

# LIFTING OUR SIGHTS BEYOND 2030

Stakeholder Toolkit

May 2021

**FiMT**  
forces in mind trust



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# Introduction



### **Purpose of the Lifting Our Sights Toolkit**

This toolkit supplements the Lifting Our Sights (LOS) research which investigates key trends and their potential for impact on Armed Forces leavers and their families in the future. It has been designed to assist a variety of organisations and stakeholders to work with the LOS findings, apply them in different settings and strengthen the conversation on supporting UK veterans. Whilst the focus is on what the future might look like, the whole LOS project is based upon how different that future will be to the present, on which most of our daily attention is spent.

The term ‘toolkit’ although widely used has many different meanings. In our case, the stakeholder toolkit lists a series of activities, including outline topic areas, questions and assessments, that organisations can use to stimulate and frame discussions which we anticipate will help shape strategies and operational approaches and lead to greater shared understanding and hence collaboration over the coming decade. All of these would benefit the Armed Forces Community.

In addition to this toolkit, our website [www.liftingoursights.org.uk](http://www.liftingoursights.org.uk) contains e-versions of the foresights, assessments and supporting presentation slide packs that organisations can download and adapt to help run whatever style activity is contemplated. We intend to update these resources regularly, and will respond to feedback on their usage, which we will be very grateful to receive.

### **Who should use?**

We encourage organisations to use this toolkit to further build upon the Lifting Our Sights findings and to unpack how these trends will more specifically affect their work with and for Armed Forces leavers. In particular, it is envisaged that this will assist with ongoing dialogue in the Armed Forces Community, Local Government, National Government, Charities and in various media and communications teams, in how each can continue to lift their sights as they work to better serve veterans and their families over the next decade and beyond. A more ambitious aim though is that the dialogue then serves to develop or refine strategies, identify priorities, align programmes or secure funding. This list is not exclusive.

### **Using the toolkit**

While the toolkit has been written with specific stakeholders and potential use cases in mind, it has been subject to only limited user testing, and in practice there will be overlaps between the various use cases outlined. It cannot take account of an organisation’s individual culture and approach to planning, nor its maturity or indeed the available resources. For some the toolkit will be too simplistic, for others it will be overly complex. We hope to have struck a happy medium and anticipate that users will tailor their own approach to reflect their organisation or setting, and we would strongly encourage all users to scan the other use case sections, which might contain particular nuggets that could also be incorporated. Of course, examining future trends alone is unlikely to provide a complete solution – policy changes driven by the veering of narrow political winds will also need consideration, particularly where they are unforeseen.

Please use the information presented here to help your organisation to work with the material from the Lifting Our Sights research, in order to better prepare for future change. An accompanying PowerPoint document can be downloaded from the LOS website which includes all the foresights alongside other supporting materials.



Our belief is that organisations that incorporate future-focused investigation into their practices can increase their preparedness for change as well as its agility to act when required. These yield benefits that can span the range from a charity better meeting beneficiaries' needs to a corporation gaining a competitive advantage. We have not laboured the question of cost/benefit analysis, which must feature in any assessment. Where and when this analysis takes place though will differ with each organisation participating, but it should not be overlooked.

This toolkit is packaged into a series of 'assessments' for key stakeholders and with potential use cases in mind (see table).

Thereafter, the toolkit provides helpful information on how to continue the conversation including a future-focused interview format and 'top tips' to bear in mind for those exploring the future. It concludes with links to a series of other foresight and horizon scanning toolkits where there is more detail on futures tools and how to apply them.

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## Key Stakeholders and Potential Use Case

Sector	Use Case
<b>Charity</b>	Board conducting a future-focused session
<b>Charity</b>	Executive team reviewing strategy
<b>Public</b>	Policy makers testing current and potential policies
<b>Public</b>	Service providers reviewing future service provision
<b>Private</b>	Business leaders seeking a better understanding of the Armed Forces Community and the transition process
<b>Communications and Media</b>	Teams gaining a better understanding of the Armed Forces Community
<b>Continuing the conversation</b>	For consideration by all the stakeholders above



# TOP PRIORITIES

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

## Section 1 | Charity Sector



*Aimed at: Boards of Trustees, Executive teams, infrastructure organisations (e.g. Cobseo, NCVO)*

The charity sector, whether specific to the Armed Forces Community or otherwise, has a huge role to play in supporting Armed Forces leavers. We envisage that the LOS findings will ensure that charities' contributions remain highly relevant today and over the coming decade. Therefore, senior leaders in the charity sector might use this material to:

- Better understand the characteristics and needs of transitioning Armed Forces personnel and veterans in the decade ahead, in the context of wider societal change
- Work more cohesively, collaboratively and effectively with others to ensure that all ex-Service personnel transition safely and securely
- Reinforce key messaging about veterans – their skills, value and experience

Below we outline inputs and key questions for two potential use cases for charities: a CEO and Board conducting a future-focused session, and an Executive Team reviewing strategy.

## 1. Charity board future-focused away day

**Purpose:** Board members appreciate a future perspective and its impact on the direction of the charity.

**Possible Use Case:** A CEO working with the Board to better appreciate future possibilities.

### **Outcomes:**

1. A shared understanding of future possibilities
2. Input and future outlook received from Board members on materials shared
3. Recommended headline areas for the Executive Team to address in more detail

### **Session outline:**

*Note: This outline assumes a single interactive session with board members, of approximately a few hours in length.*

- **Share in advance.** Under the guidance of the Board Chair or strategy lead Trustee, working with the CEO and their team, share an initial perspective of future foresights and any indicative conclusions to date as a result of reviewing the LOS material (e.g. a 'straw man' of recommended headline areas for action or further exploration).
- **Discuss the foresights.** Allow time for attendees to familiarise themselves with the material, perhaps by working with colleagues to discuss and sort LOS foresights based on perceived levels of impact on the charity. This will necessarily be highly subjective – priority for consideration on the basis of threat, opportunity or cost for example would all be valid approaches. One suggested approach is to consider impact on three areas – resilience, operations and strategic direction, which are explored in more detail in the 'implications' area. Note that this conversation adopts the standard risk management approach, namely it is not about probability of the foresight

occurring, rather it is about what would be the impact assuming it did occur. If time allows, ask attendees to identify any gaps in the foresights presented - what is missing that would be of high impact, were it to be included? Conclude with a broadly agreed list of foresights, and the priorities with which they should be considered.

