



# Female Service Leavers and Employment

**Forces in Mind Trust**

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# Final Report

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# Foreword

Sometimes understanding what isn't an issue is just as important as identifying what is. We commissioned this research into the employment outcomes and experiences of female Service leavers as there were indications that they faced greater challenges, and were less successful, than their male counterparts.



This thorough and credible piece of work has certainly highlighted where female Service leavers face challenges. Better skills translation and transferability, greater preparation for transition, use of workplace mentoring: these are aspects of leaving the Armed Forces where improvements can readily be made, and which are common to all Service leavers.

Likewise, the reported under-confidence in applying for certain positions and institutional stereotyping are issues faced by many females seeking employment, regardless of whether they're Service leavers or not.

So the worst place to be is where there is an overlap of challenges faced uniquely by Service leavers (in comparison to civilians), and those faced by females (in comparison to males). This area, which the report refers to as a 'double whammy', is where most effort should be channelled.

The report makes sensible recommendations for the Ministry of Defence and employers, which we support in full. Bringing them to the attention of employers, and there are upwards of 6 million of them in the United Kingdom, is no easy matter, but we at Forces in Mind Trust will do our best to try and look forward to working collaboratively with the Ministry to achieve that reach.

Absent are recommendations for female Service leavers themselves. I would offer these:

- Prepare early, and prepare well.
- Speak to those who have travelled your road ahead of you.
- Believe that your service has given you skills and experience most employers would dearly love to acquire.
- When faced by those who don't understand, help them to do so.

This report doesn't offer a silver bullet to solving the problems associated with female Service leavers and employment. In truth, they're well understood, and it just needs the collective determination of all those involved to remove disadvantage and overcome any challenges. And a lot of honest talking.

**Air Vice-Marshal Ray Lock CBE**  
**Chief Executive, Forces in Mind Trust**

# 1. Introduction

This report examines the transition that female Service Leavers (SLs) make from the Armed Forces into civilian paid employment. Despite the fact that anecdotal evidence suggests that female SLs are highly valued by civilian employers, they have a lower employment rate (69%) than male SLs (SLs) (81%), and a higher economic inactivity rate (20% compared with 9% for males), while their employment outcomes are mixed; higher proportions of female SLs, for example, enter professional occupations and caring, leisure and other service occupations (Career Transition Partnership Annual Statistics 2015/16). As the reasons behind this discrepancy were not known, the Forces in Mind Trust commissioned Cranfield University and the Institute for Employment Studies to carry out research to understand why economic activity is lower, and employment outcomes are currently less successful, for female compared to male SLs. Specifically, this research addressed the following questions:

1. What are the reasons that female Service personnel decide to leave the Armed Forces?
  - a) How do these differ to those of male Service personnel?
  - b) Are there any differences in when females leave the Armed Forces compared to males?
2. Why are female SLs less likely to be economically active and have successful employment outcomes than males?
3. What are the factors that affect the employment outcomes of female SLs? How do these compare to those for male SLs?
  - a) Which individual factors affect the decisions of female SLs in relation to employment (e.g. motivation to work, skills and experience, marital and family status, rank and role in the Armed Forces)?
  - b) Which factors internal to the Armed Forces affect employment outcomes in female SLs (e.g. Service and branch/regiment; resettlement support)?
  - c) Which external factors affect employment outcomes for female SLs (e.g. labour market; attitudes of employers)?
4. How is the transition of female SLs managed and supported both by the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and employers?
5. How might the reasons for the poorer employment outcomes in female SLs be addressed?

This report presents the findings from the research study, along with conclusions and recommendations.

## 2. Executive Summary

### The aim of the research

The research reported here examined the transition that female Service leavers (SLs) make from the Armed Forces into civilian paid employment. The research explored: why female SLs decide to leave the Armed Forces; the type of employment female SLs entered on leaving and the factors affecting their employment outcomes; and how the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and civilian employers help female SLs in their transition from military to civilian employment. It also examined why male SLs often have better employment outcomes than their female counterparts, in that female SLs are more likely to be economically inactive (20% compared to 9%) and have a lower employment rate (69% compared to 81%). Finally, it explored how reasons for poorer employment outcomes for female SLs might be addressed.

The research had six stages: a review of existing evidence; analysis of secondary data; interviews with key stakeholders; a survey of female SLs; interviews with female SLs; and interviews with actual and potential employers of female SLs.

### Key Findings

#### Reasons for leaving the Armed Forces

- Most female SLs leave the Armed Forces voluntarily, most commonly for reasons related to work life balance, job satisfaction, perceived quality of management, perceived lack of future opportunities and organisational reasons, as well as family responsibilities. These reasons are similar to those reported for SLs generally.

#### Factors affecting FSLs employment outcomes

- Finding a suitable job is clearly the greatest challenge of transition for female SLs. Most female SLs want to get a job when they leave the Armed Forces, with some preferring to enter training or self-employment. The vast majority of survey respondents had looked for work during transition; the majority of interviewees said there was a financial need to do so.
- Female SLs who were medically discharged, who had reached the end of their commitment, and/or who had served for a long period have particular difficulties in finding a suitable job, although no explanation was provided for why this was the case.
- Existing evidence suggests that female SLs are less likely to be economically active than male SLs. Our survey shows that of the 22% who are not in employment, 68% want to be so. This study suggests that female SLs face a 'double whammy', i.e. two sets of challenges in relation to employment: those that are experienced by SLs generally, and those experienced by women generally.
- Employers are favourably disposed to recruiting female SLs, and indeed SLs generally, regardless of gender. The benefits are perceived to be: work ethic, self-discipline, self-motivation, resilience, loyalty, adaptability, communication

skills, and experience of shift work and of other countries. However, employers recognise that male and female SLs will lack commercial and market experience, and a minority think some SLs find it hard to adjust to more flexible, less structured environments.

- In addition to the positive attributes of SLs generally, employers of female SLs praised their abilities in areas not so apparent in their male counterparts: forward planning and preparation, administration and organisation, and gathering evidence and pulling it together in a coherent way.
- Female SLs perceive their experience in finding employment to be slightly more difficult than those of male SLs, female civilians, and civilians generally. Female SLs themselves, and employers, suggested that female SLs might have particular issues as they undervalue themselves and are reluctant to apply for positions unless they see themselves as having all of the experience necessary; they therefore often deselect themselves from jobs that they might be suitable for.
- Female SLs, like all SLs, have difficulty in translating their military skills and experience into the civilian world. The workshops run by the Career Transition Partnership (CTP) are helpful in this regard although they are perceived as not always accessible to all SLs. Complicated, multi-stage civilian recruitment processes can also be off-putting to some female SLs, many of whom have not had any interview experience since joining the Armed Forces. Some employers, realising that applications from SLs might be rejected for lack of experience in the sector, had put in place systems by which CVs from veterans were separated out from the rest and considered more carefully.
- Few organisations have policies or practices for recording or tracking the employment of SLs. Some organisations, however, are very supportive of the Armed Forces and have put into place processes for purposefully recruiting veterans; although these do not distinguish between male and female SLs, a small number of pro-active organisations have made significant efforts to communicate the opportunities available to female SLs. Despite the efforts of some organisations, there was a suggestion from both employers and female SLs that more could be done to support them in finding employment, although specific suggestions were not provided.

## **Management and support of transition**

- Resettlement periods vary dramatically, as does the support received during transition. Only a minority of female SLs felt that they received enough support during transition, and some female SLs said that the support available during resettlement was not sufficiently tailored to the employment needs of female SLs, particularly related to flexible working and jobs such as administrative and clerical roles.
- Most employers did not think that SLs of either gender required particular support once they had entered the organisation. However, some organisations recognise that entering civilian employment can be a culture shock, and have military networks and/or provide a buddy or mentor to pair the SL with another

veteran; where possible, female SLs are paired with a female veteran. Smaller organisations have informal chats and a point of contact.

- Some female SLs reported discrimination when job seeking or when in employment, either because they are a SL, female or both.
- There was some evidence that some female SLs might have difficulty in adapting to the civilian workplace because of differences in management styles and organisation cultures. Although this also applied to male SLs, some female SLs and organisations felt that male SLs were sometimes more confident about their ability to take on new roles than their female counterparts. Some female SL interviewees, on the other hand, suggested that a minority of civilian employees had difficulty coping with the capability and leadership skills of female SLs.

## Recommendations

### For the MOD

1. Further steps should be taken to support women and those with caring responsibilities in the Armed Forces via increased flexibility in working practices and child care provision. Recent initiatives in relation to flexible service might help to address this need.
2. The MOD (and/or relevant external bodies) should consider developing advice and support for female SLs specifically. In particular, female SLs might require help in finding work that allows flexible working, or is outside sectors that are traditionally seen as employing SLs, or is in sectors (e.g. the financial sector) in which the full range of available opportunities might not be immediately obvious; this help should include encouraging female SLs to apply for positions, even if they do not appear to meet everything in the job specification.
3. The MOD and other relevant bodies should focus on providing support for female SLs in understanding their skills and experience and translating these into those that are valued by civilian organisations. In addition, support should be provided for employers to better understand the skills and experience that SLs bring.
4. Further steps should be taken to promote the benefits of employing female SLs to employers and also to provide assistance for employers in supporting female SLs through the recruitment process and transition. The employer briefing associated with this project might be useful as part of this.

### For employers

1. It is clear that SLs are primarily attracted to the job and organisation itself, with flexibility and convenience of location also being important; the research also suggests that female SLs are particularly concerned with organisational values. Employers should therefore seek to promote these aspects of their organisations when trying to attract female SLs.

2. It is recommended that employers track the progress and experiences of both male and female veterans more consciously, and consider how they can address any perceived or actual discrimination.
3. Employers should, if they do not already do so, consider adopting approaches such as mentoring and buddying to support female SLs when transitioning into the organisation. There might also be scope for a military charity to set up a cross-organisation mentoring system to support both SLs and female SLs through the job search and transition process.



## 3. Methodology

The research had six stages: a review of existing evidence; analysis of secondary data; interviews with key stakeholders; a survey of female SLs (FSLs); interviews with FSLs; and interviews with actual and potential employers of FSLs. The methodology for five of these activities is explained below. As the interviews with key stakeholders were included only to obtain background and to set up the research, these will not be discussed in detail below.

### 3.1 Literature review

A review of the existing evidence in relation to female veterans and their employment in the UK, the employment of male veterans, and also female employment generally, was undertaken. This has involved a number of stages:

- a) Identification of appropriate key words and search strings by which database searches could be undertaken.

The key words used for this search are shown in table 3-1.

**Table 3-1: Key words for literature review**

Women and employment	Female (OR woman OR women OR gender)	AND employment (OR labour OR work* OR career OR profession* OR job OR economy)	
Veterans and employment	Veteran (OR service leaver* OR vet* OR ex-military OR ex-service OR ex-forces OR ex-Armed Forces)	AND employment (OR career OR work* OR job OR profession* OR transition)	
Women veterans and employment	Female (OR woman OR women OR gender)	AND veteran* (OR service leaver* OR vet* OR ex-military OR ex-service OR ex-forces OR ex-Armed Forces)	AND employment (OR labour OR work* OR career OR profession* OR job OR economy)

- b) Searching of relevant databases.

As this is a specialist search, it has utilised both academic databases and a broader search of less formal sources. Pilot searches were conducted in January 2018 in order to exact the search terms.

In relation to academic databases EBSCO and ProQuest were used as these provide the broadest coverage of management and social sciences literature. For the purpose

of the informal review, we searched grey literature (research reports, doctoral dissertations, conference papers) as well as other non-academic sources. The search terms detailed above were used and a list of suitable search engines were also compiled under each thematic area due to a limited number of results found on the three main search engines: Google.co.uk, OpenGrey.eu, and the UK government publications search (gov.uk/government/publications). In addition the following website search engines were used for the first thematic area on female employment: OECD Library, Eurofound, European Commission Website, Office of National Statistics, Trade Union Congress, Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, Institute for Public Policy Research, Institute for Fiscal Studies and the Resolution Foundation. The following were used for the second thematic area: Forces in Mind Trust, Royal British Legion, SSAFA, Force Select, Three Families Federations and Recruit for Spouses. For the third and final thematic area searches were also conducted on US Army, Canadian Armed Forces, Australian Defence Force and New Zealand Defence Force; US Department of Labor, Australian Department of Jobs and Small Business and Employment New Zealand; this was due to the limited results that were found on UK websites for the final thematic area. This broader search also included information from organisations such as the International Military Testing Association (IMTA) and NATO, and the specialist military collection at the Barrington Library at Cranfield's School of Defence and Security.

Searches were carried out in February 2018, and the results were sifted based on certain inclusion and exclusion criteria: material dated pre-2008, lacking relevance to the research questions, or insufficiently robust were all excluded; from the remaining material, 51 sources were included in the review.

- c) Examination of literature in order to extract themes in relation to the three areas of: employment of female SLs in the UK; employment of male SLs in the UK; and employment of women generally.

### 3.2 Analysis and presentation of secondary data

The review of the position of females in the labour market collected data from a number of national secondary data sources to investigate gender comparisons in a range of topic areas including economic activity rates, employment rates, working hours, employment by occupation and industry, and earnings.

The following data sources were used:

- **Labour Force Survey (LFS)** –a quarterly survey covering the employment circumstances of the UK population.
- **Annual Population Survey (APS)** –an annualised version of the Labour Force Survey where four quarters of data are combined to produce a larger dataset that can provide more reliable estimates.
- **Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE)** –the most comprehensive source of information on the structure and distribution of earnings in the UK.

The LFS allows an investigation of changes over time, as the spring quarter survey asks individuals about their circumstances one year previously. This was scoped to identify female respondents who had been employed as Service personnel in the defence sector one year previously and who were now employed in other

sectors/occupations, or who were not in employment. LFS data were scoped for 2006 to 2016, with nine years being useable (in two years the occupational/sectoral breakdown was not at a sufficiently detailed level to accurately identify SLs). Only five FSLs were identified in the LFS across these nine years, which is too small a group with which to do any meaningful analysis.

A further data source was scoped to identify its potential for exploring FSLs. Understanding Society is a longitudinal dataset that surveys the same individuals each year, and so allows an analysis of people who change their job or labour market status from year to year. Unfortunately the level of detail in the occupational and sectoral variables is not sufficient to identify those in the Armed Forces – they are grouped together with police officers, fire officers etc. – and so this source could not be used to identify FSLs.

### **3.3 Interviews with employers**

In order to gain an employer perspective on the transition into civilian employment of FSLs, the research team interviewed individuals with responsibility for workforce policies and/or Armed Forces liaison from ten civilian organisations in the private and public sectors. The aim of these interviews was to explore these organisations' experiences of recruiting and employing FSLs, and in particular to identify firstly, any problems that might prevent organisations from understanding what FSLs had to offer, and secondly the benefits to the organisation of employing FSLs.

The ten interviews took place between August and December 2018. Nine were conducted by telephone, using a semi-structured interview protocol (see appendix A), while the tenth organisation provided a written submission based on the questions in the interview protocol. The questions, which were developed based on the expertise of the research team and on the evidence review conducted at the start of the research study, were approved by the FiMT project team.

The research team drew on their contacts to select organisations to approach based on these organisations' known commitment firstly to support the Armed Forces and secondly to be an exemplar of good HR practice. Many (but not all) of these organisations had signed the Armed Forces Covenant and were silver or gold award winners within the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme.

The interviewees mainly occupied two broad types of role: some were in a variety of professional roles such as HR, corporate strategy, professional services or project management; others had specific responsibility for Armed Forces liaison and/or the career transition of SLs, either as part of their role or as a full-time job. A small number of interviewees were themselves ex-Services, or had a veteran as an assistant or team member.

