



FiMT Research Centre

forces in mind trust

Research Landscape Bulletin

Issue 2: March 2024 – August 2024

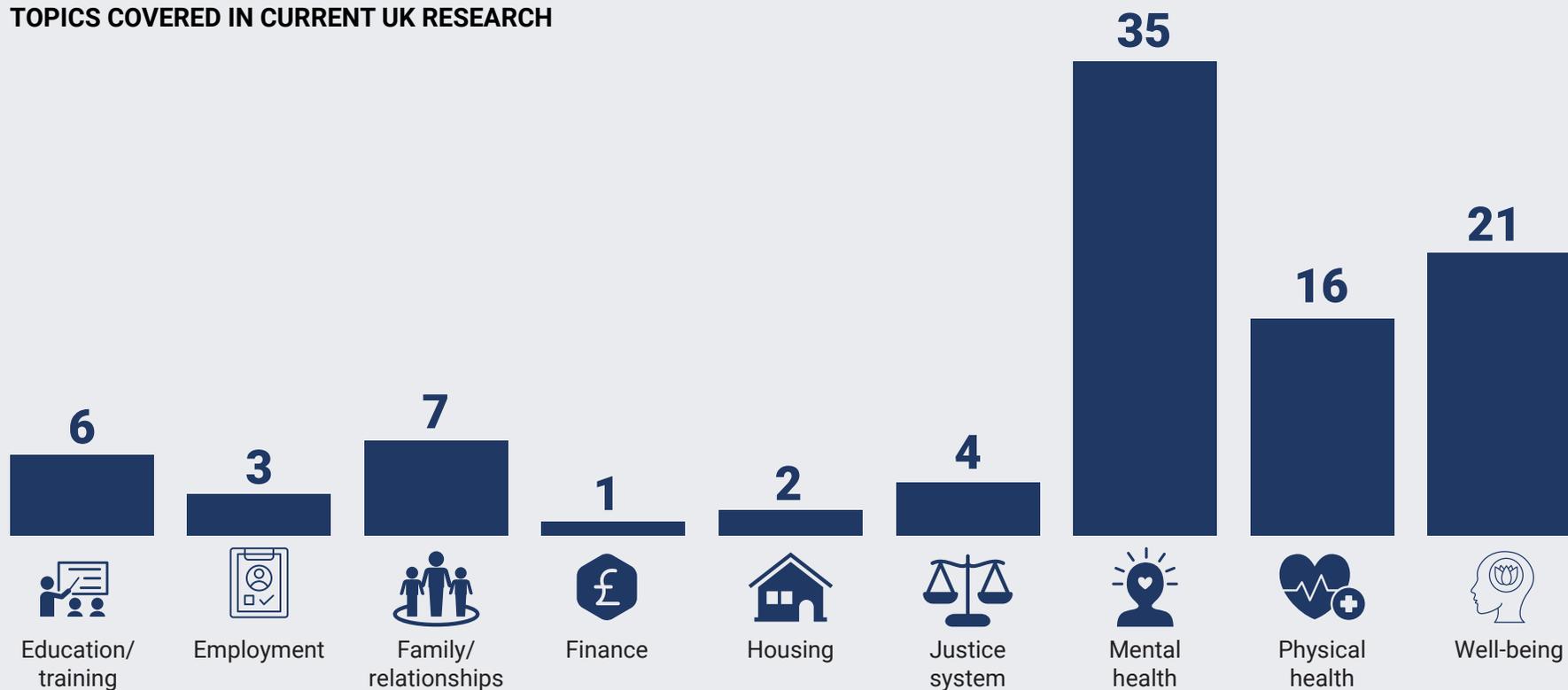
This bi-annual bulletin provides an overview of the UK Armed Forces community research landscape including what research is being conducted, and by who, and what research evidence is being published. This bulletin identifies trends and gaps in published and ongoing research, highlights what topics are currently being researched, and therefore what evidence on certain topics is coming soon. This will be beneficial to researchers, those who commission research, and those who use research to inform their work, policy, and practice. All information is taken from the [Research Community](#), [Ongoing Research](#), and [Repository](#) pages of our website.¹

What research was conducted March – August 2024?

62 research studies about the UK Armed Forces community were being conducted between March 2024 and August 2024.

Mental health was the most researched area, followed by well-being, and physical health, which is a continued trend from the previous bulletin (May 2023 – February 2024). The least researched area during the current period was finance, followed by housing, and employment. This shows a continued theme from the previous bulletin where the same topics were the least researched.