- **Consider implications.** In discussion, consider a set of questions such as the below:
  1. For the identified high priority foresights, what are key implications that result?
  2. How might these implications affect the resilience of the charity (e.g. fundraising, reserves, attracting talent, etc)?
  3. How might these implications affect the ongoing operations of the charity (e.g. ability to continue to provide a fit-for-purpose offering)?
  4. When considering the overall strategic direction of the charity, where are the gaps in our knowledge? In our plans?
- **Recommended actions.** Ask the attendees to outline (and perhaps prioritise) recommended headline areas for the executive team to address in more detail, taking into account the preparatory work as well as the output from this discussion. Then decide:
  1. Which areas should be taken forward for further consideration?
  2. What are the actions and next steps?
  3. Are there any recommendations from the LOS research that remain unaddressed, and which may have been overlooked?
- **Wrap up.** Ask the attendees to consider how much Board time is currently allocated to future-focused discussion and what is the right mix going forward? What is most important shift, learning or insight they take away from the session?

## 2. Executives of a charity undertaking a future-focused strategic review

**Purpose:** Executives use the implications of the LOS findings and translate these to strategies and action.

**Possible Use Case:** A team of charity executives and senior leaders considering longer term strategy.

### Outcomes:

1. A shared understanding of future possibilities
2. Awareness of future risks and opportunities for the charity
3. Recommended changes to consider for organisational strategy and operations.

### Session outline:

*Note: this outline assumes a single interactive session with the executive team, of approximately one day's length. In practice, an executive team might schedule several future-focused sessions during the course of a longer period of strategic review lasting some weeks or months, perhaps also conducting further research into key areas between sessions.*

- **Share in advance.** Share an initial perspective of future foresights and any relevant strategic documents. These might include: a reminder of the charitable purpose, current strategy, key initiatives, etc. Clearly state the focal question and timeframe for the session (e.g. explore strategic direction for the charity over the next x years (e.g. 3-5 years) or focus on a subset of overall strategy such as digital, etc.).
- **Discuss the foresights.** Allow time for attendees to familiarise themselves with the material, perhaps by working with colleagues to discuss and sort foresights based on perceived levels of impact on the charity. This will necessarily be highly subjective – priority for consideration on the basis of threat, opportunity or cost for example would all be valid approaches. One suggested approach is to consider impact on

three areas – resilience, operations and strategic direction, which are explored in more detail in the ‘implications’ area. Note that this conversation is not about probability of the foresight occurring, rather it is about what would be the impact assuming it did occur. Identify any gaps in the foresights presented - what is missing that would be of high impact, were it to be included? Conclude with a broadly agreed list of foresights, and the priorities with which they should be considered.

- **Work with the foresights.** Allow the team to spend more time on prioritised foresights. Consider these three steps:
  1. Review lower prioritised foresights before setting these aside. Do this because items seen as lower priority or lower impact can either mean that the team is well informed and correct in its assessment, or it can point to organisational ‘blind spots’ – areas that are institutionally ignored. Set aside to be tackled in a separate session.
  2. Review mid-level prioritised foresights: those where the views of their impact and priority varied considerably among attendees. These foresights are good indications of ‘strategic debates’ to hold in the future in order to better solidify the organisation’s position on each. Set aside to be tackled in a separate session.
  3. With the remaining high impact foresights – those prioritised at the outset plus the additions from the gap exploration – consider which will undergo the greatest change over the period of focus. This is helpful because it is likely that these foresights are the ones with most uncertainty surrounding them. In spending time exploring these in the next step, you will unpack some of the uncertainty in a helpful way.

Warning – this approach runs counter to the adage that you should tackle the most difficult/important issues first in any meeting when energy and time are at their greatest. However, this linear approach does ensure that the lower priority foresights, which some participants might wish to ‘hold onto’, can be safely set aside to concentrate on those with a higher priority. Good time management and effective facilitation are essential.

- **Conduct ‘deep dives’.** In plenary discussion or in smaller groups, apply a set of questions that ‘unpack’ selected foresights further. Possible questions include:
  1. What is the state of this foresight today?
  2. How will it change over the time period? What will be different?
  3. What are the core drivers of this change?
  4. What key assumptions are we making?
  5. What are some specific examples, activities or ‘leading light’ organisations today reflecting the change we expect to see?
  6. What/who are the pivotal technologies, organisations and regulations that enable this change – consider PESTLE<sup>1</sup> analysis?
  7. What are the implications of this foresight?

<sup>1</sup> political, economic, social, technological, legal and environmental

Each foresight deep dive could in itself absorb an entire day's work, and it would be entirely sensible to conduct them over a longer period. Sharing the load across people and time will make it a manageable and collaborative process.

- **Review the LOS Transition Journey.** Following your work with foresights, consider how the transition journey might be used to structure your organisation's approach to meeting the needs of veterans you serve. How might you adjust what you supply to transitioning Armed Forces personnel and when in the transition journey are your interactions best provided? Why?
- **Outline areas of action.** It is important to connect the future-focused analysis undertaken to the organisation's strategy (or to the focal question, if different). Consider these important questions:
  1. When considering current strategic direction of the charity within this future landscape, where are the gaps in our knowledge? In our plans?
  2. What are the risks that we see and how can we mitigate their effect?
  3. What are the opportunities that we see and how best can we take part?
  4. Which of our core strategic beliefs and assumptions, perhaps long-held and revered, are challenged by this future perspective? How will we adapt?
  5. In light of the future focused discussion, how might the charity optimally apply/shift resource allocation? How is this different to what we currently do?
  6. In what specific ways does the charity currently incorporate these foresights, recommendations or other future-focused materials, into its decision and strategy making processes? How can this be improved?

