FOCUS ON

Armed Forces Charities' Education & Employment Provision

2017

Rhiannon Doherty
Stuart Cole
Anthony Robson

dsc
directory of social change

In association with
Cobseo The Confederation of Service Charities
VS Veterans Scotland

Funded by
FiMT forces in mind trust SUCCESSFUL SUSTAINABLE TRANSITION
BIG LOTTERY FUND
Awarding funds from The National Lottery

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Foreword

Often when we talk about the armed forces community we talk about 'sacrifice'. This can evoke the possibility of losing life and limb in service of one's country. It could also mean sacrificing a normal family life, or the stability and social connections that come with a settled existence in the same community, which so many of us simply take for granted.

But serving and ex-serving men and women, and their families, make other sacrifices that are perhaps less recognised. Service in the forces undoubtedly provides many with training, skills, experience and useful employment. But it may also involve sacrificing career advancement or opportunities for educational achievement.

It is well recognised in both the research literature and public policy that the transition from the Armed Forces to 'Civvy Street' comes with significant challenges, and managing the transition is critical. Indeed, successful, sustainable transition is the *raison d'être* of our funder, Forces in Mind Trust (FiMT).

If the armed forces are your first occupation, how do you find your next one when you leave? Many Service leavers may have no experience of applying for a job, or figuring out how to market their transferable skills to prospective employers – yet they absolutely have qualities that employers should value. What support is there to help make this transition?

The MOD provides a resettlement programme to assist individuals into the civilian job market during the transition from military to civilian life. However, many service leavers still need support from armed forces charities, especially those who are no longer eligible for MOD support. Provision of education and employment for the armed forces community is rightly identified as a key ingredient in successful transition from the armed forces. This is evident in things like the Armed Forces Covenant, the Cobseo clusters and Veterans Scotland pillars, and in fact it forms one of FiMT's six key outcomes for successful transition.

That's where many armed forces charities come in, and it's why the provision of education and employment for the armed forces community is rightly identified as a key ingredient in successful transition from the armed forces. This is evident in things like the Armed Forces Covenant, the Cobseo clusters and Veterans Scotland pillars, and in fact it forms one of FiMT's six key outcomes for successful transition.

This research for the first time identifies those armed forces charities providing services around education and employment to the armed forces community. There are 78 charities working in this space – a relatively small number even in comparison to the total population of forces charities, and a minuscule proportion of the total population of all charities. But on this initial investigation, these organisations collectively seem to have a big impact – helping 38,500 people a year into employment or education, and mobilising tens of millions of pounds of charitable funds towards the cause. This should be a cause for celebration, not for concern.

DSC and FiMT have been working in partnership on armed forces charities research since 2014, and I am both pleased and honoured to see it go from strength to strength. *Focus On: Armed Forces Charities Education & Employment Provision* is the second of six thematic reports on armed forces charities to be published during 2017 and 2018.

Our aim in this work is to improve understanding of armed forces charities and their work, so that policymakers and forces charities can create a better environment for the armed forces community – in short to improve the lives of all those who sacrifice on all our behalf. I hope you find it useful – not just for the data it contains but as a resource to engage others in decision-making and debate.

Jay Kennedy, Director of Policy and Research, Directory of Social Change

About the authors

RHIANNON DOHERTY

Rhiannon joined DSC in 2017 as a Researcher on DSC's Armed Forces Charities research project, where she contributes to the researching and writing of reports including *Focus On: Armed Forces Charities' Mental Health Provision* (2017).

Before joining DSC, Rhiannon volunteered for a range of charities including NDCS and Oxfam.

Rhiannon holds a BA (Hons) in English Literature and Communications. She also holds an MA in Politics and Mass Media from the University of Liverpool.

STUART COLE

Stuart is the Research Manager for DSC's Armed Forces Charities project. Since joining DSC in 2015, Stuart has researched forces charities, producing reports including; *Focus On: Armed Forces Charities' Mental Health Provision* (2017); *Sector Insight: Armed Forces Charities in Scotland* (2016), and *Cobseo Members' Survey* (2015).

Before joining DSC, Stuart held an academic post in public health research, working on projects in partnership with the World Health Organization, Alcohol Research UK and the NHS. Stuart's work focused on violence, traumatic injury and alcohol consumption.

Stuart holds a BA (Hons) in Psychology and Sociology, an MSc in Applied Psychology, and a PGCE in Psychology. He is a qualified teacher and taught psychology for five years before moving into research.

ANTHONY ROBSON

Anthony joined DSC in 2017 as a Researcher on DSC's Armed Forces Charities research project. Along with undertaking research and writing of reports such as *Focus On: Armed Forces Charities' Mental Health Provision* (2017), Anthony also maintains the project's online database of forces charities.

Prior to joining DSC, Anthony volunteered as a high school Classroom Assistant and also as a member of the Merseyside Police Cadet scheme.

Anthony holds a BA (Hons) in Modern History, along with an MRes in English Literature and Cultural History from Liverpool John Moores University.

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About the Directory of Social Change

The Directory of Social Change (DSC) has a vision of an independent voluntary sector at the heart of social change. We believe that the activities of independent charities, voluntary organisations and community groups are fundamental to achieve social change. We exist to support these organisations in achieving their goals.

We do this by:

- Providing practical tools that organisations and activists need, including online and printed publications, training courses, and conferences on a huge range of topics
- Acting as a 'concerned citizen' in public policy debates, often on behalf of smaller charities, voluntary organisations and community groups
- Leading campaigns and stimulating debate on key policy issues that affect those groups
- Carrying out research and providing information to influence policymakers, as well as offering bespoke research for the voluntary sector

Since 2014, DSC has been commissioned by Forces in Mind Trust to produce research aimed at illuminating the armed forces charity Sector. Now in its third year, the project was grown to include two *Sector Insight* (2014, 2016) reports and a searchable online database of armed forces charities, which exists as a free resource for members of the public.

DSC's *Focus On* reports are intended as short, easily digestible reports on individual areas of provision, which are intended to inform those who work within the charity sector, policymakers, media professionals and members of the public interested in the work of armed forces charities. In June 2017, DSC delivered its first report of the series entitled *Focus On: Mental Health Provision by Armed Forces Charities*, this report explores education and employment support for the armed forces community.

For details of all our activities, and to order publications and book courses, go to www.dsc.org.uk, call 0207 697 4200 or email cs@dsc.org.uk.

For details of our research go to www.dsc.org.uk/research, or email research@dsc.org.uk.

Executive summary

DSC is committed to illuminating the vital work of armed forces charities, this report delivers an account of those providing education and/or employment support. To address this remit, DSC devised the following research questions:

- How many forces charities provide education and employment support?
- How is education/employment support delivered to beneficiaries?
- What standards of practice, collaboration and evaluation exist?

The UK armed forces community is estimated to include over six million individuals (The Royal British Legion, 2014), with a further 15,000 individuals leaving the armed forces within the previous year (MOD, 2017). A key aspect of successful transition from military life is securing civilian employment. For some, this can a present a significant challenge when marketing their skills to a potential employer or when trying to access education and enhance their professional prospects.

The charities included within this report exist to provide Service-personnel and their families with support in accessing education and employment whilst serving, during the transition to civilian life, and throughout their civilian careers.

Effectively, this report holds a mirror to forces charities making provision for education and employment, providing a comprehensive overview of the sub-sector in which they operate. It is intended as a resource for all those involved with or interested in the armed forces charities sector, such as charity workers, policy makers, the media and the public.

KEY FINDINGS

How many forces charities provide education and employment support?

There are approximately 1,200 UK armed forces charities, relatively few of which deliver education and/or employment support.

- 78 charities provide education support (6.5% of all armed forces charities).
- 59 charities provide employment support (5% of all armed forces charities).
- 41% of charities are termed 'Primary providers' i.e. education and/or employment was their sole charitable object.

How many beneficiaries are supported?

The number of beneficiaries accessing education and employment services indicates substantial demand for provision, spread over a relatively small number of charities.

- 35,800 beneficiaries accessed education services within the past year.
- At least 3,300 beneficiaries were helped to gain qualifications.
- 28,100 individuals accessed employment services within the past year.
- At least 22,302 were supported into employment.
- Ex-service personnel were the most common type of beneficiary (86%).
- In total, 65% of charities made provision for dependents and 63% support spouse/partners.

How much expenditure is dedicated to education and employment?

The overall approximate annual expenditure on education and employment provision from all charities is approximately £25,600,000.

- Primary providers accounted for approximately £10,300,000 of this total.
- Secondary providers accounted for approximately £15,300,000.
- Over three-fifths (65%) of Primary charities are committing almost all their annual expenditure to education and employment.

- Almost half (48%) of Secondary providers are spending one-quarter of their annual expenditure to education and employment.

Which types of services are provided?

Armed forces charities offer a wide range of education and employment services, many of which supported mainstream qualifications.

- Two-fifths (44%) of charities provide vocational learning support.
- One-third (35%) of charities provide transitional support.
- Grants to individuals were provided by two-fifths of charities (42%).
- In total, 65% of charities provide signposting to employment services.
- Higher education (30%) and vocational awards (18%) were the most common types of qualification supported by charities.

To what extent do charities engage in collaboration and partnership?

DSC found extensive evidence of cross-sector collaboration, almost three-fifths (66%) of charities reporting experiencing some benefits of collaboration.

- Partnership between charities themselves was most common (59%).
- Over one-third (36%) of charities partnered with business.
- In total, 13% of charities did not engage in collaboration or experienced significant barriers to forming partnerships.
- Less than one-quarter (21%) of charities partnered with statutory organisations or adopted government employment initiatives.

What standards of accreditation and evaluation exist?

Accreditation was rare, 70% of charities reported training programmes were not accredited and 68.4% said staff members were not accredited.

- Half (51%) of charities provided data on employability outcomes.
- One-quarter (26%) of charities provided data on qualification success rates.
- High success rates for qualifications and employment outcomes were common (where recorded).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- DSC's findings largely debunk the myth that there are too many forces charities, of the 1,200 armed forces charities registered in the UK, only 5% make provision for employment and 6.5% make provision for education.

- Forces charities provide an extensive variety of education and employment services, many of which support a broad range of mainstream qualifications. The most common types of qualifications supported tended to be higher level career-orientated qualifications such as degrees and diplomas vocational awards.

- Charities collaborate extensively with other organisations in order to deliver education and employment support. However, a small number of charities found it difficult to form effective partnerships and engagement with statutory schemes was low. Collaboration should be widely encouraged across the sector in order to avoid duplication and share resources and expertise.

- Accreditation was rare, DSC recommends that charities implement recognisable forms of accreditation, which would help to direct beneficiaries to appropriate services. DSC recognises accreditation is not relevant to all charities; however, it is particularly important for 'education and training providers'.

- Few charities were able to provide data on employability and qualification outcomes, DSC recommends that all charities show commitment to monitoring service outcomes and conducting impact reports.

Introduction

CONTEXT

This report aims to document current levels of education and employment provision made by UK armed forces charities. It is beyond its scope to examine the wider contextual factors underpinning the need for education and employment support within the armed forces community. Nevertheless, it is useful to briefly acknowledge some of these factors, in order to understand charitable provision as responding to need.

Mapping the transition process is a difficult task, particularly because the armed forces comprise a huge range of individuals with varying skill sets, academic achievements and professional backgrounds rather than one homogeneous group. However, Service personnel who lack qualifications or transferrable skills may find it difficult to transition to civilian life.

For instance, low literacy rates within the army have been found to exist at double the rate of civilian society. Over 80% of new recruits during 2012–2013 had a reading age of 14, compared to only 43% of the general population (Centre of Social Justice, 2014). Although veterans are as likely as the working-age population to hold a qualification, they remain less likely to be educated to degree level (19.4% v. 28.3% respectively) (MOD, 2015).

Veteran employment statistics vary considerably according to the source and method of data collection. The MOD's 2016 *Armed Forces Covenant Annual Report* indicated no significant difference in veteran and non-veteran employment (76% v. 79% respectively). Conversely, The Royal British Legion's 2014 *UK Household Survey of the ex-Service Community* found working-age veterans to be twice as likely to be unemployed as the general population (11% v. 6% respectively). Ex-forces personnel are also significantly less likely than the general population to be employed in professional occupations (18% v. 23% respectively) (MOD, 2015).

The MOD has taken significant steps to improve learning pathways and resettlement services for forces personnel. An extension of the Career Transition Partnership (CTP) contract has served to improve access to resettlement services for vulnerable groups such as early Service leavers (ESLs) and wounded injured and sick (WIS) personnel. Notably, the MOD is also the biggest single provider of apprenticeships in the UK, offering over 20,000 courses, ranging from engineering to construction (MOD, 2016a). The Standard and Enhanced Learning Credit schemes enable serving and ex-forces personnel to access a wide range of courses, across many disciplines.

However, previous research findings have highlighted a number of potential barriers, which may negatively affect ex-Service members' ability to access education and secure employment, such as:

- Access to education and resettlement services – according to the latest available figures, 2011–2012 uptake for the Standard Learning Credit scheme averaged only 8.3% across the tri-Services (Defence Committee 2013). Similarly, CTP registration remains voluntary; 12% of serving personnel chose not to register for CTP services during 2015–2016, and little information is known about this cohort (FiMT, 2017).

- In-Service qualifications falling short of employer expectations – the military aims for all Service leavers having attained level one qualifications, yet three-quarters of employers require qualifications at level two and above (FiMT, 2017). The Wolf Review found that attaining a maths and English GCSE (between the grades of A*and C) was fundamental to securing civilian employment (Wolf, 2011).