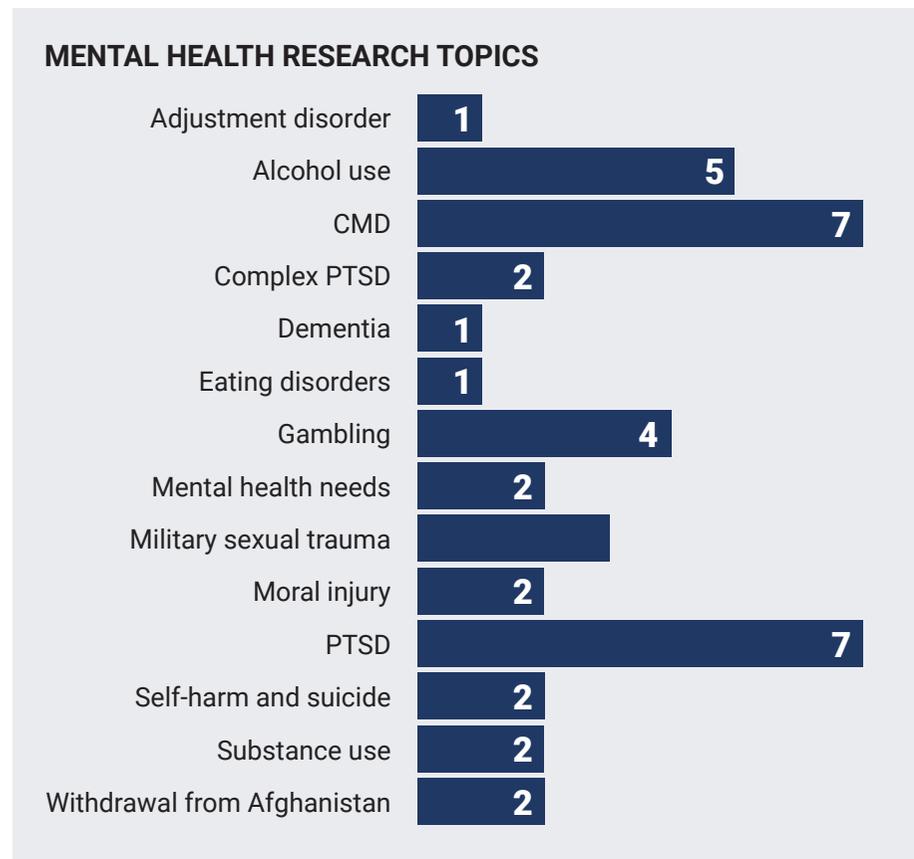
TOPICS COVERED IN CURRENT UK RESEARCH



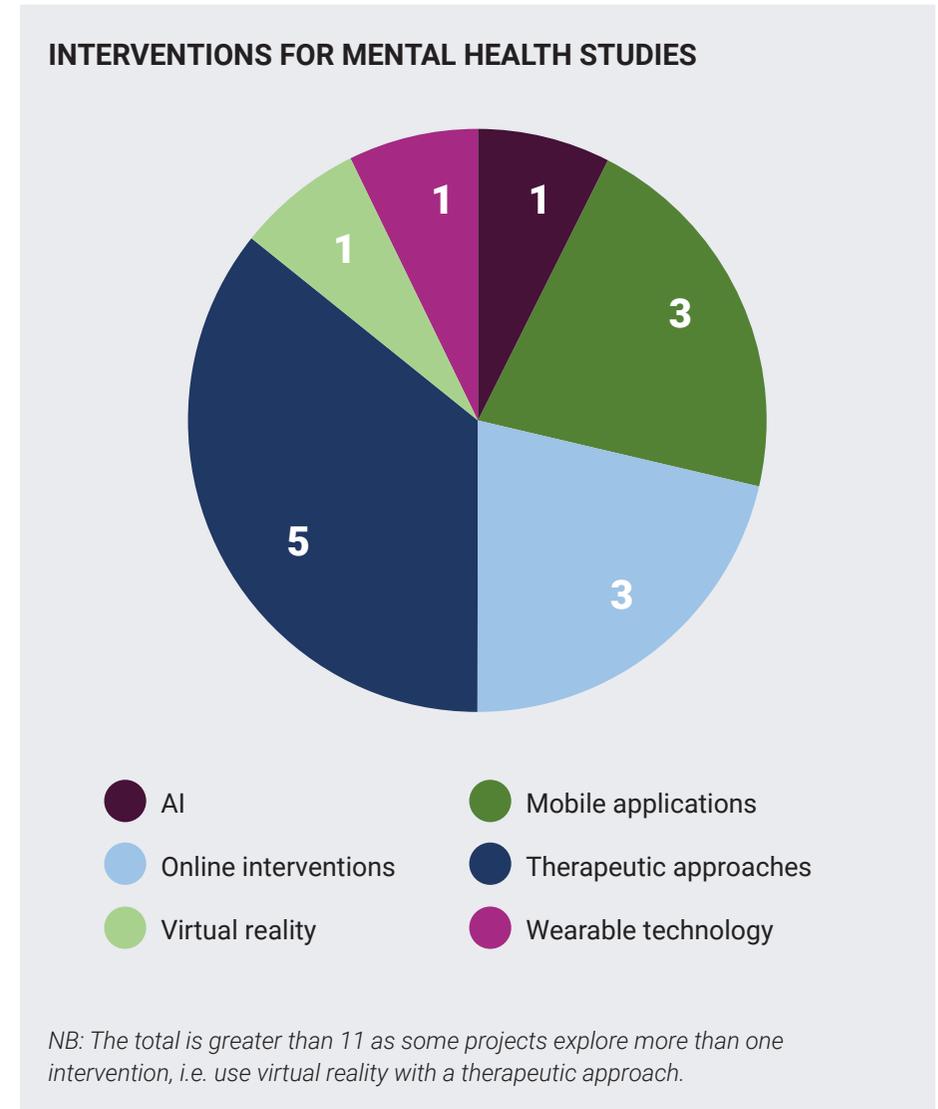
NB: The total is greater than 62 as some projects relate to more than one theme.

Mental Health research

The most common conditions of focus were post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and common mental health disorders (CMD; including depression, anxiety, non-specified broad 'mental health'), followed by alcohol use, and gambling. This is a very similar trend from the last published bulletin with the exception of less studies currently focused on military sexual trauma (MST), indicating a study on MST has recently been completed.

