

**Centre for Evidence
for the Armed Forces
Community**
FUNDED BY FiMT

Research Landscape Bulletin

Issue 3:
September 2024 – February 2025

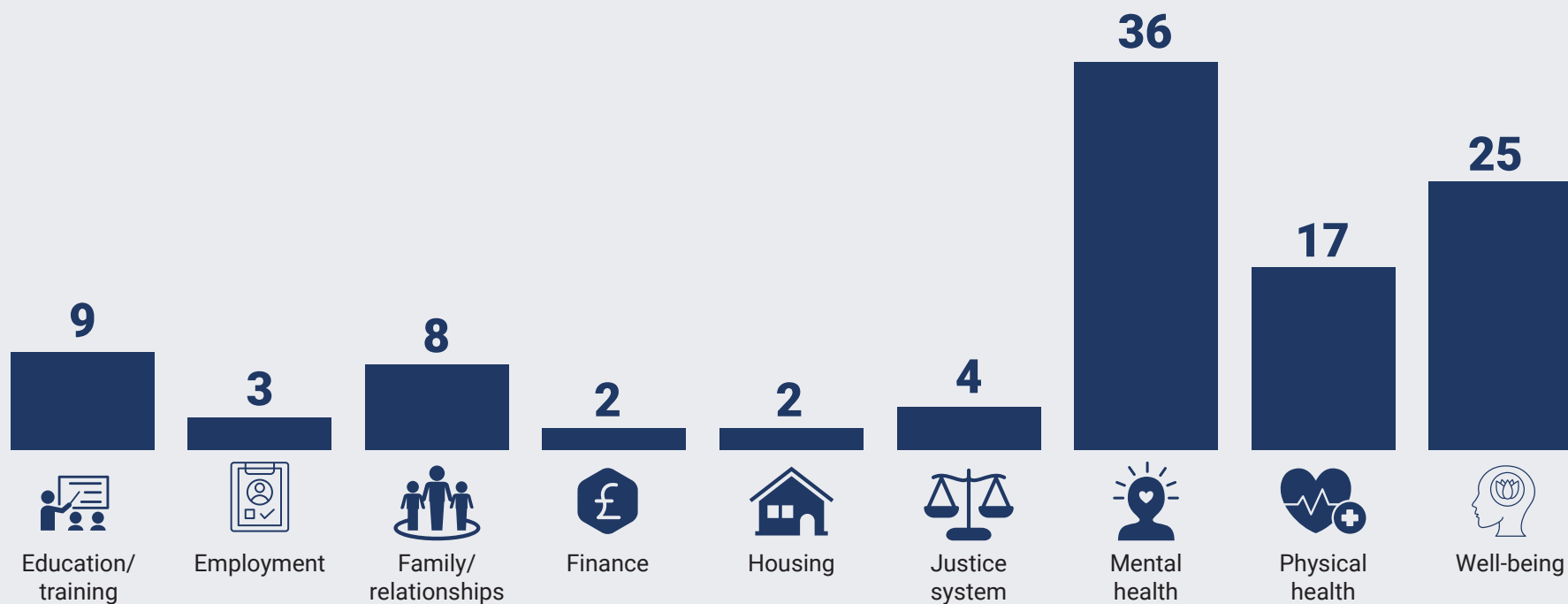
This bi-annual bulletin provides an overview of the UK Armed Forces community research landscape including what research is being conducted, and by who, and what research evidence is being published. This bulletin identifies trends and gaps in published and ongoing research, highlights what topics are 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 September 2024 – February 2025?

68 research studies about the UK Armed Forces community were being conducted between September 2024 – February 2025.

Mental health was the most researched area, followed by well-being, and physical health, which is a continued trend since May 2023. The least researched areas during the current period were finance and housing, which shows a continued theme from the previous bulletins. However, there is a minor increase in research conducted on the topics of employment and the justice system compared to the previous editions of the bulletin, which may indicate more interest in these less researched topics.

TOPICS COVERED IN CURRENT UK RESEARCH

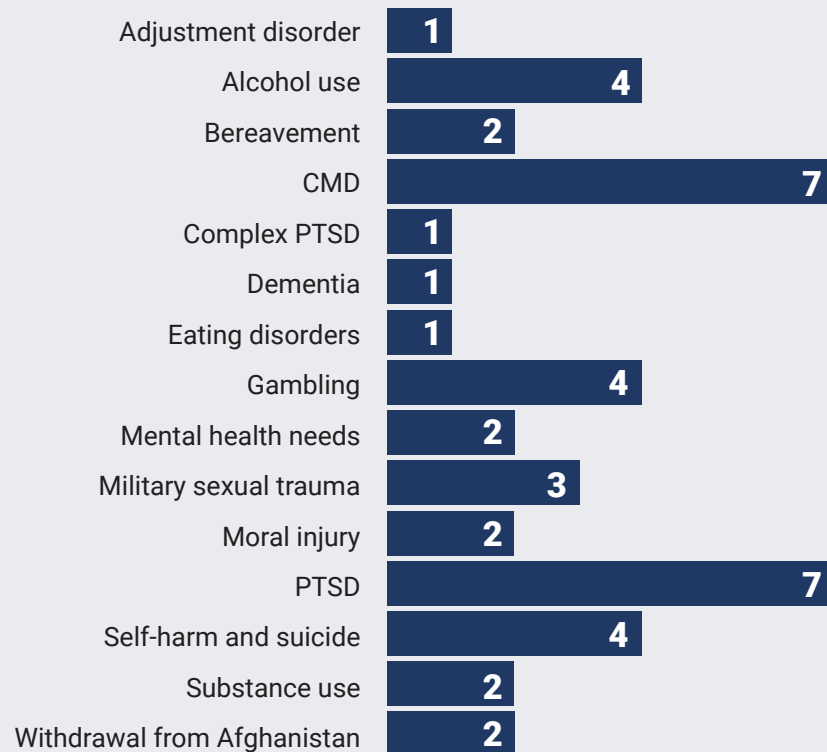


NB: The total is greater than 68 as some projects relate to more than one theme.