The interview findings were analysed to identify insights from the employer perspective, which might be useful to those in the MOD, Armed Forces and veterans' charities who have a particular responsibility for SLs' transition into civilian employment. It is hoped that the findings will also be useful to civilian employers generally, and might encourage them to seek opportunities to offer employment to FSLs.

The ten organisations were:

- PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), a global professional services firm
- The University of South Wales (USW), a higher education institute (HEI)
- The Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCGA), an agency of the Department for Transport which is responsible for maritime regulation and life-saving
- Barclays plc (Barclays), a global financial services provider
- Jaguar Land Rover (JLR), a manufacturer of premium motor cars
- Wolferstans Solicitors (Wolferstans), a law firm in South-West England (the smallest organisation of the ten)
- Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (Newcastle FT), an acute and community services provider
- Nationwide Building Society (Nationwide), a mutual financial services institution
- Surrey and Sussex Police, two partially-merged police forces in South East England
- Hampshire County Council (Hants CC), a county council in the South of England.

### **3.4 Survey of FSLs**

#### **3.4.1 Method**

A quantitative survey of FSLs, using a structured online questionnaire, was used to investigate their experience of resettlement and their post-departure destinations, as well as views about civilian employment experiences and adjusting to civilian life.

The survey protocol was submitted to the MOD Research Ethics Committee (MODREC), which fully described the proposed approach to the surveys and interviews, covering: participants/sampling, recruitment, consent, risks and benefits, and confidentiality. After some minor revisions the application received favourable opinion from the Committee in August 2018.

The online survey was hosted on Snap surveys, which met all MODREC requirements for data security. The survey went live in September 2018 and the survey link was distributed via a number of Service associations, charities and social media groups.

Direct survey invitations were also sent by email by ForceSelect, a specialist veteran recruitment agency, to approximately 800 FSLs on their books who had given permission to be contacted for any other purposes.

The survey link was also distributed by email by the Career Transition Partnership (CTP) to 1,325 FSLs with whom they were working under their contract with the MOD to support SLs for two years after they leave the Armed Forces. Both the CTP and Training, Education, Skills, Recruitment and Resettlement (TESRR) at the MOD requested a few minor changes to the questionnaire, so the survey questionnaire that these individuals received was slightly different to the other version. Thus the CTP distribution covered FSLs who had left in the previous two years (ie most during 2017 and 2018) while the other distribution channels included FSLs who had left more than two years previously.

In total, 154 survey responses were received, 91 from the CTP distribution and 63 from the other general distribution channels. For the CTP distribution this represented a seven per cent response rate.

### **3.4.2 Respondent profiles**

This section presents the key characteristics of the survey respondents, which will provide the context for the later results regarding transition and destinations among FSLs. As data regarding the breakdown of females leaving the Armed Forces each year was not available, it was not possible to ensure that these data were representative of this population.

The survey asked respondents a number of questions about personal and military demographics, including age, ethnicity, personal status, qualifications, Service, and rank.

#### ***Personal demographics***

**Age:** there was a broad spread of ages among respondents, from 20 to 61. Thirty-nine per cent of respondents were aged between 30 and 39, similar to the proportion among serving female personnel (38 per cent). A third (34 per cent) of respondents were aged between 40 and 49, while 14 per cent of serving females are in this age group; 14 per cent were under 30 (47 per cent of serving females); and 14 per cent were over 50 (two per cent of serving females). The mean age of respondents was 39.

**Ethnicity:** three per cent reported being from a mixed or Black Minority Ethnic group (eight per cent of all serving personnel, male and female, are from Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic groups). This low proportion means it was not possible to analyse the findings by ethnicity.

**Relationship status:** half of the respondents (50%) were married or in a civil partnership. A further 14 per cent were in a long-term established relationship. Of those respondents who were married or in a civil partnership, 44 per cent had a spouse or a partner who was currently a member of the Armed Forces. A quarter of respondents (25%) were single, and 11 per cent were divorced, separated or widowed (or the civil partnership equivalent).

**Educational attainment:** the majority of survey respondents (65%) had higher education level qualifications; 29 per cent held a higher degree (Masters, PhD, etc.) and a further 26 per cent held a first degree (BA, BSc, BEng, etc.), while ten per cent held a higher education qualification that was below degree level (HNC, HND, etc.). Sixteen per cent had obtained their A-levels or equivalent and a similar portion (14 per cent) had attained their GCSEs alone, while five per cent had other qualifications or no qualifications.

### ***Military demographics***

Over half (56%) of all survey respondents had served with the Army, which compares with 49 per cent of all serving females being in the Army, while 31 per cent had served with the Royal Air Force (RAF), the same as the proportion of serving females, and 13 per cent with the Royal Navy (RN), below the proportion of serving females of 20 per cent. Among all Services, 42 per cent had served as Officers, and 58 per cent in Other Ranks (ORs), while the split among serving females is 24 per cent Officers and 76 per cent in Other Ranks. Among RN SLs, the three most common ranks when leaving the Armed Forces were Able Seaman (40%), Lieutenant Commander (20%) and Commander (15%). Of those in the Army, a quarter (25%) of respondents had served as Majors, 16 per cent as Privates and 12 per cent as Captains. Sergeant (21%) was the most commonly reported rank among those in the RAF, alongside Flight Lieutenant (15%), Squadron Leader (13%) and Senior Aircraftman (13%).

Respondents gave a description of the regiment, branch or main trade in which they had been when they left, and these were grouped into a number of categories that were broadly consistent across the three Services (see table 3-2). The two largest groups were personnel/training and logistics, which together accounted for 44 per cent of all respondents, followed by medical, and warfare (warfare branches in the RN, artillery regiments in the Army, and air operations in the RAF), which each accounted for 12 per cent of respondents.

**Table 3-2: Service categories of respondents**

	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
Personnel/training	33	21.4
Logistics	35	22.7
Signals (Army only)	9	5.8
Engineering	14	9.1
Medical	18	11.7
Warfare	18	11.7
Military police	10	6.5
Other/not known	17	11.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>100</b>

### ***Association between military and personal characteristics***

Officers were significantly more likely to hold degree-level qualifications than those who served in ORs (97% of Officers compared to 26% of ORs). There were no statistically significant differences between educational attainment and Service.

Officers were also older than those who served in ORs. Fifty-nine per cent of Officers were over the age of 40 compared to 39 per cent of ORs. There were no statistically significant differences between age and Service.

### 3.5 Interviews with FSLs

Twenty-four interviews were conducted with FSLs. The interviews aimed to explore:

- 1) Decision-making processes when leaving the Armed Forces
- 2) The experience of transition and how well it was managed
- 3) Employment outcomes.

A semi-structured discussion guide was used to enable flexibility in investigating the key areas of interest (see Appendix C).

In order to gather a broad range of experiences, we selected participants from Officers and ORs for each of the three Services: RN, Army and RAF. Table 3-3 reports the distribution of our participants in terms of their Service and whether an Officer or OR.

Table 3-3: Interviewees' former Service and whether Officer or OR		
Service	Officer	OR
Army	6	4
Royal Air Force (RAF)	4	6
Royal Navy (RN)	3	1
Total	13	11

As table 3-4 reports, we also targeted FSLs who had different lengths of service within the Armed Forces. The majority of our interviewees (18 out of 24) had at least ten years' service. They differ in terms of time since they left the Armed Forces: 17 left up to two years ago, and seven over two years ago.



**Table 3-4: Interviewees' years of service, time since leaving, and whether or not a Reservist**

Years	Frequency
Up to 5 years	2
Between 5 and 10 years	4
Between 10 and 15 years	6
Between 15 and 20 years	4
More than 20 years	8
Total	24
Time since left the Armed Forces	Frequency
Within the past six months (since August 2018)	2
Between six months and 1 year ago (January- August 2018)	4
Between 1 and 2 years ago (within 2017)	11
More than 2 years ago (before 2016)	7
Total	24
Reservist	Frequency
Yes	5
No	19
Total	24

Interviewees were identified via survey respondents who volunteered, via a survey question, to participate in a follow-up interview. Initially, each interviewee was contacted by email to describe the purpose of the research and to identify a convenient time for the interview. Interviews were conducted via the telephone as this allowed to provide flexibility to participants in relation to finding the most suitable time to be interviewed. All interviewees were sent a participant information sheet before the interview, and completed a consent form before the interview started.



## 4. Findings

The findings below are split into three sections. First we will summarise what is already known about our research questions by presenting the results from the review of the existing literature and secondary data analysis. Second, we will examine the results from our interviews with employers. Finally we will examine the results of the survey and interviews with female SLs and veterans.

### 4.1 Literature Review

The review of existing evidence focused on three questions: first the existing evidence on female veterans and employment; second the evidence on veterans generally and employment; and third, the evidence on females and employment generally. It is important to note that both academic and non-academic literature relating to the employment experiences of female veterans is sparse, with very few papers being found. Most of the literature that is available is based in the USA and focuses on the nature of employment outcomes for female veterans, rather than on the factors affecting these outcomes. This supports the notion that the current research project is desperately needed.

Here, we will provide a summary of the UK evidence on female veterans and employment. The full review of the evidence, including that from the USA and on veterans generally, is provided in Appendix D.

### Female veterans and employment in the UK

- Employment rates in the veteran population can only be estimated because the MOD does not track its ex-Servicemen and women, nor is this information captured in the census.
- The Annual Population Survey (a UK household survey conducted by the ONS) suggests a higher level of inactivity in female SLs, compared to male. For example, in 2016, female veterans had an employment rate of 72% compared to 79% in male veterans. These figures have risen over the previous year however when they were 66 and 78% respectively (MOD, 2017).
- The employment rates among female veterans and non-veterans, on the other hand, are similar: 72% compared to 69%.
- Although these figures are in line with wider UK gender differences in the workplace, there is a lack of research investigating the reasons behind the economic inactivity of the female veteran population in the UK.
- Survey results from the CTP (MOD, 2018), suggest that in 2016-17 FSLs were much more likely than men (27% compared to 4%) to report economic inactivity due to looking after family; this is consistent with the broader economic literature on male and female employment trends suggesting that women's employment rates are lower than men's.

- The literature explains this gap between male and female employment generally in relation to the different barriers that women face in the labour market. At the root of much of the inequality is the differing trajectories men and women's careers take after they become parents, with a disproportionately high number of women leaving or not entering the labour market due to caring responsibilities after childbirth. This has been referred to as the 'motherhood penalty'.
- Women are also more likely than men to adapt their paid work according to the additional caring responsibilities that come with parenthood, especially with very young children, which has a damaging effect on mothers' income compared to single women (OECD, 2017b). This is reflected in England, where the most common way that families organise their economic activity is mothers working part-time and men working full-time (ONS, 2017).
- While part-time work keeps women attached to the labour market, it has important drawbacks, such as earning less than men and women missing out on opportunities to advance their careers due to not working full-time.

## Secondary data analysis

This section presents a summary of the analyses of secondary data in relation to the employment of women in the UK. The full findings for this secondary data analysis can be found in Appendix E.

- The economic activity rate of working age women was 73 per cent in 2017, below the male rate of 83 per cent, although the gap has shrunk from 14 percentage points in 2004 to 10 percentage points.
- There is little difference between male and female activity rates among people aged 16 to 24.
- The activity rate for women with three or more children is substantially lower than the rate for other women – 54 per cent compared with 73 per cent – while there is little difference in activity rates between women with no children, and those with one or two children.
- Female activity rates are lowest for those whose youngest child is under 5 (65 per cent) or aged 16 to 18 (66 per cent) and highest for those whose youngest child is between seven and 15 (76 per cent).
- The female employment rate in 2017 was 70 per cent, compared with the male rate of 79 per cent; thus the gap is slightly smaller than for the activity rate. The gap has shrunk from 13 percentage points in 2004.
- Two fifths (40 per cent) of women in employment work part-time, compared with 11 per cent of men in employment.
- Women are more likely than men to be in professional, administrative/secretarial, personal service, and sales/customer service

occupations, and less likely to be in managerial, associate professional/technical, skilled manual and semi-skilled manual occupations.

- Within the higher level occupational groups, women are particularly over-represented in teaching professional jobs, and in health professional and associate professional jobs.
- Nearly 45 per cent of women in employment work in the public administration, education and health sectors, compared with 17 per cent of men in employment. Women are under-represented in the manufacturing, construction, and transport and communication sectors.
- Women earn less than men on average, although the gap in median hourly earnings has shrunk over the last 20 years; in 1997, women's median hourly earnings was 82 per cent of male earnings, but by 2017 this had risen to 90 per cent.
- There was very little difference in the female and male unemployment rate in 2017, although from 2004 to 2015 the female rate was below the male rate.

## 4.2 Findings from interviews with employers

A summary of the findings from the interviews with employers are presented below under the themes that were identified as a result of the analysis. Employers were asked specifically about FSLs, but several interviews were able to speak only of SLs generally. This is partly due to the small number of FSLs they employed, but is also because they saw no differences between male and female SLs, and therefore no need to have any special provisions for FSLs.

### 4.2.1 Employing and tracking FSLs

Although all ten employing organisations knew that they employed SLs, and the majority were sure or fairly sure that some of their SL employees were female, most did not know the exact number. This was explained as being because firstly, few organisations put a flag on the employee record to denote that the individual is a veteran, and secondly, the organisations were all dependent on individuals identifying themselves as veterans. Some organisations (e.g. Hants CC and Barclays) had conducted recent staff polls or surveys, in which veterans had been invited to self-identify; these organisations therefore knew that they employed 'at least' the number who volunteered this information. In line with the relative proportions of men and women leaving the Armed Forces every year, several organisations said that the number of FSLs would be 'around ten per cent' of the total number of SLs employed. However, this varied somewhat; at Newcastle FT, for example, around half of the employed SLs were female, whereas at Barclays (a company that employs several hundred SLs), only five per cent were known to be female, although for more recent (2018) recruits the figure was ten per cent. Around half of the interviewees knew that the total number of FSLs in their organisations was definitely only in single figures, using descriptions such as '*extremely small*', '*very low figures*', '*fewer than ten*' and '*there used to be five of us but now it's only two*'.

Even in the bigger organisations that employed FSLs in fairly large numbers (around 20 or more), and that had a flag on the employee record, it appeared to be unusual to

track the performance and career progression of SLs. This is mainly due to the low number of SLs when compared to the many thousands of employees overall. In addition, the small number of FSL employees meant that comparisons between them and their male SL counterparts, or between them and female employees generally, might not be statistically valid. Another reason for not carrying out such tracking was that the monitoring of aspects such as performance and career progression tended to happen only for the 'protected characteristics' under equality and diversity legislation. Although gender is a protected characteristic, being an Armed Forces veteran is not. One company, Barclays, had recently run a survey of its SL employees and found that most respondents, including the FSLs who responded, were clearly positive about their progression so far within the company. Another company, JLR, worked with a charity called 'Mission Motorsport' and had been informed by Mission Motorsport that its retention rate of SLs (including FSLs) was higher than 90 per cent after three years, compared to around 80 per cent generally.

The majority of interviewees were aware of the types of roles in which FSLs were employed, as the following responses illustrate:

- "In a variety of roles, both internal and client-facing" (PwC)
- "On the academic side ... opportunities are very limited because applicants need a teaching qualification. The most likely areas are in admin, professional services, and facilities & estates" (USW)
- "They are eligible for any jobs open to those who are not existing civil servants via open recruitment; the Coastguards attracts them because of the required aptitude, but there are management and clerical/admin jobs that might be attractive" (MCGA)
- "It's very varied: financial crime, treasury, mortgages, audit – a mix of banking roles and functional roles" (Barclays)
- "FSLs work in the whole range of roles e.g. HR, logistics, engineering, manufacturing and project management" (JLR)
- "Legal roles (solicitor, trainee solicitor, paralegal) rather than admin" (Wolferstans)
- "They're in all sorts of roles, although typically nurses and health care assistants. We have one who's a chaplain" (Newcastle FT)
- "The three areas I know about are change and project management; HR; and brand/marketing" (Nationwide)
- "Normally, as a new probationer constable; and occasionally into the contact centre which operates the emergency switchboard" (Surrey & Sussex Police)

## 4.2.2 Recruitment of FSLs

Interviewees were able to identify activities they undertook with regard to the recruitment of SLs generally, although most made it clear that they did not differentiate between male and female SLs.

