health and not considered disabled (ONS, 2024). Additionally, while unemployment benefits are predominantly utilised within the first two years following departure from the Services, disability-related benefits tend to be longer term, indicating ongoing challenges in transitioning to civilian employment (Burdett et al., 2019). When employed, ex-Service personnel in poor health or classified as disabled are more likely to work part-

time and are underrepresented in high managerial and professional roles, while being overrepresented in elementary occupations compared to those in good health or not classified as disabled.⁹ For those facing mental health issues, other barriers identified include stigma and discriminatory employer attitudes, low expectations about one's own chances of finding suitable employment - which can sometimes be reinforced by negative attitudes from health professionals - and ineffective supported employment models, which further complicate access to and retention of employment (Carolan, 2016). **Tailored career support, such as coaching, targeted job search assistance, and Individualised Placement and Support (IPS) services, which integrate mental health and employment support, can improve long-term employment outcomes for ex-Service personnel who face additional challenges**, including those with disabilities, health conditions, and older individuals (Carolan, 2016; Flynn & Ball, 2020; Fisher et al., 2021).

Post-Service Barriers and Facilitators



Research consistently highlights the challenge of **translating military-acquired competencies and skills to the civilian workplace** (Ashcroft, 2012; Pike, 2016; Fellows et al., 2020;

Fisher et al., 2021). **Ex-Service personnel often report difficulties in effectively communicating and promoting their assets to civilian employers, particularly those who served for a long period or held highly specialised military roles**, such as in heavy artillery (Johnsen et al., 2018; Lyonette et al., 2020; Fisher et al., 2021). Conversely, those with transferable skills — especially in fields like engineering, medicine, and aviation — tend to experience smoother transitions and greater success in securing employment, particularly among higher-ranking personnel (Ashcroft, 2012; Fisher et al., 2021). **Studies also stress the importance of identifying areas of skill shortages in the civilian job market and aligning them with**

⁹ Among ex-Service personnel who are in employment, 34.4% of those in poor health and 29.2% of those classified as disabled work part-time, compared to approximately 18% of those in good health or not considered disabled. Additionally, 12.3% of those working and in poor health and 10.4% of those classified as disabled are employed in elementary occupations, whereas 8.8% of those in good health or not considered disabled are in these roles. Conversely, 9.6% of those in poor health and 12.5% of those classified as disabled are engaged in high managerial, administrative, and professional occupations, compared to over 16% of those in good health or not classified as disabled (ONS, 2024).

military skills to encourage recruitment based on a strong 'fit' (Pike, 2016; Fellows et al., 2020). Moreover, tailoring CVs and application forms to specific roles and organisations, using clear and commercial language, and avoiding military jargon and acronyms can help employers better understand the value ex-Service personnel bring, facilitating more successful transitions (Fisher et al., 2021).



Adjusting to civilian work culture can present significant challenges for ex-Service personnel transitioning from the structured hierarchy and culture of military life

to the unknown and competitive civilian job market (Pike, 2016; Lyonette et al., 2018a, 2020). Unrealistic expectations regarding employment opportunities, the job application processes, and salary, especially among senior personnel, are often reported (Futures 4 Forces, 2015; Kantar Futures, 2017). This unrealistic outlook has shown to be a significant source of frustration, with **ex-Service personnel frequently expressing feelings of disconnection from civilian norms and disappointment with the loss of status, identity, and community provided by the military** (McDermott, 2007; Williams et al., 2018; Gordon et al., 2020; Jones et al., 2022; Serfioti et al., 2022). Transitioning into occupational environments that offer continuity with their military background, such as civilian uniformed professions – including the police force, prison and fire service, and other security occupations – and jobs in defence-related government agencies, can ease the adjustment process and provide a renewed sense of belonging (Higate, 2001; McDermott, 2007; Brunger et al., 2013; Fisher et al., 2021; Turner & Moran, 2021). However, some researchers have questioned whether these roles, particularly in protective and highly masculinised environments, truly represent successful integration into civilian life (Brunger et al., 2013). **A deeper understanding of the cultural and identity challenges faced by ex-Service personnel during their transition to civilian life is necessary to fully address these issues.**