Mental Health research

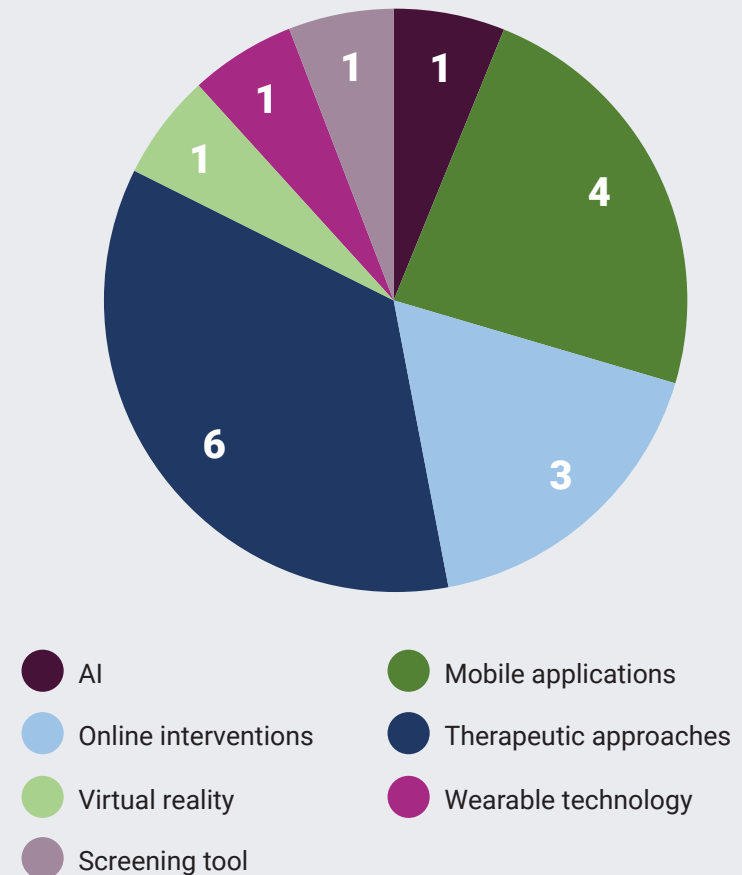
The most common conditions of focus were post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and common mental health disorder (CMD; including depression, anxiety, non-specified broad 'mental health'), followed by alcohol use, gambling, and suicide. This is a very similar trend from the previous bulletins with the exception of more studies currently focused on suicide and bereavement.

MENTAL HEALTH RESEARCH TOPICS



Interventions were a focus for 17 of the mental health studies.

INTERVENTIONS FOR MENTAL HEALTH STUDIES

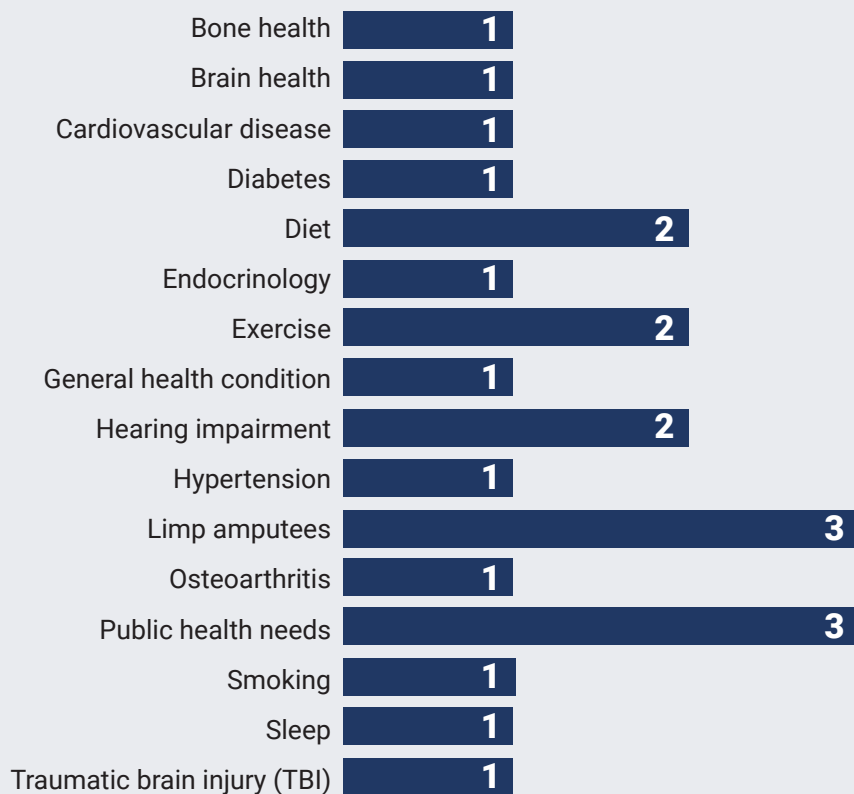


NB: The total is greater than 17 as some projects explore more than one intervention, i.e. use virtual reality with a therapeutic approach.