- The transferability of civilian qualifications – while efforts have been undertaken to improve the transferability of civilian qualifications, some combat roles do not have a civilian equivalent. Fewer than half (48%) of regular Service personnel were satisfied with civilian accreditation opportunities, according to the 2016 *Covenant Annual Report*. Although 71% of employers stated a willingness to hire ex-forces personnel,

only 39% would be willing to hire someone with no industry experience (Deloitte, 2016).

- Employer perceptions – in total 91% of employers, polled by Lord Ashcroft, thought it was common for ex-Service personnel to have a physical, emotional or mental health problem (Lord Ashcroft, 2012). Contrary to some negative perceptions, ex-Service personnel have been found to perform well within civilian workplaces and tend to be promoted faster than colleagues of non-military background (Deloitte, 2016).

- Challenges for dependants – children of serving personnel have been found to be at greater risk of emotional and behavioural problems, mental health issues and incidence of child as carer (The Royal British Legion, 2014). Anecdotal evidence also suggests that military spouses are often overlooked by employers who favour more geographically stable candidates (Brown, 2008).

This report is intended as a timely resource for charity workers, policymakers, media organisations and interested members of the public. According to the latest MOD figures, 14,970 people left the UK regular armed forces within the past 12 months (MOD, 2017). It is vital to ensure that all Service leavers, both past and present, have access to education, training and employment support which helps them to successfully transition to civilian life.

FOCUS OF THE REPORT

This report aims to illuminate a small section of the employability and education landscape of the UK that is occupied by armed forces charities. To date, little data has been gathered on how many forces' charities provide education and employment services, the estimated numbers of beneficiaries accessing this type of support and the range of services available.

This piece of research is focused entirely on mapping the existing education and employment provision being made by UK armed forces charities. It is beyond the scope of this report to assess the educational and employment needs of the armed forces community or comment on the extent to which that need is being met by charities or statutory bodies. Additionally, this report does not make comment or value judgements on 'effectiveness' of current provision being made by charities, its purpose is to hold an objective mirror to this particular subsection of the armed forces charity sector.

TERMINOLOGY

For the purpose of this report, and in keeping with the language used in *Sector Insight* (2014 and 2016), the term 'ex-Service personnel' will stand to refer to any person who has served in the UK armed forces (for at least one day) and does not include dependants of ex-Service personnel. When referring to ex-Service personnel and their dependants, the term 'ex-Service community' is employed. In order to make reference to both Service and ex-Service personnel, including their dependants, the term 'armed forces community' is henceforth used. Dependants are categorised as: spouses/partners; divorced or separated spouses; widows/widowers; and children of Service and ex-Service personnel.

The focus of the report is singularly on those charities defined as armed forces charities which make provision for education and/or employment. Undoubtedly, provision exists for education and employment support among the wider charity sector, which beneficiaries can access regardless of any affiliation with the armed forces. However, this report will focus exclusively on charities who serve the armed forces community.

Within the context of this report, the term 'education' is defined as the advancement of knowledge or skills. Education is used interchangeably with 'training' to include both traditional academic learning and practical skills training. It encompasses a wide range of learning methods across different skill levels from basic literacy skills, to higher education, to vocational courses and independent living skills. Education may be undertaken in formal educational institutes such as a college or university, in an informal setting such as on-the-job training or online course, or a combination of both.

'Employment' is generally defined as exchange of payment for labour and services. For the purposes of this report, we have expanded this definition to include work placements and work experience. The term is also inclusive of voluntary positions, which although unpaid may serve to increase future employment prospects.

Education and employment are closely interlinked, given that the former is often undertaken with the objective of gaining the latter. As a result of this overlap, many armed forces charities make provision for both. The scope of this report is therefore focused on armed forces charities with a specific remit for education and/or employment, through data that provides an overview and analysis of their valuable work.

DSC CLASSIFICATION OF ARMED FORCES CHARITIES

The definition of an armed forces charity utilised for this report is applied as outlined in *Sector Insight 2016*:

> *'Charities that are established specifically to support past and present members of the armed forces and their families (the armed forces community). In this context, an armed forces charity must be able to apply this definition to their beneficiaries.'*
>
> *Sector Insight 2016*

When DSC published its first report on armed forces charities (*Sector Insight 2014*), the number of armed forces charities was reported as being approximately 2,200 charities. Since 2014, the methodology for categorising armed forces charities has been refined to exclude charities whose direct beneficiaries are not members of the armed forces community. This exclusion therefore applies to 'cadet' charities, which accounted for 500 charities in Sector Insight 2014.

Cadet charities were excluded on the basis that although they are, by their own admission, not firmly affiliated with the armed forces, and their beneficiaries (the cadets themselves) are not necessarily members of the armed forces community. The same logic has also been applied to a number of heritage and memorial charities (242 charities in Sector Insight 2014), which do not directly serve the armed forces community. It is appreciated that certain heritage or memorial charities do in fact directly serve the armed forces community, and therefore not all heritage or memorial charities have been removed, but are each considered for inclusion on a case-by-case basis.

DSC's Sector Insight 2014 also found that although there are new charities being registered each year, the general trend shows a reducing number of armed forces charities. In 2017, DSC undertook a count of the number of armed forces charities registered in the UK. The current figure stands at approximately 1,200 charities which conform to the above revised definition of an armed forces charity.

Although this is a dramatic drop in the number of charities when compared to DSC's Sector Insight 2014, the change is largely reflective of a methodological shift in the categorisation of armed forces charities. Sector Insight 2014, reported that there were approximately 1,495 armed forces charities which, conform to the revised definition of an armed forces charity as applied by DSC since 2016 and in this report.

Sector Insight also found a total of only 419 charities (28% of the revised 1,495 figure) were charities which provide only welfare support (termed 'welfare charities'). DSC's findings from Sector Insight 2016 also showed this trend for charities registered in Scotland, of which fewer than one-third (30%) of charities were also solely 'welfare charities'.

Such findings as those referenced above, have wider implications when applied to the enduring misconception that there are 'too many charities'. Where in fact, there are fewer than one-third of charities doing what an average member of the public would consider a charity to actually do, such as provide welfare to those in need.

METHODOLOGY

DSC maintains a database containing information on approximately 1,200 armed forces charities, of which approximately 900 are registered with the Charity Commission for England and Wales (CCEW). Another 300 charities included in the database are registered in Scotland with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR).

In order to identify charities which make education and/or employment provision, DSC undertook a systematic keyword searching process of the CCEW, OSCR and Charity Commission for Northern Ireland (CCNI) databases. In order to be included in this report, charities were required to meet specific eligibility criteria, including specifying that education and employment was either their sole charitable object or one of their key charitable objects. Although many charities' objects refer to education and employment for ex-Service personnel, DSC also looked for specific evidence of this beyond their official charitable objects and regulator classifications. This included charities making specific reference to programmes and services addressing education and/or employment issues, funding other organisations to deliver these services on their behalf or working with partners to meet such needs.

A number of forces charities generally state in their objects that they make provision for former members who find themselves in need, which includes the possibility of education and employment support. However, this is not explicitly described in many charities' objects or accounts. Such charities are not included in this analysis unless evidence of provision can be identified in information provided by the charities, either online or via information submitted to the relevant charity regulator.

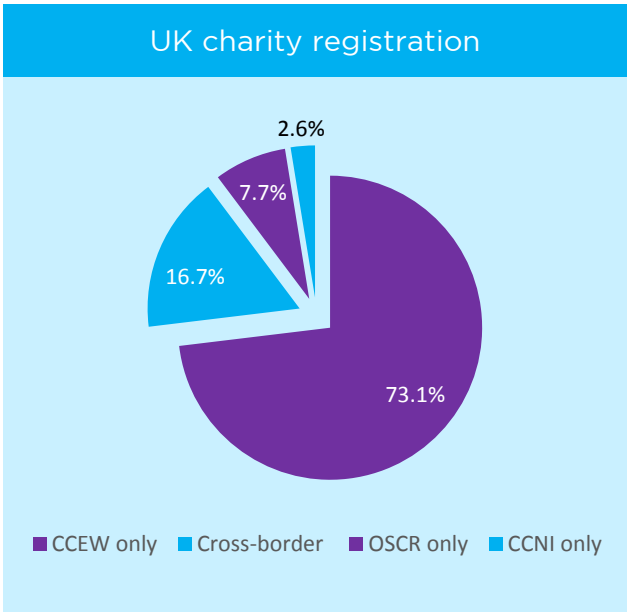
In May 2017, DSC sent email requests to 78 charities inviting them to take part in a survey. This was followed up by a postal invitation to the survey. To bolster the survey data, follow-up phone calls were conducted with charities which had so far been unresponsive to survey invitations. As a result of this, 59.0% of the 78 charities identified as education and/or employment charities (N=46) responded to the survey.

Researchers collected data on the remaining 41.0% of charities which did not respond to the survey (N=32). Relevant data was gathered from a wide range of sources, including charity commission information, charities' websites, annual accounts, impact reports and direct correspondence with charity representatives where possible. The 78 charities included in this research represent 6.5% of the total number of UK armed forces charities.

The data presented in this report is therefore derived from numerous searches of the three UK charity regulator registers; DSC's own data; and systematic searches of the internet via Google and Bing public search engines. DSC is confident that the charities represented in this report are comprehensive and accurate as of the final data-collection and refinement date (31/07/2017). The possibility of charities being excluded from the report due to not being found by researchers is recognised; however, due to the rigour of the search process, this is considered to be unlikely.

Financial data utilised in this report was not gained through means of survey. It was taken from the latest available accounts and annual reports that were submitted to UK charity regulators. The majority (69.2%) of data utilised in this report comes from 2015/2016 accounts; with 21.8% being from 2014/15 accounts. A total of 9.0% charities had no available accounts listed during the data-collection process, which was predominantly because of charities not yet having been required to submit accounts due to their newly registered status.

Figure 1



DSC examined the split of charities by their registration with their respective charity regulators. Figure 1 shows a percentage split of the 78 charities featured in this data.

Charities registered exclusively with CCEW accounted for 73.1% (57) of charities.

Cross-border, which refers to charities registered with both CCEW and OSCR, accounted for 16.7% (13) of charities.

Charities registered exclusively with OSCR accounted for 7.7% (6) of charities.

Charities registered with CCNI accounted for 2.6% (2) of charities.

CHAPTER ONE

An overview of charities' education and employment provision

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides information and analysis on the nature and characteristics of the provision made by UK armed forces charities for the education and employment of beneficiaries. The chapter is divided into the following sections:

- Provision for education and employment
- Primary and Secondary providers
- Beneficiaries accessing support
- Charitable expenditure and grant-making

DSC identified 78 charities which make provision for education and/or employment support. In total, 78 charities, provide education support, which represents 6.5% of all UK armed forces charities. Of the 78 charities included in this report, 59 charities make provision for employment, which represents 5.0% of all UK armed forces charities.

There is extensive overlap in service provision, as evidenced by the fact that over three-quarters (75.6%) of all charities featured within this report make provision for both education and employment. The remaining quarter (24.4%) make provision solely for education (N=19).

The substantial overlap in provision is unsurprising given that education and employment are so closely interlinked; the former is often undertaken with the objective of gaining the latter. It is common for charities to offer education or training support which aims to support transition into civilian employment. For example, a charity may deliver or fund vocational training courses and subsequently arrange a work placement.

1.2 PRIMARY AND SECONDARY PROVIDERS

DSC divided charities into two distinct categories, based upon their charitable objects. Charities were classified as being 'Primary' or 'Secondary' providers of education and/or employment support.

Primary provider charities make provision for one specific area of support and regularly commit all of their charitable expenditure to a specific need, which is likely to be specifically referred to in a Primary provider's charitable objects. Primary providers are defined here as those whose charitable objects are solely focused on education and/or employment support or for whom education/employment was the major component of their provision.

Secondary provider charities make provision across a wide range of need and support and include such well-known charities as the RAF Benevolent Fund, SSAFA, The Royal British Legion, and Help for Heroes, who all have in common the fact that they do not focus on one topic of support, but provide a wide range of support to their many beneficiaries. Secondary providers are defined here as those who included education and/or employment support as one of several charitable objects.

A Primary/Secondary split was undertaken to illustrate a fundamental difference in the type of charity in regard to the specific provision being explored (in this case education

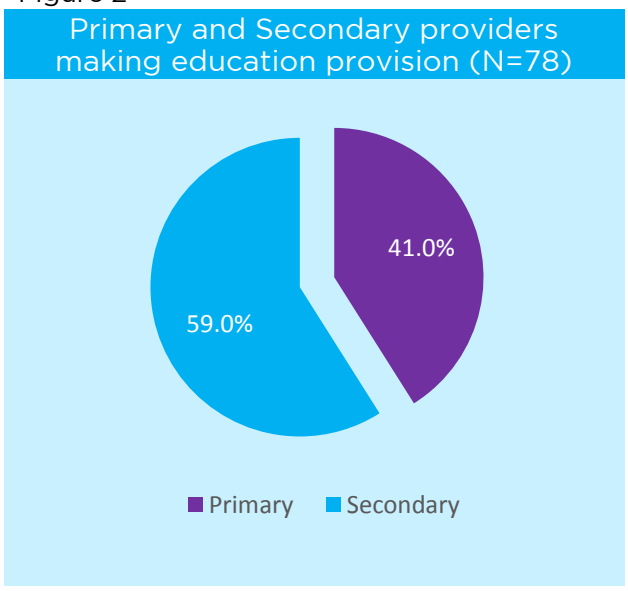
and employment). In previous research, DSC found Secondary provider charities to commonly be financially larger than their Primary counterparts; with the financial resources to commit significant amounts of resources across many topics of need.