This is an ambitious, arguably impossible, list of questions to answer. There is a clear risk of superficial conclusions, or great omissions. Nonetheless, they are important considerations ordered in a way that leads to logical and helpful deductions and next steps. If top-level conclusions at least can be recorded, then they can be tackled over time and in greater detail.

- **Wrap up.** Share the output with participants. Show how the conversation has moved on, or has improved (e.g., deepening by showing more consistencies on expected impact, or broadening by revealing gaps or new knowledge). Consider additional sessions that either build on this output or that use the output to feed further strategic and action-oriented working sessions.
- **Take action (post event).** The next step after the event is finished is to consider actions for the charity to take. Strategic and decision-making processes will differ considerably within organisations, but in general should embrace a basic 'start, stop and continue' model: Given this future perspective, what must we now start doing? Stop doing? Continue doing?







## Section 2 | Public Sector

*Aimed at: Central, Devolved and Local Government to include politicians, Special Advisors and officials as well as service providers in specific areas such as health, education, employment and housing.*

As Armed Forces leavers are citizens first and foremost, the role of government at all levels has considerable influence in their lives, just as with all citizens. We all need housing, employment, education, transport and other basic infrastructure services. Beyond this, serving Armed Forces personnel must embrace a mindset of total commitment: of putting their 'life on the line for Queen and country', thus further cementing the depth and longevity of the relationship between themselves and government. This is well articulated in the Armed Forces Covenant. We envisage that politicians, policy makers, service providers and others in the public sector will choose to work with the LOS findings to ensure policies and services provided keep pace with changes to come both in the Armed Forces and in wider society. At a high level, the public sector might use this material to:

- Provide consistent, yet tailored support for transitioning Armed Forces personnel across geographies
- Establish and/or maintain clear lines of accountability and efficient 'handover' throughout the transition process
- Continue to communicate the role of the Armed Forces, tell an accurate story of veterans and mitigate against misinformation.

Below we outline inputs and key questions for two potential use cases for the public sector: Policy makers testing current and potential policies; and service providers reviewing future service provision.

### **1. Policy makers testing current and potential policies**

**Purpose:** Exploration of the LOS future landscape in order to optimise future policy choices for Armed Forces leavers.

**Possible Use Case:** A team of policy makers aiming to stress test current or potential policies.

#### **Outcomes:**

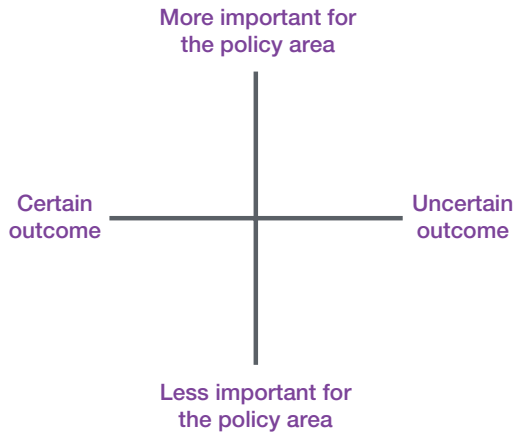
1. A shared understanding of future possibilities
2. Opportunity to test current and potential policy
3. Suggested changes to select policies, to improve their effectiveness or robustness and new potential policy considerations.

#### **Session Outline:**

*Note: This outline assumes a single interactive session with policy makers, of approximately one day's length. The session may benefit from a facilitator to lead the session.*

- **Share in advance.** An initial perspective of future foresights and remind all of the policy area in focus.
- **Discuss the foresights.** Allow time for attendees to familiarise themselves with the foresights. Ask them to identify any gaps in the foresights presented - what is missing from the LOS foresights that would affect the policy area, were it to be included?

- **Plot the foresights.** In smaller groups, consider each foresight (including gaps added) with regard to its importance for the policy area. Then consider the degree of uncertainty around the foresight. It could be helpful for each group to plot the foresights on an uncertainty matrix.



- **Consider policy.** Discuss the foresights. Begin by comparing the differences in how each group plotted the foresights. Foresights that reside in the lower left have less importance and can be planned for, so set them aside for now. Foresights in the lower right are also less important but are more uncertain. Here maintaining a 'watching brief' on their development over time is advised. Foresights in the top two fields are most critical to consider with regard to assessing policy. Foresights in the top left are very likely already affecting the policy, have a predictable outcome and should be prioritised for action. Foresights in the top right are also important, but their outcome is less certain. Here the need is to consider how these foresights might develop over time and how policy might need to adjust to accommodate that change. Ask the participants to identify some foresights in the top half of the matrix that they see as most important and use these to discuss existing and potential policy options and suggested improvements. Below we use a handful of LOS foresights to illustrate key questions that policy makers might consider as they explore the foresights that they prioritise:

1. **Changing Perceptions:** In what ways does our communication policy help to convey an accurate perception of veterans today? What might it do differently in the future?
2. **Living in Civilian Society:** Given the probable shift toward serving Armed Forces personnel being more integrated with society via policies such as the Future Accommodation Model, how might this impact accommodation policies for leavers?
3. **Holistic Transition:** To what extent do our policies encourage the involvement of families of ex-Service personnel in key decisions and actions taken during the process of transition?
4. **The Blurring of Work:** In what ways might our employment policies for leavers relate to a more flexible model of the Armed Forces in which serving personnel can, for example, combine civilian and military roles? What impact could that have on veterans over the next decade?

- **Construct scenarios (optional).** To further test the policy against all of the foresights, it may be helpful to create scenarios. Scenarios are simply a set of very different, but equally plausible future environments. By creating these different scenarios of the policy environment, you are able to test, or 'wind tunnel' policies and how well they perform in different future settings. For UK policy makers, we recommend following the steps for scenario creation and application in [The Government Office for Science Futures Toolkit](#).
- **Consider recommendations.** Ask the participants to consider the LOS recommendations, in particular those associated with the four priority areas. Which of these recommendations relate to the policy area in question and how might policy options be further shaped and refined to better serve the recommendations?