Physical Health research

The most common areas of focus were healthcare needs and limb amputations followed by diet, exercise, and hearing impairment. Compared to the last bulletin period, there are now more studies exploring diet and exercise.

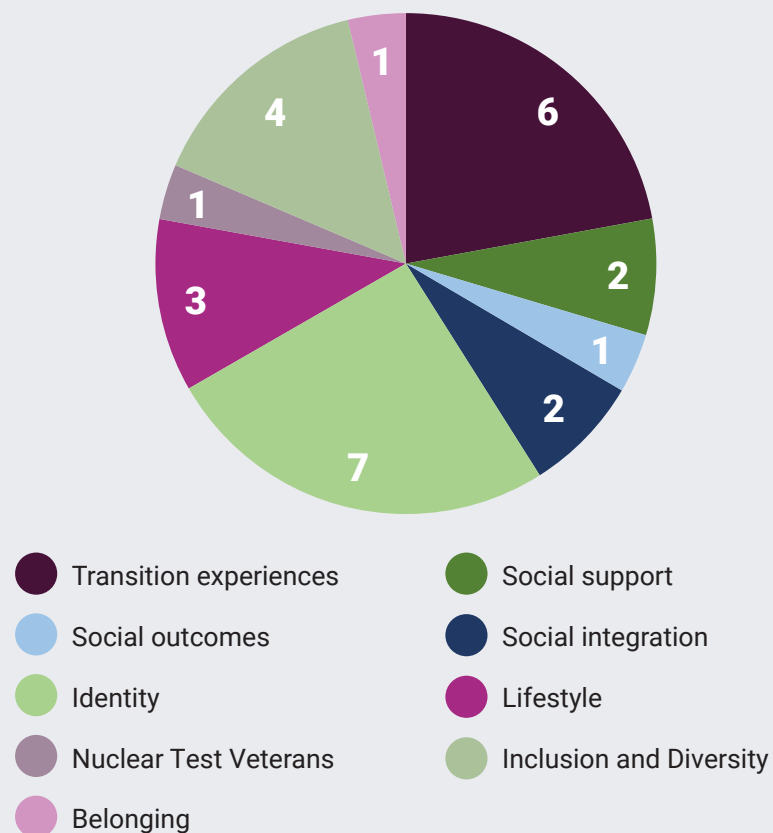
PHYSICAL HEALTH RESEARCH TOPICS



Well-Being research

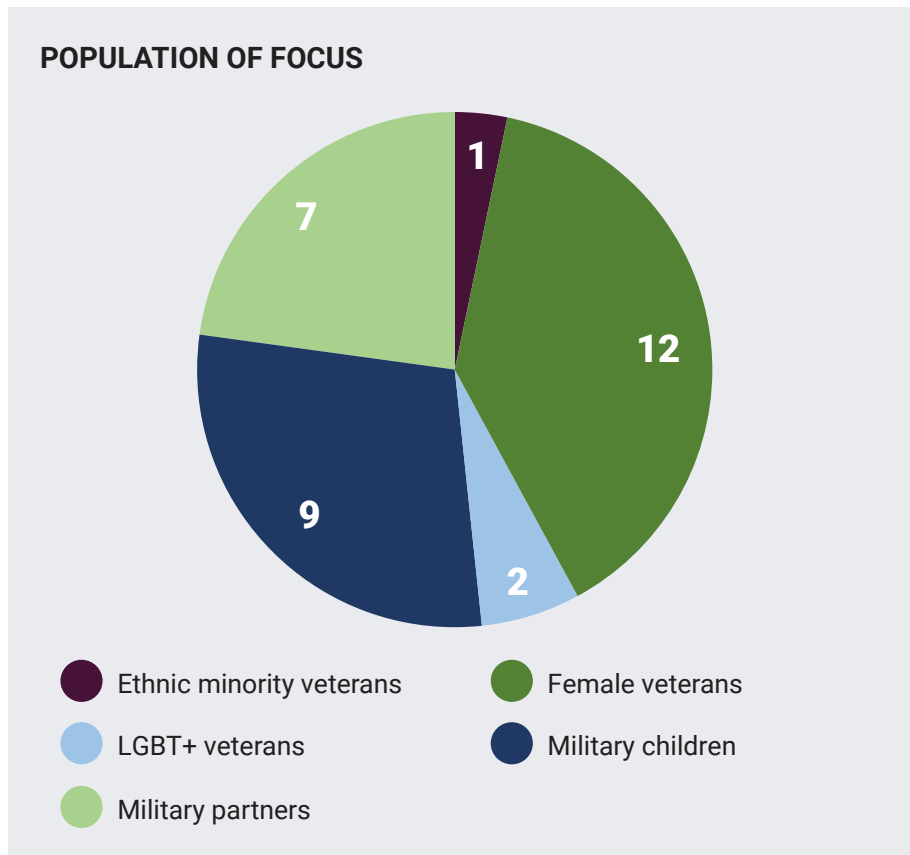
The most researched well-being topics were transition and identity, which is a continued trend from the previous bulletins. There is now a [new study exploring belonging](#) among Veterans who are university students.