Such financially large charities may devote a small percentage of their expenditure to a specific topic of need. However, due to their financial size, 20% of their annual expenditure can often be greater than a more financially modest Primary provider, which commits 95% of its expenditure to the same topic.

Throughout this report, the reader will encounter data which has been split by Primary and Secondary provider. This enables the reader to distinguish between the type of provider and through the graphs presented see the difference between these two types of charity. It is noted, however, that there are financially large charities which are Primary providers, such as Combat Stress (*Focus On: Armed Forces Charities' Mental Health Provision*); however, this has been seen to be the exception.

Each charity in this report was individually categorised as being Primary or Secondary in nature, and so it is acknowledged that there is an element of subjectivity in this assessment. However, this method is useful as a means of distinguishing between those charities for which the education and/or employment of the armed forces community is the primary focus, or for which education and/or employment support is one strand of a wider provision for the armed forces community.

Figure 2



Importantly, this is not in any way a value judgement on charities and their provision. There is no implied quality of provision, or commitment of charities making such support available. It is solely a means of identifying which charities provide education and training as their primary charitable object or as a secondary charitable object.

Figure 2 shows the split of Primary and Secondary providers for all charities identified as making provision for education and/or employment (N=78). Approximately three-fifths of charities (59.0%) were identified as being Secondary providers and two-fifths identified as Primary providers (41.0%).

1.3 BENEFICIARIES ACCESSING SUPPORT

Data collected from survey respondents and DSC's research provide a figure for the number of beneficiaries accessing charities' services in the last year. Secondary providers were not always able to provide reliable figures for education and employment provision, as these were often indistinguishable from wider areas of provision. In total, this data was available for 32 charities, which represents 41.0% of all charities in our dataset.

The minimum number of beneficiaries accessing education support is approximately 35,800 beneficiaries per year according to all which specified (N=31). Whereas, the minimum number of beneficiaries accessing employment support per year is approximately 28,100 according to charities which specified (N=32).

Although the types of beneficiary (e.g. veteran or family member) cannot be reliably distinguished, this figure does provide an indication of service users from a sample of over half of the forces charities DSC identified as making provision for education and employment.

Over half (54.8%) of all charities which specified (N=31), reported that 1–99 beneficiaries accessed their education provision per year, which accounted for an estimated 580 beneficiaries. In total, four charities which specified, claimed to deliver education provision to over 1,000 beneficiaries in the past year, which accounted for an estimated 30,600 beneficiaries.

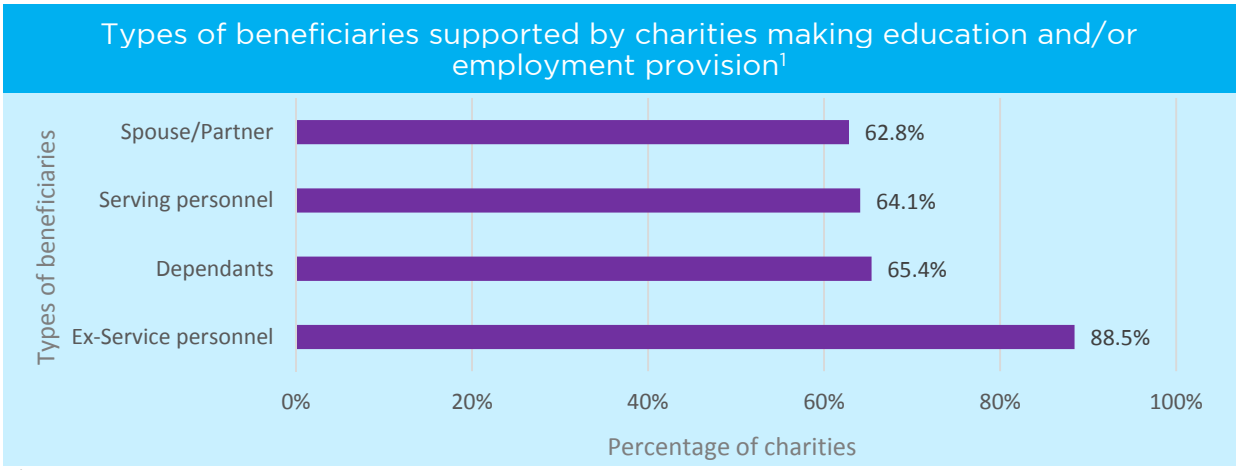
For charities making employment provision the most common number of beneficiaries supported per year was 1–99, according to over two-fifths (43.8%) of all charities which specified (N=32). This accounted for an estimated 530 beneficiaries. In total, three charities reported that their charity made employment provision for over 1,000 beneficiaries in the past year, which accounted for approximately 21,650 beneficiaries.

It should also be noted that veterans may access more than one charity for support. Similarly, beneficiaries may access both education and employment services from one charity. Therefore, it is not possible with current figures, or through current service providers' record-keeping, to control for such overlap and so figures should be used with caution. Further research on the beneficiary community may be needed to provide an approximate figure of multi-service usage.

Nevertheless, the minimum figures stated by charities where specified highlight substantial demand for education and employment support within the armed forces community. A large number of beneficiaries (at least 35,800) access support from a relatively small pool of charities (78 in total). DSC also collected data on the number of beneficiaries who successfully secured employment or gained a qualification with the help of armed forces charities. These findings are discussed in chapter three.

Figure 3 shows the survey responses (N=46) percentage of charities making provision across five main beneficiary categories. The most common beneficiary category was ex-Service personnel (88.5%) which 68 charities support. Almost two-thirds (65.4%) of charities supported dependants. Over three-fifths made provision for serving personnel (64.1%) and spouses/partners (62.8%).

Figure 3



[1]Data is taken from charities where specified (N=46).

Further analysis showed that almost three-fifths (59.0%) of charities support three or more beneficiary types, typically delivering a wide range of education and employment support to the wider armed forces community. However, some charities did provide specialist support where provision catered directly to a specific beneficiary group. For example, seven charities, which account for 8.9% of all charities in the dataset, exclusively provide education support for dependants.

A small number of charities (seven in total) enforce strict or restricted eligibility criteria for beneficiaries, such as belonging to a specific Service category, being a WIS (wounded, injured and sick) veteran or having an affiliation to a particular regiment.

DSC's findings indicate that provision is relatively evenly spread across various subsections of the armed forces community. Beyond the seven charities catering exclusively to dependants, it is currently not known if charities offered tailored services for specific beneficiary types, for example, recruitment advice for military spouses. Although beyond the scope of this study, this would be an interesting avenue of further research.

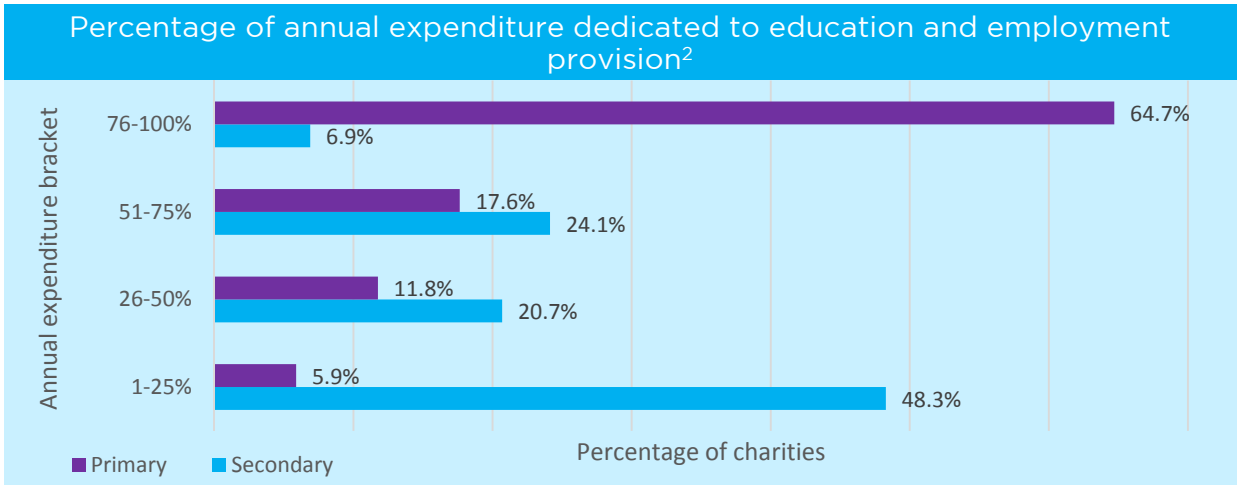
1.4 CHARITABLE EXPENDITURE

The overall approximate annual expenditure on education and employment provision from all charities is £25,641,871. Primary providers accounted for approximately £10,287,546 of this total, while Secondary providers accounted for approximately £15,354,325. It should be noted, however, that this amount is taken from data where available (N=70 charities) and is an approximation based on their reported percentage of expenditure only.

Each charity's reported expenditure has been back-calculated from charity regulator records on each corresponding charity's annual charitable expenditure. Survey data used in this calculation is based on approximate percentage of expenditure attributed by respondents to education and/or employment support. It is recognised that there may be an element of 'double counting' in the above expenditure figures, as one charity's expenditure (as a grant) can become another charity's income and would therefore feature twice in the overall financial accounting.

Figure 4 shows the total amount dedicated as a percentage of total annual expenditure. Primary providers are more commonly (64.7%) committing between three-quarters and the entirety of their annual expenditure on education and employment provision. In contrast to this, Secondary providers are most commonly (48.3%) spending up to one-quarter of their annual expenditure on education and employment provision.

Figure 4



[2]Data is taken from charities' survey responses, where expenditure was specified (N=46); Primary providers who specified (N=17), Secondary providers who specified (N=29).

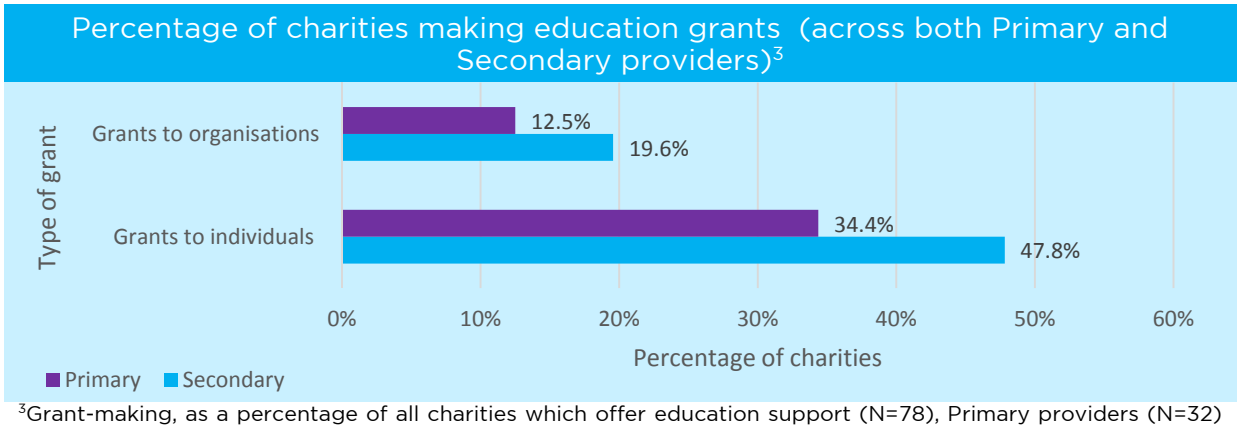
Figures presented are based upon approximations of average expenditure provided by survey respondents; however, it clearly illustrates the distinction between Primary and Secondary providers and therefore the importance of providing distinct analysis for each.

1.4.1 Grant-making

DSC examined the number of charities making grants for education and employment provision.

Figure 5 shows the percentage of charities who make education grants to individuals and organisations, split by Primary and Secondary providers. Overall, Secondary providers were slightly more likely to make educational grants. Almost half of all Secondary providers (47.8%) made grants to individuals, compared to one-third of Primary providers (34.4%). Similarly, one-fifth of Secondary providers delivered educational grants to organisations, compared to 12.5% of Primary providers.

Figure 5



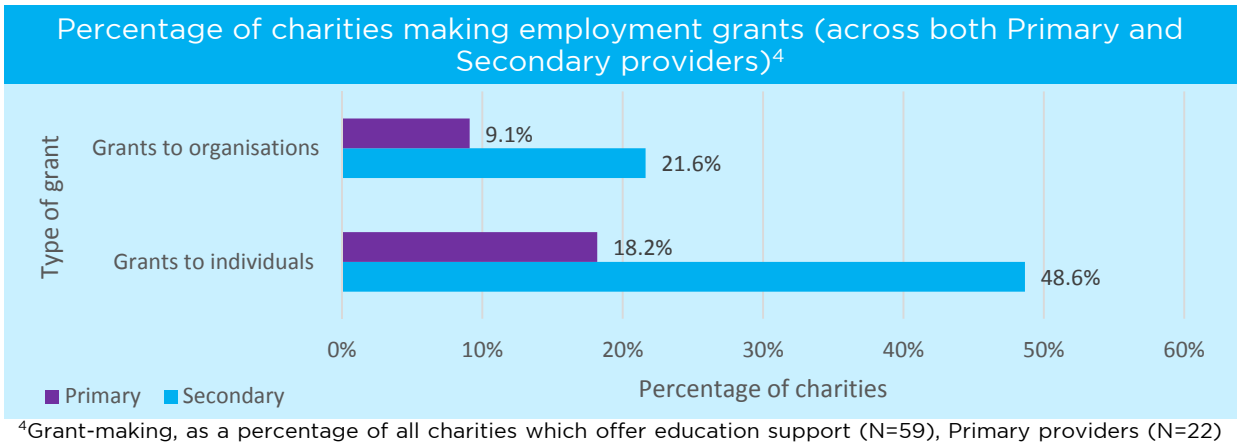
[3]Grant-making, as a percentage of all charities which offer education support (N=78), Primary providers (N=32) and Secondary providers (N=37).