Some interviewees described the steps that their organisations take to purposefully recruit SLs. PwC, in common with the other 'Big Four' accountancy companies, runs 'military insight days' twice a year to introduce SLs to professional services firms. Barclays holds military fairs twice a year (in London and Glasgow), runs a CV and interview skills workshop, holds monthly 'live chats' to enable people to log on and ask questions, and has an internship programme to enable SLs to 'try out' the company. Newcastle FT helps SLs with CV writing, regardless of whether or not they want to work for the Trust. However, such efforts are not always successful; Hants CC, for example, had to cancel a planned careers fair aimed at the AF community in 2016 due to low interest. Hants CC now publicises its general events (e.g. CV and interview skills and transferable skills) to local military units and the three military Family Federations, rather than running events specifically for the AF.

Several organisations work via other bodies to make SLs aware of the opportunities available to them. JLR, for example, works with Mission Motorsport, a charity that identifies people who could be suitable for a career with the company, including those who might be injured or wounded; the company offers work experience, internships and placements to these individuals. Barclays belongs to Veterans Employment Transition Support (VETS), and Surrey and Sussex Police participates in an annual military careers event.

Several organisations also described belonging to different military networks, and having links with bodies such as the Officers Association and British Forces recruitment team. Hants CC, for example, belongs to a network called 'Forces Connect South East' (FCSE) which is a cross-border partnership comprising the following local government and NHS organisations in SE England. This two-year project is funded by the Covenant Fund and aims to make it easier for Service families, SLs and Reservists to access public services and to provide support for finding jobs.

Although some organisations are already doing a lot, in a very proactive way, to recruit SLs and give them a good employment experience, most interviewees felt that more could be done. Some said that the interview had acted as a prompt to investigate existing processes, hold discussions within the organisation, and forge better links with the MOD so that CTP could be better-informed about job opportunities. An issue for some was the recruitment process, which might deselect SLs who could not cite relevant sectoral experience, although there was also recognition that tackling this could require additional resources. One interviewee pointed out that the organisation had no difficulty filling its vacancies with good quality people, so it would be hard to justify the additional expense of a recruitment campaign aimed specifically at SLs. Finally, some organisations were working to promote the benefits of employing SLs and Reservists to other staff and managers, so that they would be more receptive to offering employment opportunities to such individuals.

### 4.2.3 Relationship with the MoD

The most common method of accessing SLs in general, including FSLs, described by interviewees was working with the MOD via the CTP, although the degree of engagement varied. Some organisations, notably the very large ones, had a very close relationship with CTP: they attended CTP fairs and events, met regularly with the CTP, and participated in initiatives such as the In Service Placement programme. One company said, *'We work very, very closely with the CTP; this is a key relationship'*. Some of these large organisations also had formal relationships with different parts of the MOD, including TESRR, and/or had informal relationships with different individuals in the MOD via military networking. The smaller organisations also engaged with the CTP, usually by providing information about the organisation, the types of work available to both male and female SLs, and where SLs can go (e.g. a website) to find out about vacancies.

### 4.2.4 Recruitment challenges

A small minority of interviewees did not see any challenges in recruiting FSLs, or indeed SLs in general. One said, for example, that *'the application forms we see from SLs are well-completed'*. However, most thought that the biggest challenge lay in SLs' ability to 'sell' themselves and articulate their skills and experience in a way that makes sense to civilian employers; this was regardless of whether the SL was male or female. Sometimes, this was seen as due to vocabulary and terminology, but SLs were also perceived to find it difficult to communicate their skills and, sometimes, to discount their experience as not being relevant or of interest to non-Defence organisations. As one interviewee put it,

*"A soldier can take guns apart and reassemble them, which is a real skill – but they don't know how to express this in a way that might be useful to us".*

Some interviewees remarked that SLs who had been to CTP workshops usually put together a better application than those who had not, but that even they will tend to submit CVs that are too generic and unspecific to the sector.

Another challenge was the lack of experience that SLs have in sectors outside Defence, with commercial and business experience in particular being cited as an example. This lack of experience could, without intervention, lead to applications and CVs from SLs being rejected at the first hurdle. Here, some interviewees felt that FSLs are at a disadvantage compared to their male counterparts, with one interviewee giving a succinct summary:

*'There's an issue with FSLs, although it's to do with their being female rather than being SLs - women often deselect themselves from positions unless they're sure they can do them, while men will put themselves forward in a more speculative way, even if they think they can only do some of the role'.*

The combination of being a SL (and lacking experience in the sector) and being female therefore acts as a 'double whammy' that prevents FSLs from applying for some positions to which they might be well-suited.

A further challenge suggested for all SLs is that, without help (such as the workshops that some of the larger organisations run), they can find it difficult to understand the

types of roles in civilian organisations where their skills could best fit. Misconceptions about the organisation and sector may also lead to some well-suited FSLs not submitting an application. As one interviewee said:

*“We find that without help, military people tend to underestimate their skill-sets; they’re slightly self-deprecating and don’t always link their experience to the focus of a commercial role. It’s important to map skills onto a job advert and they don’t always do this”.*

The interviewee from Barclays spoke of misconceptions about the financial sector that might prevent FSLs in particular from applying:

*“What we want to get across is that banking activity is actually a relatively small part of the business. It breaks my heart that we have so many opportunities for women that they’re not taking up. FSLs think it’s all about finances and banking ... they feel it’s a hostile, cut-throat environment, and ... male-dominated.”*

The recruitment process itself could, some interviewees believed, put SLs at a disadvantage compared to those who had more experience at navigating such processes. The Civil Service process, for example, was seen by one interviewee as lengthy and complicated to navigate – for all non-Civil Servants, not only SLs. In other organisations, typically very large ones that receive hundreds of applications and CVs a day, those who make the first selection sift may not notice that an application is from a SL (and therefore in need of special consideration) and reject it on the basis of lack of experience in the sector. Another issue suggested for SLs was their lack of interview experience (especially, one interviewee noted, for the NCO ranks), which puts both male and female SLs at a disadvantage compared to civilians, who are used to having to navigate interviews for internal promotions as well as external job applications.

Linked to the recruitment process were competency frameworks, which candidates are often asked to use when submitting job applications. One interviewee believed that the Civil Service competency framework puts all non-civil servants at a disadvantage because it uses terminology that does not always lend itself to people coming from different sectors. However, in Surrey and Sussex Police, the competency framework was seen as working in SLs’ favour because the terminology used, and skills required, can often be a good match with military requirements.

A final issue raised by a small minority of interviewees was that it can be necessary to manage SLs’ expectations, in that they sometimes think they can come into a civilian organisation at a relatively high level because of the rank they occupied in the Armed Forces, not properly recognising that they lack the relevant experience; however, this tends to apply more to male than female SLs.

The majority of organisations had put processes in place to ‘catch’ applications from SLs so they could be reviewed and, if necessary, translated. In smaller organisations that received a small number of applications and CVs, this was an informal process carried out by one or two people who are themselves SLs, but in larger organisations a formal process within the recruitment team was needed to prevent applications being rejected early on. To tackle misconceptions, some organisations had made a significant effort to communicate to the CTP the range and variety of roles on offer.



For example, Barclays ran an event specifically for FSLs and described this as very successful in counteracting the perception that the financial sector is male dominated and only about banking.

#### **4.2.5 Supporting new entrants**

Most organisations did not think FSLs needed particular support, once recruited, and described their induction process as exactly the same as for other new entrants. However, the larger organisations mostly gave SLs a 'buddy' from within their military networks which was believed to be useful in acclimatising SLs to a culture and organisation that often differ markedly from their previous experience. Hants CC, as part of its FCSE work, has been leading on a project focusing on supporting newly-recruited SLs and Reservists to succeed in employment; this includes a freely-available online training course, launched in early December 2018.

Smaller organisations also aimed to support SLs when they first start, although this tended to be more informal. An existing employee who is a veteran may, for example, 'call in for a chat' to help the new SL feel at home.

One interviewee felt that the culture of a civilian organisation could present problems for SLs:

*"Culturally they're used to a more robust environment, so that might be a challenge".*

Another agreed, but thought that FSLs adapted more easily than their male counterparts.

#### **4.2.6 Mental health issues**

When asked about any issues around the mental health of SLs, most interviewees said that they did not think this was an issue for SLs any more than for employees generally, often adding that their organisation had processes and training in place to support anyone who did experience mental health problems. One interviewee believed that there had been a few cases of SLs needing help due to PTSD, and spoke of some SLs experiencing '*rough patches*', but that the absence rates of SLs were on a par with those of civilians. In the larger organisations, SLs who need some support could also turn to the military network, where their problems are well understood by others.

No interviewees gave any examples of FSLs requiring mental health support, although this finding should be treated with caution due to the very small number of SLs overall who needed support.

#### **4.2.7 Benefits of employing FSLs**

All interviewees spoke positively about the benefits of employing FSLs, and indeed SLs in general. They spoke of:

- A good work ethic
- Strong self-discipline
- Being self-motivated
- Being efficient



- Paying attention to detail
- High levels of resilience and cope well under pressure
- Using initiative and 'thinking on their feet'
- 'Cracking on' with a task and getting it done
- Being trustworthy
- Loyalty
- Being good at problem-solving
- Adaptability
- Good team-working skills and dynamics, including motivating the team
- Leadership skills
- Seeing the 'big picture'
- Being good at communication
- Good diplomacy skills
- A wealth of life experience
- Experience of different cultures and countries
- Understanding of shift work (for Police and NHS)
- Understanding of the potentially disruptive nature of Police/emergency services work.

In addition, FSLs in particular were seen as being good at:

- Forward planning and preparation
- Administration and organisation
- Gathering evidence and pulling it together in a coherent way.

However, these 'female' attributes were mentioned by interviewees mainly in the context of FSLs being somewhat better than their male counterparts at preparing for civilian work on leaving the Armed Forces.

#### **4.2.8 Gaps in skill sets**

Only a small number of gaps and disadvantages were cited with regard to employing SLs, usually by only one interviewee and never with regard to FSLs alone. These included:

- Lack of commercial experience
- Lack of knowledge about specific products and services
- Lack of knowledge about markets
- Possibly some discomfort with cultures and organisations that are very flexible
- Occasionally too blunt and insufficiently diplomatic.

#### **4.2.9 Transition of FSLs from military to civilian employment**

Most interviewees said that FSLs (and SLs in general) received the same induction as all other new recruits; indeed, some did not think that SLs would, or should, need extra support in transitioning to their new organisation. As one interviewee put it, "*We don't want to smother them*". Some thought that SLs were actually at an advantage, because they had often had more training and a greater variety of experience than civilians; in the police, for example, a young probationer Police Constable in his or her first job was likely to be less able to cope than an experienced former officer or NCO.

In addition, many organisations had military networks that could offer support and understanding, and were able to give the SL a buddy who was not only ex-military, but often matched on gender and, where possible, Service, type of military role and even cap badge.

One interviewee thought that SLs who had been in the AF for a long time would find it harder to adjust than those who had only served for a few years, because they were likely to be very steeped in the culture and processes of their service. This interviewee also thought that here, FSLs could be at an advantage because they had often served for less time than their male counterparts. Another interviewee believed that FSLs were better able to adjust than male SLs because they tended to plan their exit better and had a clearer view of the 'end game'. However, in general, interviewees believed that most new recruits who were FSLs, and indeed SLs in general, were looking forward to their new careers and excited to be starting these.

No organisation provided any training specifically for SLs, saying that the training available to them was the same as for any other new recruit; however, Hants CC, as mentioned above, now has an online training course to assist new employees who are SLs to settle in. The only gaps that might need to be addressed by additional training related to specific products or systems, although it was perceived that in some sectors, SLs also might need additional exposure to the commercial and business world before they became fully confident.

#### **4.2.10 Motivations and preferences of FSLs**

Most interviewees saw little difference between male and female SLs in relation to the type of work they wanted to do after leaving the Armed Forces, particularly after they had received (e.g. via a workshop) an explanation of what the organisation did and the variety of roles on offer. Before getting to this stage, some interviews said that FSLs tended to be somewhat gender-stereotyped in their preferences:

*"I'm a bit reluctant to say this, but a lot of FSLs want to work in HR or citizenship ... We try to explain the full range of careers and we're quite successful in this. Once we engage with people, we can open their minds"*

In the NHS, there was a perception that FSLs favour work as a nurse or health care assistant, due to their experience and qualifications gained in the Armed Forces. In other organisations, interviewees were pleased to report that FSLs were working very effectively in some more traditionally 'male' areas such as engineering and policing.

Interviewees believed that FSLs chose their organisation for a variety of reasons:

- Strong brand
- Reputation – as a good employer and as a 'Forces friendly' employer willing to take on SLs
- Word of mouth, from SLs who have had a good experience
- Good training and development
- Career opportunities and a good career trajectory
- Ability to use existing skill sets
- Similarity to the Armed Forces, such as being a public service, being structured, and/or being large

- Being co-operative and (in the private sector) not owned by shareholders
- Being an ethical employer
- For FSLs in particular, having family-friendly policies and practices
- Offering a lifestyle and the opportunity to be part of a 'family'
- Location (e.g. the company's headquarters being close to military organisations)
- Ability (for organisations based in one area of the country rather than being national or global) to stay in one geographical area rather than move around.

These reasons were not seen as differing between male and female SLs, although FSLs with families tend to be particularly attracted to location, family friendliness and geographical stability.

#### 4.2.11 Advice to other organisations

Interviewees were unanimous in saying that they would recommend employing FSLs, or SLs in general, to other organisations, because of the benefits they would bring. Some interviews were already advocates in the sense that they had visited other organisations to talk about working more closely with the MOD and employing ex-Service people. However, one interviewee counselled caution, in that it was important to find out what the SL can offer the organisation rather than employ them simply because they are a SL. The following statements give a flavour of the enthusiasm of interviewees:

*"None of our 'problem people' are ex-military"*

*"You're talking to the converted! The qualities that make up a good Service person can add to any organisation; SLs are motivated and capable."*

*"Absolutely, I'm a passionate advocate. I'll go to any organisation to talk about this."  
"There are a lot of benefits and very, very little downside."*

*"The workforce is our biggest asset, and SLs have skills that are invaluable ... We need a first class workforce, and employing FSLs helps us to ensure our future pipeline."*

*"FSLs are particularly suited to the way that policing is going now."*

Specific advice to other organisations was:

- Examine any barriers to entry
- Promote the advantages of the organisation to FSLs, for example via the CTP and military networks, and ensure that the CTP fully understand the variety of roles on offer to avoid any stereotyping.
- Advocate the organisation as a great place to work
- Emphasise the organisation's values, because FSLs in particular respond to values
- It may require some investment, but the benefits will far outweigh the cost
- Commitment from the top is essential

- Think about the nature of the organisation's jobs, and which types of SL they might be suited to; some organisations are finding that jobs they thought would be appropriate only for ex-Officers are actually equally well-suited to experienced NCOs
- From Newcastle FT: *"It might help other NHS organisations to know that our commitment to the AF helped us get an 'Outstanding' rating from the Care Quality Commission."*

## 4.3 Findings from survey and interviews with FSLs and veterans

### 4.3.1 Transition and resettlement

Respondents were asked a number of questions relating to their experiences of transition and the support they received during resettlement.