WELL-BEING RESEARCH TOPICS



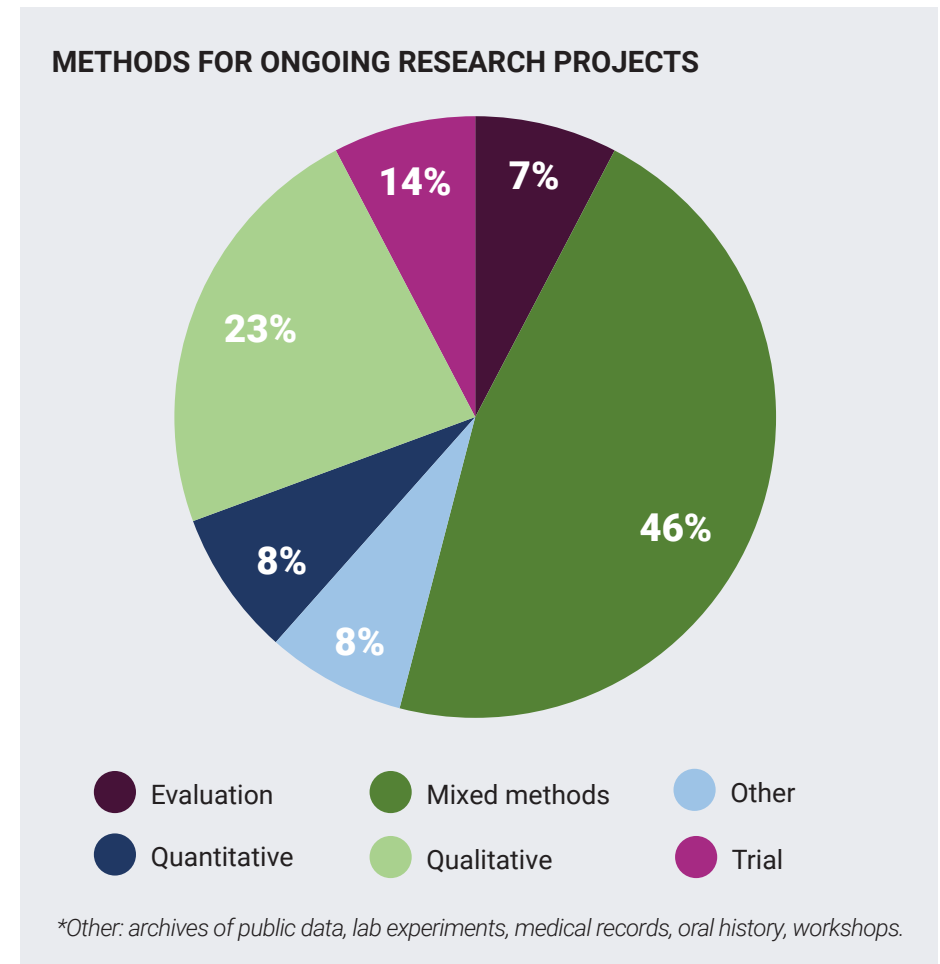
Populations of focus

Across the 68 ongoing research projects, 31 focused on specific often under researched populations: 12 female Veterans, 9 military children, 7 military partners, 1 ethnic minorities, and 2 LGBT+ Veterans. In this bulletin edition, there is an increase in studies involving military families, children, and partners compared to the previous edition.



Methods used in current research

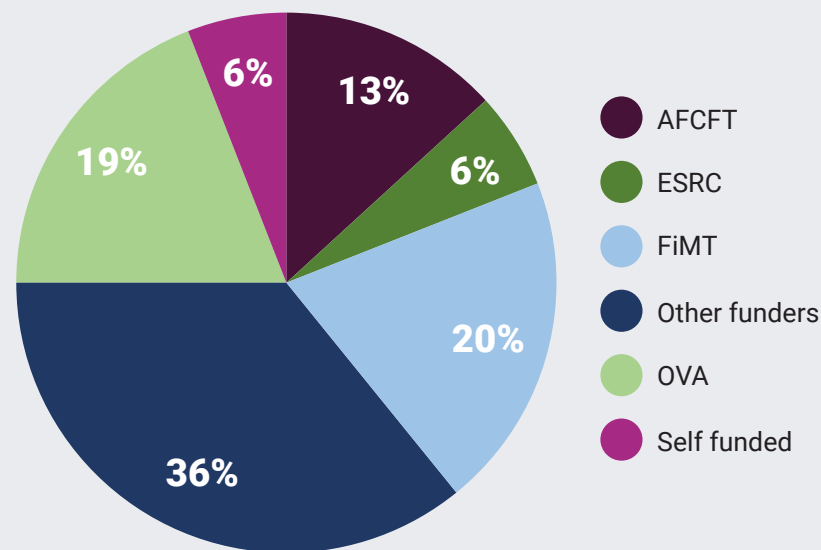
The most common approach was mixed methods, followed by qualitative studies.



Research funders

Forces in Mind Trust (FiMT) and the Office for Veterans' Affairs (OVA) funded most of the research conducted between September 2024 and February 2025, which is a continued trend from the previous bulletins. However, there are many other funders of UK Armed Forces community research.