Overall (when no Primary-Secondary split is applied), approximately two-fifths (42.3%) of all charities making education provision deliver grants to individuals. However, grants to organisations were much less common, fewer than one-fifth (16.7%) of all charities making education provision issued grants to organisations to deliver education support.

Figure 6 shows the charities which make grants for employment purposes, split by Primary and Secondary providers. Secondary providers were over twice as likely to make employment grants when compared to Primary providers.

Almost half (48.6%) of Secondary providers made grants to individuals, compared to fewer than one-fifth (18.2%) of Primary providers. Approximately one-fifth (21.6%) of Secondary providers offered employment grants to organisations, compared to just one-tenth of Primary providers (9.1%).

Figure 6



[4]Grant-making, as a percentage of all charities which offer education support (N=59), Primary providers (N=22) and Secondary providers (N=37).

In total (when no Primary-Secondary split is applied), almost two-fifths (37.3%) of all charities making employment provision issued grants to individuals. In contrast, 16.9% of charities offered grants to organisations for employment purposes.

Information on grant-making practices is taken from charity regulator information. However, previous research undertaken by DSC showed that in practice, only around 10% of those charities which state that they make grants actually do so.[5] Overall, armed forces charities were over twice as likely to provide grants to individuals rather than organisations, for both education and employment purposes.

[5]This situation is not specific to the armed forces charity sector. Earlier research by DSC published in *UK Grant-Making Trusts and Foundations* revealed that many more charities in general state in their objects that they make grants than they do in practice.

It should be noted that grant-making practices may impact the accuracy of estimated expenditure figures as there is potential for grants to be recycled within the same closed group of armed forces charities, thus inflating sector expenditure. For example, grant-making charities which deliver funds for education support are likely to give directly to other charities featured within this report, who in turn use the awarded funds to deliver services to beneficiaries.

1.5 CHAPTER ONE SUMMARY

Provision for education and employment

DSC identified 78 charities that made provision for education and/or employment for the armed forces community, which represents 6.5% of all armed forces charities (N=1,200). All 78 charities in the dataset deliver education provision, three-quarters (75.6%) of which also make provision for employment support.

Primary and Secondary providers

Almost three-fifths (59.0%) of charities in the data are Secondary providers of education and/or employment support. Just over two-fifths (41.0%) of charities are Primary providers of education and/or employment support.

Beneficiaries

At least 35,800 beneficiaries accessed education support and 28,100 accessed employment support within the previous year. These figures should be treated with caution as they are conservative estimates, based upon data where specified. The four main beneficiary groups for which education or employment support was offered were: veterans (supported by 87.2% of charities); serving personnel (supported by 64.1% of charities); spouse/partner and dependants (each supported by 62.8% of charities).

Charitable expenditure and grant-making

Expenditure data, where provided by charities, suggests that annual expenditure on education and employment is in the region of at least £25,641,871. Approximately two-fifths of charities offer grants to individuals for education and employment purposes (42.3% and 37.3% respectively). Conversely, grants to individuals were offered by fewer than one-fifth of charities, 16.7% and 16.9% of education and employment providers respectively.

CHAPTER TWO

Service delivery: education and employment

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides information and analysis on types of education and employment services being delivered to beneficiaries. The chapter is divided into the following sections:

- Categories of education support
- Qualifications supported
- Delivery of services
- Partnership and collaboration
- Accreditation and impact evaluation

2.2 CATEGORIES OF EDUCATION SUPPORT

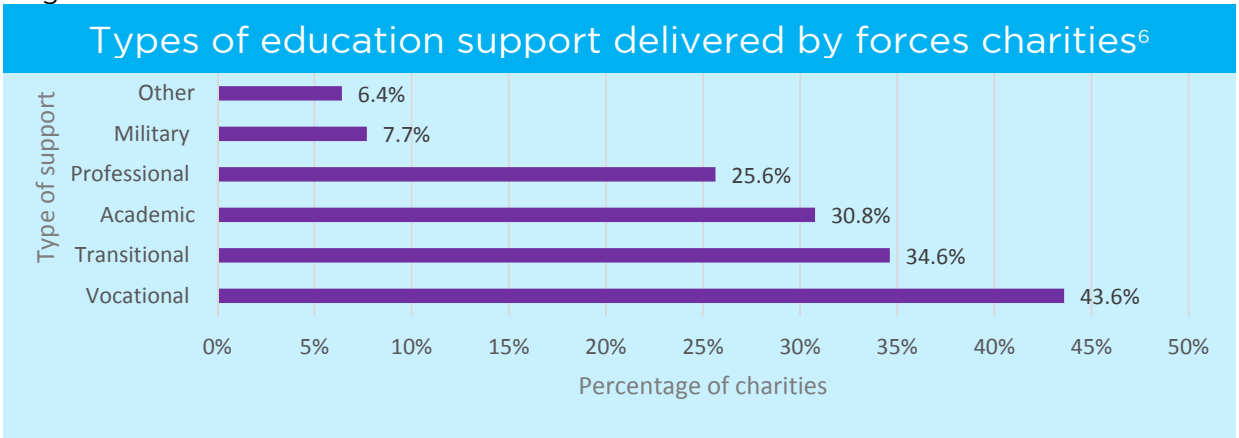
As mentioned in the introduction, the term 'education' encompasses a wide range of learning methods and training practices. In order to measure the most common types of provision offered by armed forces charities, DSC categorised education provision into five distinct groups, which are defined as follows:

- Academic learning – theoretical learning, which usually takes place within classroom environments and supports national qualifications, for example GCSE or degree.
- Vocational training – practical skills, which may take place in a classroom environment or on the job and prepares students for a specific trade or job, for example NVQ or apprenticeship.
- Transitional training – skills to help veterans adapt to civilian life, for example, financial budgeting training.
- Professional training – skills to advance or develop a civilian career, for example, management course.
- Military training – skills to advance a Service career, for example, career development or leadership training.

Figure 7 shows the types of education provision available across all armed forces charities which make provision for education (N=78). In total, 34 charities, which represent over two-fifths (43.6%) of all charities, provide vocational training. Over one-third of all charities deliver transitional skills training and academic learning (34.6% and 30.8% respectively). A quarter (25.6%) of charities stated that they facilitate professional development training. The least popular category of education was military training, supported by only 7.7% of charities.

In total, 6.4% of charities reported providing 'other' types of educational provision, which included experiential learning, Military Health First Aid and computer skills.

Figure 7



[6]Note: categories are not mutually exclusive and percentages therefore do not sum to 100.

2.3 RANGE OF SERVICES: EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

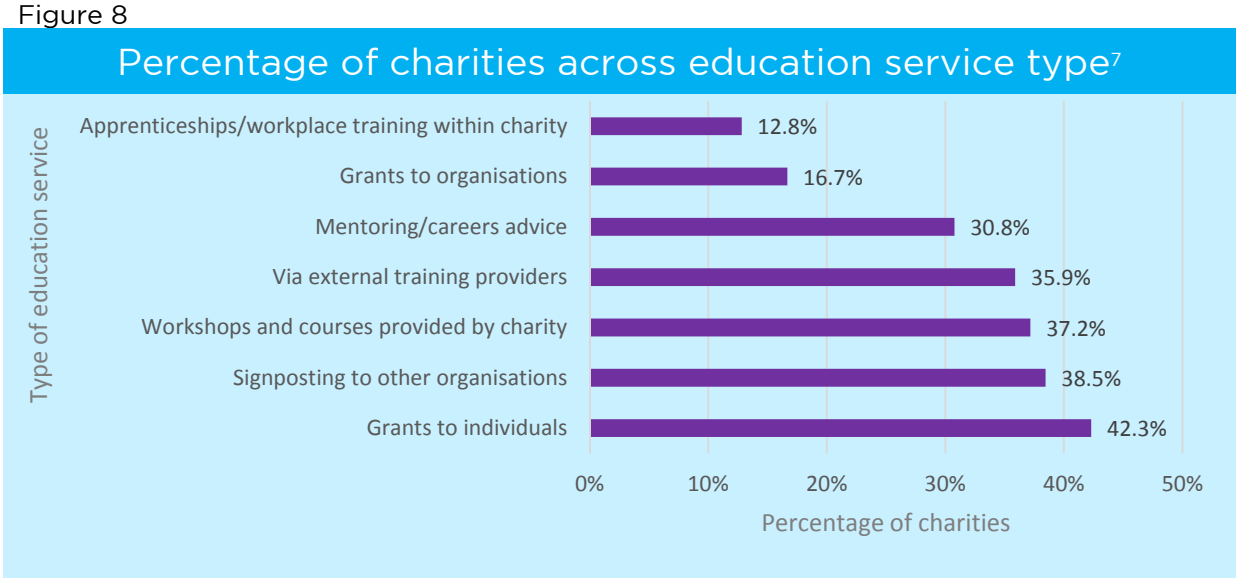
2.3.1 Education services

Figure 8 shows the range of services offered by charities who provide education support. Over two-fifths (42.3%) of charities state that they offer grants to individuals to access education. However, noticeably fewer charities (16.7%) deliver educational grants to organisations.

Workshops and courses were the second most popular education services delivered via charities themselves, offered by half of Primary provider charities (50.0%). Approximately one-third (30.8%) of charities directly delivered mentoring and careers advice, while just 12.8% offered apprenticeships or workplace training within their charity.

Over one-third of charities outsourced education provision to other organisations, either by signposting to other organisations or delivering services via external training providers (38.5% and 35.9% respectively). In total, seven charities reported providing 'other' forms of education provision which included residential training programmes, lectures, seminars and a commercial flying school.

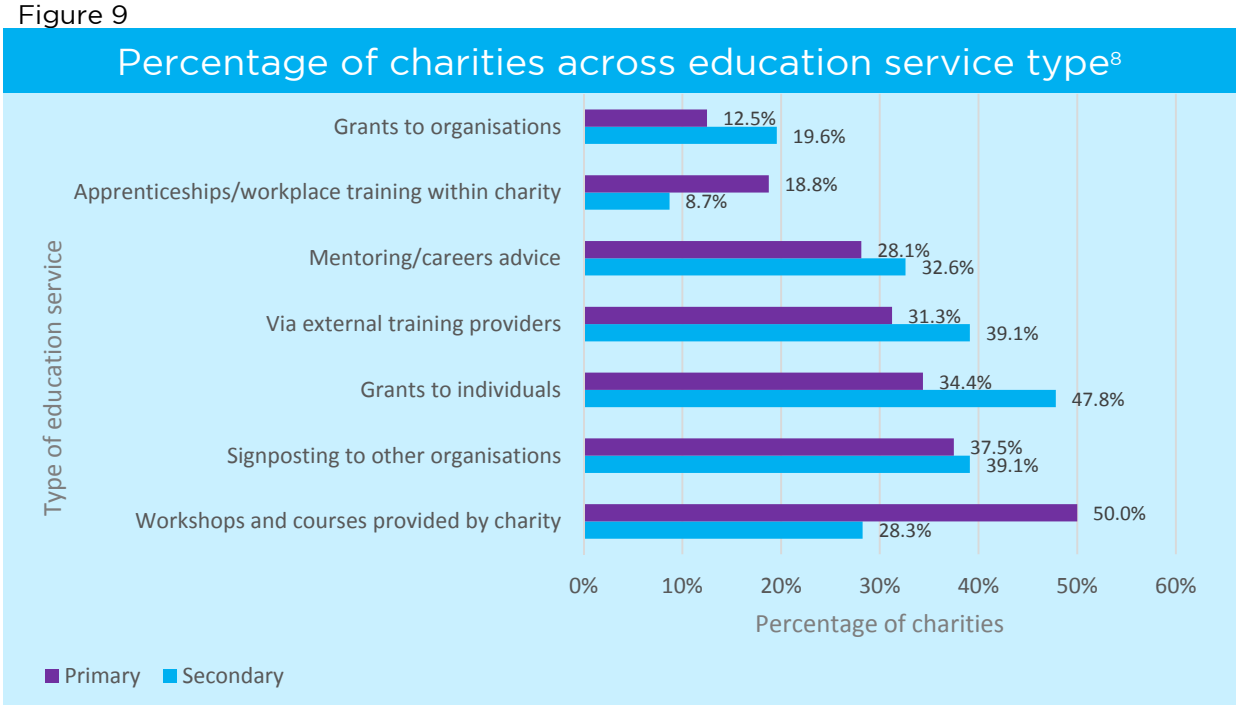
Figure 8



[7]Note: categories are not mutually exclusive and percentages therefore do not sum to 100. Measured as a percentage of charities which make education provision (N=78).

Figure 9 shows differences in service type across education services when split between Primary and Secondary providers. As expected, Primary providers were noticeably more likely to deliver 'in-house' education services. For example, half (50.0%) of all Primary providers held internal workshops and courses, compared to 28.3% of all Secondary providers. Similarly, 18.8% of Primary providers offered apprenticeships and workplace training within their charity, compared to 8.7% of Secondary providers.