#### ***Length of service***

There was an equal spread of responses from people who had served for different lengths of time. Fifty-one per cent of respondents had served for more than 15 years and 49 per cent had served for less than 15 years. Those who had served in the Royal Navy (RN) were more likely to have served for longer. Sixty-five per cent of those who served in the RN had served for more than 15 years compared to 49 per cent those in the Army and RAF respectively. These differences were not statistically significant.

#### ***Reasons for leaving the Service***

Over half (52%) of all respondents had left the Armed Forces voluntarily, while 29 per cent reached the end of their commitment, and ten per cent left on medical grounds. There were some differences here between Services. Those who had served in the RN were more likely to have been medically discharged (25% of respondents compared to 8% of those who served in the Army and 6% of those from the RAF). Medical discharge was also a more common reason given by those who had served in ORs (14% compared to 5%). Those who had left voluntarily were more likely to be younger: 71 per cent of those under 30 had left voluntarily, compared to only 24 per cent of those aged 50 and over. For those aged 50 and over, the most common reason was, unsurprisingly, reaching the end of their commitment (62%). These differences were not statistically significant.

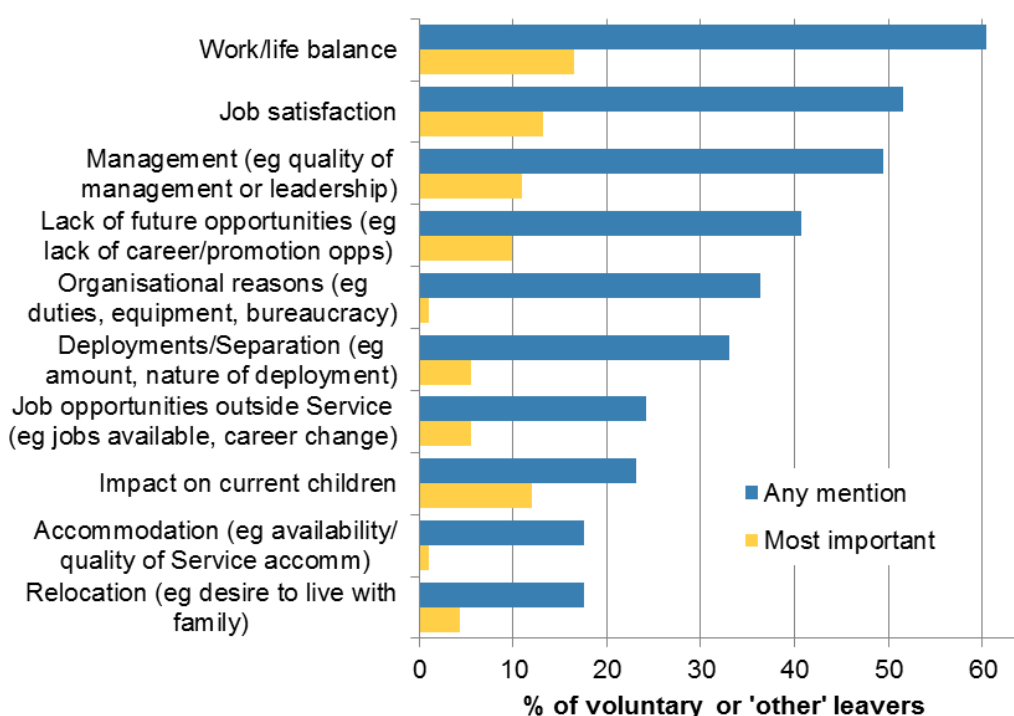
**Table 4-1: Reasons for leaving the Armed Forces**

	Number	%
I reached the end of my commitment	45	29.2
I left voluntarily - PVR (VO)	80	51.9
I left on medical grounds (Medical Discharge)	15	9.7
I left for disciplinary reasons	1	0.6
Redundancy	2	1.3
Other	11	7.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: IES/Cranfield Survey of female SLs 2018/19

Voluntary leavers, and those leaving for 'other' reasons, were asked to indicate the factors that influenced their decision to leave. The most common reasons for leaving the Armed Forces were work/life balance (60%), job satisfaction (52%), quality of management/leadership (50%), lack of future opportunities within the Service (41%) and organisational reasons (36%). Respondents who gave more than one reason were asked to say which of the reasons they gave was the most important reason for leaving their Service. Fourteen per cent chose job satisfaction, while 11 per cent said the impact on their current children was the most important reason. Eleven per cent of respondents reported that the quality of management was the main reason for leaving.

**Figure 4-1 Reasons for leaving among voluntary leavers and those leaving for 'other' reasons**



Source: IES/Cranfield Survey of female SLs 2018/19

There were some significant variations in the impact of leaving factors by respondent characteristics. Leavers from the RN were much more likely than those in the Army and RAF to report work/life balance and deployments as influences on their decision to leave, while RAF leavers were much less likely to report management issues as an impact on their leaving decision than were those leaving the RN or Army. Leavers from ORs were more likely than Officers to mention bullying and harassment. Other significant differences included:

- Single respondents were more likely to mention accommodation, and less likely to mention impact on spouse or current children, than were married/cohabiting respondents;
- More than four fifths (82%) of respondents in their 20s mentioned job satisfaction, compared with around half of those in their 30s and 40s, and 17 per cent of those in their 50s. Young leavers were also more likely than older leavers to mention pay and rewards (29%) and relationships with colleagues

(24%). Impact on spouse was most commonly mentioned by respondents in the late 30s and 40s (29%); and

- Respondents who left their Service in 2018 were more likely than those who left earlier to mention accommodation (33%) and relationships with colleagues (29%).

Respondents were also asked to describe in their own words their reasons for leaving. They described in various ways how family had impacted their decision to leave the Armed Forces. For example:

*"As a single parent I was expected to find childcare for exercise and guard duties. No I was not given support in the fact I had no one to look after my child."*

*"I am married to a serviceman and have two children and was finding it increasingly stressful being the primary carer. Of most concern was moving children during the school year or trying to get a school place in a different area so I chose to leave at the end of my commitment."*

*"I left after maternity leave, did not want to be separated from child and husband (also serving) for both a 6 month course and 6 month tour within first 2 years of child's life."*

Similar issues affected serving couples:

*"I was told to 'get married' if we wanted support in being co-located (I was Army, my partner RM) I struggled in a busy role, with a baby and a regularly deployed partner."*

*"My husband was also in the Service. We had no option of co-location and lived three hours apart. I was working shifts (usually 4-6 days on duty or standby) and he was in a highly responsive and deployable role. This was not a sustainable situation, especially if we were ever to have a family."*

Respondents who mentioned job satisfaction as an influence on their decision to leave gave the following examples of how they were not satisfied when working in the Armed Forces:

*"Career is about balance, for me the balance was off. I was willing to make compromises as long as I was satisfied by the roles I undertook, eventually the satisfaction reduced, and the compromise increased. As a single officer I felt under-valued for the value I added - I was a high performer, yet had to live in a small room and unable to provide any certainty in my life. I wanted to feel rewarded (not just recognised) for my success."*

*"Although I enjoyed my role within the Army, I felt unappreciated and unsupported by my direct chain of command. I worked above my station for a number of years and was heavily relied upon but felt my opinion of the work setup was quickly disregarded. I felt the management was unprofessional and this confirmed my decision for leaving."*

*"Following the death of one of my soldiers while we were deployed I felt that the Army handled the situation poorly and I could no longer support the hierarchy decision. I was also fed up of being the only single senior captain and having to take all the rubbish deployments and weekend work while paying the same amount as they did to live in a house, to live in the mess where I shared a bathroom and had to ask the Adj*

*permission to have guests. In Germany I did the same job as my peers, worked those extra hours yet they all took £1000 a month home more than me purely through virtue of having a wife."*

*"I felt under challenged and bored in my current role. I felt that I was not suitable for life in the service any more as I became angry with the treatment of junior ranks."*

Another commonly mentioned reason was the perceived lack of career progression. For example:

*"I realised that I would be very likely to have office based 'staff' jobs for the remainder of my career. Whilst I would have some say in where and what I did, I would not be in full control of my jobs. There are opportunities with the civil service to continue to contribute to National Security/Defence where I will get to have a full say in where and what I do."*

*"I do not think the structured nature of a military career allows for career progression – the notion of promotion on time is barmy. The inability to decide your own career future does not make for a very satisfying career."*

FSLs also described various organisational issues that had affected their decision to leave, including sexual discrimination and bullying.

*"Although I stayed in the Service for a couple of years after the event, I had experienced and witnessed bullying from the same individual who was my line manager. I raised a Service Complaint but it wasn't upheld despite an 18-month investigation; this led to my lack of faith in the system and ultimately my decision to leave."*

*"I was sexually assaulted in 2011 by a soldier when I was an OC [Officer Commanding]. I was unsupported throughout the process, including court martial, and it took its toll on me as a person. I battled on for five years but found I could no longer tolerate the 'male/stale/pale' attitude so resigned."*

Lastly, some survey respondents described wanting a change in career and an improvement in work/life balance after years of service.

*"I wanted to feel more stable. I had moved 5 times in 6 years and wanted to have a bit more control over my life."*

*"I believed that the nature of my work was exhausting me and impacting negatively on my fertility. My husband and I had been undertaking IVF without success, and I decided therefore to change my work/life balance to seek to improve my prospect of becoming pregnant."*

*"I feel I have reached a certain point in my life where I have had enough of Army life and have decided to take full advantage of my pension point."*

### **Interviewee responses**

The main reason for leaving the Armed Forces in our interviewees was family responsibilities. Indeed, the majority of participants made the decision to leave the Armed Forces after having children. FSLs reported that there is a problem generally with being a parent with small children in the Armed Forces, as the nature of the

military job required them to be posted away from their families for long periods of time and this required relying on a strong family support-network to be able to do it. In some cases, however, both parents were serving so one of them had to make the decision to leave in order to provide stability for family. In the cases of our participants, it was always the woman who decided to leave either because their partners were further up the career ladder or because they wanted to dedicate time to their children. The importance of providing family support was even more important in the case of single parenting. For example, one of our participants reported that it is quite common that single women with children make the decision to leave since they are not provided with childcare that would allow them to stay in their job while caring for children.

Most interviewees suggested that the requirements of a military job often creates tensions and stress in females' lives and that there is no tolerance for exceptions for people with families. For example, one of the participants reported that during her five years of marriage to her husband who was serving too, they only managed to live together for eight months. When asking if they have tried to talk with their managers to find a solution such as requesting being posted together, this interviewee explained that their request was always rejected. This caused this FSL to feel frustrated and stressed.

A lack of career prospects was another reason that led a minority of the participants to make the decision to leave the Armed Forces. In some cases, this was due to difficulties in getting the promotion needed to progress in their career; in others, it was the frustration because of a lack of recognition and reward when progressing which influenced the decision of our participants.

In general, the majority of interviewees reported that even when they progress in the military career, they do not really get control of their life in terms of working hours, weekends or holidays. Most of the time, this led to a desire to transition into civilian employment in order to have more routine. For some interviewees, this transition was part of their plans even before joining the Army, for others it became a choice due to the increasingly demanding nature of the work.

Job characteristics and specific aspects of the military employment were also reasons that people left the Armed Forces. For example, around one fifth of respondents reported that there was an increased level of stress related to the lack of guarantee of who they would be working with and where they would get posted, which contributed to a persistent sense of unpredictability about the job.

Moreover, the possibility of having to face difficult situations, like for example having to deal with delicate political issues or losing a colleague, is another job characteristic which, in two cases, impacted on our participants' decision to leave. In these cases, participants felt that they had not been completely supported by their Service, which left them feeling frustrated and wanting to leave.

In some cases, our interviewees left the Armed Forces because they felt discriminated against. For example, one participant reported that she was increasingly asked to do difficult and unpopular jobs because she was younger with no family responsibilities - this was perceived as a form of discrimination. Indeed, the majority of interviewees



who did not have family often reported that they felt they were treated differently because they did not have children or, more generally, caring responsibilities.

In other cases, the discrimination was related to gender. For example, one of our interviewees reported that one of the main factors contributing to her decision to leave was the culture of sexism and sexual harassment in the Armed Forces. This was also the case for another one of our interviewees who reported that she was sexually assaulted by a male service member and that, even though she reported him and he was found guilty, he was not removed from the Service. She felt that she was not supported by the organisation or by her colleagues and made the eventual decision to leave.

Around one quarter of interviewees had left because they reached the natural end of their contract in the Armed Forces or because they were part of a redundancy process. In most of these cases, participants suggested that they had not wanted to leave but, did not have any choice. A minority of these were now retired, while others had found different employment or had started their own business. These people were very proud of their Service and some suggested that it would be a privilege to have the opportunity to continue to support the Armed Forces by offering their experience in some way, e.g. by holding seminars to train new members.

Alternatively, a minority of interviewees had left because they were medically discharged. In most of these cases, however, the main cause of health problems appeared to be related to the characteristics of the job and the culture in which they were operating. Indeed, the increased level of stress due to lack of work-life balance, the unpredictability of the work, and the delicate nature of some of the tasks, had led to increasing anxiety and other forms of mental health difficulties. In the same way, dealing with sexual discrimination on a daily basis, had led some interviewees to lose confidence in themselves, which in turn led to different forms of mental health issues.

### ***Resettlement***

Respondents were asked how long their resettlement period was, from confirmation of leaving to time of leaving. Thirty-six per cent of survey respondents had a resettlement period that lasted between one and six months, 46 per cent for between seven and 18 months, and 18 per cent had a resettlement that lasted last for 19-24 months. Those who left because they had reached the end of the commitment were more likely to have had a long resettlement period, and short resettlement periods were most associated with those leaving voluntarily or for other reasons. Of this group, 47 per cent had a resettlement period lasting 19-24 months and 18 per cent for 13-18 months. By comparison, 88 per cent of those who left voluntarily had a resettlement period of less than 12 months. These differences were statistically significant.

Resettlement tended to be longer for those who had served the longest. Of those with the shortest serving period (less than nine years), 52 per cent spent six months or less in resettlement and no respondents had a resettlement period of more than 12 months. By comparison, 30 per cent of those who had served for 16 years or more had a short resettlement of less than six months (with a mixture of reasons for leaving but an above average proportion being medically discharged) and nearly half (48%) had a resettlement period of 13-24 months. Shorter resettlement was also more common among ORs (46% had a resettlement period of less than six months) than

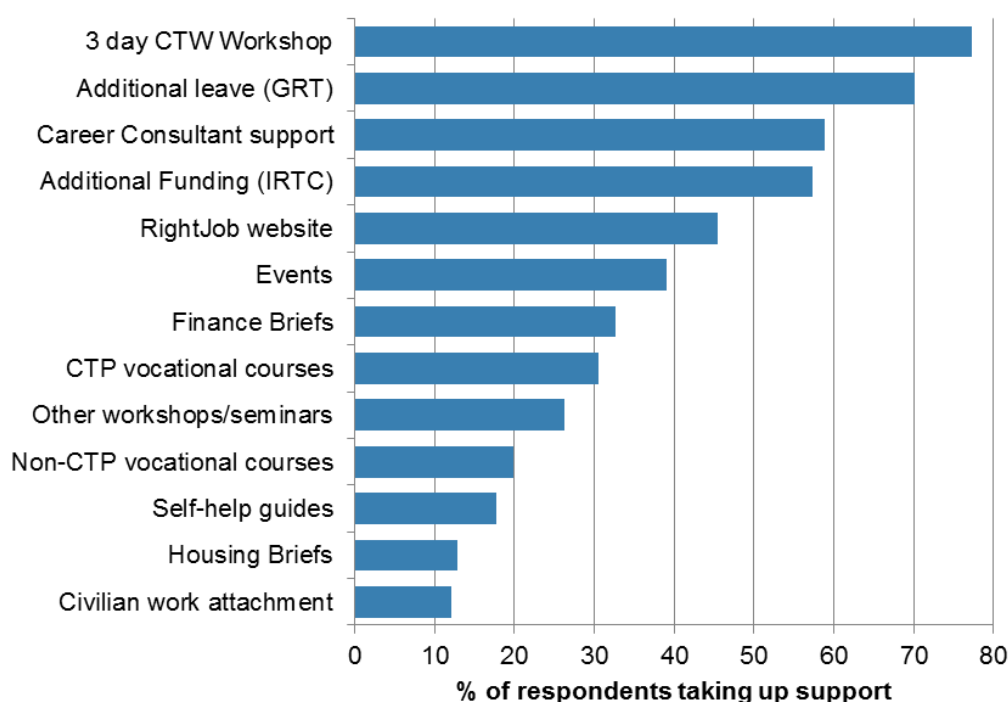
Officers (22%). Officers were twice as likely to have their resettlement period last between 19 to 24 months (12% among ORs compared to 25% among Officers).