FUNDERS OF UK ARMED FORCES RESEARCH

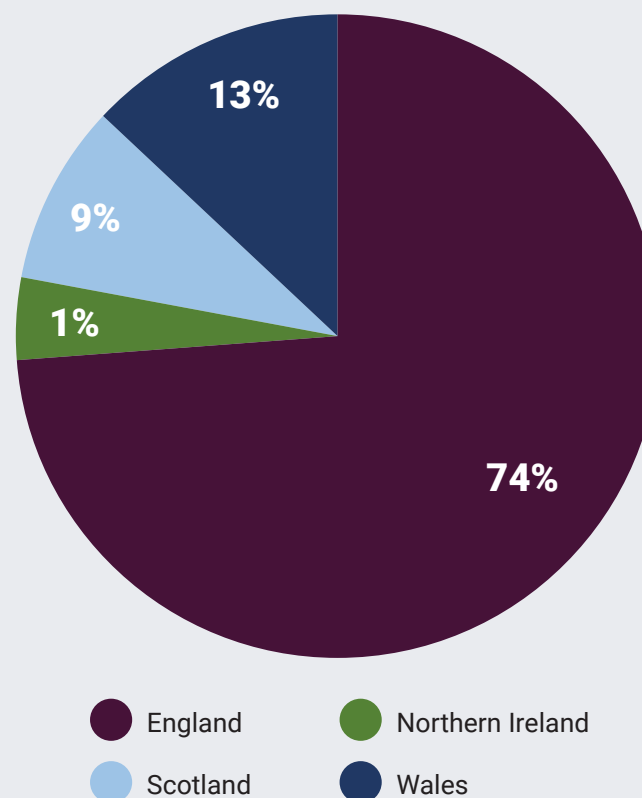


**Other funders (listed in alphabetical order): ADVANCE Charity, Gambling Commission Social Responsibility Funds, Gambling Research Exchange (GREO), Greenwich Hospital, HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS), Liverpool John Moores University, London Interdisciplinary Social Science Doctoral Training Partnership (LISS-DTP), Morgan Advanced Studies Institute (MASI), National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR), Royal Air Force (RAF) Benevolent Fund, Royal British Legion (RBL), Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC-CRSH), 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 was 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, 109 researchers were listed on the Research Community page who conduct research with the UK Armed Forces community. Of these, 28 were PhD students.