- **Wrap up.** Share the output with participants. Show how the conversation has led to a stronger focus on certain foresights and their impact on policies. Share how the work will be taken forward. Consider additional sessions with key stakeholders.
- **Take action.** Compare the resulting potential policy options and suggested improvements. Identify how to address each, what relevant work might already be under way, the next steps required and any stakeholders that need to be involved.

## 2. Public sector service providers assessment

**Purpose:** Exploration of the LOS future landscape in order to consider how service provision may need to shift to accommodate Armed Forces leavers in the future.

**Possible Use Case:** A service provider wanting to stress test a suite of its current activities against the LOS future landscape.

### Outcomes:

1. A shared understanding of future possibilities
2. A view on specific service offering resilience / degree of future 'fit-for-purpose'
3. Suggested changes as to how services for leavers are delivered going forward.

### Session Outline:

*Note: This outline assumes a single interactive session with service providers, of between a few hours and one day's length.*

- **Share in advance.** Share an initial perspective of future foresights and remind all of the area in focus. It may be appropriate to pare back the LOS foresights shared to only those related most specifically to the particular service being explored (e.g. employment).
- **Discuss the foresights.** Allow time for attendees to familiarise themselves with the foresights. Ask them to identify any gaps in the foresights presented – what is missing from the LOS foresights that would affect the service area, were

it to be included? If helpful, prioritise the foresights on their potential for impact in order to focus attention on a small number.

- **Explore foresight pathways.** In smaller groups, select foresights to work on and explore in more detail. Begin by describing the current state of the foresight today and then describe an 'end state' of how the participants expect it to change over the timeframe. Then, create two or more pathways from today to the future end state of how the change might unfold (e.g. steered by regulatory frameworks, influence shifts in public opinion, significant technological input, demands from business, etc.). Populate these foresight pathways with key milestones. Note: It can help individuals to be more open minded toward possibilities if working 'back to front', i.e. from the end state to today's description. Additionally, a template can be helpful for ensuring that the core aspects of the discussion are captured. Below is a template that Future Agenda often use to facilitate this conversation, available to download on [www.liftingoursights.org.uk](http://www.liftingoursights.org.uk):

Lifting Our Sights		Event Location:	FUTURE AGENDA
Area of Future Change / Insight:			
Key Assumptions We Are Making:		Core Drivers of the Change:	
Pivotal Technologies: (and Companies):			
Specific Examples of Changes Emerging:			

- **Consider service offering.** Review the differing pathways for each foresight that has been explored. Consider and discuss how these different pathways could impact the ways that service provision might need to be deployed most effectively. How does the service offering develop across the milestones of a given pathway? How does the service offering differ between different pathways?
- **Consider the LOS Transition Journey.** Use the Transition Journey to further unpack or refine potential service provision changes in the future. Separately, use it to identify the most appropriate service access points.
- **Consider recommendations.** Ask the participants to consider the LOS recommendations, in particular those associated with the four priority areas. Which of these recommendations relate to the service area in question and how might the service be further shaped and refined to better serve the recommendations?
- **Wrap up.** Share the output with participants. Show how the conversation has led to a greater appreciation of how shifts in service provision might need to occur, as well as having identified indicative milestones of future change. Share how the work will be taken forward.
- **Take action.** Conduct additional sessions with service delivery staff to further hone the future service delivery pathways.









## Section 3 | Private Sector



*Aimed at: Leauers, decision-makers and strategists in private sector organisations and business associations (e.g. CBI, FSB, Chambers of Commerce).*

Employment after service is both an economic and self-fulfilment necessity for veterans and their families. The number entering the private sector each year is relatively small, but there are proven business advantages for employers who take on ex-Service personnel, in addition to their satisfying the moral imperative placed upon society by the Armed Forces Covenant to ensure that no disadvantage is caused by military service. For these reasons, the private sector has a significant input into the lives of ex-Service personnel as they transition to new surroundings, environments and obligations. For some people the transition can be routine and well planned in advance, for others the enormity of the change can come as a shock or appear overwhelming.

We envisage that senior leaders in the private sector will elect to work with the LOS findings to ensure that their offerings accommodate the needs of veterans and their families, and separately to better appreciate the value and the evolving core transferable skills that veterans bring. At a high level, private sector organisations might use this material to:

- Identify and implement the role they should play in supporting the structures of the Armed Forces Covenant on behalf of the nation.

In addition, because employment contributes such a key part to successful and sustainable transition, private sector employers might also use this material to:

- Identify how best to employ the skills and value of veterans in their organisation
- Consider veteran specific employment (and other) support, and its visibility/accessibility to veterans
- Better appreciate the changes that transitioning personnel face and remove undue complexity in its processes and interactions with them.

For many private sector organisations, strategy and business development are core activities, and they may face drivers such as customer service and shareholder value which are not relevant to all sectors. In addition, the (business) planning process within a private sector organisation is likely to be well defined and action orientated. Therefore, identifying where LOS findings fit requires thought and commitment, but is likely to reap benefits to business outcomes in often unexpected ways.

Below we outline inputs and key questions for potential use case for an organisation wanting to know how to strengthen its ties to the veteran community and take advantage of it. We have not prescribed a set format but have offered an activity flow that can be tailored to suit the participatory body, its role within the organisation's strategic planning process, and the time available. For associations (or infrastructure/membership bodies), it might be appropriate to conduct regional assessments as well as central.

### 1. Private sector leaders' assessment

**Purpose:** To improve its awareness of the veteran community and hence better understand the value that veterans bring to the business landscape, and what business can do to facilitate successful transition.

**Possible Use Case:** A business or business association wanting to explore how to strengthen its ties to the veteran community and tap into this valuable human resource.