### ***Support during transition***

FSLs generally made use of a wide range of support during transition, with only eight per cent not taking up any type of support<sup>1</sup>. Figure 4-2 shows that just over three quarters of respondents (77%) attended the three-day Career Transition Workshop, while 70 per cent took up additional leave (Graduated Resettlement Time), 59 per cent made use of Career Consultant support, 57 per cent received additional funding (Individual Resettlement Training Cost), and 45 per cent used the RightJob website. Just under one in three respondents (31%) undertook vocational training courses via the Career Transition Partnership (CTP) and 20 per cent undertook training via external training providers; 41 per cent undertook either type of training, and nine per cent undertook both types. Two fifths (40%) of those who left on medical grounds made use of CTP Assist, the specialist support for those on medical discharge.

The CTP sub-sample of respondents provided details of the type of events attended. CTP Employment Fairs were the most common type of event, attended by 35 per cent of respondents, followed by specific company/employer recruitment events (9%), Insight Days (7%) and charity events (4%).

***Figure 4-2 Support taken up during resettlement***



There were some significant differences in the take up of CTP support by Service and rank.

- Female Officers were twice as likely as ORs to undertake CTP vocational training courses (39% and 20% respectively) and were also twice as likely to use Finance Briefs (42% compared with 21% of ORs).

<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately we were not able to obtain a comparator figure for male service leavers.

- Female Officers were more likely than ORs to take up additional leave and additional funding (75% of Officers took up additional leave and 64% took up additional funding, while take up among ORs was 57% and 44% respectively). Officers were also more likely than ORs to attend the three-day Career Transition Workshop (81% compared with 63% of ORs).

The use of most types of support was significantly associated with the length of resettlement period. Respondents with short resettlement periods of up to six months were least likely to use Career Consultant support, Finance Briefs, the RightJob website, events, vocational training, the Career Transition Workshop, other workshops, additional leave and additional funding.

Respondents who had taken up training during resettlement were asked whether this was top-up training, to refresh or extend their existing skills, or conversion training, to learn new skills not related to their main trade, or a mixture, or some other type of training. Conversion training was more common than top-up training, with 71 per cent of respondents who undertook CTP courses, and 89 per cent of those who undertook non-CTP courses doing conversion training, either on its own or in combination with top-up training.

**Table 4-2: Training during resettlement**

	CTP courses	Non-CTP courses
Top-up training (to refresh or extend existing skills)	19.0	7.1
Conversion training (to learn new skills not related to your trade)	47.6	57.1
Mixture/both	23.8	32.1
Other	9.5	3.6
<b>N=</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>28</b>

There were a number of common types of training among the CTP vocational courses, including project management (AMPM and Prince2), CIPD Level 5, property maintenance/building/gardening, finance, accounting, business start-up/self-employment, and schools business manager/bursar courses. There was a wider range of courses undertaken by those who used non-CTP vocational training, including swimming instructor, woodworking, dog grooming, hair and beauty, and health/first aid courses.

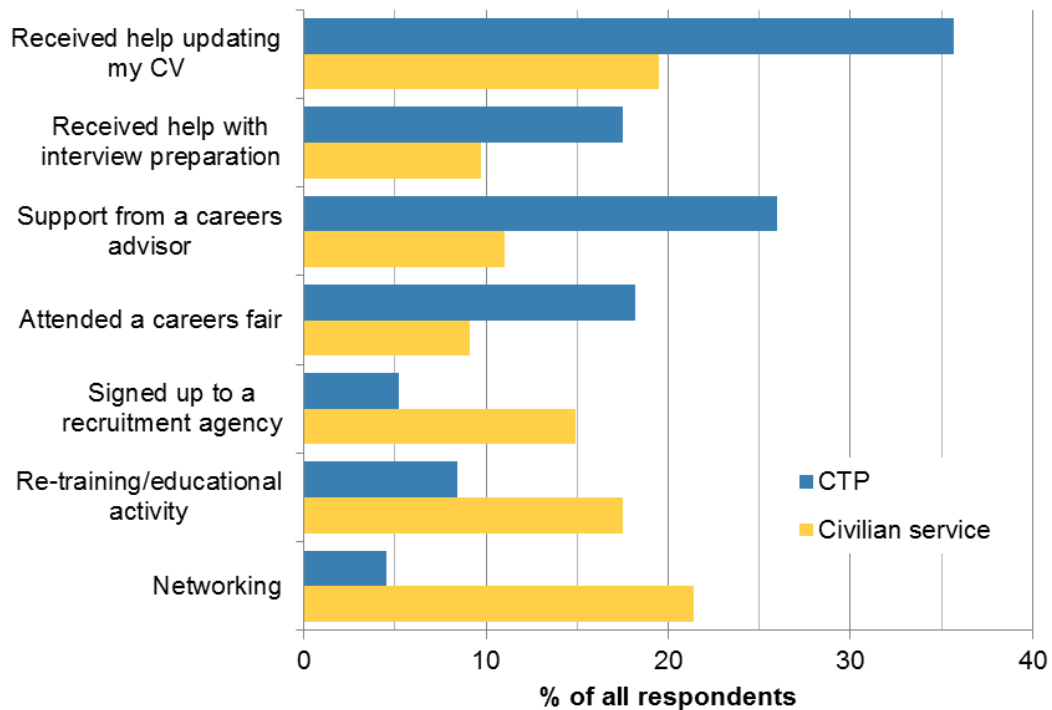
### ***Post-departure support***

Respondents were asked if they had received any careers support (e.g. help in looking for jobs, applying for job, accessing training etc.) since they had left the Armed Forces, either from CTP or from civilian support services. Just under half (47%) had used CTP support after they had left their Service, and 38 per cent had used civilian support services.

Figure 4-3 shows the proportion of all respondents that had used each type of support from each source. The most common post-departure support received from CTP was help updating the respondent's CV (36% of all respondents), followed by support from a careers advisor (26%), attending a careers fair (18%), and help with interview

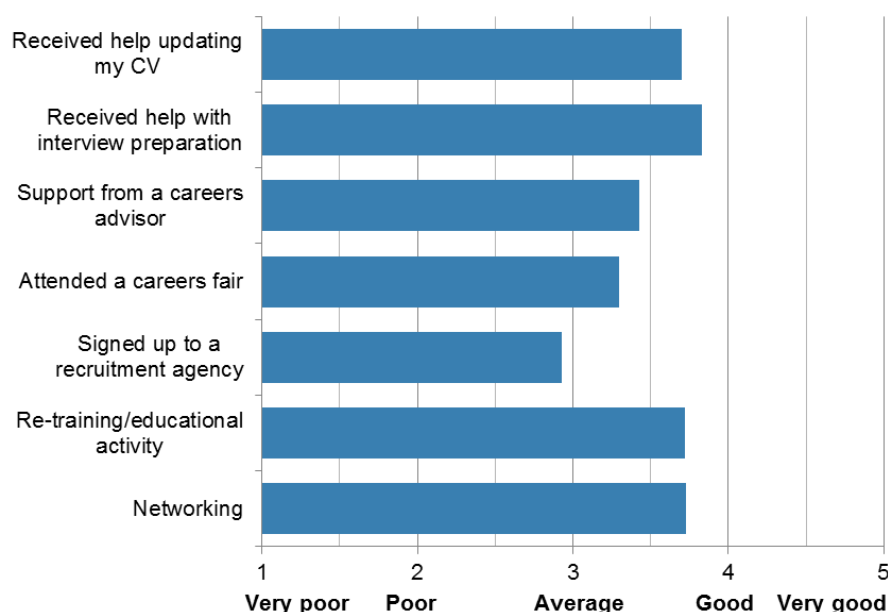
preparation (18%). Civilian support services were most commonly used for networking opportunities (21%, whereas only 5% used CTP for this support), and civilian services were also more commonly used than CTP for re-training/educational activity (18%) and access to recruitment agencies (15%). Officers were significantly more likely than ORs to use both CTP and civilian services to attend careers fairs, and to use civilian services for networking.

**Figure 4-3 Use of different types of support**



Respondents were also asked to rate the usefulness of the support they received, using a scale of Very Poor, Poor, Average, Good, and Very Good, and the results are presented in Figure 4-4. Help with interview preparation was rated as the most useful, closely followed by networking, re-training, and help with CVs. Access to recruitment agencies was rated as the least useful support.

**Figure 4-4 Usefulness of different types of support**



### **Views on amount of support and type of support received**

Survey respondents were asked whether they felt they had received the right amount of support during transition. On average views were broadly neutral; 44 per cent of respondents agreed that they had received enough support during the transition period (13% strongly agreed and 31% agreed), while 36 per cent disagreed (17% strongly disagreed, and 19% agreed); 21 per cent neither agreed nor disagreed. Satisfaction was associated with the number of sources used; those who were very dissatisfied had used only two elements of resettlement support, while those who were neutral or satisfied had used at least five.

Married/cohabiting respondents with a serving husband/partner were significantly more positive that they had received enough support during transition than single respondents or other married/cohabiting respondents, and agreement was strongest among respondents in their late 30s and 40s. Officers were more positive than ORs, and RN leavers were more positive than Army leavers, who were more positive than RAF leavers, although these differences were not statistically significant (and there was little variation in the number of sources used by respondents from the different Services).

Respondents who disagreed that they had enough support during resettlement asked to describe the specific additional support they would have liked to have received but did not. The responses were wide-ranging in nature but similar themes of a more tailored approach to CTP and more employer access were apparent. For example:

*“I would have liked to have more time with a qualified career counsellor who is supportive and also takes the time to understand the Service leaver. Whilst officially it appears that you can utilise CTP for interview prep and CV writing, the reality is it’s often difficult to get time away from the primary role in order to access these services. I believe that the CTP courses should include possible avenues for women who may leave the forces and support their spouse as they move from posting to posting.”*

*"A proper leaving interview from my Chain of Command... after 24 years I left with minimal contact from the hierarchy. Proper guidance and contact with an allocated IERO [Individual Education and Resettlement Officer] would have been beneficial. I was assigned within my last 12 months which was detrimental to my resettlement and personal welfare. I was told by my career consultant that he would contact me and I did not receive any contact for over 6 months."*

*"The CTP team should have contacts with various agencies (Hayes, Tiger Recruitment, Bain and Grey etc.) especially for clerical work as when I attending the job fairs, nobody catered for Executive Assistants/Personal Assistants, it was completely the wrong forum."*

*"I made a complete career change & perhaps an emphasis on transferable skills to different spheres may have been helpful rather than stereotypical ex-service personnel jobs."*

*"Career transition advice should be made available much earlier. It takes time to find a job, somewhere to live, register with doctors and dentists, find schools for children. Six months is not long enough. The format of CTP is outdated. Not everyone wants to be an electrician or plumber or learn how to tile. Those are not the skills needed in a modern market. The sum of money made available is nowhere near enough."*

Some respondents expressed disappointment over not having received any kind of support during their transition.

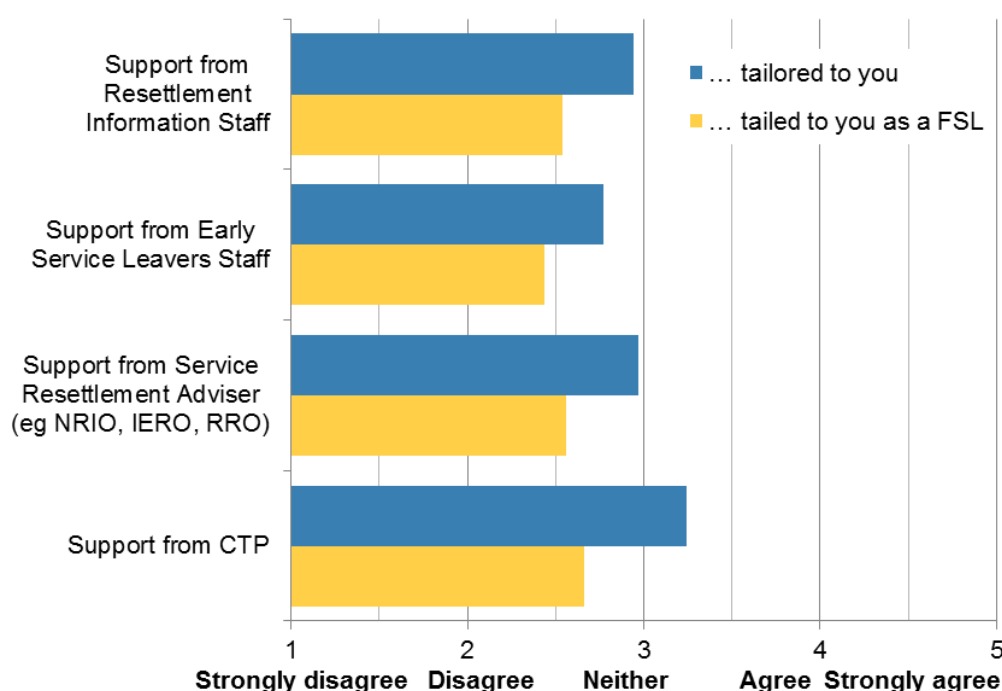
*"There wasn't anything put in place really, they just left you to deal with your own stuff. After I signed off nobody really bothered."*

*"I would have benefitted from a work coach during resettlement absolutely no confidence at all in CTP staff. As I was overseas there was little to no resettlement support."*

Respondents were also asked the extent to which they agreed the support they received from different sources during their transition was tailored to them. Respondents who received the survey via CTP were asked if they agreed the support was tailored to them, while other respondents were asked if they agreed the support was tailored to them 'as a female Service leaver'. Each respondent gave only one rating depending upon which version of the survey they completed, rather than giving a rating to each question.

The level of agreement differed substantially between the two groups, with those who were asked to indicate agreement that the support was tailored to them as a female Service leaver giving more negative responses than those who were asked to indicate agreement that the support was tailored to them, without the gender specification. However, the pattern between the sources was the same for both groups, with agreement that support was tailored being strongest for CTP support, and weakest for support from Early Service Leavers staff. Thus the support from CTP was rated as the most tailored, and among those who completed the survey via the CTP invitation and were asked whether support was tailored to them, there was overall mild agreement that it had been.

**Figure 4-5 Views about the tailoring of support**



Respondents who disagreed that the support they received was tailored to them were asked to describe how the support could have been more tailored to them. Many of them described how they wanted support that was less generic.