NUMBER OF PhD STUDENTS CONDUCTING RESEARCH WITH THE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY

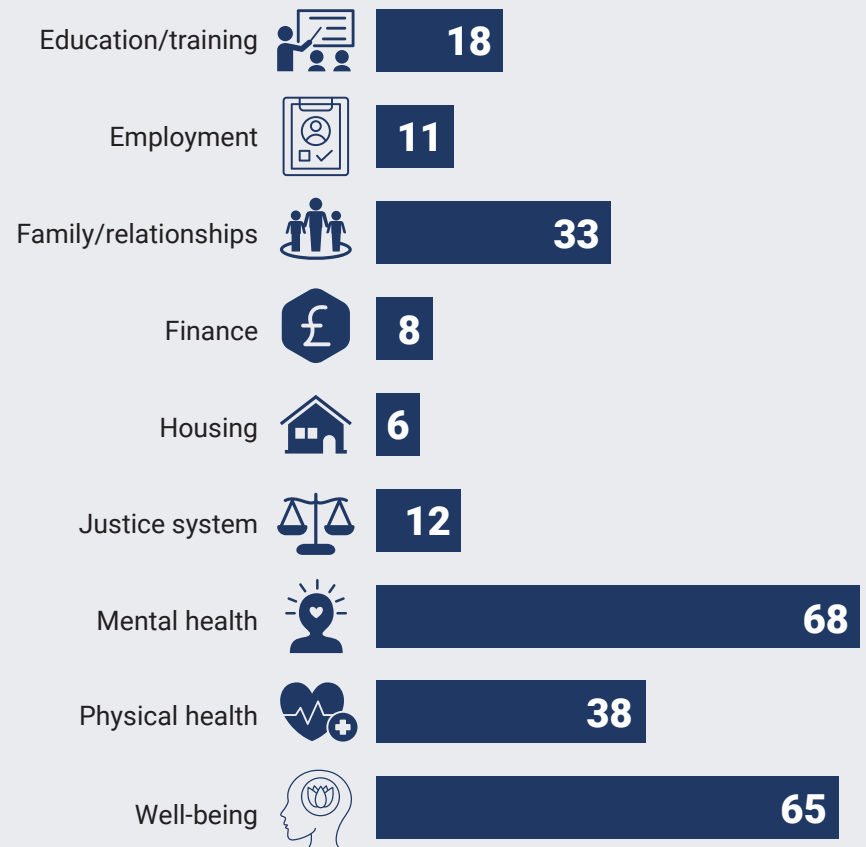


28 PhD students among researchers conducting research with the UK Armed forces community

Researcher expertise

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

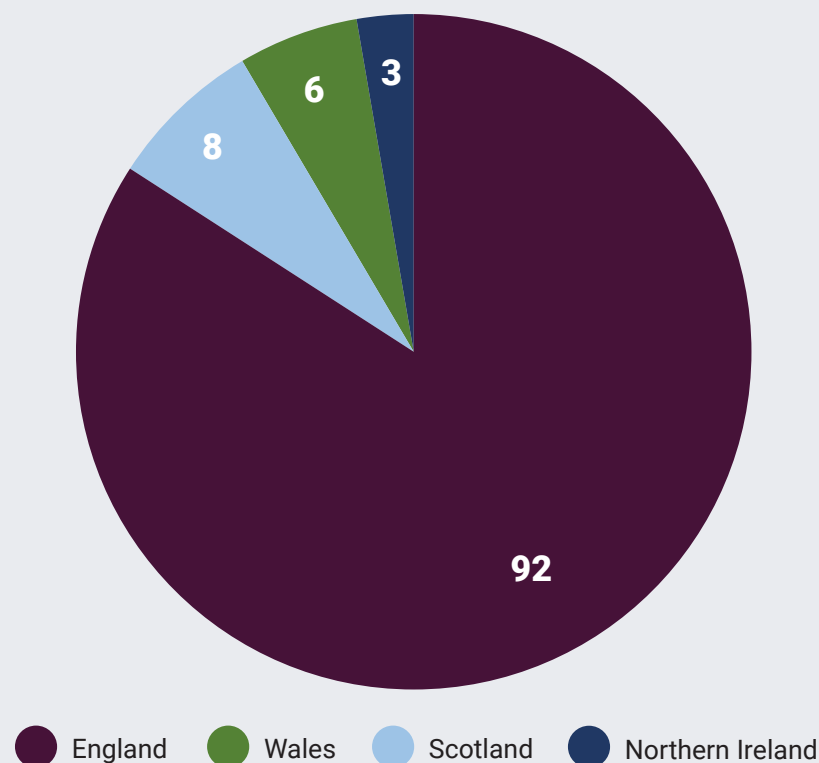
RESEARCHER EXPERTISE AND FOCUS



Geographic location of researchers

The majority of researchers captured in the Research Community page were based in England, with fewer across the devolved nations.

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION OF RESEARCHERS



If you are a researcher and your profile is not currently on the [Research Community](#) page please get in touch to be included team@fimt-rc.org

Research Centres

Our research community page included 21 research centres specifically focused on conducting research with the UK Armed Forces community, the majority of these were in England.

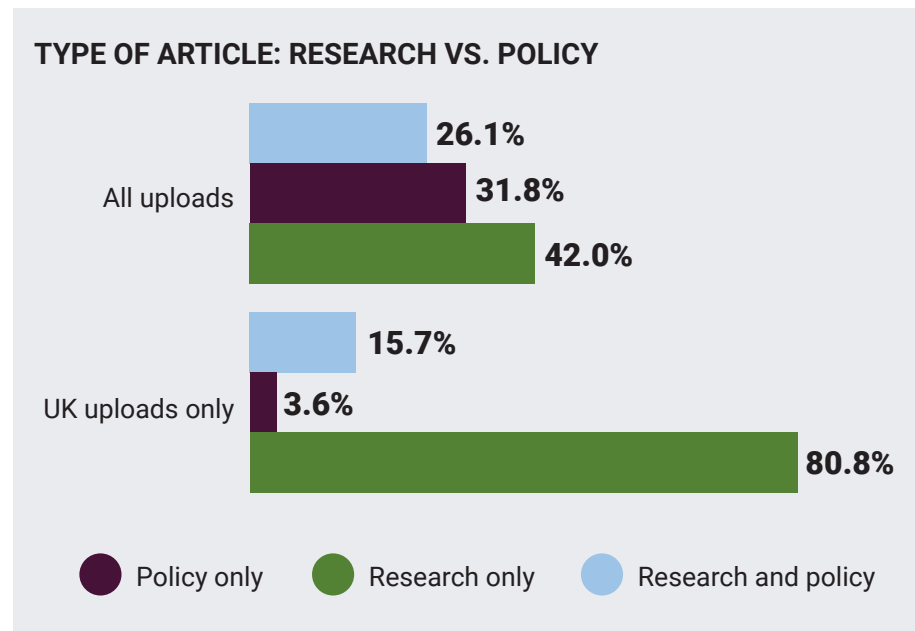
RESEARCH CENTRES IN ENGLAND, WALES, SCOTLAND & NORTHERN IRELAND



What research has been published?

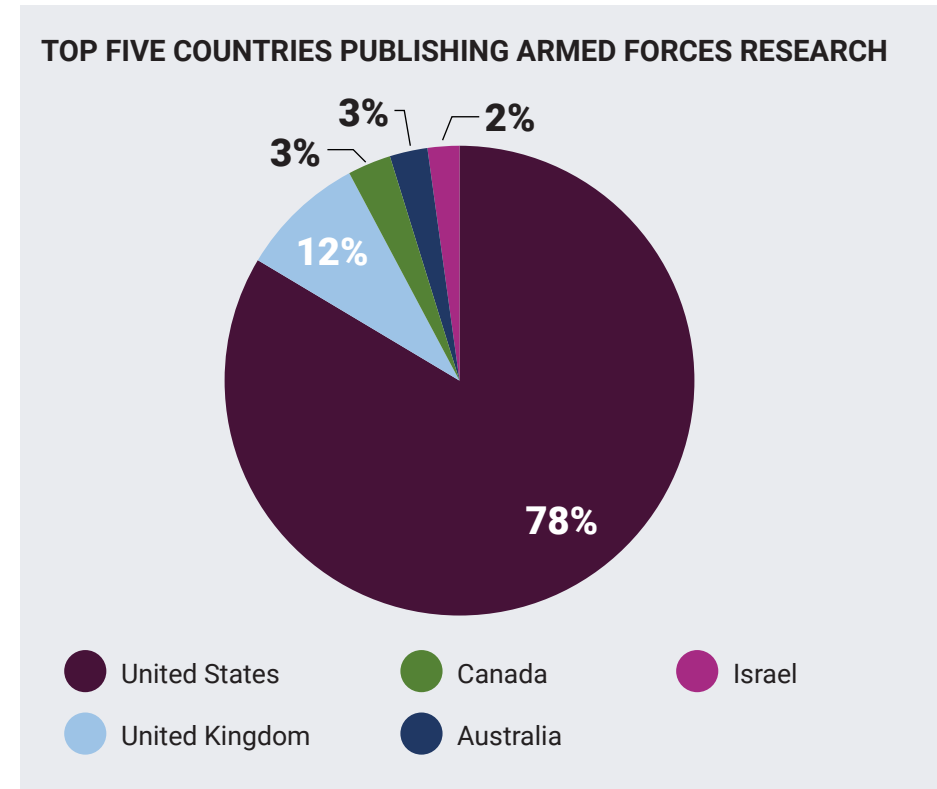
Our online repository is a searchable collection of international published and grey literature² of research evidence and policy documents about the Armed Forces community. The **repository** is updated each month using a robust methodology.³