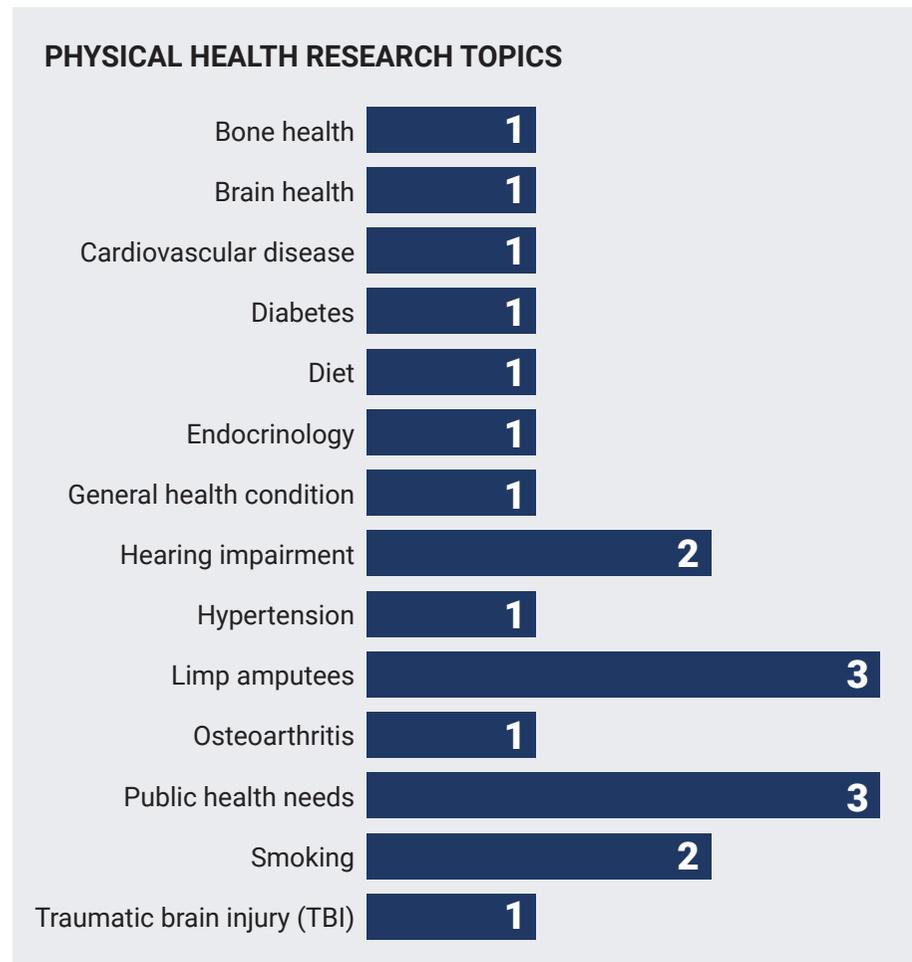


Interventions were a focus for 11 of the mental health studies.



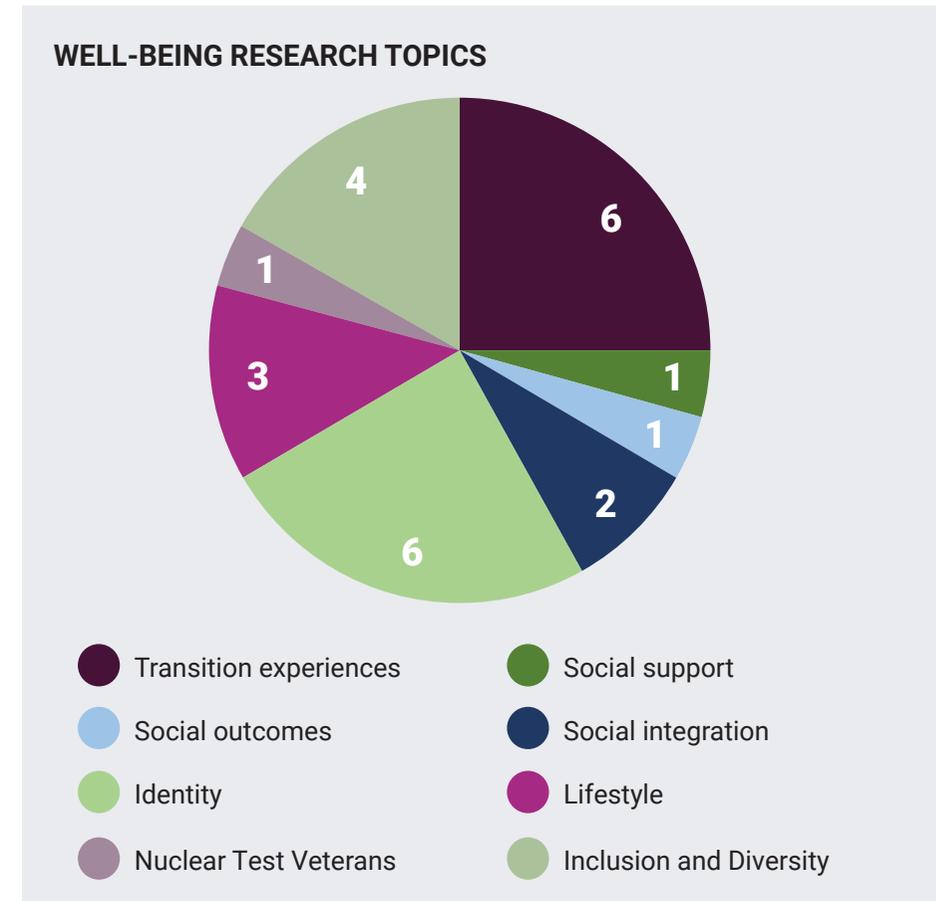
Physical Health research

The most common areas of focus are healthcare needs and limb amputations followed by smoking and hearing impairment.