*“As an educated woman with a couple of undergraduate degrees and a Masters, I needed educated, well thought out advice. The support offered is generic and not catered to individual needs.”*

*“It could be recognised that just because you are leaving at a certain rank you may not necessarily want to leave to the most common civilian role for that peer group. I felt that as I didn't fit the "mould" there was no other option available to me. There seemed little consideration to the specialisations a number of armed forces personnel are trained in or the skill sets a number of personnel will hold alongside their military service.”*

*“The advice was all very generic. Potential career paths offered were in project management or general management with little focus on my interests or wider skill set.”*

Many of the respondents felt the support could have been better tailored to non-standard careers that women are more likely to take up than male SLs. For example:

*“I was the only female on the CTW [Career Transition Workshop] I attended. Most of the focus was on jobs perhaps somewhat stereotypically pursued by ex-soldiers of a certain age.”*

*“The workshops I went to were very focused on either going to the city and earning lots of money or setting up your own business and earning lots of money. Both were run by the same individuals and I felt a theme had become entrenched.”*

Some respondents also reflected on broader barriers women in the labour market and how these could be addressed through CTP.

*“Discussions and practical advice against women's tendency to undervalue themselves – this plays out in interviews and salary negotiations.”*

*“I think there is a higher propensity amongst women to demonstrate hesitancy in making their case for how skills fit in civilian companies. Also, there is a higher degree to which work life balance and flexible working options may be of benefit due to the likelihood of women having some form of caring responsibility. Giving women the confidence to know that those options exist and providing opportunities in organisations where this is a core value would provide insights which could then be taken into a wider job search with a much greater sense of certainty.”*

*“Perhaps working on more mind-set type elements – women, on the whole, tend to feel like they have bigger barriers in terms of confidence and balancing family commitments than their male counterparts. We were all treated the same, which on the one hand I think is great because it doesn't bring gender into it, but ultimately gender does play as aspect as the expectations placed on women are often different.”*

But others felt that there should not be a tailored approach to women that differed from the resettlement package offered to men.

*“I don't particularly want extra support due to being a female. But I don't have any children so I can imagine that might make a difference.”*

*“Female or male is irrelevant. Both face the same situation when leaving the forces. Gender is not a factor.”*

Just over two fifths of respondents (43%) said that there were other types of support that would have been useful that they did not receive. A common theme among responses was the lack of guidance on non-standard careers that differed from those normally offered through CTP. For example:

*“I found that the career opportunities offered through CTP tended to be relatively limited in range e.g. engineering in defence related industries. Armed Forces personnel have a lot to offer future employees and the 'system' does not seem to go out and sell this to non-defence related companies. As a result there is often a lack of appreciation as to what skills, including life and management skills, we can offer.”*

*“The CTP only offers a very narrow remit of courses and does little to help those in transition refine their options at the same time as working with them to identify what you want. They don't actually help you get to a place of understanding what is it you want....a lot of people don't really know, and fall into something more out of luck than judgement maybe.”*

*“It seemed to all be tailored to full-time, male-dominated careers, not working mums.”*

Many of these respondents said they wanted a more tailored or one-to-one approach from CTP staff. In some cases, respondents found the advisers to lack the skills and experience required for careers advisory services.

*“I could have benefited (although likely not available) from a more tailored approach to my transition – or maybe linking up with someone more aligned with the sector I wanted to join. As I was leaving as an officer I felt that it was assumed that I would go*



*into a Management Consultant role and even though I explained that wasn't what I wanted it was as if that was the only advice available so they just carried on anyway even though it wasn't relevant to me."*

*"A one to one career discussion would have been helpful. Upon leaving I discovered that the industry that I had hoped to work in looked unfavourably upon the fact that I did not have an engineering degree and hence were unwilling to consider employing me, even though I had completed relevant courses relevant to the role. If I had known this in advance then I would have planned some resettlement activities differently."*

*"I felt that the staff at CTP were not suitably trained or experienced to offer the correct advice. For example I was assigned an advisor who had left the military a few months before me, we had served in the same Corps and she was a lower rank than me. I did not feel she had the necessary skills and experience."*

In relation to specific types of employability support, commonly mentioned topics included access to employers through work placements and careers fairs, as well as CV writing. For example:

*"A visit to an industry partner, i.e. Amazon, BT."*

*"Short placement availability and offers from employers, industry, NHS"*

*"Professional CV writing and cover letters. I found the CTP CV writing was quite basic and needed more work to be competitive."*

### ***Looking for work during transition***

Eighty seven per cent of respondents had looked for work during transition. Those under the age of 35 were more likely to have done so than those were older (93 per cent of those under 35 compared to 84 per cent of those older). Of all respondents, 74 per cent had looked for work before or during resettlement. Seventeen per cent had taken a break initially then looked, and 9 per cent had looked for work immediately after leaving. Officers were more likely than non-Officers to have taken a break (20 per cent compared to 16 per cent). Younger SLs were more likely to have searched for work before or during resettlement (84 per cent of those under 30 compared to 41 per cent of those over 50). These differences were not statistically significant.

### ***Preferred destination activity at the point of leaving***

Respondents were asked about their preferred activity when leaving. Two-thirds of respondents had employment as an employee as their preferred activity, while 18 per cent preferred training or education and a further 17 per cent self-employment. Nine per cent of respondents wanted a temporary career break for family reasons.

**Table 4-3: Preferred destination activity on leaving**

	Number	%
Employment as an employee	101	66.0
Self-employment	26	17.0
Education/training	27	17.6
Temporary career break for family reasons	13	8.5
Temporary career break for other reasons	6	3.9
Long term break from working for family reasons	4	2.6
Long term break from working for other reasons	1	0.7
Other	4	2.6
<b>N=</b>	<b>153</b>	

RN leavers were more likely than other leavers to mention self-employment as a preferred destination (35%, compared with 18% of Army leavers and 8% of RAF leavers). Older leavers aged 35 and over (23%) were much more likely to prefer self-employment than younger leavers aged 34 and under (4%). There were no significant variations in preferred destination by rank.

Respondents' preferences for the sector and occupation of employment at their time of leaving were compared with their branch, regiment or main trade to gauge the extent to which they were looking for similar work in civilian employment to their Service employment, or were looking for a change. Two fifths (41%) of respondents preferred the same type of work, while 24 per cent wanted something in the broad area they had been in in the Armed Forces, and 26 per cent wanted a total change; 10 per cent gave vague preferences for civilian employment or did not give preferences at all.

Respondents from personnel and training branches were most likely to be looking for similar work (68%), followed by those from medical branches (57%) and former Royal Signals respondents (56%), while only 22 per cent of those from logistics branches were looking for similar work. Examples of the type of work respondents were looking for include:

- Personnel/training respondents were commonly looking for HR advisor or manager positions, mentor or coach positions, and administration or personal/executive assistant positions;
- Logistics respondents looking for a change mentioned a wide range of sectors/roles, including personal trainer, farmer, paramedic, and security, legal and HR positions;
- Royal Signals respondents were looking for telephony/communications/IT engineer positions, or (management) consultant positions (former Officers)
- Engineering respondents were commonly looking for engineering positions in civilian employment, although some were looking for different roles such as nurse, teacher, massage therapist, and police detective
- Those medical respondents who did not prefer to stay in medicine/ health mentioned roles in sports, events and catering
- Warfare respondents wanting similar roles mentioned aerospace/ aviation roles and data analyst (former intelligence respondent), while those wanted a change

mentioned finance, recruitment, administration, childcare and canine care/dog grooming

- Some military police respondents wanted to move across to the civilian police, while others considered moving into trainer or personal trainer roles, or a major change to become a pilot or a dog groomer.

**Table 4-4: Extent to which respondents sought a match between military and civilian employment on leaving**

	<b>Direct match</b>	<b>Vague match</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>Vague/ unknown</b>	<b>N=</b>
Personnel/training	68.0	12.0	12.0	8.0	25
Logistics	22.2	29.6	33.3	14.8	27
Signals (Army only)	55.6	11.1	33.3	0.0	9
Engineering	38.5	23.1	30.8	7.7	13
Medical	57.1	14.3	21.4	7.1	14
Warfare	36.4	9.1	45.5	9.1	11
Military police	28.6	28.6	28.6	14.3	7
Other/not known	15.4	61.5	15.4	7.7	13

### ***Interviewees' experience of transition***

The period of notice varied between interviewees. Depending on the reasons for leaving, this varied between a few days (in the case of medical discharge) and two years (end of the contract). This appears to have had an effect on how each of our participants experienced the transition.

All of the interviewees who had reached the end of their contract described the transition and resettlement process as being a very good experience with everything organised in advance and well managed by their Service. In the cases in which people did not want to leave but have been forced to, either by the organisation (e.g. medical discharge) or personal circumstances (e.g. family reasons), the experience of the transition and resettlement process varied between a very bad experience to a quite a good one.

In general, participants felt that the support provided by the CTP was well organised. The majority of participants reported that they had used the workshops available to prepare them to transit into new employment. The two workshops which were found to be the most useful were the sessions on how to write a CV and how to be prepared for a job interview. Indeed, all our interviewees agreed on the usefulness of these two workshops, even though they also had different opinions on how they could be improved.

For example, around one fifth found that the sessions on CV development were very much focused on a structure and form that actually not all the civilian organisations used, as most civilian organisations actually require candidates to fill in online forms and undertake tests. These interviewees suggested that it would have been useful to explore this process during the workshops. In the session on how to be prepared for a job interview, although a lot of focus was on interviewing, it was not found always very helpful, especially because the interviews were conducted in front of the whole class.

Attending workshops with people who are going through to the same process was found to be very supportive by the majority of interviewees as this offered an opportunity to share experiences and discuss fears, excitement and expectations for the future. To this end, however, these interviewees suggested that it was paramount to organise the workshops so that the people attending have similar work experience or come from the same rank. Indeed, when this had not happened, they felt that they had missed the opportunity to have “someone to discuss [things] with” who could better understand their position.

In some cases, our interviewees had not had the opportunity to take part in all of the transition workshops since they were held, for example, in different locations (it was suggested that there were not many courses available in the North) or because they had personal circumstances which prevented them from attending the course (e.g. mental health issues or being pregnant). In at least two cases, interviewees could not attend workshops due to not being released from operational duties. Ensuring that people can attend courses online or at distance was suggested as a solution in order to provide everyone with the same benefits.

In the cases of mental health discharge or discrimination, it was also suggested that these people should be offered counselling support during the transition, beyond career support. Our interviewees reported that in these cases, no additional support was provided, and in most of the cases they felt that they were left alone.

A minority of interviewees suggested that younger women might encounter more problems in transition because they may be less confident. They suggested that it would be good to have female mentors to help them raise their confidence.

The most common challenge for our interviewees related to finding a new job, which is something they suggested was left completely up to the person who is leaving. Indeed, it was suggested that the Armed Forces did not provide active support in finding a new job. As our interviewees explained, the only support provided was to provide advice on civilian roles that could fit with the individual’s experience in the Armed Forces. However, even in relation to this advice, almost all interviewees reported that the list of jobs suggested was quite “*closed*” and that the MOD should recognise that “*not everyone has the same interests*”. In particular it was suggested that sometimes FSLs tend to be more adventurous with their job choices than men as they may have broader interests. Interviewees suggested that it would be helpful to provide a workshop on how to find a new job or to provide a list of organisations which have processes set up for recruiting ex-military personnel.

#### **4.3.2 Employment destinations**

This section investigates the actual destinations of survey respondents, in relation to their employment status and employment characteristics, including the sector of their employer, their occupation, the factors that influenced them in their employment choices, and experience of working or applying for jobs prior to their current position. This will include brief sub-sections on self-employed respondents, and those not currently in employment, although the small numbers of respondents in these two categories precluded any detailed analysis.

### **Employment status**

Respondents were asked a number of questions to establish their current status at the time of the survey; firstly, if they were in employment, and if so whether they had re-joined the Armed Forces or were serving on Full-Time Reserve Service (FTRS) and, if not, whether they were working as an employee or were self-employed. Responses to these questions have been combined to create a combined employment status variable. Overall, 64 per cent of respondents were employees at the time of the survey, 10 per cent were self-employed, four per cent had re-joined the Regulars or were on FTRS, and 22 per cent were not in employment (Table 4-5).

**Table 4-5: Employment status at time of survey**

	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
Employee	98	63.6
Self-employed	16	10.4
Re-joined AF	6	3.9
Not in employment	34	22.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>100</b>

Leavers from the Army (73%) were less likely to be in employment than leavers from the RN (85%) and RAF (83%), although the difference was not statistically significant. There was little difference between Officers and ORs (employment rates of 77% and 79% respectively).

Only two thirds (68%) of married leavers, or those with a partner, and whose husband or partner was serving in the Armed Forces were in employment at the time of the survey, compared with 78 per cent of single leavers, and 86 per cent of married/cohabiting leavers whose husband/partner was not serving. This difference was significant at the ten per cent level.

The likelihood of being in employment tended to decrease with age, with 95 per cent of those aged under 30, and 81 per cent of those aged 30 to 34 in employment at the time of the survey, compared with 74 per cent of those aged 35 to 39, 75 per cent of those in their 40s, and 71 per cent of those aged 50 and over.

Respondents who had served for 22 years or more had the lowest employment rate (70%, although as we show below this is mostly by choice) followed by those with between nine and 15 years' Service (75%), while 91 per cent of those who had served for less than nine years were in employment, as were 81 per cent of those with 16 to 21 years' Service.

Respondents who left for medical reasons, or who reached the end of their commitment were much more likely than voluntary leavers to be unemployed or inactive (40% of medical leavers and 31% of end of commitment leavers were not in employment compared with 17% of voluntary leavers, while all those who left for other reasons were in employment).

There were some significant associations between personal and military demographics and employment status, in terms of whether respondents were employees or self-employed. Nearly two fifths (38%) of RN leavers in employment

were self-employed, compared with 12 per cent of Army leavers, and eight per cent of RAF leavers. One in three employed respondents (35%) who left when they were in their late 30s (35-39) were self-employed, more than twice the overall average of 15 per cent, while no respondents who left in their 20s were self-employed.

### ***Interviewee responses***

The majority of our interviewees (19 out of 23) were currently employed. In most cases, they started seeking new employment before or immediately on leaving the Armed Forces and, in some cases, secured a new job even before leaving.

Interviewees explained their desire to work in relation to the need to contribute to the family finances or, in the case of single parents, to financially sustain the family. In some cases, interviewees did not have a specific list of requirements when applying for jobs. However, in most cases, FSLs were interested in finding a job in which they could make use of the experience and skills gained during their time in the Armed Forces. Salary and location of the job were other important factors that interviewees considered when job hunting. In some cases, once they left the Armed Forces, interviewees decided to start their own business.

Those interviewees who did not need to find a job immediately on leaving had taken the opportunity to either spend some time with their family or to consider what they wanted to do next. Some interviewees had gone on to do something completely different to what they had done in the past, such as dog-grooming or management consultancy. One of our interviewees explained that this was quite “scary”, but that to be in a new work environment and do completely new things helped her to “*step into that new phase of her life*”.

Two of the four interviewees who were not currently employed were in the process of seeking employment. The remaining two participants who were not currently employed either did not need to work or had decided to dedicate time to their family.

## **4.3.2.1 Respondents in employment as employees**

### ***Impact of training***

Survey respondents working as employees who had received training during resettlement were asked about the impact that the training had on them securing employment. Some respondents were asked if they felt they would have secured employment without the training, while others were asked if they believed the training benefitted them in securing employment. Eleven per cent of the first group (1 respondent out of 9) reported that they did not think they would have secured employment without the training they received, while in the latter group, just under half (46%, 13 out of 28 respondents) felt that the training benefitted them in securing employment.