In this period, 1,066 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 33 countries.⁴ Five countries are responsible for almost all included papers, with the United States (US) being the largest. Publications from the UK were responsible for 8% of research and policy documents.



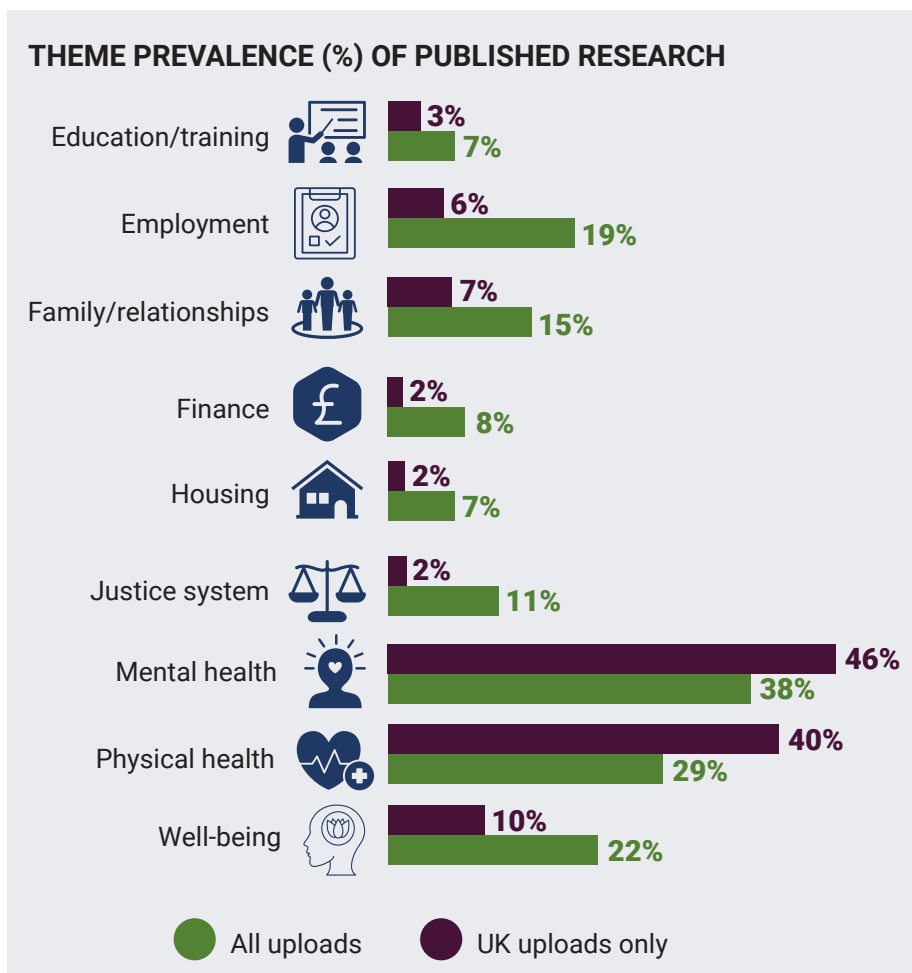
² Grey literature refers to documents and materials that are produced outside of the traditional academic publishing and distribution channels. Examples of grey literature might include reports, working and policy papers, government documents, white papers, newsletters, and other types of documents that are otherwise hard to classify.

³ Full details of the method can be found <https://www.centreforevidence/resources/method-for-updating-the-fimt-research-centre-online-repository/article>

⁴ Other countries represented in repository uploads (listed in alphabetical order): Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Colombia, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, India, Iran, Israel, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, South Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, Syria, Taiwan, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay, Vietnam, Wales.