#### Outcomes:

1. A shared understanding of future possibilities
2. A greater awareness of the value that veterans bring, and their cultural/values fit within the organisation
3. How to leverage organisational abilities to improve ties with, and opportunities for, veterans and their families.

### Session Outline:

*Note: This outline is presented as a single interactive session of a few hours in length with representatives from the business or business association, representatives from the Armed Forces Community and (ideally) recent Armed Forces leavers, all working together to understand various points of view. As stated earlier, we would highly recommend that the activity flow be tailored to suit the organisation's needs.*

- **Share in advance.** Share the LOS Final Report, perhaps emphasising those foresights and findings that are most relevant to the particular focus of the organisation in question (e.g. for an employment focus key foresights to include could be: 1. Reskilling, Upskilling and the Skills Gap, 2. Smarter Talent, 3. Blurring of Work, 4. Living in Civilian Society, 5. Regions of Connection, etc.). Share as well the Armed Forces Covenant, and any case studies of businesses addressing a similar focal question.
- **Unpack the focal question.** With the help of organisation leaders present, outline the core question being addressed and in what way the organisation would like to strengthen its ties with the veteran community (e.g. employment opportunities for veterans or veteran family members, improving presence and awareness of the organisation within the transitioning community, providing services to veterans, etc).
- **Discuss the foresights.** Collectively build a shared understanding of the value provided by, and needs of, Armed Forces leavers by discussing the foresights. If recent leavers are present, they may be able bring life to the foresights by sharing personal stories of their own experiences. Ensure that the following is covered:
  1. What veterans bring today and how that might change in the future.
  2. What veterans look for from organisations, what they will look for in the future, and how these match how the workplace itself will change in the future.
  3. A summary of the issues that veterans face in regard to the focal question.
  4. Where are these foresights the same as those the business's strategic vision has already identified? And where are they different?
- **Discuss the Transition Journey.** Share the LOS Transition Journey. Through discussion, use it to identify opportunities for the business to interact at key moments along the way. These opportunities for potential improvements are sometimes referred to as 'pain points'.
- **Explore opportunities.** In smaller groups, work in turn with the identified pain points and develop outline responses, or propositions, that the organisation might undertake. Key questions could include:
  1. What is the problem we are seeking to address?
  2. What is the impact on the individual?
  3. What are the causes of the problem?
  4. What may be potential solutions?
  5. What might success look like for the individual and the business?
  6. Who/what do we need involved in order to be successful?
- **Wrap up.** Share the output with participants. Show how the conversation has led to a greater appreciation of the value that Armed Forces leavers bring and the issues that they face during and after transition. Explain how the work will be taken forward.
- **Take action.** Develop the outline propositions into fleshed out concepts that can be tested for their viability and possible inclusion into the offering of the organisation.





## **Section 4 | Communications and Media**



*Aimed at: Media teams, in house and external Communications and Public Relations firms, the press.*

For the increasing proportion of society without a direct connection to a member of the Armed Forces, or an understanding of modern military service, the role of the media in telling the story of Armed Forces leavers is critical. This is particularly important given the weight of attention that stakeholders in the LOS research have given to correcting public misperceptions of the Armed Forces and in some cases overcoming the well-established ‘myths’ that exist about veterans. We recognise the different drivers for each, but anticipate that both media organisations and in-house communications teams will use the LOS research to:

- Broaden their contextual understanding of the Armed Forces Community and its future challenges
- Help distinguish between systemic and individual failings and issues
- Serve as catalysts to continue and strengthen public dialogue on the role of the Armed Forces and the lives of transitioning Armed Forces personnel and their families
- Help to mitigate against misinformation regarding veterans.

Below are some key questions to consider in light of the LOS findings.

### **1. Independent media organisations**

1. How well does your organisation understand the nature of and challenges facing UK veterans and the wider Armed Forces Community?
2. How can you use individual cases to support public policy and systemic changes?

3. Is there a reason for media to further the debate around the LOS research? In particular can the media play a role in focusing attention on the four priority areas of: Empowering the System, Personalising the Transition Process, Empowered Civilian and Accurate Perception?
4. How can the media avoid aggravating public misperceptions about veterans?
5. What extra connectivity would facilitate more newsworthy and balanced journalism?

### **2. In-house communications teams**

1. How well is the communications effort coordinated with fund raising and policy?
2. In what specific ways might your communications efforts help offset inaccurate perceptions of veterans overall? Dramatic entertainment and case studies usually focus on individuals facing adversity, not always successfully, but do not represent the majority of the Armed Forces Community.
3. How might the changing demographics of veterans, for example the loss of the WW2 ‘great generation’ of veterans, affect key messages on ex-Service personnel going forward?
4. How might your organisation help maintain connectivity between the public and Armed Forces leavers?
5. What role do in-house communications teams have in focusing attention on the four priority areas of: Empowering the System, Personalising the Transition Process, Empowered Civilian and Accurate Perception?



## **Section 5 | Continuing the Conversation**

### Aimed at: All Stakeholders from previous Sections.

In this Section, we present ways in which individuals and organisations can continue the conversation initiated by the Lifting Our Sights research.

Part 1 lists general questions that can be tackled in a variety of ways, by a range of participants; it provides topics or prompts for debate and in some cases specific challenges. These can be fed into general discussions on policy or delivery, or more structured meetings, or form the basis for strategic or operational goal setting. They are categorised to help focus attention but, unlike in Section 4, they are not designed to stand alone. Rather they should be viewed through the appropriate lens: the functional nature of the individual or organisation conducting the thinking; or the cohort likely to be the subject of that thinking; or even the generic type of activity.

Part 2 is aimed at those wishing to move towards or reinforce a more futures-based approach. As such, it provides simple guides to help unpack issues and opportunities of particular concern and to help develop discussion more generally.



#### Part 1 – Questions for debate

To build on the foresights contained within this report, and therefore stimulate deeper debate, here are five questions arranged by different stakeholders and approaches.