These respondents were asked to expand on how the training benefitted them. Some reported that the training was directly linked to the role they were in, for example a swimming instructor course, personal trainer course, CIPD qualification, and IT courses, while others reported that the training helped them successfully apply for jobs (CV writing, interview techniques, conversations about salary), consolidate their skills and experience and boost their confidence, and to provide insights as to whether particular jobs were suitable for them or not.

### **Working hours**

Employee respondents were also asked whether they were working full-time or part-time, and whether their position was permanent or temporary. Overall, just under one in five employee respondents (18%) were working part-time. The proportion was significantly higher among leavers with a husband/partner who was serving in the Armed Forces (35%), and among those who left their Service in their late 30s (40%), while no respondents who left in their early 30s, and only 15 per cent of those who left in their 20s, were working part-time. There were also significant differences by reason for leaving, with only nine per cent of voluntary leavers working part-time, compared with 25 per cent of those who reached the end of their commitment, and half of those who left for other reasons.

The majority of part-time respondents were working part-time through choice, rather than being unable to find full-time work. Half of part-time respondents said that they preferred part-time work or did not want a full-time job, while 17 per cent worked part-time for study or health reasons, and a further 17 per cent gave other voluntary reasons for working part-time; thus only 17 per cent were working part-time because they could not find a full-time job. Respondents who said they preferred part-time work or did not want a full-time job described their reasons for not wanting a full-time job, and these were mainly around childcare, fitting around working patterns of their husband/partner, and work-life balance generally. For example, respondents explained:

*"I now have a daughter and want to spend as much time with her as possible. Similarly, I'm fortunate that my financial situation enables me to work part-time. Working part-time gives me the work/life balance that I want."*

*"I wanted flexibility and not the bone numbing tiredness my full-time roles in the Armed Forces generated"*

### **Contract type**

One in six employee respondents (16%) were in a temporary job at the time of the survey. The only significant variation was by reason for leaving, with two fifths of those who left for 'other' reasons being in temporary positions, compared with 14 per cent of voluntary leavers, and 13 per cent of those who left at the end of their commission (significant at the 10% level).

Half of all temporary workers were on a fixed term contract, while the rest were a mixture of casual work, zero hours contracts, agency/bank work, and seasonal work. Just under half (44%) said that they took a temporary position because they could not find a permanent job, while a similar proportion said they preferred temporary work (with one citing Reserve commitments and one citing that their husband/partner would be posted again soon), and the remainder were on a contract for a probationary period.

### **Industry**

Employee respondents reported working across a range of sectors, although predominantly in service sectors, as shown in Table 4-6. One in ten respondents were working in manufacturing, utilities or construction, i.e. not in service sectors. Nearly one in five (18%) were working in the other services sector, covering entertainment, recreation and other personal services, while 13 per cent were in public



administration, a further 13 per cent were in health, 11 per cent were in the charity/voluntary sector, and 10 per cent were in financial and business services.

**Table 4-6: Industry of respondents working as employees**

	Number	%
Manufacturing, utilities, construction	10	10.2
Distribution, transport, hotels etc.	8	8.2
Information and communication	7	7.1
Financial and business services	10	10.2
Public administration	13	13.3
Education	8	8.2
Health	13	13.3
Charity	11	11.2
Other services	18	18.4
All employees	98	100

There was some variation by former Service, with all employees in the information and communication sector having served in the Army, making up 13 per cent of employed Army leavers, while only six per cent of Army leavers were in the charity/voluntary sector, and only seven per cent of Army leavers were in manufacturing, utilities or construction.

There was also substantial variation by rank, which was significant at the ten per cent level. Officers were much more likely than ORs to be working in financial and business services (19%, compared with 5% for ORs) and education (14%, compared with 5%), while they were less likely to be in the health sector (8%, compared with 17% for ORs), and no Officers were working in distribution, transport and hotels, while 13 per cent of ORs were employed in this sector.

### **Occupation**

Nearly two thirds (63%) of employee respondents were working in high-level non-manual jobs – managerial, professional, or associate professional/technical occupations. One in four (27%) were working in professional occupations, which included nurses, teachers, engineers, and lawyers, while one in five (21%) were in managerial occupations, across a range of sectors.

**Table 4-7: Occupation of respondents working as employees**

	Number	%
Managers and directors (e.g. finance, HR managers/directors, small business owners)	20	21.3
Professional occupations (e.g. doctors, nurses, teachers, scientists, lawyers, etc.)	25	26.6
Associate professional/technical (e.g. housing, welfare, police, HR/sales/marketing officers)	14	14.9
Administrative and secretarial occupations (incl. book-keepers/payroll, PAs, receptionists, etc.)	11	11.7
Skilled trades (e.g. chefs/cooks, bakers, gardeners, tailors, florists, etc.)	13	13.8
Other occupations	11	11.7
All employees	94	100

There was some variation in occupation by former Service, with a below average proportion of Army leavers entering skilled trade jobs (8%, compared with 20% of RN and RAF leavers), and an above average proportion of Army leavers entering other occupations (14%, compared with 9% of RN and RAF leavers). Relatively few RAF leavers were in professional occupations (15%).

There was a highly significant association between rank and occupation, as shown in Table 4-8. Three quarters (76%) of Officers were in managerial or professional jobs, compared with 30 per cent of ORs, while 55 per cent of ORs were in administrative, skilled trade or other occupations, compared with 11 per cent of Officers.

**Table 4-8: Occupation of respondents working as employee (by rank)**

	Other Ranks	Officers
Managers and directors (e.g. finance, HR managers/directors, small business owners)	16.1	29.7
Professional occupations (e.g. doctors, nurses, teachers, scientists, lawyers, etc.)	14.3	45.9
Associate professional/technical (e.g. housing, welfare, police, HR/sales/marketing officers)	14.3	13.5
Administrative and secretarial occupations (incl. book-keepers/payroll, PAs, receptionists, etc.)	17.9	2.7
Skilled trades (e.g. chefs/cooks, bakers, gardeners, tailors, florists, etc.)	21.4	2.7
Other occupations	16.1	5.4
<b>N=</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>37</b>

Leavers with higher education (HE) qualifications were significantly more likely than those with lower level qualifications to be in high-level jobs. Two thirds (65%) of leavers with degrees or other HE qualifications were in managerial or professional jobs, compared with 17 per cent of leavers with A-levels or equivalent, and 14 per cent of those with qualifications below A-levels. Two thirds (67%) of leavers with A-levels or

equivalent were in administrative, skilled trade or other occupations, as were 79 per cent of those with qualifications below A-levels.

Occupation was also significantly associated with age, and with relationship status. The proportion of leavers in managerial or professional jobs increased with age, from 28 per cent of those in their 20s, to around 40 per cent of those in their 30s, and around two thirds of those aged 40 and over, while the proportion in skilled trade or other occupations decreased with age, from 56 per cent of those in their 20s, to around one third of those in their 30s, and around five per cent of those aged 40 and over. Over half (57%) of single leavers were in managerial or professional jobs, compared with 42 per cent of married/cohabiting leavers, while 35 per cent of leavers with a husband/partner in the Armed Forces were in professional or technical jobs, compared with seven per cent of other leavers, and married/cohabiting leavers whose husband/partner was not in the Armed Forces were most likely to be in skilled trade occupations (27%).

### **Time of initial employment**

The survey asked questions about how long employees had been with their current employer, how many employers respondents had worked for, and when they first secured employment if they had worked for more than one. Using these responses it was possible to construct a variable showing when employee respondents first started work in relation to their discharge date.

Two fifths of employees (40%) had secured employment before their discharge from their Service, while a quarter (25%) found employment within one month after discharge, 18 per cent found employment between one and six months after discharge, and 19 per cent had a break of six months or more before they started work.

There were no significant influences on when FSLs first started work, with a spread of start dates by the personal, military and transition characteristics of respondents.

### **Where interviewees are working**

In seeking new employment, industry or employment sector was not one of the main criteria for the majority of our participants: they were more concerned about the nature of the job itself. Table 4-9 reports the current employment sector of our interviewees.

**Table 4-9: Employment sector of interviewees**

<b>Employment Sector</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Public sector (e.g. local government)	3
Healthcare	3
Social care (e.g. education)	1
Retail and customer service	2
Professional services (e.g. consultancy, finance,	5
Leisure and Sport	1
Defence (e.g. FTRS)	1
Police (e.g. detective)	2
Construction	1

Several interviewees were employed within the professional services sector (e.g. consultancy, finance, recruitment). Indeed, one of our interviewees explained that the military network was really strong in the financial and professional services areas and most of the time these kinds of roles offered the opportunity to make use of the managerial skills gained during the time in the Armed Forces.

The public sector was also suggested as a choice for FSLs. This was explained in relation to the fact that the type of job reflected interviewees expectations or because the public sector was considered to offer good benefits to personnel in relation to maternity leave and pay, working hours, and support for mental health conditions.

The remaining interviewees had generally found employment in sectors that reflected their roles within the Armed Forces. For example, the healthcare sector for those who had been in the medical field, construction sector for engineers and the leisure industry for physical instructors.

Whatever the sector, when seeking new employment, the main concern for our interviewees was related to salary and the level of the job. In the majority of the cases, the salary was found to be lower than in the military, even when our interviewees secured a higher position than that which they held in the Armed Forces. The level of the job was important to interviewees because of the responsibilities associated with this. An aspect that had been noticed and valued by our interviewees was the possibility to benefit from flexible working practices provided by some of the organisations. Indeed, especially in the case of women with caring responsibilities, having the possibility to work from home without the need to be physically in the office, or being able to flex working hours in a day, had been found to helpful in order to balance work and life.

### **4.3.3 Influences on employment**

Survey respondents were asked to indicate how strong an influence a range of factors were in their decision to work for their current employer or in their current sector. In the

survey, the order of the factors was randomised for each respondent to avoid order bias.

Location of employment, and interest in the job itself, were the most influential factors, and were on average a strong influence on respondents' employment choices (Figure 4-29). These were followed by a keen interest to work in the sector or organisation, which was a fairly strong influence, and a number of factors which were above a moderate influence:

- Transferability of skills from the Armed Forces;
- Relevant experience gained from the Armed Forces;
- Flexibility of work hours;
- Good progression opportunities;
- Attractive pay and rewards; and
- Recognition of qualifications and training in the Armed Forces.

Suggestions from staff involved in resettlement were a very weak influence on respondents' employment choices.

**Figure 4-6: Influences on Employment Choice**



Factor analysis was undertaken to investigate whether responses about the influences of particular factors appeared to be driven by underlying 'constructs' that explained variation in a number of factors. This suggested a number of groupings, which were confirmed as valid scales using reliability analysis. First, the four 'suggestion' factors emerged as a clear factor, as did the three factors about skills, experience and qualifications gained from the Armed Forces (the second group). Third, interest in the sector/organisation and interest in the content of the job grouped together, and finally, good training opportunities was paired with good progression opportunities. Key variations in these groupings included:

- FSLs from ORs rated suggestions from the range of resettlement staff more highly than did Officer leavers, although there was little variation by other personal, military and transition characteristics.
- Respondents aged in the 40s rated the skills, experience and qualifications gained from the Armed Forces as a strong influence, while those aged under 35 rated it as a weak to moderate influence.
- Officers, and FSLs from the RN, rated interest in the sector/organisation/job much more highly than other respondents.
- The rating of training/development decreased with age, with respondents aged under 30 rating it between moderate and strong, and respondents aged 50 and over rating it between weak and moderate.

Among the factors that did not group together, the only significant variation in responses was regarding flexibility of work hours. Married/cohabiting respondents with a husband/partner in the Armed Forces rated this as a much stronger influence than other respondents, as did respondents who left their Service when they were in their 30s.

#### **4.3.4 Reasons for being recruited and support from employers**

Around half of respondents reported that their current employer explained their reasons for offering the respondent a job, and they were asked to give details about the feedback. A majority mentioned that the skills, experience and qualifications they gained from serving was a key factor in their employer offering them a job.

*“Suitability given experience, qualifications, and personal factors (i.e. I had experienced the issue that the project was due to address)”*

*“Administration background and adaptability from skills learned from being in the Army”*

*“Skills set and experience in both the NHS and Armed Forces will be invaluable in performing my role and supporting beneficiaries. Flexible approach and ability to develop the role, self-managing”*

Other respondents mentioned that they performed well during the application process, or that their employer said they were a good fit/right person for the role, and a couple mentioned that personal connections helped them get the job.

Just over one in ten respondents (12%) reported that their employer offered them additional support because they were a Service leaver, either during the application process, in employment, or in both situations. Young respondents were more likely to receive support than older respondents; around 20 per cent of respondents aged under 35, and 13 per cent of respondents aged 35 to 39, said that they received support from their employer, compared with five per cent of those aged 40 and over. Two respondents said that they were on a veterans’ internship scheme and received support and training through that, while other support included:

*“Employer offers a military buddy system - former Service leaver assigned to you to support your application and first 100 days of employment.”*

*"I had an initial telephone call and was then invited to come in for a face to face chat. I also received general guidance regarding completion of the application form."*

*"My employer suggested I came into the company to do a test drive around the yard with another employee with me. Once they thought I would be suited to the job, I started working within the week as a yard shunter [sic] to gain confidence and experience before letting me out on the road after 7 months."*

*"Relocation costs. Work experience."*

*"They held the role open for me to complete Resettlement."*

### ***Interviewees' experiences of the application process***

The experience of going through the application process was not uniform among our interviewees. Some interviewees did not experience any difficulties in finding and securing a new job. This is especially true of those with a degree. However, for the majority of interviewees, the process was not so smooth. Interviewees suggested that there is a *"natural sense of apprehension"* in being a SL who is going to be interviewed since, in some cases, the only job they have ever applied for was in the Armed Forces. It was explained that this apprehension comes from a lack of experience with job interviews plus a lack of sector-specific experience. In some cases, having been in the military sector for a long period of time was seen as a barrier itself. Interviewees suggested that there are complex stereotypes about being a FSL. In some cases, interviewees reported that comments such as *"you are too military"* or *"you need to be more feminine"* are quite common or that sometimes people did not believe that they were ex-military. It was suggested that there are cultural stereotypes of women in the Armed Forces and that most of the time people do not understand what being ex-military implies, what kinds of competencies and skills people in the military may have acquired, and what their role may have been. Interviewees described this situation as stressful and frustrating.

In at least two cases, interviewees also reported that they found the application process difficult because of the challenge in obtaining reference letters from their previous employer in the Armed Forces. In other cases, interviewees were told that, given the years they spent in the Armed Forces, they were overqualified and thus their applications were rejected. To overcome this, in some of these interviewees had modified their CV and hidden their previous experience in order to get the job.

In relation to transferable skills, the majority of interviewees did not have difficulties as most of the time they got a job which reflected their skills set and, in some cases, they even got a job for which they were overqualified. In general, managerial skills were seen as easily transferable to the civilian environment and, in some case, interviewees found that the training they had received within the military applied well to their new organisations. At the same time, the more technical skills, such as those in engineering, were seen as applying to those specific sectors that interviewees were currently employed in.

### ***Interviewees' experience of transition***

Although our interviewees did not struggle with transferring their skills to civilian employment, they reported that in general, there are quite a number of differences



between the military and the civilian environment which required some time to get used to. For example, around one fifth noticed that the terminology used is quite different and even if some the CTP workshops helped with business terminology, getting the whole vocabulary would take some time.

One interviewee suggested that civilian companies were much more interested in things you had 'delivered' in the past as a way to evaluate your skills. However, this was problematic in the Armed Forces since most of the time military tasks did not require anything to be 'delivered' in this way.