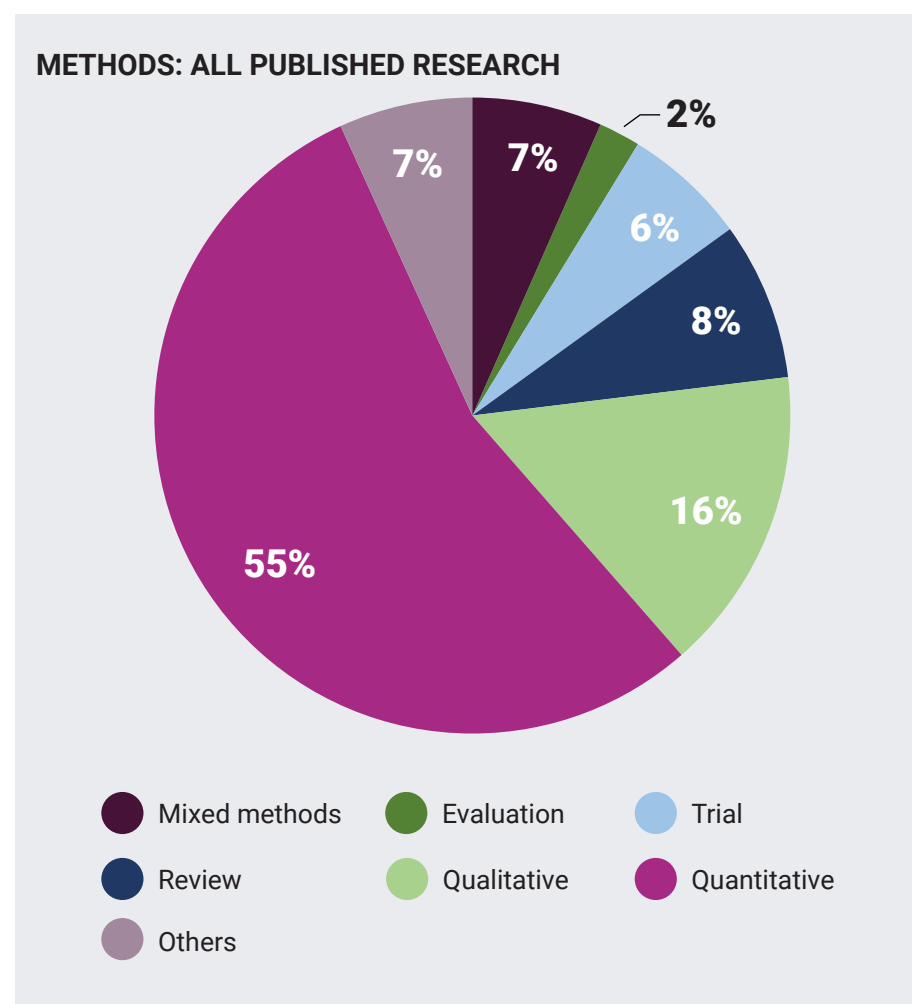
Topics covered in published research

Between September 2024 and February 2025, most papers focused on mental health, with physical health being the second most common and finance the least. This distribution is mostly consistent internationally and, in the UK, with the UK having a more equal distribution of papers across themes.

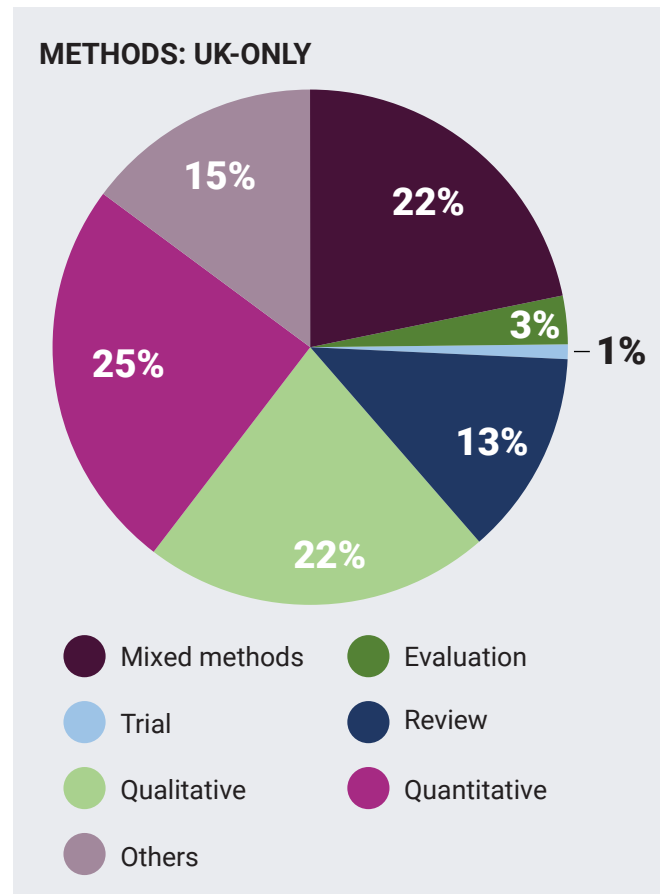


Methods used in published research

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



When considered alone, the distribution of the methods used in UK research uploaded to the repository differed: the UK had a more even spread of quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods, reviews, evaluations, and trial approaches. Unlike international trends, qualitative and mixed methods were equally prevalent in the published research. However, similarly to global research, trials were the least present.



Summary

Trends in UK Research activity:

- *Housing and Finance* continue to be less researched areas in the UK. There is slightly more interest in *Employment* during this period, however, it remains a less researched area compared to other themes.
- *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' page 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.
- There is a slightly increased presence of research involving military families and children.

Trends in published research:

- Research relating to *Finance, Housing, the Justice System, and Education / Training* 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, justice and education are considered core aspects of transition. However, the number of papers about *Employment* has risen both in the UK and internationally since the March-August 2024 period.
- *Mental and physical health* continue to dominate published research about the Armed Forces community. During this period, more research on *mental health* was published, compared to *physical health* being the most prevalent in the previous reporting period.
- 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. However, it seems that more research has been published in countries subject to heightened conflicts, with Israel now rising to being in the top 5 of publishers, closely followed by Ukraine.
- Internationally and in the UK, quantitative methods are most commonly reported in published papers. However, whilst the UK has more equally distributed methods in its published papers, more than half of international research uses quantitative methods.

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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.