Figure 9



[8]Note: categories are not mutually exclusive and percentages therefore do not sum to 100. Measured as a percentage of charities which make education provision (N=78).

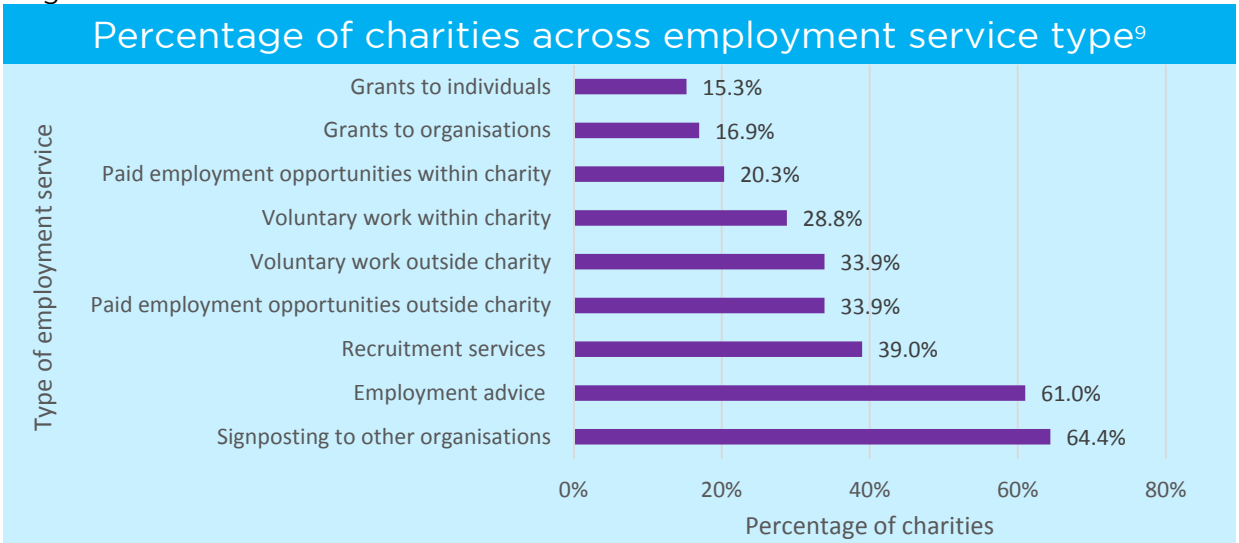
2.3.2 Employment services

Figure 10 shows the range of services offered by charities who provide employment support (N=59). The most popular service delivered via charities themselves was employment advice, offered by over three-fifths of charities (61.0%). Two-fifths offered recruitment services such as recruitment consultants and job-seeking support (39.0%). Over one-fifth of charities offered paid or voluntary job positions within their organisation (20.3% and 28.8% respectively).

A significant number of charities outsourced employment provision or collaborated with other organisations in order to support their beneficiaries into employment. Over three-fifths (64.4%) signpost to other organisations, while one-third (33.9%) offer paid or voluntary employment opportunities with external organisations.

With regards to grant-making, less than one-fifth (15.3%) of charities offer employment grants to individuals, while 16.9% make grants both to organisations and individuals. In total, seven charities provided 'other' forms of employment provision such as mentoring, apprenticeships and work experience schemes.

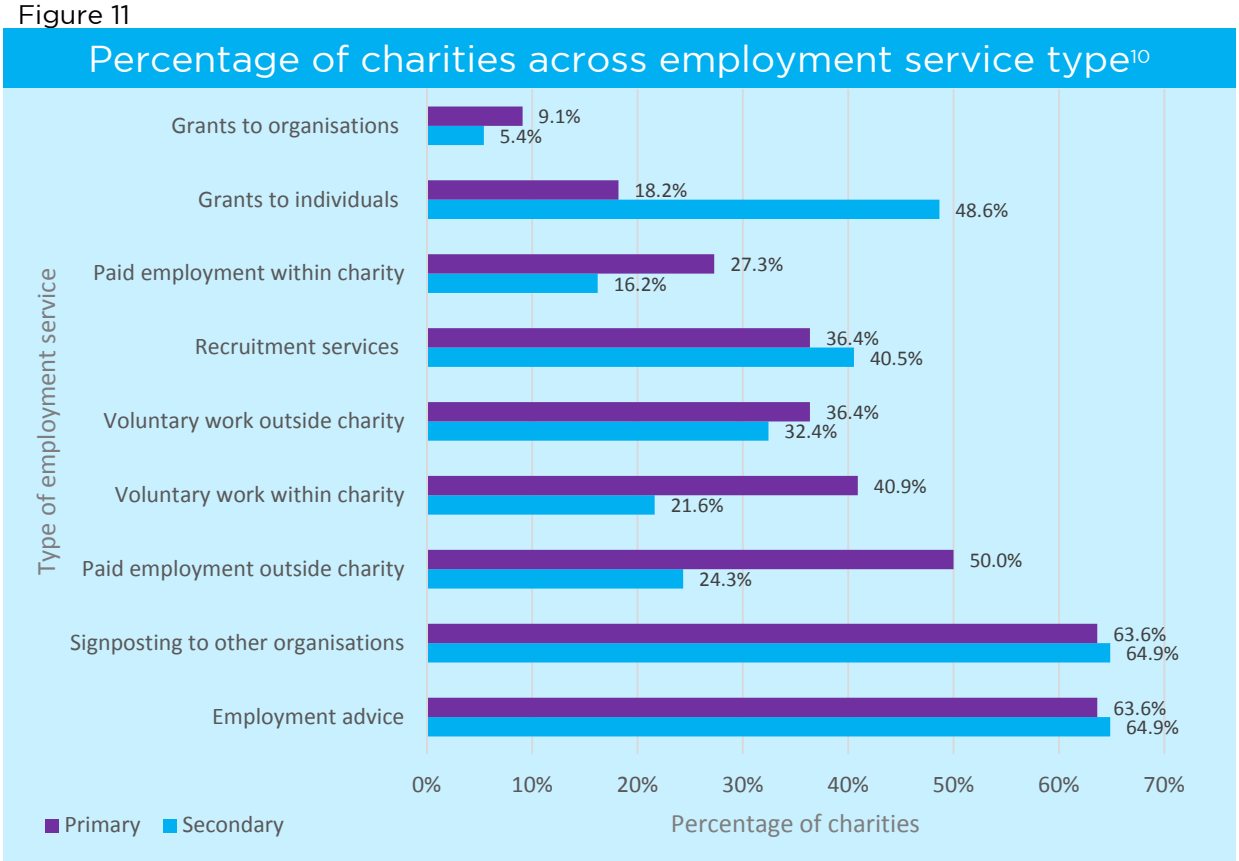
Figure 10



[9]Note: categories are not mutually exclusive and percentages therefore do not sum to 100. Measured as a percentage of charities which make employment provision (N=59).

Figure 11 shows differences in service type across employment services when split between Primary and Secondary providers. Unsurprisingly, Primary providers were found to be around twice as likely to deliver 'in-house' employment services; two-fifths (40.9%) offered voluntary work within their organisations compared to only 21.6% of Secondary providers, and 50.0% offered paid employment opportunities directly, versus only 24.3% of Secondary providers.

Figure 11



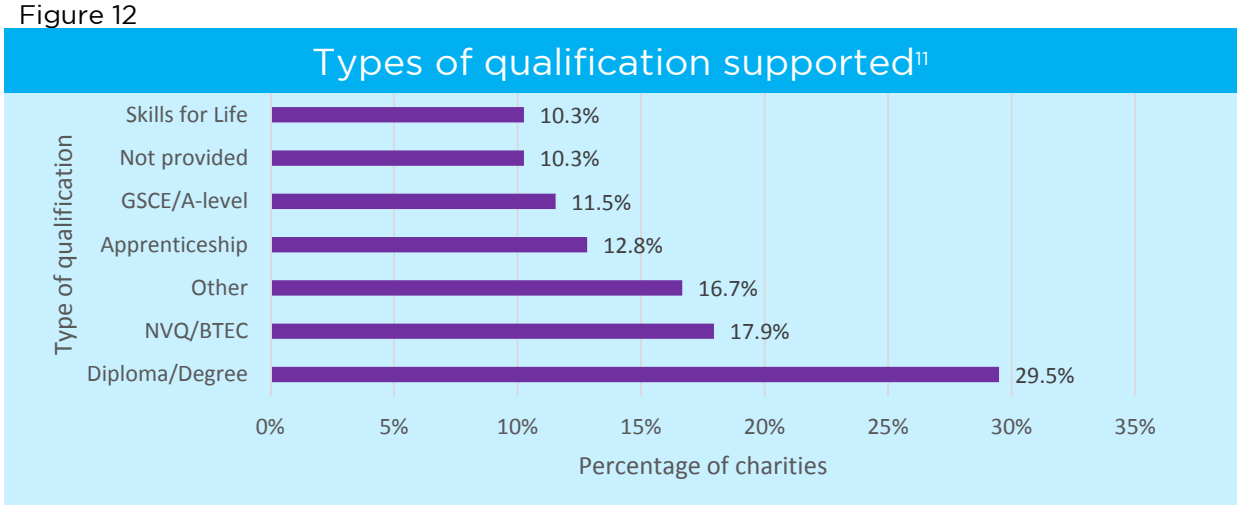
[10]Note: categories are not mutually exclusive and percentages therefore do not sum to 100. Measured as a percentage of charities which make employment provision (N=59).

2.4 QUALIFICATIONS SUPPORTED

Figure 12 shows the qualifications supported by forces charities. Overall, the most common type of qualifications supported were higher education awards such as degrees and diplomas, supported by close to one-third (29.5%) of all charities which specified. In contrast, the least commonly supported qualification was Skills for Life, supported by one-tenth (10.3%) of charities which specified.

One-tenth (10.3%) of charities stated that their education provision did not support any qualifications. Overall, 13 charities supported 'other' qualifications which were typically industry-specific awards in areas such as forestry, sports and coaching, security and driving.

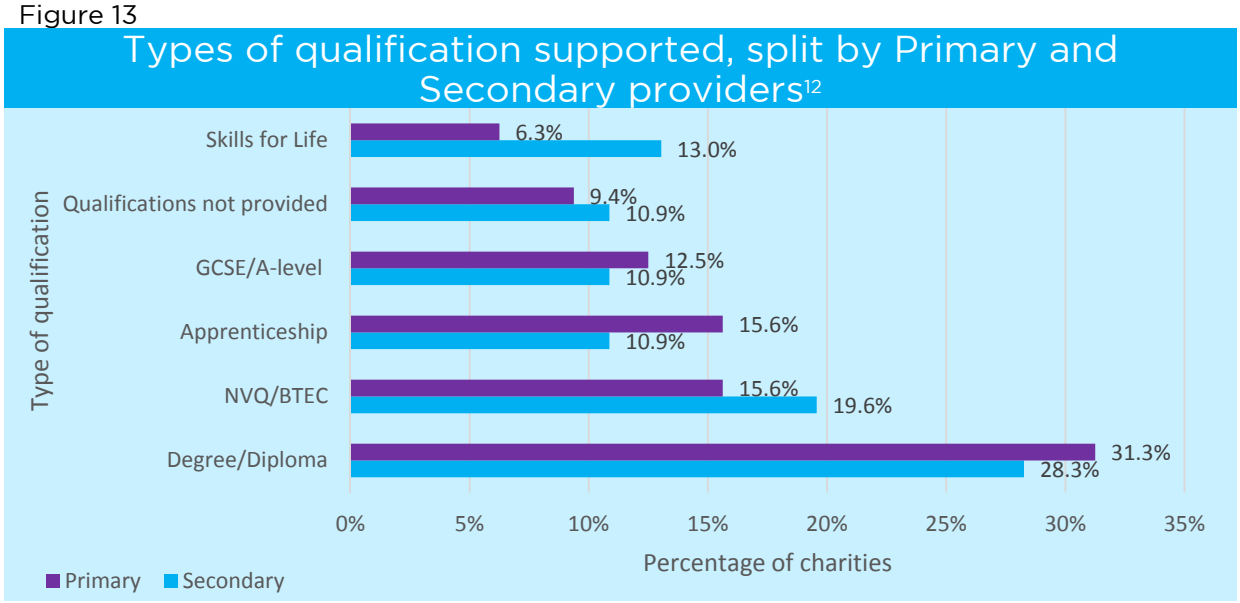
Figure 12



[11]Note: categories are not mutually exclusive and percentages therefore do not sum to 100. Measured as a percentage of charities which make employment provision (N=78).

Figure 13 shows the types of qualifications supported by charities making education provision, where specified, split between Primary and Secondary providers. Primary providers were marginally more likely to deliver higher education qualifications, such as diplomas and degrees. Secondary providers were more likely to provide lower-level qualifications such as Skills for Life; secondary level qualifications such as GCSE and A-levels and vocational qualifications such as NVQs and BTECs.