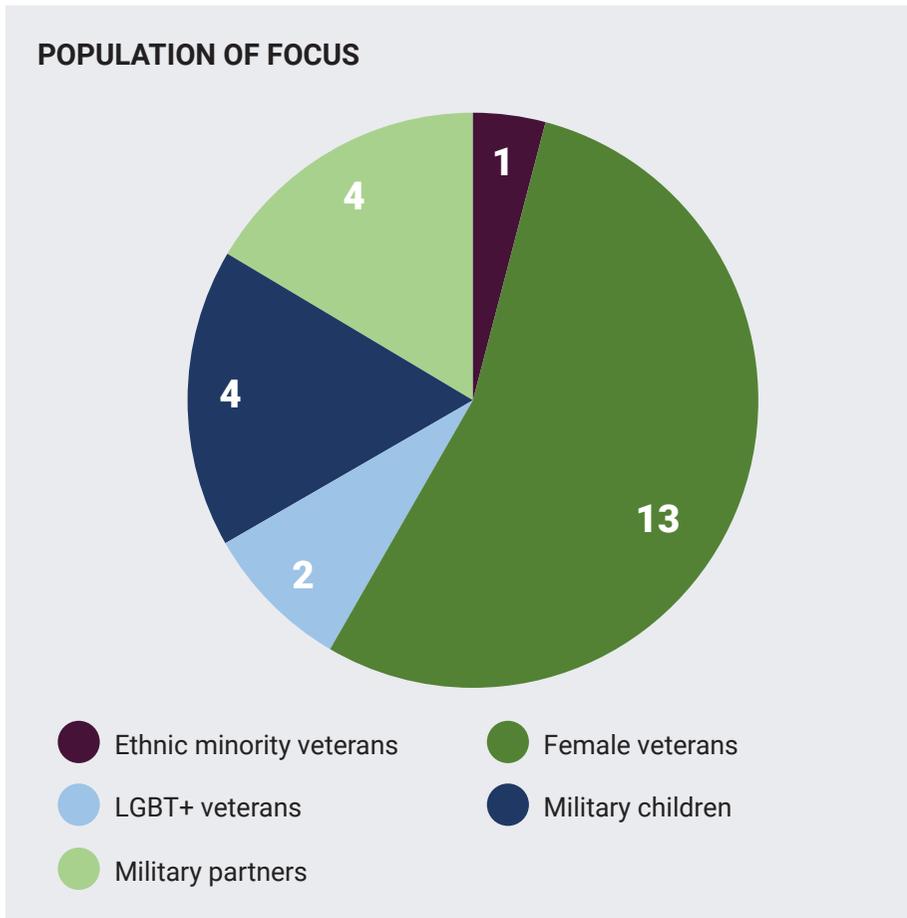
Well-Being research

The most researched well-being topics were transition and identity, which is a continued trend from the previous bulletin. There are now less studies exploring isolation and social support, indicating a study focused on this topic has recently been completed.



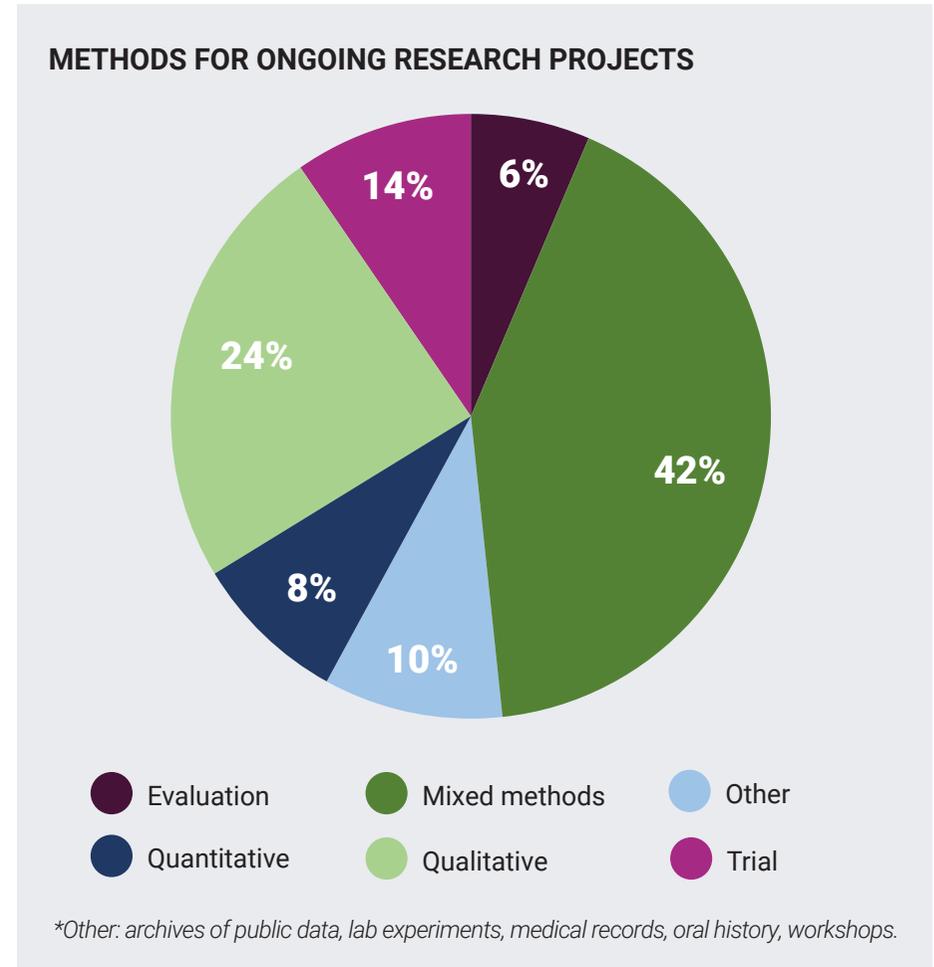
Populations of focus

Across the 62 ongoing research projects, 24 focus on specific often under researched populations: 13 female Veterans, 4 military children, 4 military partners, 1 ethnic minorities, and 2 LGBT+ Veterans.



Methods used in current research

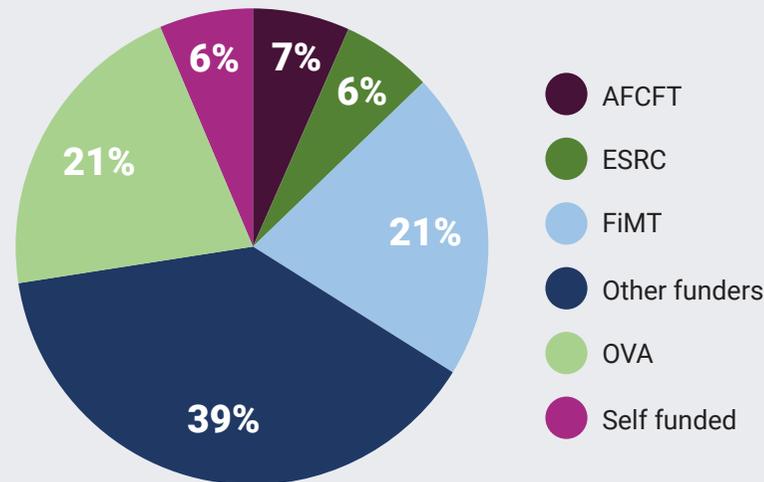
The most common method used in this period was mixed methods, followed by qualitative and then trials.



