

# Policy Summary: Improving data, access and coherence across the transition landscape

The [Understanding the Transition from Military to Civilian Life report](#) (2025) provides a comprehensive review of how Service leavers and families navigate the transition from military to civilian life. It identifies both the progress that has been made over the last decade as well as the areas that could be strengthened to help ensure all serving personnel and their families experience a successful transition into civilian life. Whilst we know most Service personnel and their families make a successful transition, some do not. The report estimated the total cost of poor transition to government and the third sector in 2025 to be approximately £258m<sup>1</sup>.

## The support landscape

There has been significant progress in the support available to ex-Service personnel and their families with much resource being spent and invested in improving and enhancing the transition process. This includes new initiatives in health, housing, employment and the justice system such as Op COURAGE, Op RESTORE, Op FORTITUDE, Op ASCEND and Op NOVA. In addition, there is a wide system of support delivered by the Armed Forces charities sector. Efforts have also been made to provide a single point of entry to the charity sector via the Office for Veterans' Affairs online signposting platform and through facilitating access to support via Defence Transition Services (now part of Veterans Services).

Despite the improvements, the number of services that are now available has resulted in a large network of support that is complex and often confusing. To support Service leavers and their families to better navigate transition and any support they may require, there needs to be a more coherent ecosystem of support in place. This does not require significant transformation; instead existing services and information should be enhanced or refined, ensuring that those who need additional support can readily access it. The complexity of the support landscape needs to be reduced, enabling the provision of seamless support, including providing single entry points to organisations. The introduction of the VALOUR support network could be a positive step towards achieving this.

## Data on the Armed Forces community

Over the last decade, the availability and granularity of data on ex-Service personnel's outcomes have improved. This includes the release of the Census data for England, Wales and Scotland and the first Veterans' Survey. In addition, new platforms have been developed, such as the Veterans Data Dashboard and MONARCH to help provide centralised access to disparate datasets.

Whilst there are ongoing efforts to improve the coordination of support and availability of data, such as data improvement programmes and the VALOUR support network, challenges remain. Current data quality issues undermine the sector's ability to gain an accurate picture of transition outcomes for ex-Service personnel and families, the associated cost of poor transition and how these could be mitigated.

**Improving data, access and coherence across the transition landscape is crucial** in understanding and improving outcomes for ex-Service personnel and their families. Improvements can help to identify those most likely to experience poorer outcomes earlier on, mitigate the cost of poor transition and create a collaborative and effective ecosystem of support that meets the needs of the Armed Forces community.

## Policy Issues:



### Complex support system

The Armed Forces charity sector provides significant support for the Armed Forces community. However, due to its large size, it can be difficult to navigate and can appear overwhelming to ex-Service personnel and families. This can act as a barrier to identifying and reaching out to relevant organisations that could support their transition.

Both government and third sector initiatives have also increased the amount of information available resulting in a complex and confusing landscape. Some Service leavers and families report receiving too much information, while others report receiving too little information, or receiving it at the wrong time, hindering decision-making.

Accurate insight into available support can also be complicated by continual changes to the support sector and regional variation.



### Gaps in service provision

Despite significant government investment in supporting ex-Service personnel, charities report a lack of clarity around central government responsibility and what gaps they are expected to fill. The complex and changing support landscape also makes it difficult to identify unmet needs.



### Poor data sharing between organisations

Challenges sharing data between military and civilian systems, such as between the MOD and NHS or between statutory and third sector agencies can disrupt continuity of Service leavers' support and eventual outcomes. Incompatible systems and poor data sharing can impede collaboration, communication and joined-up working, leading to slow and inefficient information exchanges.



### Poor data quality, access and coherence

The current transition landscape makes it difficult to accurately track outcomes and provide support to the Armed Forces community, particularly the ex-Service community.

Despite policy changes and efforts to improve monitoring of Service leavers, identification and referral of individuals in need of additional support at the point of discharge continues to be inconsistent.



### Limited evaluation

A lack of evaluation of third sector support and government backed schemes makes it difficult to assess how well current support is meeting the needs of ex-Service personnel and families. Where evaluation is conducted, the approach varies, limiting insight into the impact of services and subsequent data from which to direct future services and provision.

## Policy Recommendations:



### Improved data quality, access and coherence across the transition landscape

The sector (including MOD and statutory and non-statutory support providers) should explore further the possibility of better collating, tracking and transferring relevant data and information on Service leavers within and between organisations to enable:

- improved tracking and understanding of transition outcomes
- identification of those more likely to experience poor transition outcomes
- improved understanding of the effectiveness of interventions and policy initiatives
- more personalised and targeted provision of support.

Transition (particularly post-discharge) would benefit from being more coherent as an ecosystem of support and better sharing and access to data.



### Improved data sharing between organisations

There is a need for improved data collection and sharing practices across the MOD and statutory and non-statutory service providers. This includes enhancing sharing of best practice, data collection to inform service monitoring, and sharing data pertaining to the needs of veterans and related interventions.

Greater anonymisation of data could facilitate better data sharing. Data protection is key, and any solution must ensure integrity and confidentiality of data.



### Longitudinal study of ex-Service personnel and families

A longitudinal study of ex-Service personnel and their families should be conducted to fully understand the transition journey and outcomes for ex-Service personnel and families.

A longitudinal study would allow changes over time to be captured, would avoid any misremembering by participants and enable the success of any new initiatives to be measured.

<sup>1</sup> The cost of poor transition could vary between £63 million and £546 million depending on how individuals experience the negative outcomes (e.g. severity of symptoms, whether they seek help, the type of treatment they receive). This does not include costs to individuals or private businesses.