Figure 13

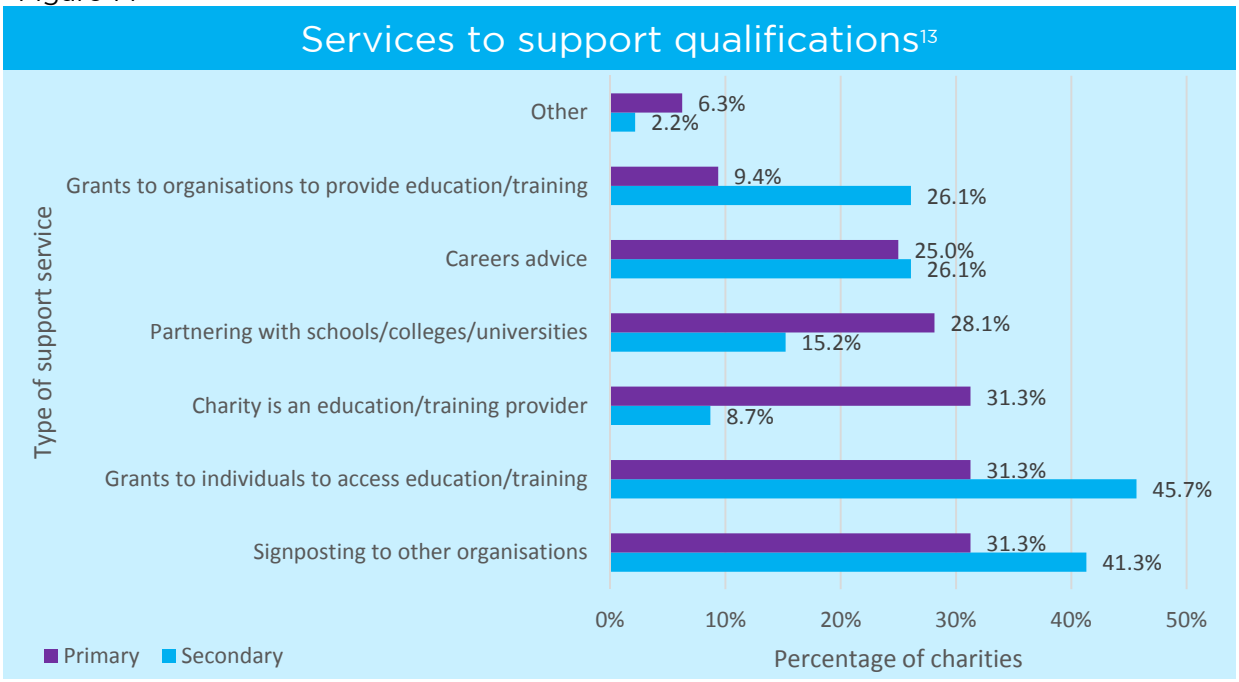


[12]Note: categories are not mutually exclusive and percentages therefore do not sum to 100. Measured as a percentage of charities which make employment provision (N=78).

The most common service was grants to individuals to access education, delivered by close to two-fifths of all charities (39.7%). This was closely followed by signposting to other organisations (37.2%). In contrast, fewer than one-fifth (17.9%) of charities were able to offer qualifications directly due to their status as a formal education or training provider. 'Other' services, provided by three charities, included provision of learning materials and financial assistance to self-employed veterans.

Figure 14 shows the services provided by charities to help beneficiaries to gain nationally recognised qualifications, split between Primary and Secondary providers. As expected, Secondary providers were more likely to deliver grants to organisations who deliver courses/training. Notably, Primary providers were around twice as likely to partner with organisations which awarded qualifications. The following section discusses partnership and collaboration in greater depth.

Figure 14



[13]Note: categories are not mutually exclusive and percentages therefore do not sum to 100. Measured as a percentage of charities which make employment provision (N=78).

DSC found evidence of forces charities facilitating a wide range of qualifications, across all attainment levels. Notably, charities were more likely to support qualifications at secondary school level and above. In contrast, fewer than one-tenth of charities provided Skills for Life, which aims to improve basic literacy and numeracy skills of adult learners. Charities predominately offer higher level, career-orientated qualifications such as higher education degrees and vocational awards, which serve to improve access to civilian employment.

However, it should be noted that supporting qualifications is not a measure of the quality of education provision. Certain types of education and training methods do not lend themselves to formal qualifications, for example transitional skills training tends to focus on learning to perform everyday civilian tasks such as financial management and household budgeting.

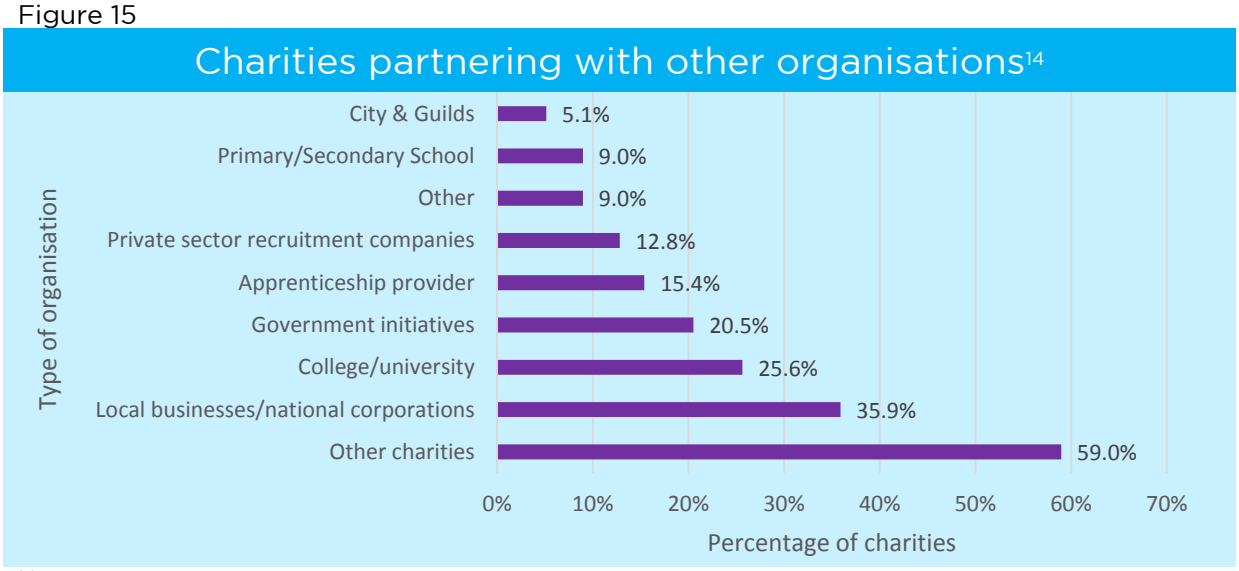
2.5 PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION

Figure 15 shows the extent of partnership and collaboration between charities and other organisations. The most common form of partnership was between charities themselves, almost three-fifths (59.0%) of charities partnered with other third sector organisations.

Over one-third of charities partnered with businesses (35.9%). The least common partnership was City & Guilds training providers; 5.1% of charities engaged in collaboration with this institution.

'Other' types of partnership organisations were reported by 9% of survey respondents and included local statutory services, umbrella organisations, livery companies, industry and awarding bodies.

Figure 15



[14]Note: categories are not mutually exclusive and percentages therefore do not sum to 100. Measured as a percentage of charities which make education and employment provision (N=78).

Overall, Primary and Secondary providers were fairly consistent with regards to the type of partnerships undertaken. However, partnerships with private sector recruitment agencies, were over six times more common for Secondary providers (19.6%) compared to Primary providers (3.1%). In contrast, Primary providers were noticeably more likely to partner with colleges/universities (34.4% v. 19.6%) and apprenticeship providers (21.9% v. 10.9%).

DSC's research also explored the extent to which employment charities engage, adopt and implement government employment initiatives. Analysis focused on five popular schemes, which are briefly outlined as followed:

- Armed Forces Covenant – outlines the obligation that the government, the nation and the armed forces have to help one another, and ensures ex-Service personnel face no disadvantage compared to civilians. Organisations pledge to support the forces community by signing the Covenant.

- Career Transition Partnership (CTP) – the MOD's official provider of armed forces resettlement, which provides services that support veterans' transition to civilian life, including employment support.

- Defence Relationship Management (DRM) – a single point of contact linking employers with the MOD, offering advice and support on employing members of the armed forces community.

- Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) – encourages employers to support defence and inspire other organisations to do the same by issuing awards to those which demonstrate support for the armed forces community.

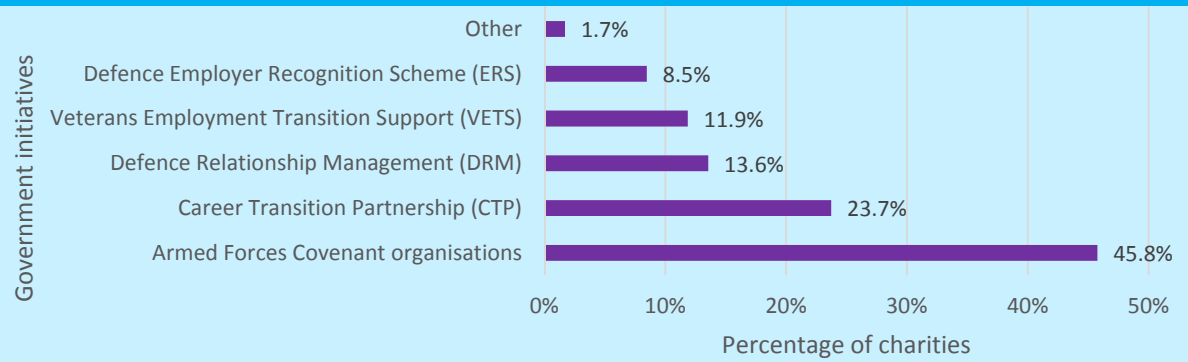
- Veterans Employment Transition Support (VETS) – a social enterprise that brings together charities, businesses and the MOD to improve employment outcomes for veterans, employers and the UK economy.

Figure 16 shows the adoption of government employment initiatives across all charities which offer employment support (N=59). Working alongside Armed Forces Covenant signatory organisations was the most popular initiative by a significant margin; this practice was undertaken by over two-fifths (45.8%) of charities.

Over one-fifth (23.7%) of Service charities engaged with CTP pathways. The Defence ERS generated the least amount of engagement, with only 8.5% of charities reporting to have utilised this scheme within their employment delivery framework. Only one charity reported implementing an 'other' initiative, specifically the Defence Recovery Careers Service.

Figure 16

Government initiatives adopted by employment providers[15]



[15]Note: categories are not mutually exclusive and percentages therefore do not sum to 100. Measured as a percentage of charities which make employment provision (N=59).

Interestingly, collaboration was the most frequently cited aspect of 'best practice', mentioned by eight survey respondents (or 22.7% of those that specified):

'Recommended working collaboratively with other organisations to share resources/expertise and avoid duplication.'

'Look at wider provision and seek to double up/collaborate wherever possible. When governmental funding is involved, this seems particularly appropriate.'

Survey respondents

An additional survey question, asked specifically, to what extent charities benefited from collaborating with other organisations when delivering education and employment provision. Of those who specified (N=54), two-fifths stated partnerships played a pivotal role in service delivery or were instrumental to achieving charitable objects. Partnerships are particularly vital for Secondary providers and grant-making charities, who often do not provide services directly:

'Work extensively with employers to generate vacancies suitable for our beneficiaries.'

'Full extent. We don't conduct service delivery ourselves but fund others.'

Survey respondents

A further quarter (25.9%) of those who specified reported experiencing some or occasional benefits of partnerships, such as being able to refer beneficiaries to external organisations or access the services of partner organisations on a case-by-case basis; or noted the potential benefits of future partnerships:

> *'Shared learning and access to people who can influence policy'*
>
> *'This is still very much in development, but we find that a collaborative approach makes the delivery of employment provision more efficient and professional.'*
>
> Survey respondents

In contrast, seven charities (13.0% of those specified) stated that they did not currently engage in any partnerships or experience any benefits of doing so, many of which noted facing significant barriers to forming partnerships:

> *'We seek to collaborate but find there is often reluctance.'*
>
> *'Massively misunderstood by community. Bigger charities don't want to partner/collaborate with smaller charities'*
>
> Survey respondents

It should be noted that forces charities make up a small element of the wider education and employability landscape within the UK. Members of the armed forces community may access support from other third sector organisations and statutory bodies.
Survey feedback emphasised the importance of collaboration, not only within the third sector itself but also between charities and businesses, government agencies and policymakers. The vast majority of respondents acknowledged the value of partnerships in terms of enabling them to deliver effective services to their beneficiaries.

A small but significant number of charities encountered serious barriers to forming partnerships, which perhaps indicates that further steps could be taken to facilitate and encourage open collaboration across the sector.

CASE STUDY: COLLABORATION ON EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT

RFEA - The Forces Employment Charity is one of the UK's oldest military charities, having been operating for over 130 years. The charity's mission is to provide life-long, life-changing support, jobs and training opportunities to Service leavers, veterans and their families, irrespective of circumstances, rank, length of service, or reason for leaving.

In the previous year, 16,000 Service and ex-Service personnel accessed RFEA services, 15,000 of which were successfully supported into employment. RFEA also provides an excellent example of cross-sector collaboration, working alongside charities, public sector organisations and commercial companies to deliver the most effective employment service for its beneficiaries.

In addition to RFEA's own comprehensive Ex-Forces programme, it provides specialist employment support services to beneficiaries of ABF The Soldiers' Charity, Walking With the Wounded, Help for Heroes, The Royal British Legion, the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity, Poppyscotland and the RAF Benevolent Fund. Working in partnership with Walking With the Wounded it has also developed Project Nova, an early intervention programme designed to help veterans in police custody, which is now operating across 17 constabulary areas in England.