Research funders

Forces in Mind Trust (FiMT) and the Office for Veterans' Affairs (OVA) funded most of the research conducted between March and August 2024, which is a continued trend from the previous bulletin. However, there are many other funders of UK Armed Forces community research.

FUNDERS OF UK ARMED FORCES RESEARCH

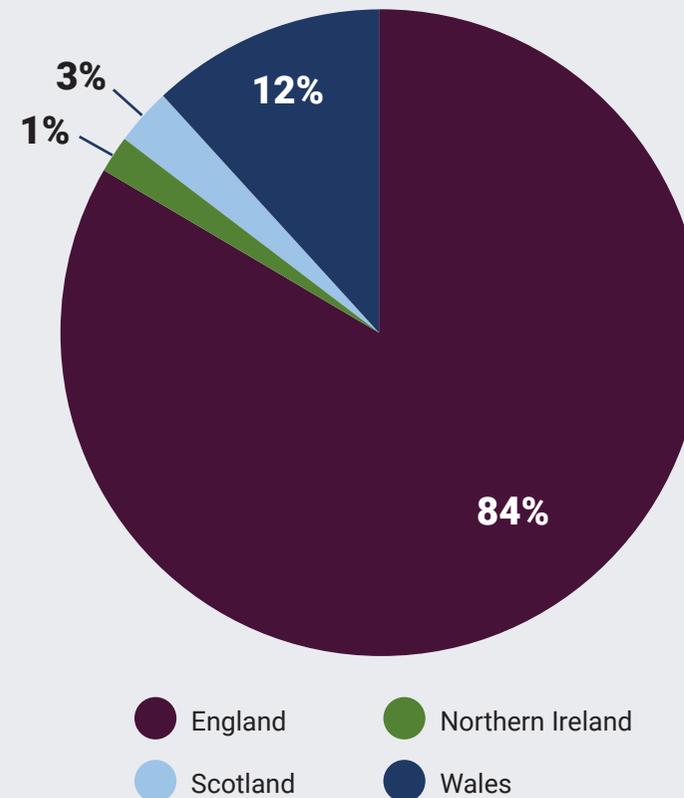


*Other funders (listed in alphabetical order): ADVANCE Charity, Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust (AFCFT), Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), Gambling Commission Social Responsibility Funds, Gambling Research Exchange (GREO), Greenwich Hospital, HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS), King's College London, Liverpool John Moores University, London Interdisciplinary Social Science Doctoral Training Partnership (LISS-DTP), National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR), NHS England, Royal Air Force (RAF) Benevolent Fund, Royal British Legion, Self-funded, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC-CRSH) Department of National Defence MINDS Initiative Doctoral Award, The Watson Trust Foundation, UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), University of Essex.

Geographical distribution of research

The majority of the research captured in the 'ongoing research' page is conducted in England, with research from the devolved nations being less represented.

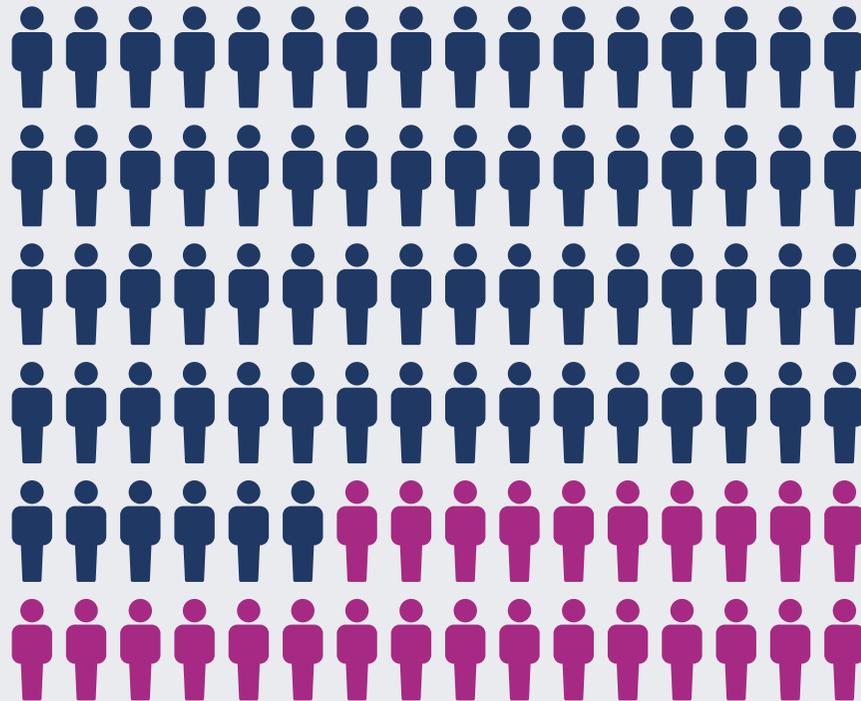
GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF RESEARCH STUDIES



Who is conducting the research?

In this period, 96 researchers were listed on the research community page who conduct research with the UK Armed Forces community. Of these, 26 are PhD students, 11 of which have been added since the last bulletin.