##### Public sector policy questions

1. Can, and if so how should, a career in the Armed

- Forces be used to reduce social inequality?
2. How can policy in a resource constrained environment best support the transition of Service personnel?
3. What accountability mechanisms should be in place to ensure that strategic goals on veterans' welfare are being met?
4. How can institutions ensure accreditation alignment between military and civilian skills qualifications?
5. Given regular use of the Armed Forces to aid civil authorities, how can the Government helpfully distinguish the different roles and resulting perceptions of the Armed Forces and Emergency Services? How will this positively impact the treatment of veterans and transitioning personnel?

##### Charities supporting members of the Armed Forces Community

1. Can more collaboration or consolidation deliver better outcomes for those in transition?
2. How can charities work in common cause with others to meet shared outcomes and goals for those in transition?
3. Without a publicly recognisable military conflict of some scale, how will Armed Forces charities demonstrate their relevance to voluntary donors?
4. How can charities do more to leverage digital opportunities to have tangible, measurable impact?
5. What actions can charities take proactively to ensure that the Board, Leadership and wider team are appropriately diverse as recommended in the Charity Governance Code?

##### Service providers for members of the Armed Forces Community (all sectors)

1. Are service providers prepared and equipped to cope with the potentially different needs of a new cohort that will include more female and more ethnically diverse transitioners?

2. Where are the opportunities for deeper, richer collaboration to provide transitioning Service men and women with the support they need? Are holistic assessment and service provision possible?
3. How can the appropriate data be collected, interrogated and shared to ensure that the most vulnerable Service leavers and their families are identified and supported in a timely fashion?
4. In a more devolved Britain with rising regional focus, how should accountability be defined between regional and national governments?
5. Will health and social care providers be able to deal with the likely psychological needs of future Service leavers?

### Armed Forces and the Ministry of Defence

1. How can the MOD upskill Service men and women to excel in civilian life?
2. At what point in a Service career should transition training be introduced, and how can it be measured?
3. How can the take up of life skills training among serving personnel be improved, without it being a mandatory requirement?
4. What more can be done to provide Early Service Leavers and vulnerable transitioners the necessary support as they enter civilian life?
5. What more can MOD do to encourage all businesses, large and small, to be better prepared to support transitioning Service personnel?

### Serving members of the Armed Forces

1. At what point in your military career should you start thinking about transition?
2. Recognising that transition may be challenging, how can you accommodate your family's needs during this period?
3. Have you done any financial planning or preparation for finding work in today's more dynamic and flexible labour market? Are you aware of how to access financial support if you need it?

4. How can you articulate the skills that you have gained in the Armed Forces so that they meet civilian expectations?
5. Are you aware of all the support resources available to you when you leave the Armed Forces, in case you might need them?



### Part 2 – Developing a futures-based approach

Many organisations will already take a futures-based approach in at least some aspect. Size and maturity of an organisation and its place within a strategic cycle will all affect the investment in, and attention paid to futures. The motivation for embracing this approach can equally vary – survival, profit, charity and altruism all have a role to play; none is the 'right' motivator, all are valid, and all are probably present to some degree.

Future-focused research can help to spot emerging signals that will inform and shape the landscape and it is a good organisational 'muscle' to keep in shape. There are extensive resources and consultancies available to those seeking futures research. This Part provides a basic introduction and some signposting for those who wish to develop this approach.

We recommend speaking to a wide range of informed individuals to ensure you establish a comprehensive overview of the potential future landscape. Interviews are one powerful way to do this. In this section we outline an approach to conducting future-focused interviews, top tips and additional links, all of which will help you to continue the conversation.



## Conducting a future-focused interview

A future-focused interview is a qualitative interview. This means that open-ended questions are the most appropriate format to use. In general, you are seeking more response from the interviewee than a simple yes or no and your primary tasks are to ask good questions and to listen well to the response. Below is a handy checklist for listening well and below that, a helpful interview format to start you on your way.

Reminders for listening well:

1. Ask questions. To add clarity and show your interest.
2. Seek confirmation. To ensure that you have heard key points correctly.
3. Delay your response. To ensure that the speaker is finished.
4. Minimise distractions. Improve focus by removing distractions in advance.
5. Empathise. Try to appreciate the speaker's point of view, even if you disagree.



## Future-focused interview format (a novice's guide)

### In advance of the interview

- When setting a time and date for the interview, be sure to explain the research question, the expected time to be taken (e.g. 45mins), how the material will be used and explain that the material will be non-attributable.

- Ideally, interview in pairs, where one of you will lead the interview and the other will serve as scribe.

### On the day of the interview

- Thank the interviewee for their time, confirm when the interview will finish. Let them know if you plan to record the interview and if they are in agreement. Explain again that the interview will be used to scope the future landscape of your topic and that the interview is non-attributable. Share the focal question and explain the intended use, perhaps something like the below:

*Thank you for making time today. We are conducting a number of expert interviews with individuals like yourself. Our aim is to gain perspectives on the future of XX in 20XX (the focal question) and these conversations will help us to ensure that our research is focused and relevant. We have set aside 45 minutes for this conversation. Our questions will be more open than closed and will loosely follow this flow: What is the situation today; How did we get here and What outlook do you see going forward. However, we will likely spend more time on future-focused questions. But as with most interviews, your comments will also lead us to ask other questions as well – apologies for these deviations in advance!*

- One good approach to outline your interview question set is the Seven Questions interview. It is a foresight technique that has proved useful for decades in gathering opinion on key issues, determining insight into key drivers of change and in engaging key stakeholders. While the actual questions may deviate for your research, or you might change direction during the course of a given interview, these are the main areas that you might want to cover:

1. The critical issues
2. A favourable outcome
3. An unfavourable outcome
4. Key (cultural) changes

5. Lessons from the past
6. Decisions which must be faced
7. If the interviewee were 'all powerful'

Remember, each question is designed for the person being interviewed to talk and that you will try and not interfere by guiding too much. The seven questions approach is about their view, not yours. The interviewee is free to interpret the questions as they see fit. Below are some questions that follow the main areas above and have been shaped around an example focal question of: *The Future of UK veterans in 10 years' time*.