Notably, RFEA is the principle charity provider to the CTP, and deliver resettlement services on behalf of the MOD. RFEA's Employer Relationship Team works with employers to create thousands of job opportunities each year, and its Central Support Team guides Service leavers and veterans through the transition and job-finding process.

In addition, RFEA was instrumental in developing two specialist strands of the CTP: CTP

Early Horizons which is dedicated to providing transitional support to ESLs (Early Service Leavers); and CTP Assist which provides specialist help to WIS (Wounded, Injured and Sick personnel). Previous to their development, ESLs and WIS Service leavers were largely overlooked by the CTP, despite being identified as being particularly vulnerable to unemployment.

RFEA's collaboration extends beyond the charity sector. It has built relationships with a network of over 7,000 UK employers from large multinationals to local companies across all major employment sectors. The charity has also collaborated with statutory organisations and is currently delivering Through the Gate – a programme which provides careers and employment help to veterans in prison in the east of England – which is funded by the European Social Fund.

Its wide portfolio of current programmes supports Service leavers, veterans and their families who face a range of transitional and employment issues, including those in recovery centres, in police custody, prison and probation, and temporary accommodation. RFEA is also a member of several consortiums of service charities including Cobseo, Veterans Scotland and the Veteran's Gateway.

RFEA has established itself as an expert in the delivery of employment services to the ex-Service community, as evident by the vast number of referrals and collaborative projects. The charity provides a vital delivery role, particularly for Secondary providers who do not operate dedicated employment programmes. In collaborating with the MOD, RFEA effectively lends its expertise in identifying and responding to a unique need.

2.6 ACCREDITATION, EVALUATION AND IMPACT

2.6.1 Accreditation

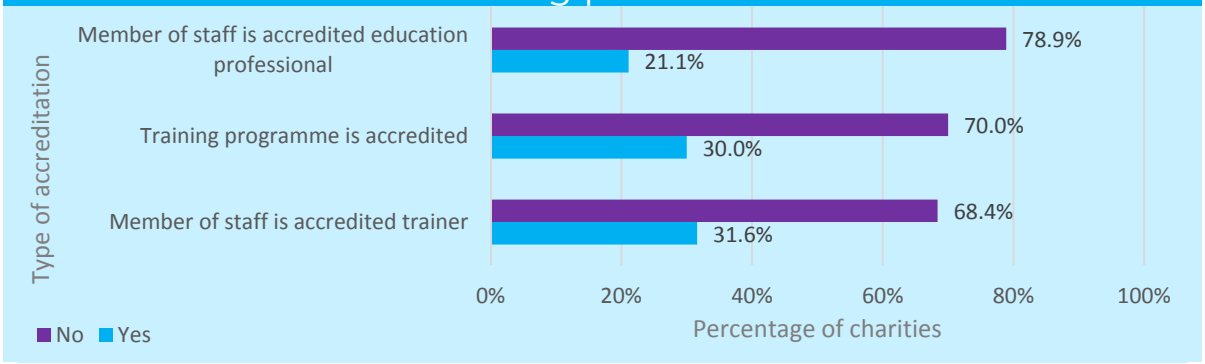
Figure 17 shows the number of charities which offered accredited services or employed accredited staff. Accreditation trends were consistently low, one-fifth of charities (21.1%) employed education professionals, while just under one-third offered accredited training programmes or employed accredited trainers (30.0% and 31.6% respectively).

Of those who stated 'yes' to undertaking accreditation, types of accreditation included regulatory awards from specific industry bodies such as the CAA (Civil Aviation Authority), City & Guilds recognised trainers and fully qualified career advisors. Survey responses also showed the diverse range of niche and specialist accreditation options available in the wider education and training sector.

It should be noted that a charity's accreditation status is not intended to be evaluative, and it therefore does not equate to a value judgement of their services. Notably, accreditation is more relevant to certain providers than others. For example, charities which are 'education or training providers' would be expected to implement teaching standards. In contrast, accreditation is less relevant to those charities which primarily provide support via advocacy and advice, signposting or grant-making.

Figure 17

Percentage of charities which offer accredited education and training provision[16]



[16]Note: data is taken for charities where specified, for member of staff education professional (N=38); training programme is accredited (N=40); member of staff is accredited trainer (N=38).

Across the board accreditation was rare. DSC acknowledges that it may be difficult to implement a standard form of accreditation across the sector, due to the reasons previously outlined. Nevertheless, recognisable forms of accreditation or alternatively, stamps of best practice would improve beneficiaries' ability to identify and select appropriate education and/or employment provision. Possible forms of, and alternatives to, accreditation, which could be implemented by forces charities are discussed further in chapter three.

CASE STUDY: BEST PRACTICE – THE IPS MODEL OF EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT

The Poppy Factory has a proud history of supporting WIS (wounded, injured and sick) ex-Service personnel into employment, since its inception in 1922. The vision for The Poppy Factory is 'every disabled veteran should have the opportunity for meaningful work' (Carolan, 2016). Since the launch of its employability service in 2010, it has provided support to over 2,000 veterans and supported 818 beneficiaries (clients) into employment.

The Poppy Factory follows the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) approach to supported employment, which has been found to be the most effective approach to supporting people affected by mental health problems, spinal injury and homelessness into competitive open employment (Van Til et al, 2012; Ottomanelli, Barnett and Toscano, 2014; Rosenheck and Mares, 2007).

IPS works on the principle of 'place, train and maintain'. Employability consultants work with an individual to find and secure a job in open, competitive employment with training and development subsequently provided by an employer as needed, once the individual is in the role. This is very different to the traditional train and place approach. All placements are paid, based upon a person's work preferences, and aim to get people into employment quickly, while still respecting the individual's own pace. One of the primary differences between IPS and other forms of supported employment is the focus on joined-up and integrated working between employment specialists and clinical teams.

The charity also offers paid, meaningful employment opportunities for disabled veterans, and their dependants at The Poppy Factory headquarters in Richmond, Surrey. The factory manufactures poppies and wreaths for the royal family and The Royal British Legion's annual Poppy Appeal. Personalised in-work support is available for veterans and their employers during the first 12 months of employment. Occasionally, and despite a focus on open competitive employment, The Poppy Factory provides a salary grant for the first year of work, to enable an individual with particularly complex needs, to re-enter work.

The charity has recently launched an 'Employer Toolkit', an online resource to help organisations employ and provide better management to veterans with disabilities in

the workplace: www.poppyfactory.org/employers-toolkit. The toolkit comprises ten sections, covering everything from mental health at work to employment law and updating and educating employers and veterans on best practice.

The Poppy Factory receives a large proportion of referrals from other military charities as well as a growing number from statutory services (NHS and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)). During 2015–2016 and 2016–2017, referrals were received via over 30 different organisations, the top referrers being Combat Stress and The Royal British Legion. The charity also engages with a vast range of employers, private sector recruitment agencies and DWP providers to source suitable work for beneficiaries. The Poppy Factory is recognised as a silver award defence employer and partners with numerous Armed Forces Covenant organisations.

The Poppy Factory is also accredited as a Disability Confident Employer under the DWP Disability Confident Scheme. The accreditation recognises the actions that The Poppy Factory takes to support people with disabilities and long-term health conditions to fulfil their potential in the workplace.

The charity is unique in that it offers direct employment opportunities in addition to more traditional forms of employment support such as careers advice and employment coaching, and it has emerged as the country's leading employment provider for veterans with health conditions and disabilities. The Poppy Factory also offers the IPS approach across the scope of mental and physical health, as well as for veterans with hearing or sight loss, and a community-based service is delivered in every region of England and Wales.

The Poppy Factory can be considered as an example of best practice as it adopts a well-researched, evidence-based model of employment support. The IPS model has been proven to have positive employment outcomes for WIS veterans and has the potential to be widely adopted across the sector.

2.6.2 Outcomes: qualifications

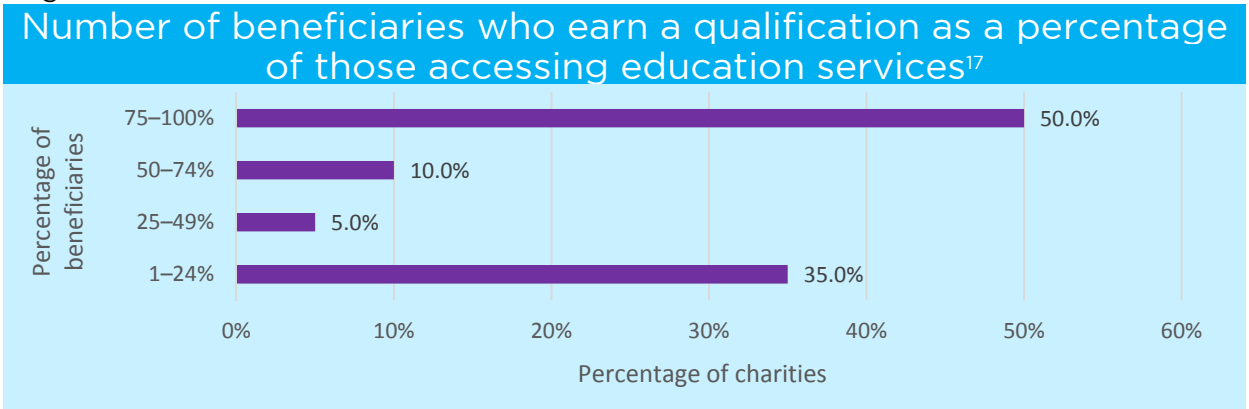
In total, 20 charities, which represents a quarter (25.6%) of all charities making education provision, were able to provide data on 'qualification outcomes', i.e. the estimated number of beneficiaries successfully gaining qualifications after accessing charitable support. Primary providers were slightly more likely to provide data on qualification outcomes, close to one-third (31.3%) of all Primary providers supplied this data, versus one-fifth (21.7%) of Secondary providers.

Based on the data provided where specified (N=20), forces charities helped at least 3,310 individuals to gain qualifications within the last year. This figure is an approximate number of beneficiaries successfully completing qualifications as a direct result of charitable intervention as stated by charities themselves.

Of those charities which provided data (N=20), 80% of those which specified helped between 1–99 individuals gain a qualification, which equated to 538 beneficiaries. In total, two charities reported helping over 1,000 people gain a qualification per year, which accounted for approximately 2,400 individuals.

Figure 18 shows the number of beneficiaries gaining qualifications as a percentage of all beneficiaries accessing education support. Of those charities which specified (N=20), the majority reported high service outcomes; half (50.0%) stated that they helped over 75% of all beneficiaries who accessed education support gain a qualification. In total, five charities, which represents 25.0% of those who specified, reported that 100% of beneficiaries who approached them for support earned qualification(s).

Figure 18



[17]Note: based on data where specified (N=20).

However, it should be noted that not all charities deliver outcome-based provision. For instance transition-skills training, such as financial budgeting, is unlikely to result in a qualification. Moreover, the object of the majority of charities is to provide access to education and training. Beyond this point, charities may be unlikely to monitor the long-term educational progress of beneficiaries.

2.6.3 Outcomes: employment

In total, 30 charities, which represents half (50.8%) of all charities making employment provision, were able to provide data on 'employability outcomes'. Primary and Secondary providers were equally likely to be able to provide this data (50.8% and 50.0% of which supplied data respectively).

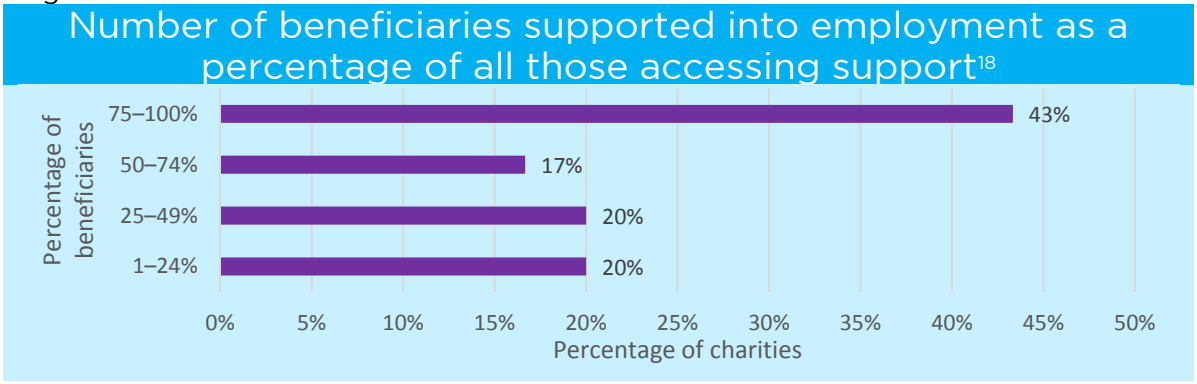
Notably, forces charities were twice as likely to collect data on employability outcomes as education outcomes; only one-quarter (25.6%) of charities recorded qualification success rates. This may be due to the fact that employment outcomes are typically easier to measure.

Based on survey responses where specified (N=30), forces charities helped at least 22,300 beneficiaries into employment within the last year. This figure is a conservative estimate only, as roughly half of charities making employment provision did not specify how many beneficiaries gained employment.

Of those charities which provided data (N=30), 22 charities or roughly three-quarters (73.3%) of those which specified supported 1–99 beneficiaries into employment, which accounted for an estimated 937 individuals; data for which is shown in figure 20. In total, two charities reported supporting over 1,000 beneficiaries into employment per year, which accounted for an estimated 19,600 individuals.

Of those who specified employability outcomes (N=30), over two-fifths (43.0%) reported helping over 75% of beneficiaries accessing support into employment.