NUMBER OF PhD STUDENTS CONDUCTING RESEARCH WITH THE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY

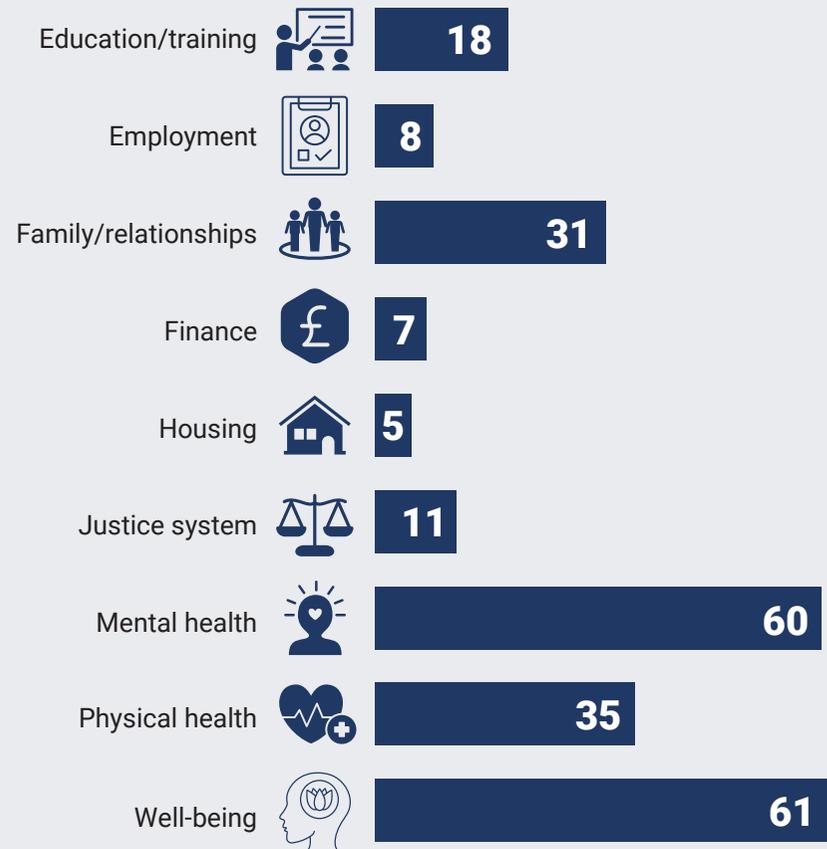


26 PhD students among researchers conducting research with the UK Armed forces community

Researcher expertise

The most common areas of research expertise and focus are mental health and well-being, followed by physical health.

RESEARCHER EXPERTISE AND FOCUS



Geographic location of researchers

The majority of researchers captured in the research community page are based in England, with fewer across the devolved nations.



Research Centres

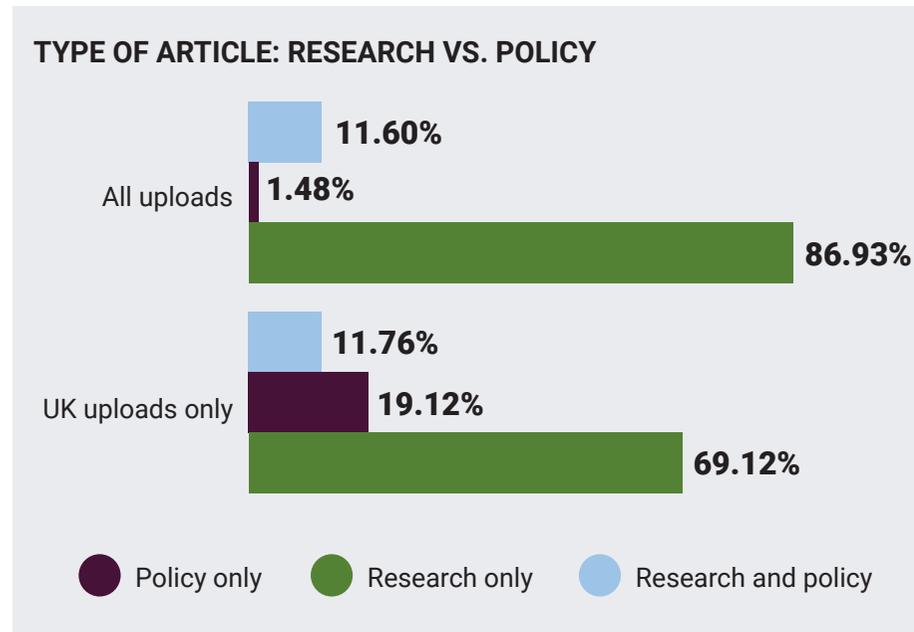
Our research community page includes 20 research centres specifically focused on conducting research with the UK Armed Forces community, the majority of these are in England.



What research has been published?

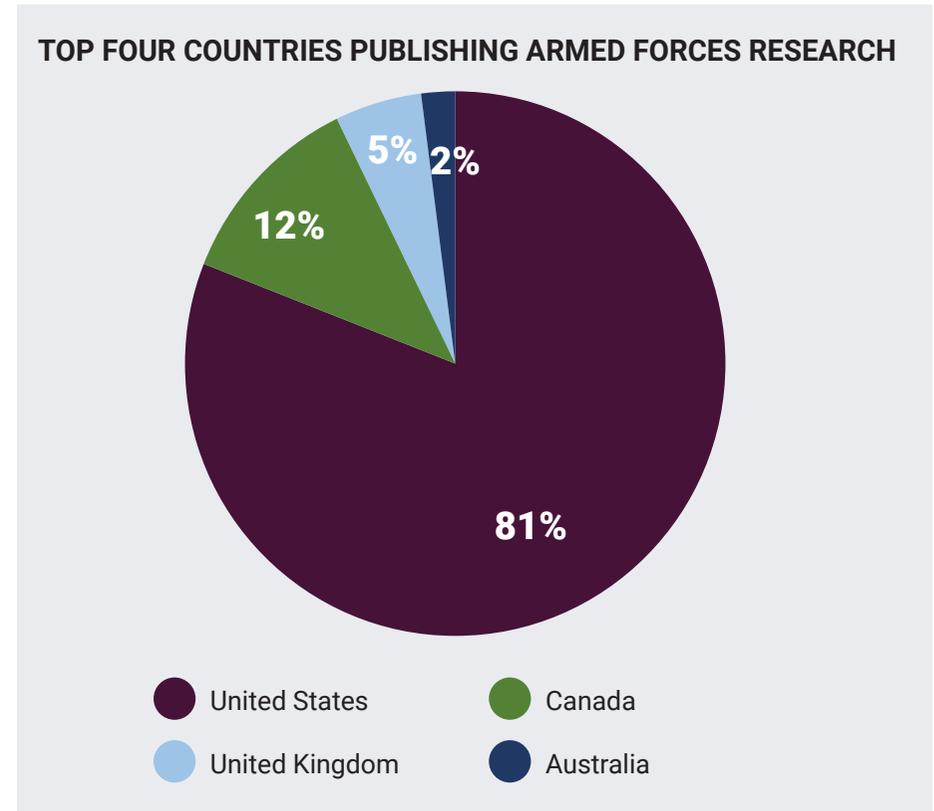
Our online repository is a searchable library of international published research evidence, grey literature,² and policy documents about the Armed Forces Community. The repository is updated each month using a robust methodology.³