1. Looking back over the last ten years, what have been the biggest changes affecting UK veterans?
2. Looking back, what do you see as recent successes or failures that have led to our current situation?
3. Looking forward to the next 10 years, what do you see as the critical issues affecting UK veterans?
4. If things went well, what you would see as a desirable outcome for veterans in the UK in the next 10 years?
5. If things didn't go well, what you would see as an undesirable outcome and veterans in the UK in the next 10 years?
6. What do you see as the key decisions that need to be faced?
7. If you were all powerful, and taking on board this conversation, what future agenda would you (now) set for UK veterans today?

Thank the interviewee. Remind them that the information will be used but that all quotes will be non-attributed. Ask them for their contact details so you can share information afterwards. Give them your contact details and ask them to get in touch if they have any questions. Lastly – and importantly – ask them about other informed experts or stakeholders that you should speak to.



### Top tips for studying the future

These tips may be useful for any organisation when responding to the Lifting Our Sights findings or when conducting further future-focused work.

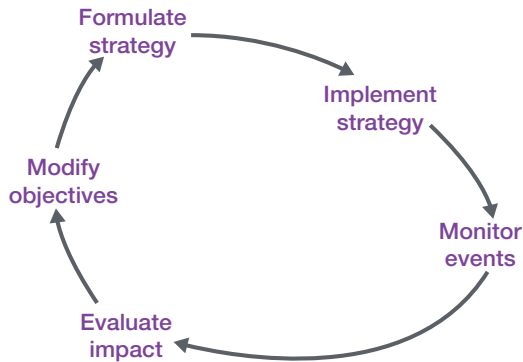
- *Frame the research*

Set a clear question that you will explore. Set a timeframe to consider (5 to 10 years is typical). Determine what is in and out of scope. Build a list of areas to explore and experts within them.

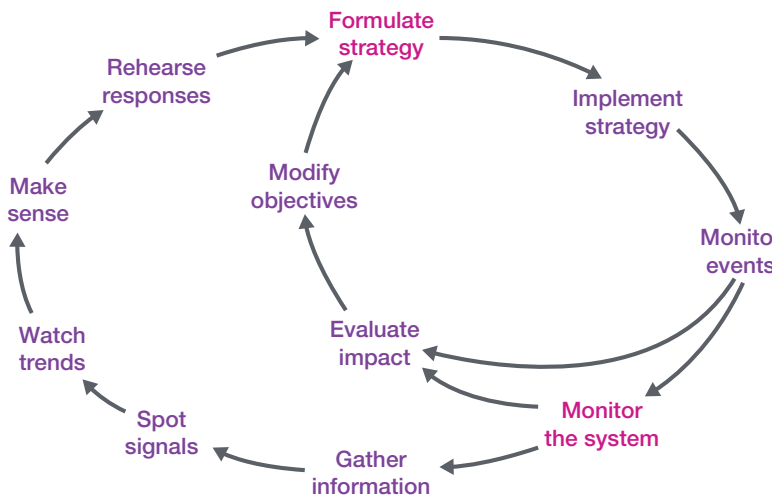
- *Connect foresight research to strategy*

Incorporating foresight into strategy can be done in an impromptu or day-to-day fashion at workshops and meetings by using the Start, Stop and Continue method. It goes something like this. Based on a given future perspective (or a specific future foresight) what should we now start, stop and continue in order to offset today, the implications of tomorrow?

Increasingly, organisations are adopting a more formal approach to incorporating foresight into their decision- and strategy-making processes. One example of this is to include a horizon scanning process – a way of looking for weak (and strong) signals about future direction – into a strategic planning process. This is illustrated below in an adaptation of the 'The Futures Bridge', taken from the [The Government Office for Science Futures Toolkit](#).



Traditionally, strategic models monitor strategy, results and impact achieved, but may not take account of the wider context within which the organisation operates and where it has less control. In other words, organisations are well practiced at an ‘inside-out’ approach.



By building in a process of scanning the future and connecting this to the strategic process, the organisation becomes more adaptive, prepared and responsive to the wider context in which it operates. In short, the organisation becomes better at marrying its ‘inside-out’ point of view with an ‘outside-in’ perspective.

- *Be inquisitive*

The 'Five Whys Model' is a solid way to get to the root of an issue. It suggests that you should ask why five times in order to reach true understanding. However, you may want to find alternative ways to ask why. If you just repeat why in parrot fashion you might gain better problem understanding but you could equally incense your interviewees or workshop participants or be reminded of your own 5-year-old.

Below are some open-ended questions that are good alternatives to asking why.

1. How did you respond?
2. What does that mean to you?
3. What kind of outcome were you expecting?
4. How did that make you feel?
5. How is that important to you?
6. What changes would you like to see?
7. What were you thinking about at the time?
8. How did that happen?

Five Whys is a great way to hear context and uncover causes. It will also help you to ensure that the topic is the right one to address.

- *Links to other foresight toolkits*

The toolkits below provide more detail about futures tools and processes and how to apply them in a range of future-focused investigations. The list is not intended to be exhaustive, and other organisations such as RAND Europe, with whom Forces in Mind Trust has a strong relationship, use other tools.

UK Government Office for Science – [Futures Toolkit](#)

UK Government Office for Science – [A Brief Guide to Futures Thinking and Foresight](#)

Government of Canada – [Foresight Training Modules](#)

Singapore Government - [Centre for Strategic Futures](#)

Arup – [An Introduction to Corporate Foresight](#)

UK Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre (DCDC) – [Global Strategic Trends](#)

Observatory of Public Sector Information (OPSI) – [toolkits, various](#)





# Appendix

Below we list each of the foresights from the LOS research. Additionally please access the LOS website to download these in workshop format, or to read more detail about them in the LOS Final Report - <https://www.liftingoursights.org.uk/>.