Building robust social networks is crucial in aiding ex-Service personnel's employment prospects, especially in smaller organisations where personal recommendations

are particularly important (Futures 4 Forces, 2015; Flynn & Ball, 2020; Fisher et al., 2021). Initially anchored in pre-Service contacts and in-Service military colleagues, these networks can expand over time, facilitating access to new employment opportunities (The Centre for Social Justice, 2014; Gordon et al., 2020). Higher-ranking individuals frequently leverage broader networking opportunities while in Service, contrasting with younger, lower-ranking counterparts (Fellows et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2022). To support their networking efforts, the latter can particularly benefit from peer mentors – ex-Service personnel now employed in the civilian world –, as well as participation in workshops and training initiatives with employers which further help bridge the gap between military and civilian employment (Grand-Clement, 2019; Parry et al., 2019; Fellows et al., 2020).



Geographical barriers can present challenges for ex-Service personnel navigating post-Service employment opportunities.

Family ties, homeownership, children's education, and rural living often take precedence over job prospects when considering relocation options, which can limit employment options and earning potential (Deloitte, 2018; Grand-Clement, 2019). **A considerable portion of ex-Service personnel show reluctance to relocate for job opportunities, with over half expressing a strong unwillingness to move, even if the right job arises (Deloitte, 2018). Regional employment disparities exist, with evidence indicating that it is "very difficult" to secure desired jobs for more than a quarter of ex-Service personnel in Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, and the North of England,** in contrast to only 9% of those in the South of England (Deloitte, 2018). Research focusing on Northern Ireland has shown additional challenges due to personal safety concerns rooted in the legacy of the Northern Ireland Conflict (Roy et al., 2020). Negative public attitudes toward this group and reluctance to disclose military backgrounds further compound employment hurdles, often leading to acceptance of lower-skilled occupations and adverse effects on long-term health and general wellbeing compared to counterparts in Great Britain (Roy et al., 2020).

Employer Perceptions and Preferences



While many businesses view ex-Service personnel positively, expressing comfort in working with them, acknowledging their valuable skills, strong work ethic, and resilience (OVA, 2022), ***misconceptions, negative attitudes, and stereotypes, such as perceiving ex-Service personnel as “mentally unstable” or overqualified, and being too institutionalised, can result in conscious and unconscious discriminatory hiring practices, leading to long-term unemployment or underemployment*** (Futures 4 Forces, 2015; Deloitte, 2016; Grand-Clement, 2019; Pike, 2016; Flynn & Ball, 2020; Fisher et al., 2021). These attitudes hinder their integration into the civilian workforce and perpetuate stereotypes, impacting their employment prospects and well-being (Morris-Butler et al., 2018).

Evidence consistently indicates that there is a ***common belief among employers that ex-Service personnel possess limited or non-transferrable skill sets*** (McDermott, 2007; Futures 4 Forces, 2015; Grand-Clement, 2019; Armstrong, 2023). The prevalence of military terminology in ex-Service personnels' CVs poses difficulties for recruiters unfamiliar with such language, hindering their ability to discern how military work experiences translate to civilian capabilities and align them with their company's needs (McDermott, 2007; Pike, 2016). As a result, ex-Service personnel often find themselves in low-paid, routine occupations or opt for civilian uniformed professions or skilled trades where the military training is more easily applicable like building,

plumbing, electrical work, and technical roles (Higate, 2001; McDermott 2007; Deloitte, 2016).

By failing to recognise their valuable skills and experiences, many businesses are deprived of the advantages ex-Service personnel have to offer (Business in the Community, 2017; Fellows et al., 2020). ***Ex-Service personnel can bring a diverse array of skills beneficial to the private sector, including leadership, communication, organisational abilities, problem-solving, strategic thinking, resilience, and other forms of cross-functional expertise*** (Deloitte, 2016; Pike, 2016). Businesses employing former military employees often report their strong work ethic, loyalty, engagement, and overall effectiveness (Deloitte, 2016; Pike, 2016). This is further complemented by lower sickness absence rates and higher retention rates when compared to non-Veterans (Bramley and Manthorpe, 2019). Previous research highlights an overlap between UK job market skill shortages and roles within the AF, such as chefs, metalworkers, and electricians (RBL, 2014; Pike, 2016). Studies point to the potential for ex-Service personnel in health and social care roles (Bramley & Manthorpe, 2019). Therefore, ***it is essential not only for ex-Service personnel to learn how to emphasise their valuable skills and experiences during the job application process, but also for employers to be equipped to recognise their potential contributions, facilitating a smoother transition to the civilian job market.***