In this period, 1,355 international research and/or policy papers were added to the repository. Of these, the majority were research papers.



Countries publishing Armed Forces research

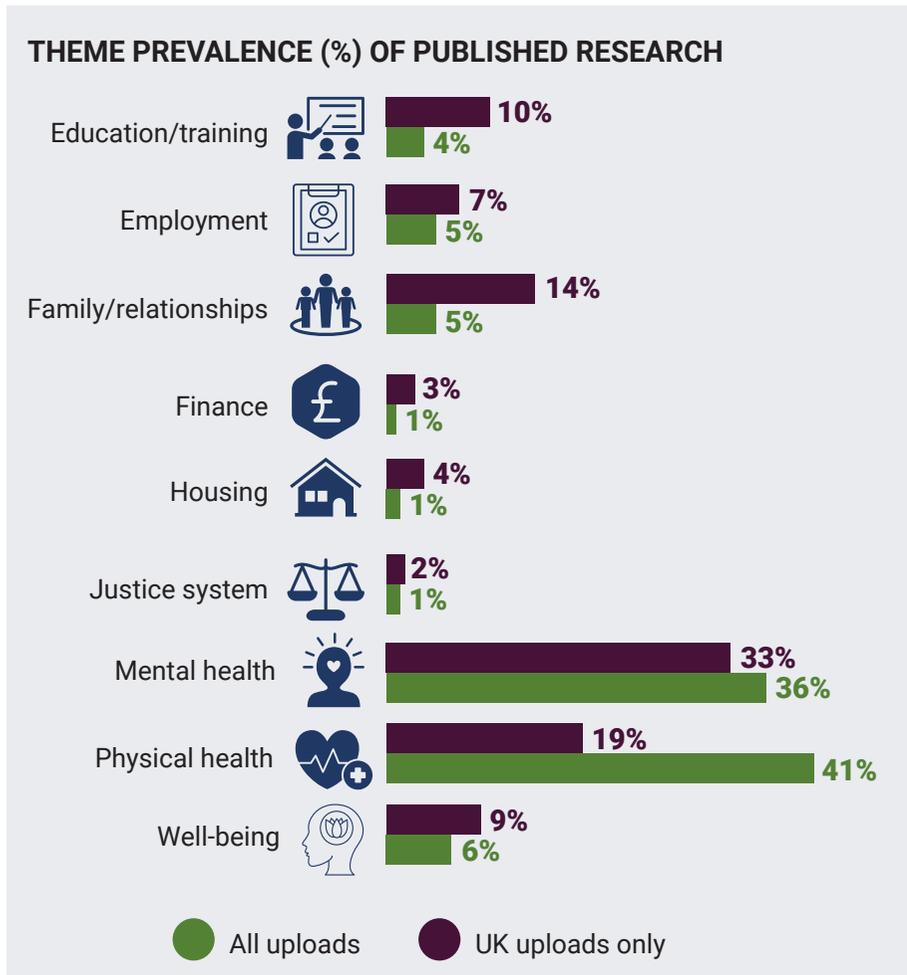
Research published in this period covered 39 countries.⁴ Four countries are responsible for almost all included papers, with the United States (US) being the largest. Publications from the UK were responsible for 5% of research and policy documents.



² Grey literature refers to documents and material that is produced outside of the traditional academic publishing and distribution channels. Examples of grey literature might include reports, working and policy papers, government documents, white papers, newsletters, and other types of documents that are otherwise hard to classify.
³ Full details of the method can be found <https://www.fimt-rc.org/resources/method-for-updating-the-fimt-research-centre-online-repository/article>
⁴ Other countries represented in repository uploads (listed in alphabetical order): Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ethiopia, Finland, Five Eyes, France, Germany, India, Iran, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Poland, Romania, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Syria, Taiwan, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States, Vietnam.