## Foresights - The Certainties

**Climate and Ecological Crisis** - As the impact of both global warming and the ecological crisis becomes evident, new triggers for conflict emerge. All activities are scrutinised for mitigation.

**Data and Automation** - As data reveals the previously unknowable, increasing automation transforms society and the digitisation of services improves transparency for some.

**Rising Inequality** - Increasing health, wealth, and education inequalities mean that more people at the margins of society struggle. The gap between the haves and the have nots increases.

**Shifting Power and Influence** - As the centre of global economic activity continues to move East, stronger Asian leadership and US constraint stimulate a global power vacuum.

**Changing Characteristics of Conflict** - In a world of cyber-attacks, biowarfare, and misinformation, traditional military forces are increasingly complemented by less visible assets and capability.

## Foresights - Catalysts and Accelerators

**Covid 19** - The pandemic accelerates adoption of health technologies and seeds lasting change on issues such as privacy, trust and the nature of how we work.

**Misinformation** - The hijacking of truth by a more diverse, unregulated community undermines who we trust. Even sophisticated users struggle to determine fact from fiction.

## Foresights - The UK in 2030

**A Changing Demographic Mix** - By 2030, the UK will have the fastest growing and second largest population in Europe: SE England will be the main

centre of this growth. Society will be ageing faster, and proportionally we will have fewer children. It will also be more diverse.

**Accelerating to Zero Carbon** - As the tangible reality of climate change makes an impact, with more frequent flooding, hotter summers and shorter winters, resilience becomes a priority. The UK will achieve a 100% renewable energy supply for the majority of the year.

**The Blurring of Work** - Progressively part-time multiple job workforces and flexible automated workplaces will become common, but some will find them difficult to adapt to.

**Building Communities** - With more single households, sustained working near home and delayed retirement, many seek to make more of their local communities. Finding common interest and activities becomes a priority.

**Declining Economic Influence** - By 2030, the UK will have dropped outside of the world's top ten economies. Britain seeks to still operate as part of a European partnership, but also to reposition itself as a global broker rather than a global power.

**Improved Digital Connectivity** - By 2030, 5G will be available to 90% of the UK population, with 6G launching. The digital divide will narrow as low-cost access is delivered as a common ambition. Questions on data transparency, value and control will however remain.

**UK Leadership in Key Sectors** - Leadership in some key areas such as higher education, finance, science and the creative industries will continue to have global impact. Other sectors will decline. New international collaborations with higher growth economies will be sought.

**More Devolved Power** - Occurring at different speeds, with varying levels of national and regional support, the UK will experience more devolution and sustained decentralisation. This will redefine what it means to be British.

**Reskilling, Upskilling and the Skills Gap** - With many likely to continue to work until they are aged 70, reskilling and upskilling is expected to become the norm. Filling, funding and coordinating the skills gaps is a core challenge.

### **Foresights - Armed Forces Transition**

**Changing Perceptions** - As public understanding of the role of the Armed Forces declines, so does the support to recognise veterans' capabilities, actions, and contribution to society.

**Continuous Transition** - With shorter careers and a recognition that transition is an ongoing process and not a single event, expectations and preparedness are managed from the start.

**Fitting In** - With more ageing, migration, and mass unemployment all having an impact, the speed of change in local society is accelerating. Some adapt but others are marginalised.

**Holistic Transition** - To help ensure a lasting, stable transition, support design moves beyond the basics of employment and housing to include wellbeing and involving the needs of the leaver's family.

**Landing Well** - Greater emphasis on improved public awareness of the skills developed within the Armed Forces allows for a more aligned transition to civilian life.

**Living in Civilian Society** - The Future Accommodation Model helps to prepare many better for life after Service, but makes traditional methods of maintaining trust and comradeship more difficult.

**Measuring Progress** - Shared metrics are adopted across the transition journey to track sustained progress, and accountability, towards the Strategy for Our Veterans ambition.

**New Transitioners** - New structures of military Service provide a counter to the shocks associated with today's transition journey, simplifying some stages of transition but adding more complexity in others.

**Regions of Connection** - With MOD spending and bases focused in select areas of the UK, other regions have less understanding of, connection to and empathy with the Armed Forces.

**Smarter Talent** - The increasing use of technology, especially within the Royal Navy and the RAF, makes the Armed Forces a leading source of recruits for the smarter talent pool.

**Supporting Civilian Authorities** - In times of need, Armed Forces support for the emergency services increases, and the boundaries of what this entails are tested.

**Greater Integration** - As military personnel policies seek to reflect changes in broader society, traditional boundaries are challenged by changing family structures, increasing diversity, and a drive for equality.

### **Foresights - Charitable Sector**

**The Digitisation of Services** - The charitable sector embraces digital platforms to improve information flow, data sharing, transparency, and the visibility of impact being delivered.

**Deeper Collaboration** - Common ambitions, better partnerships, co-design initiatives, and shared funding allow some charities to align their activities for more effective impact.

**Embracing Movements** - More nimble hybrids combine the strength of charity with the fluidity and freedom of people-powered movements.

**Greater Competition** - Reduced budgets and rising demand for services drives a shift in funding priorities. Demonstrating efficiency increases competition between charities.

**Ideological Rethink** - Increased pressure on services heralds a realignment around charitable purpose. There is a greater focus on responding to immediate needs, rather than policy development.

**Reduced Support** - A struggling economy, changing welfare state and a challenged Armed Forces charity sector reduces the depth and breadth of transition support.



## **Forces In Mind Trust**

Forces in Mind Trust fund targeted, conceptually sound, evidence generation and influencing activities that allow policymakers and service deliverers to help us achieve our goal.

Each year approximately 15,000 people leave the UK Armed Forces and for the vast majority they transition successfully into the civilian world, their lives having been enormously enriched by their time in service. However, some need additional support, and it is these most vulnerable people that Forces in Mind Trust exists to help.

For more information please contact

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