Employment Experiences After Service

Despite the challenges outlined, recent research indicates that most ex-Service personnel swiftly secure employment after leaving the UK AF (Deloitte, 2018; Burdett et al., 2019; Fisher et al., 2021; MoD, 2024b; ONS, 2024). However, uncertainty around securing suitable employment and potential career paths post-discharge, compounded by a lack of confidence in their employment prospects and a perception that employers prefer candidates with civilian experience, have long been widespread concerns (Ashcroft, 2012; 2014). These uncertainties have often led ex-Service personnel to set their employment goals below their capabilities, hindering career advancement and job satisfaction (Ashcroft, 2014). Emerging evidence indicates that between a third and half of **ex-Service personnel experience some form of underemployment, with their skills and qualifications not fully utilised, and their aspirations not fully realised in their civilian roles** (Pike, 2016; Fellows et al, 2020). This underutilisation contributes to feelings of overqualification and job dissatisfaction, as many ex-Service personnel perceive their expertise and experience as undervalued in the civilian labour market (Brunger et al., 2013; Lyonette et al., 2020).

Underpayment emerges as another significant issue, with many ex-Service personnel encountering a reduction in income after transition.

The discrepancy between military and civilian salaries can induce financial strain, diminished job satisfaction, and a sense of disillusionment (Ashcroft, 2012). **Unrealistic expectations regarding career progression and salary** also shape employment experiences. Jones et al. (2022) found a misalignment between ex-Service personnel's expectations of rapid career progression, high-quality jobs and high salaries, and the realities of the UK's increasingly insecure and precarious labour market. Deloitte (2018) similarly reported that fewer than half surveyed ex-Service personnel

who had left the military within the preceding decade achieved their expected salary, with many earning considerably less than anticipated.

High job mobility is also common, with many ex-Service personnel moving through a series of short-term positions (Ashcroft, 2014). **Post-Service careers often follow non-linear trajectories, with role changes occurring every one-and-a-half to two years on average, and often alternating with periods of unemployment and reliance on out-of-work benefits** (Scullion et al., 2019; Armstrong, 2023). While these frequent job changes may reflect a pursuit of roles better aligned with their skills and personal values, **further research is needed to understand the underlying motivations and the long-term consequences for ex-Service personnel.**

The transition to civilian employment can be a lengthy and complex process unfolding over extended periods, with some challenges emerging only years after discharge (Scullion et al., 2019). As it becomes increasingly clear that securing employment soon after leaving Service does not guarantee a successful transition, emerging research calls for a shift in focus to assess whether post-Service employment is fulfilling and sustainable in the long term (Deloitte, 2018; Lyonette et al., 2018a; Grand-Clement, 2019; Fisher et al., 2021; Jones et al., 2021). In line with recent suggestions by Fisher et al. (2021), future **research should continue to work on redefining successful employment by providing longitudinal insights into the employment experiences of ex-Service personnel. Future endeavours should examine not only how well their skills, qualifications, and experience are utilised (extrinsic rewards) but also how well their roles meet their desired work-life balance, values, work ethic, and personal aspirations (intrinsic rewards) and exploring what factors contribute to lasting career satisfaction and stability.**

Partners' Employment



The employment experiences of partners¹⁰ of ex-Service personnel are largely overlooked in research (Sondergaard et al., 2016; Gordon et al., 2020). When explored, studies have typically emphasised partner employment as crucial for the successful resettlement of Service leavers to civilian life (Kantar Futures, 2017). For many Service leavers, partner employment provides a source of stable income, social networks, and realistic expectations which can bolster resilience during periods of transition and uncertainty (Ashcroft, 2014; Centre for Social Justice, 2016; Heaver et al., 2018). However, **little attention has been paid to the benefits employment can offer to partners themselves – such as financial independence, career growth, and personal fulfilment – key to their overall well-being and sense of stability.** Moreover, most available research focuses predominantly on female partners of ex-Service

personnel, leaving the employment experiences of male partners and those in diverse family structures less understood.¹¹

Military and ex-Service partners face unique employment challenges that can impact their long-term career prospects and access to independent income (Lyonette et al., 2018b; Gribble et al., 2019; Slapakova et al., 2023). **Frequent relocations disrupt local support networks, knowledge, and qualifications, which can adversely impact career trajectories, especially in professions reliant on local expertise** (Blakely et al., 2012; 2014; Centre for Social Justice, 2016). These issues are compounded during overseas postings by language barriers, short-term residency, and difficulties in pursuing further education and training (Centre for Social Justice, 2016). The migratory and geographically isolated nature of Service life often restricts job opportunities

10 We use the term 'partners' broadly to refer to the long-term, cohabiting partners of ex-Service personnel, whether married or unmarried.