Figure 19



[18]Note: Number of charities who specified number of beneficiaries supported into employment (N=30).

Qualification and employability outcomes were based on a relatively small sample, due to the fact that many Secondary providers were unable to provide this data. However, where data was available, it generally indicated high outcomes. Two-fifths of charities helped 75–100% of their beneficiaries into employment and 50% supported 75–100% of their beneficiaries to gain qualifications.

Measuring impact is extremely important, as it enables charities to judge the effectiveness of their services, identify any gaps in provision and evidence their ability to effectively meet the needs of their beneficiaries.

Not all charities featured within this report publish impact reports, specifically relating to education and/or employment provision. In the absence of comprehensive impact reports, qualification and employability outcomes have served as a useful indication of impact.

2.7 CHAPTER TWO SUMMARY

Types of education support

Vocational skills training was the most popular type of education support, offered by over two-fifths of forces charities (43.6%). This was followed by transitional-skills support, which was provided by over a third (34.6%) of charities.

Delivery of services

Grants to individuals to access education was the most popular education service offered by over two-fifths (42.3%) of charities represented in this report. Signposting to other organisations was the most popular employment service, offered by almost two-thirds (64.3%) of those making employment provision.

Qualifications supported

In total, 90% of charities offered services which directly supported beneficiaries to gain qualifications. According to survey responses, the most popular qualifications supported were higher education awards, offered by close to one-third (29.8%) of all charities.

Partnership and collaboration

The most common type of partnership was between charities themselves; almost two-thirds (59.0%) of charities collaborated with other charity sector organisations to provide education and/or employment support. Businesses were the most popular private sector partner, with over one-third of all charities (35.9%) engaging in this form of partnership.

Accreditation and impact evaluation

In total, 12 charities, which represents only 15.4% of all charities featured in this report, delivered services or employed staff which were formally accredited. Half (50.8%) of all charities making employment provision were able to provide data on employability outcomes. Only a quarter (25.6%) of charities making education provision produced data on qualification outcomes.

CHAPTER THREE

The last word: conclusions and recommendations

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides conclusions and recommendations from the research presented in this report. DSC's objective in undertaking this research was to provide an account of the provision being made by armed forces charities to beneficiaries in need of education and employment support. To address this remit, DSC devised the following research questions:

- How many forces charities provide education and employment support?
- How is education/employment support delivered to beneficiaries?
- What standards of practice, collaboration and evaluation exist?

3.2 HOW MANY FORCES CHARITIES PROVIDE EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT?

DSC identified 78 charities as being relevant to this report, of which 78 made provision for education and 59 made provision for employment. Education and employment are closely interlinked, resulting in significant overlap in service provision with three-quarters (75.6%) of charities featured within this report making provision for both.

It is unsurprising that 100% of charities which offer employment support also offer some form of education provision, which includes services such as CV writing, interview-skills, training and transitional support.

DSC research largely debunks the myth that there are 'too many forces charities'. Analysis at the subsector level reveals that the total number providing specialist support is relatively small; those making education provision (N=78) represent 6.5% of all forces charities, while those making employment provision (N=59) represent 5.4%.

Moreover, only 32 charities are Primary providers of education support and even fewer so (22 charities in total) are Primary providers of employment support. Primary providers refers to charities for which education/employment is the sole charitable object, whereas Secondary providers are charities with multiple objects. This distinction is particularly important, as it reveals that few charities exist solely to provide dedicated or expert education/employment support.

The size of sector or amount of provision available can also be loosely measured by charities' approximate expenditure on education/employment and the numbers of beneficiaries receiving support.

According to data where specified, armed forces charities annually spend at least £25,641,871. In total, approximately 35,800 beneficiaries accessed education services per year, while 28,100 accessed employment services.

It should be noted that these figures are approximate minimum totals only, as several charities did not specify data; Secondary providers in particular were not always able to provide accurate approximations. Nevertheless, these figures illustrate high levels of demand for education and employment support within the armed forces community and a robust response from the charity sector.

3.3 HOW IS EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT DELIVERED TO BENEFICIARIES?

Ex-Service personnel were the most common beneficiary type, supported by 88.5% of charities. Serving personnel, spouses/partners and dependants were all supported by over three-fifths of charities.

Three-fifths (59.0%) of all charities supported three or more beneficiary groups. This highlights the fact that the majority of charities make 'general provision' which caters to the wider armed forces community and supports diverse needs.

However, a small number of charities make specialist provision for specific beneficiary groups. For instance, seven charities offer education provision exclusively for the dependants of armed forces personnel.

In total, eight charities specified having strict eligibility criteria in place that fell outside of DSC's broader beneficiary categories. For example, affiliation with a specific regiment, membership of a particular Service or being a WIS (wounded, injured and sick) veteran.

Popular services differ in regard to education and employment provision; the most common education service was grants to individuals, provided by just over two-fifths of charities (42.3%). This was closely followed by signposting, undertaken by just under two-fifths of those making education provision (38.5%).

The most popular employment service was signposting, delivered by almost two-thirds (64.4%) of those making employment provision. Employment advice was also common, provided by over three-fifths of charities (61.0%).

As expected, Primary providers were more likely to deliver services 'in-house' while Secondary providers more likely to outsource provision. Primary providers were noticeably more likely to offer in-house voluntary positions, paid employment opportunities, workshops and courses. Conversely, Secondary providers were more likely to make grants and use external training providers.

3.4 WHAT STANDARDS OF PRACTICE, COLLABORATION AND EVALUATION EXIST?

3.4.1 Collaboration

Partnership with other charities is the most popular form of collaboration, undertaken by close to three-fifths (59.0%) of charities. The most popular private sector partner was businesses, with which over one-third (35.9%) of charities partnered.

Many charities noted the benefits of partnerships; collaboration was the most frequently cited aspect of best practice, mentioned by eight survey respondents. In total, 33 charities stated that partnerships were vital to achieving charitable objects and a further 14 reported experiencing occasional benefits of partnerships.

As highlighted by this report's case study, the Regular Forces Employment Association (RFEA) can be seen as a sector-leading model of cross-collaboration; the charity partners with numerous forces charities, statutory and private sector organisations, and notably, delivers Career Transition Partnership (CTP) services on behalf of the MOD.

However, not all charities experience benefits of collaboration; seven charities reported experiencing no benefits of partnerships or having none in place, many reported significant barriers to forming effective partnerships, such as the reluctance of bigger charities to engage in collaboration; this was particularly common among smaller charities and Secondary providers.

As for uptake of government employment initiatives, almost half (45.8%) of those offering employment support worked with Covenant organisations and one-quarter (23.7%)

engaged with the CTP. However, engagement across other initiatives was generally low, and in certain cases, survey answers exposed a lack of awareness of initiatives and how to access them.

3.4.2 Accreditation

Very few charities making education and/or employment provision offered accredited programmes and employed accredited staff. In total, 78.9% of charities who specified did not employ accredited education professionals, 70.0% did not offer accredited programmes and 68.4% did not employ accredited trainers.

It should be noted that accreditation status does not necessarily reflect the quality of provision offered. There are several reasons why accredited programmes may not be widely implemented across the sector. Due to the diverse range of education and employment services, corresponding accreditor/awarding bodies and varying industry standards, it is extremely difficult to apply a uniform form of accreditation across the sector.

Furthermore, accreditation is not relevant to all education and training providers. Charities which are 'education or training providers' are likely to implement teaching standards, but accreditation may be less relevant for those which provide support primarily via advocacy and advice, signposting or grant-making.

3.4.3 Measuring outcomes

According to data, where available, at least 3,310 beneficiaries gained qualifications with the help of charities and 22,300 were supported into employment. Only a quarter (25.6%) of education charities were able to provide data on qualification outcomes, despite 90% claiming to offer qualification(s). Employment charities fared slightly better, with roughly half (50.8%) providing data on employment outcomes.

Low response rates do not necessarily mean that charities fail to monitor service outcomes, they simply may not have had this data available. Furthermore, while measuring employment outcomes is relatively straightforward, measuring education outcomes is often more complex and could take place over a lengthy period. Additionally, not all services have measurable outcomes, for example transition skills or CV writing are unlikely to have a corresponding certificate/authentication process.

Often, education providers' object is to help beneficiaries gain access to employment. They may be therefore unlikely to extend a monitoring process beyond this point or track educational progress over time. In hindsight, it may have been more effective to ask for approximate numbers of beneficiaries supported into education rather than data on qualification outcomes, in order to encourage a greater response rate.

3.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.5.1 Greater commitment to measuring impact

Close to half (49.2%) of employment charities and three-quarters (74.4%) of education charities were unable to provide data on qualification and employment outcomes.

DSC recognises that implementing a monitoring and evaluation process may be difficult for the reasons highlighted above. These difficulties may be exacerbated for smaller charities, and Secondary providers who may provide sporadic education or employment support on an ad hoc basis.

Nevertheless, this information is vital to understand the effectiveness of current services and identify any gaps in provision. It is useful not only for forces charities themselves but also policymakers and beneficiaries who will stand to be better informed when seeking help.

3.5.2 Implement easily recognisable standards of best practice

Generally low levels of accreditation were observed across those making education and employment provision, with only 12 charities specifying that they offer accredited services or employ accredited staff.

Recognisable sector-wide standards of practice would serve to better inform members of the armed forces community when selecting assistance. It would also enable charities to signpost beneficiaries to the most relevant services.

Due to the specialist nature of provision, it is difficult to apply uniform standards of practice across the board. However, this could potentially come in the form of a seal of approval from umbrella organisations such as Cobseo or Veterans Scotland.

Alternatively, charities could adopt scientifically tested models of provision. The Poppy Factory leads the way in this respect by adopting the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) model of supported employment.

3.5.3 Extend opportunities to collaborate

Charities frequently partnered with other organisations to deliver education and/or employment provision. Three-fifths (59.0%) of charities partnered with other voluntary sector organisations, and collaboration was the most frequently cited rule of best practice suggested by survey respondents.

However, survey feedback also indicated that some charities experienced problems in collaborating with others:

> *'We seek to collaborate but find there is often reluctance.'*
>
> *'Bigger charities don't want to partner/collaborate with smaller charities.'*
>
> Survey respondents

Similarly, some survey responses revealed a lack of understanding of what statutory schemes were available and how to access them:

> *'None – we wouldn't know how to access them.'*
>
> Survey respondents

This perhaps indicates the need for greater effort to inform voluntary sector organisations about their services and extend opportunities for collaboration. This report should not be read in isolation; military charities make up only a small part of the education and employability landscape in the UK. Members of the armed forces community can access support from other voluntary sector organisations and statutory bodies; it is therefore essential that effective cross-collaboration takes place in order to: avoid duplication; share resources and expertise and alleviate pressure on a small number of specialist providers.

3.5.4 Further research

This report aimed to provide an overview of education and employment provision for the armed forces community. Most charities were found to make general provision for this wide cohort; three-fifths (59.0 %) of charities support three or more beneficiary groups. Over two-fifths of charities made provision for Service personnel, spouse/partners and dependants, which seemingly indicates that not one subgroup was overlooked by current provision.

Although beyond the scope of this report, it would be interesting to look at specialised provision for specific beneficiary groups. It would be particularly interesting to determine to what extent tailored provision for serving personnel, spouses/partners, etc. is available

and how they differ from one another, as each group faces a unique set of challenges with regards to education and employment.

As highlighted at the outset of this report, it is currently not possible to assess whether charitable provision is meeting 'need'. This is mainly owing to the fact that the size of the armed forces community cannot be accurately measured. To do so would require a census question, which DSC strongly recommends implementing.

Measuring need is an extremely difficult task as the armed forces community is made up of a huge variety of individuals with different skillsets, education levels and employment experience. However, a census question would be the first step in tackling this complex question.

DSC hopes that this report will help illuminate this important subsector of charitable support for the armed forces community and will serve to provide insight to policy-makers, the media, the forces charities themselves and, in turn, their many beneficiaries.

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FOCUS ON

Armed Forces Charities' Education & Employment Provision

This report follows on from the Directory of Social Change's (DSC) *Sector Insight* reports on UK armed forces charities, a series which DSC has been publishing since 2014. Building on these broader studies, the *Focus On* series exists to provide a more specific analysis of the work of armed forces charities across the UK — in this case, those who are making provision for education and employment support. This study contributes to DSC's growing body of research on the armed forces charity sector, which also includes the *www.armedforcescharities.org.uk* website.

This report provides an overview of the education and employment provision made by armed forces charities registered across the UK, focusing on:

- Analysis of qualifications supported and services provided for education
- Assessment of expenditure on education and employment provision
- Exploration of employment support offered by charities
- Categorisation of Primary and Secondary providers
- Collaboration, evaluation and standards of practice
- Insights into the beneficiary population
- Conclusions and recommendations

This is a unique resource for charities, government, policymakers and researchers to understand what armed forces charities deliver in terms of their education and employment provision. This subject area has been thoroughly explored to provide a body of evidence and insightful analysis which informs of policy, practice and research.

'Our aim in this work is to improve understanding of armed forces charities and their work, so that policymakers and forces charities can create a better environment for the armed forces community – in short, to improve the lives of all those who sacrifice on all our behalf.'

Jay Kennedy, Director of Policy and Research, Directory of Social Change

'The clearly detailed evidence in this report offers an important and unique insight into the education and employment support provided by the armed forces charity sector across the UK.'

Ray Lock, Chief Executive, Forces in Mind Trust

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This report is part of a wider project for and about armed forces charities, which includes the website **www.armedforcescharities.org.uk**