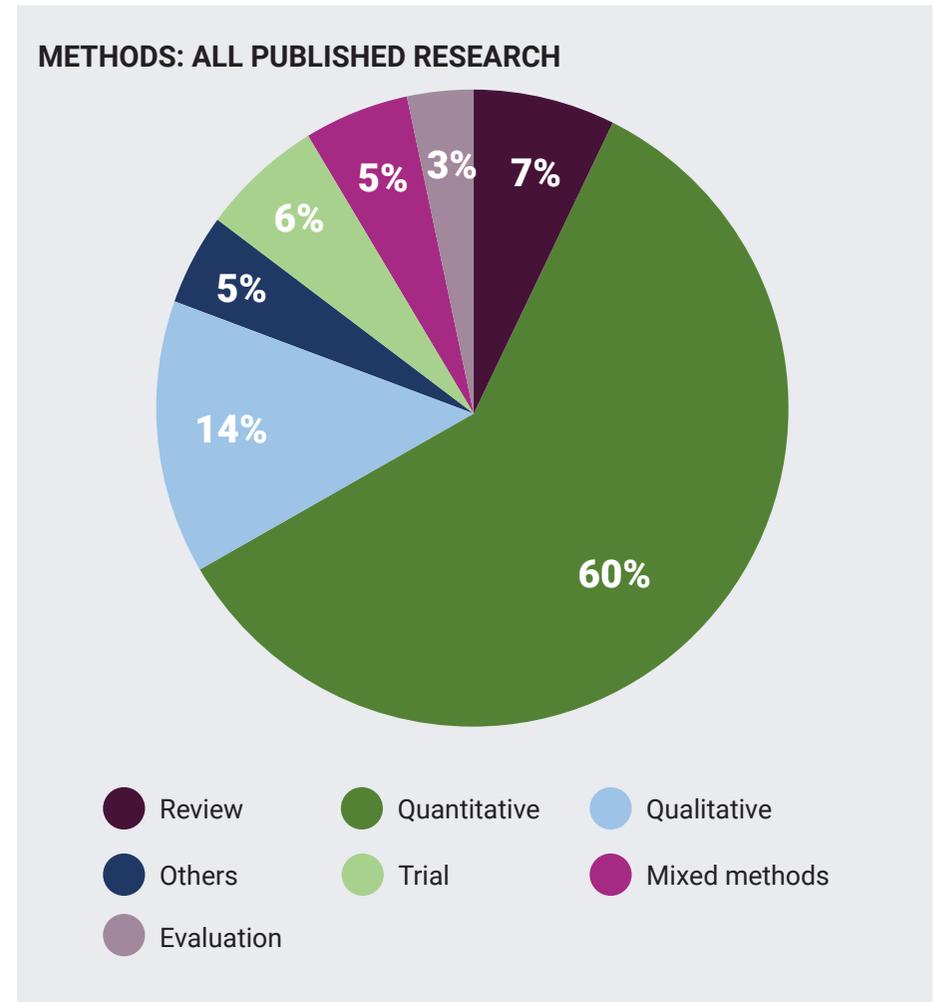
Transition topics covered in published research

Between March 2024 and August 2024, most papers focused on physical health, with mental health being the second most common and the justice system the least. This distribution is mostly consistent internationally and, in the UK.

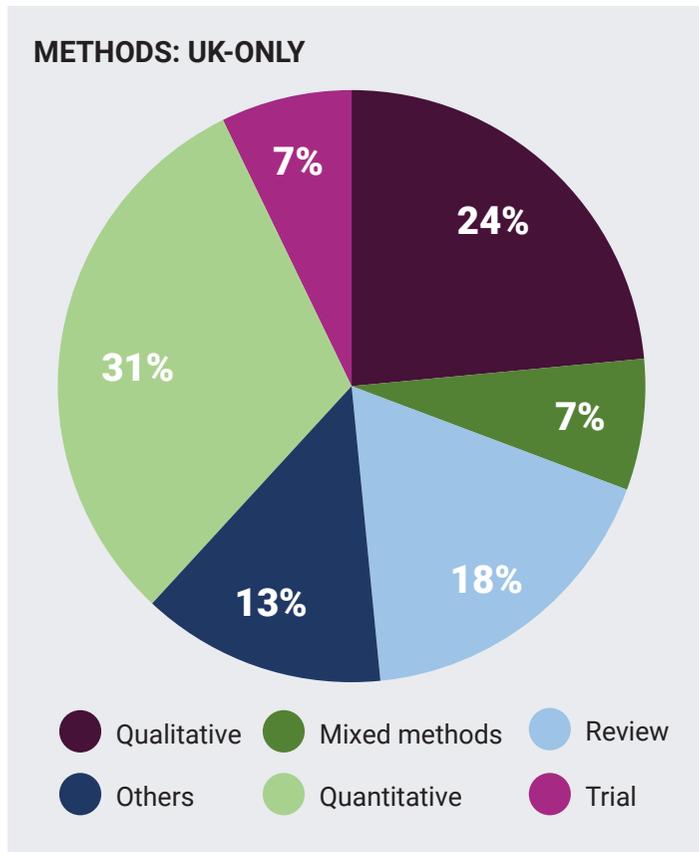


Methods used in published research

The majority of published research used quantitative methods, less used qualitative and review approaches, with fewer mixed methods and evaluations overall.



When considered alone, the distribution of the methods used in UK research uploaded to the repository differs: the UK has a more even spread of quantitative, qualitative, reviews, trial and mixed methods approaches. The UK also did not publish any evaluations during the observed period. However, similar to international trends, there are a fewer number of trials and mixed methods.



Summary

Trends in UK Research activity:

- *Housing, Finance, and Employment* continue to be less researched areas in the UK. It is important to explore if this is a gap that needs to be addressed.
- *Mental health and well-being* continue to be the most researched themes and to have the most researcher expertise.
- Most research activity captured in the 'ongoing research' and most researchers and research centres captured in the 'research community page' are in England. We encourage researchers from Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, to share their research and details to provide a comprehensive picture of research and researchers across the devolved nations in order to identify potential gaps and to highlight where researchers with certain expertise are based.
- Mixed methods continue to be the most popular research methods used in the UK.

Trends in published research:

- Research relating to the *Justice System, Housing, Finance, and Employment* are the focus of less research internationally and in the UK, with fewer research papers being published focused on these areas. This is surprising since housing, finance and employment are considered core aspects of transition.
- Physical and mental health continue to dominate published research about the Armed Forces community.
- The majority of research continues to focus on WEIRD⁵ populations in the US and UK; with increasing diversity within the Armed Forces, this should be reflected in research.
- Internationally, quantitative methods are most commonly reported in published papers, compared to the UK which mostly reports on studies that used qualitative methods. This may reflect the different kinds of research questions being addressed across different countries and focus on different topics where different methods are required.

5

Coined by Henrich, Heine and Norenzayan (2010), WEIRD refers to populations that are Western/White, Educated, Industrialised, Rich and Democratic. This population is typically overrepresented in the research.