11 Recent data on families of currently serving personnel estimates that nine in ten Service partners are female, with the majority in relationships with male Serving personnel. Moreover, 81% of partners aged 16-64 are employed, whether full-time, part-time, or self-employed, though employment rates are slightly lower for Army Other Ranks spouses (76%) (MoD, 2024c).

for partners, particularly as on-base services are increasingly outsourced (Ashcroft, 2014). The historical lack of suitable and affordable childcare, combined with the demands of military life, has often hindered partners' ability to seek employment both during and after their partner's resettlement, although the new childcare offer for parents in overseas locations could represent a positive step forward (Heaver et al., 2018; Lyonette et al., 2018b; Gribble et al., 2019; MoD, 2024d). Employers' stereotypes and misconceptions about military life, along with frequent moves resulting in CV gaps, further disadvantage military and ex-Service partners in the job market, contributing to perceptions of instability and emotional distress (Lê et al., 2010; Blakely et al., 2012; Centre for Social Justice, 2016; Lyonette et al. 2018b).

These challenges often mean partners work fewer hours and apply for jobs below their qualifications and earning potential (Hisnanick & Little, 2015; Centre for Social Justice, 2016). Many partners choose flexible or 'portable' careers such as nursing, teaching, and childcare, as these professions facilitate smoother transitions when families are relocated due to postings (Lyonette et al., 2018b). Self-employment has also emerged as a viable option, offering continuity despite relocations and flexibility to manage responsibilities such as

childcare (Lyonette et al., 2018a; 2018b; Fellows et al., 2020). Recognising and leveraging the valuable skills and expertise developed throughout their time supporting ex-Service personnel can enhance their employment opportunities (Fellows et al., 2020).

Targeted employment support and resources for partners are essential to address their specific needs and capitalise on their skills (Blakely et al., 2012; Godier-McBard et al., 2020).

These could include specialised job training and advice tailored to both Serving and ex-Service partners, workshops on salary negotiation and CV writing, and listings of military-friendly job opportunities (Hisnanick & Little, 2015), alongside support with the cost of childcare (Lyonette et al., 2018b). Yet, many partners remain unaware of the services available to them (Heaver et al., 2018; Lyonette et al. 2018b; Fellows et al., 2020), or prefer to rely on informal social networks rather than military-linked services as their primary source of support (Dandeker, 2006). A cultural shift is needed towards viewing the transition as a long-term process that actively involves the Service leaver's family (Heal et al., 2019). Early and proactive planning, combined with a recognition of the intrinsic value of partner employment for those who wish to work, can significantly improve employment outcomes both for ex-Service personnel and their partners (Heaver et al, 2018; Godier-McBard et al., 2020).

Recommendations:



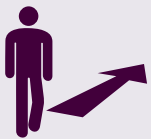
While most ex-Service personnel secure employment after leaving the UK Armed Forces, it is unclear whether this employment meets their needs and aspirations, with research highlighting issues of underemployment and job dissatisfaction. It is crucial to **continue working on redefining the concept of successful employment for ex-Service personnel by assessing not only how effectively their skills and qualifications are utilised but also how their roles align with personal values, work-life balance, and overall fulfilment, in line with recent studies.**



Post-Service careers are often characterised by complex and non-linear trajectories, with some challenges emerging only years after discharge. **Further research is needed to examine the long-term experiences and outcomes of ex-Service personnel.** Future studies should provide longitudinal insights into the evolving nature of employment roles over time and identify the factors that influence long-term career success and fulfilment for ex-Service personnel.



There is a need to expand research into the impact of **intersecting identities** (e.g., gender, age, sexual orientation and gender identity, ethnicity, disability, neurodivergence) on employment outcomes for ex-Service personnel. Research should focus on **identifying specific risk factors and support needs for various groups to develop targeted interventions that address these unique challenges.**



Future research should shift focus from solely identifying barriers to **understanding the facilitators of employment for ex-Service personnel.** This includes examining factors that can contribute to successful transitions, such as developing relevant experience and qualifications during or after Service, enhancing skill transferability, facilitating partners' employment opportunities, providing avenues for networking and increasing social capital.



The 2021 Census data can offer valuable insights on the effects of certain personal characteristics on the long-term employment outcomes for ex-Service personnel. However, **further research is needed to explore the influence of in-Service factors**—such as rank, branch, deployment history, length of Service, and time since discharge—on employment trajectories. **Particular emphasis should be placed on examining the impact of different discharge types to better understand the varied experiences and needs associated with each type and to investigate internal variations within these groups.**



A deeper understanding of the cultural and identity challenges faced by ex-Service personnel during their transition to civilian life and employment environments is necessary. Researching how these factors affect adaptation to civilian work and how **personal resources and attributes** play a role in this process will provide valuable insights for developing more effective support and integration strategies.



There is a need to keep **building evidence on the contributions of ex-Service personnel in the civilian workplace to challenge existing stereotypes and misconceptions**. Highlighting their skills and work ethic is crucial for improving their employment prospects and public perception.



UK based research focused on the long-term employment of partners, particularly during and after the transition period, is required. **This research should consider partner employment not only as crucial for the successful resettlement of ex-Service personnel to civilian life, but also the benefits employment can offer to partners themselves**. It should consider diverse family structures and understudied groups (e.g. male partners, partners from ethnic minorities, or those of non-UK origin), while challenging underlying assumptions about partners of ex-Service personnel and accounting for their **varied needs and experiences**.

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Annex A: Methodology

A narrative literature review of extant academic and grey literature was conducted. This methodological approach was chosen due to its suitability for synthesising a broad range of material with the aim of informing future research and/or policy. A structured approach was employed which centred around the sequential process of literature identification, data extraction, and follow-up analysis:

Literature identification

Sources relevant to the study were located using three complementary search strategies:

- Initial literature search using Google Scholar conducted in November 2023 using a selection

of key words.

- Appraisal of literature within the Forces in Mind Trust Research Centre repository.
- 'Snowball searching' by identifying relevant sources through the reference lists of prior selected literature.

The resulting longlist of literature was captured on a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. Due to the broad nature of the research landscape, a set of inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied to identify sources most relevant to the review (see Table 3). Any sources not meeting the criteria were excluded.

Table 3. Literature inclusion and exclusion criteria

Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
Focus of the source	Sources addressing service personnel's and/or ex-Service personnel engagement with the labour market, including employment, unemployment, under-employment, skills and qualifications, and job seeking behaviours.	Sources that do not address issues specified in the inclusion criteria.
Type of source	Peer and non-peer reviewed academic and grey literature based on sound research evidence and ethical research practice. Doctoral theses.	Source types not meeting those specified in the inclusion criteria. Master's theses are not included.
Date of publication or issue	Sources published during or after 2001 (year selected to reflect the summary's objective of capturing recent evidence).	Sources published prior to 2001.
Research subjects' country of origin	The UK.	Outside of the UK.
Language	Sources published in English.	Sources published in languages other than English.

Annex B: Research summary search strings

Population

"veteran*" OR "deployed" OR "reserve" OR "military veteran*" OR "armed forces veteran*" OR "UK veteran*" OR "ex-service personnel" OR "ex service personnel" OR "service leaver*" OR "service personnel" OR "Early Service Leaver" OR "Armed Forces" OR "Royal Air Force" OR "RAF" OR "Army" OR "Royal Navy" OR "Royal Marine" OR "defence personnel" OR "military service personnel" OR "military families" OR "military family" OR "armed forces families" OR "armed forces family"

Subject matter

"benefits" OR "career*" OR "career development" OR "career management" OR "career transition*" OR "civilian labour market" OR "civilian workforce" OR "competenc*" OR "employ*" OR "expert*" OR "furlough" OR "hiring" OR "income" OR "job" OR "job seeking" OR "job-seeking" OR "knowledge" OR "labour market" OR "post-service employment" OR "post service employment" OR "profession*" OR "qualifications" OR "self-employed" OR "self employed" OR "skills*" OR "socioeconomic status" OR "socio-economic status" OR "special*" OR "talent" OR "talent management" OR "underemployment" OR "under-employment" OR "unemployment" OR "un-employment" OR "vocation*" OR "work*" OR "training"