Organisational culture was another area that our participants found quite challenging. As one of our FSLs observed, in the military they "*get used to the word 'we'*" while in some civilian companies they are required to think and act individually. Moreover, interviewees suggested that the management style differed between military and civilian employment in that the sort of management based on 'command', typical of the military environment, did not apply to civilian organisations and therefore, civilian managerial procedures and practices required some time to adapt to.

A small number of interviewees said that they found the practice of men and women not getting equal pay within some civilian organisations quite "*new*" to them. As they reported, in the military they were paid and treated the same and everyone on a particular grade in an area of work got the same salary. For some, the transition from the military to the civilian environment represented a massive cultural shock. Interviewees explained that in the military each person could be seen as a 'cog in a machine' so when they left the Armed Forces it was like losing part of their identity. This was suggested as one of the difficult things to deal with.

Almost all of our interviewees reported that the civilian organisation they are currently working in did not have anything set up for supporting ex-military personnel. In one case, the organisation had an internal group of veterans, which offer support to new employees with a military background. In another case, one interviewee who had started her own business reported that she previously applied for a job where the company was guaranteeing interviews to ex-military personnel. However, apart from these two experiences, no others had experienced recruitment practices designed specifically for SLs. In line with this, these companies do not offer any additional training to ex-military personnel. In the majority of the cases, interviewees did not feel that they needed additional training because of their military background. However it was suggested that SLs could benefit from a buddy/coaching system, which not all the organisations seemed to provide. Indeed, interviewees explained that SLs were vulnerable during their initial time in new job, especially when they had spent a long time in the military. Therefore, having someone such as a mentor from the organisation to talk to could provide the additional support SLs might need.

#### **4.3.5 Previous applications/jobs**

Around half of employee respondents in the survey had applied for jobs in other sectors, or worked in other sectors, before their current job. Table 4-10 shows the sectors that respondents had applied to or worked in. Public administration was the most common sector, with two fifths (41%) of respondents having applied to or worked in this sector, followed by information and communication, and banking and finance (both 24%), and retail/wholesale, support services, and education (all 22%).



**Table 4-10: Respondents previous employment sector**

	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	2	4.3
Mining and Quarrying	1	2.2
Manufacturing	7	15.2
Electricity and gas companies	4	8.7
Water companies; waste and recycling	3	6.5
Construction	3	6.5
Retail and wholesale; vehicle repair	10	21.7
Transportation (road, rail, water, air); warehousing; post and courier activities	7	15.2
Hotels, other accommodation; restaurants, bars and pubs etc.	7	15.2
Information and communication (publishing, film/TV/radio, telecommunications, computers/IT)	11	23.9
Banking and insurance; other financial services	11	23.9
Professional services (e.g. legal, accounting, consultancy, science, vets, marketing, etc.)	9	19.6
Support services (e.g. car/equipment hire, temp agencies, travel agencies, office support, etc.)	10	21.7
Public administration (central and local government, police, courts, etc.)	19	41.3
Education (pre-primary through to higher education)	10	21.7
Health, residential care and social work	9	19.6
Charity	8	17.4
Arts, entertainment and recreation (including libraries, museums, sports centres, etc.)	2	4.3
Other services (e.g. hair/beauty, other personal services; repair of goods; membership organisations)	6	13.0
<b>N=</b>	<b>46</b>	

Respondents were asked to give reasons why they preferred their current sector/employer to previous ones they had applied to or worked in. A number said that their current job was the only one they were offered, and that earlier applications had been unsuccessful, while others mentioned factors related to their previous military experience, and the overall benefits of the current job:

*“Because they appreciated and understood my military service. Not one of the previous jobs applied for did. I was repeatedly being told I didn't have enough 'civilian' experience or I was over-qualified.”*

*“Completely different environment from the Armed Forces which I wanted.”*

*“The overall package was the best - it was the best location and the most flexible working arrangements; so even though it was a significant pay cut and not the highest salaries job I was offered it was the best for my work/life balance.*

### 4.3.6 Self-employment

Ten per cent of all respondents (16 individuals) were self-employed at the time of the survey. The small number of self-employed respondents means that it is not possible to do a detailed and reliable analysis of the destinations and motivations of FSLs entering self-employment, although the key characteristics are presented to give an indication of the work areas and decision making processes of these respondents. Reasons for choosing to be self-employed centred on the flexibility and freedom, particularly around children and family, while one mentioned that self-employment was the quickest way to start working rather than applying for jobs.

Self-employed respondents were undertaking a range of activities, including consultancy and project management, visitor economy (B&B, caravan park), health and therapeutic roles (nurse, massage therapy, play therapy), and service roles (delivery driver, pet sitting, dog grooming).

Most self-employed respondents were working part-time (63%, 10 out of 16 individuals), mainly for the flexibility and fitting in around family/children, although a couple mentioned that they did not have enough work (yet) to work full-time.

### 4.3.7 Unemployment/inactivity

Just under a quarter of respondents (22%, 34 individuals) were not working at the time of the survey. We saw above that respondents from the Army, married/cohabiting respondents with a husband/partner in the Armed Forces, older respondents, and those who left at the end of their commitment or for medical reasons were more likely than other respondents to be out of work.

Of those who were not currently in employment, 68 per cent wanted to work. 47 per cent had looked for paid work in the four weeks before they completed the survey: this proportion was significantly higher among ORs than among Officers (63% compared with 27%). Furthermore, married/cohabiting respondents whose partner was not in the Armed Forces were less likely than other respondents to have looked for work (25%, compared with 58% of single respondents and 50% of married/cohabiting respondents with a serving husband/partner).

Of those who had not looked for work, 17 per cent (3 individuals) were waiting to take up a job they had already obtained, and 22 per cent (4 individuals) said that they would like to have a regular paid job, either a full- or part-time job, even though they had not looked for work in the previous four weeks. Thus only one in three out of work respondents (32%, 11 out of 34 individuals) had not looked for work and did not want a job.

The most common reasons for not looking for work among the respondents who had not looked for work or were waiting to take up a job were because they were studying (36%, 5 individuals) or they were looking after the family/home (29%, 4 individuals), while some said that they did not need employment (21%, 3 individuals).

*"I took voluntary redundancy from my last job ... and am taking a short career break to concentrate on my studies. This does not mean that I am not also looking for part time work e.g. earlier this summer I applied for part time work ... but was unsuccessful (the*

*feedback I received was helpful but showed that they did not understand the management skills which come from military service.).”*

*“After years of being apart my husband and I want stability. He is still in and travels a lot still and has also been on deployment in the last 18 months.”*

*“Have a good pension which I can live off. Don’t want to have to work for a boss.”*

Around one in four respondents who were not looking for work or waiting to start a job (27%) said that they would be able to start a job in the next two weeks if one became available. Those who could not start a job said that childcare, study or health were the main reasons why.

### **Previous work**

Just under two fifths of work respondents (38%, 13 individuals) had worked since they left their Service. There was a strong association when respondents had left, but not with any other personal or military characteristics. Just under half (46%, 6 individuals) had secured employment before they left or within the first month, and just over half (54%, 7 individuals) left their first job voluntarily – for childcare/travel reasons, or having a poor fit between the organisation/managers and the respondents’ attitudes and experiences.

Among those who had not worked since leaving their Service, three quarters (76%, 16 individuals) said they thought they would definitely undertake paid work in the future, 10%, 2 individuals said they definitely would not undertake paid work, and 14%, 3 individuals said they did not know), and of these, 63 per cent (12 individuals) thought they would work within the next year, and a further 21 per cent (4 individuals) thought they would work in between one and five years’ time.

### **4.3.8 Intentions regarding Reserve Service**

One in six respondents (16%) who had not re-joined the Armed Forces on a full-time basis were volunteering for the Reserves at the time of the survey. There were a number of significant differences by respondent characteristics:

- Recent leavers were more likely to be volunteering – 26 per cent of those who left the Armed Forces in 2018, and 18 per cent of those who left in 2017 were volunteering, compared with six per cent of those who left before 2017.
- Service – 24 per cent of those who had previously been in the Army were volunteering, compared with 11 per cent of RN leavers, and four per cent of RAF leavers.
- Rank – officers were much more likely to be volunteering than ORs (27% and 9% respectively).
- All of those who were volunteering in the Reserves were doing so for the same Service they had left.

Wanting to stay part of the Armed Forces ‘community’ was a common reason for volunteering for the Reserves:

*“I love the comradeship that comes with the Army, didn’t want to leave the Army behind altogether”*

*“I miss the sense of community. It is part of my identity and I was sad to leave.”*

Others said that they were volunteering because they loved the military but that Regular Service did not fit in with their family commitments:

*“I enjoy the military and only left as the hours and commitment don't work with a young family.”*

*“I wasn't 'finished' with the RN when I left. I left because full-time service did not suit my family life, but I felt my experience should not be wasted and could be of use to the RNR.”*

Other reasons included volunteering while unemployed to get some extra money, or while working part-time to increase income or to fill in time when not working, to maintain links with former colleagues, and to work on specific projects.

One in ten respondents who were not currently volunteering said that they were likely or very likely to volunteer for the Reserves in the next two years, although there were only minor differences by respondent characteristics. Reasons were generally around having enjoyed Service life and wanting to still be a part – as one respondent put it:

*“To benefit from the better parts of Service without the aggravation”*

Respondents also mentioned contributing to specific projects.

**Table 4-11: Current and Future Reserve Service**

	Volunteer for Reserves		Re-join Regulars	
	Number	%	Number	%
Very unlikely	81	65.3	114	77.0
Unlikely	16	12.9	19	12.8
Neither likely nor unlikely	15	12.1	10	6.8
Likely	9	7.3	2	1.4
Very likely	3	2.4	3	2.0
<b>N=</b>	<b>124</b>		<b>148</b>	

### 4.3.9 Re-joining the Armed Forces

Six individuals, representing four per cent of all respondents, had re-joined the Armed Forces at the time of the survey, all in the Full-Time Reserve Service rather than Regular Service. One had moved from previously being a Regular in the Army to joining the FTRS in the RN. Reasons for re-joining included:

*“A job came up which offered me promotion and made use of my previous service experience and knowledge base.”*

*“Because a home commitments contract in the same location as my partner means that I can continue to do something I love without negative impact on our family.”*

Very few respondents said they were likely or very likely to re-join the Armed Forces in the next two years; only three per cent were likely or very likely, while 77 per cent said they were very unlikely. Reasons for considering re-joining included going into the Full Time Reserve Service to get a better work-life balance, and not having matched former pay in civilian employment:

*“My intention is to join under a FTRS contract so I can still enjoy a military job that can work with my family life.”*

*“The money! I can't get a job with a good enough wage to support myself and children.”*

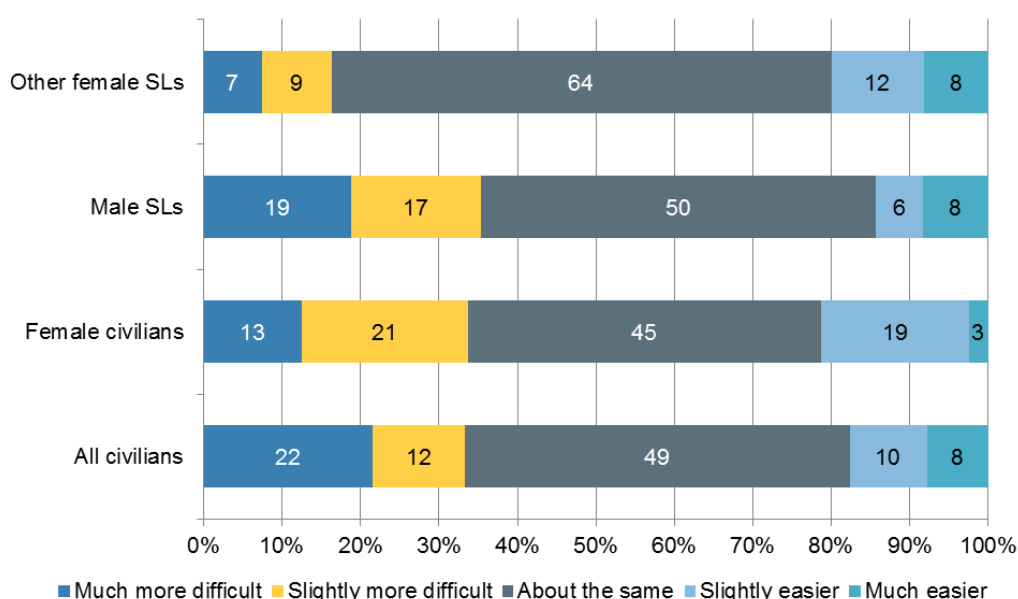
#### **4.3.10 Views about employment of Service Leavers**

Respondents were asked a number of questions about their experiences and views as FSLs. Firstly, they were asked how they thought their own experience of finding a job compared with:

- Other FSLs?
- Male SLs?
- Civilians? (some respondents were asked about civilians generally, while others were asked specifically about female civilians.)

Figure 4-7 shows the responses. Experiences in comparison with other female SLs were felt to be broadly neutral, with 16 per cent feeling their experience was more difficult, 64 per cent feeling it was about the same, and 20 per cent feeling their experience was easier. In comparison with the other groups, respondents felt their experience was, on the whole, slightly more difficult, particularly in comparison with male SLs.

**Figure 4-7: Experience of finding a job compared to other groups.**



Army leavers were more likely than other leavers to feel that their experience was similar to, or easier than that of male SLs, while RAF leavers were least likely to express this view.

Respondents in their 40s felt, on average, that their experience was easier than that of female civilians, while older and younger respondents generally felt their experience was more difficult.

Tables 4-12 to 4-15 show the reasons why respondents felt their experience was different to that of the other groups. In comparison with other female SLs, a majority of those who felt their experience was easier felt it was down to their job-related skills (63%) and experience (56%), and only 19 per cent mentioned requirements for childcare/flexibility, while childcare/flexibility was mentioned as a reason for having a more difficult experience by 36 per cent of those who felt their experience was more difficult than that of other females SLs. Turning to comparisons with male SLs, the pattern of responses were fairly similar, with job-related skills and experience commonly cited as a reason why respondent felt their experience was easier, while requirements for childcare/flexibility, and being female, were the most commonly cited reasons why respondents felt their experience was more difficult.

**Table 4-12: Perceived ease of finding work compared to other female SLs**

Other female SLs	Easier		Difficult	
	Number	%	Number	%
Job-related skills	17	63.0	8	36.4
Job-related experience	15	55.6	9	40.9
Experience at job hunting / interviews	7	25.9	3	13.6
Requirements for childcare / flexibility	5	18.5	8	36.4
Other	8	29.6	11	50.0
<b>N=</b>	<b>27</b>		<b>22</b>	

**Table 4-13: Perceived ease of finding work compared to male SLs**

<b>Male SLs</b>	<b>Easier</b>		<b>Difficult</b>	
	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
Job-related skills	10	52.6	14	29.8
Job-related experience	9	47.4	18	38.3
Experience at job hunting / interviews	3	15.8	7	14.9
Requirements for childcare / flexibility	0	0.0	20	42.6
Female	4	21.1	23	48.9
Other	8	42.1	9	19.1
<b>N=</b>	<b>19</b>		<b>47</b>	

When comparing respondents' experience with those of civilians, job-related skills and experience, and having served in the Armed Forces, were the most commonly mentioned reasons for having an easier experience of finding a job, but were also commonly cited as reasons for having a more difficult experience, while a relative lack of experience at job hunting and interviews was also a key reason for having a more difficult experience.

**Table 4-14: Perceived ease of finding work compared to female civilians**

<b>Female civilians</b>	<b>Easier</b>		<b>Difficult</b>	
	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
Job-related skills	12	70.6	15	55.6
Job-related experience	14	82.4	20	74.1
Experience at job hunting / interviews	1	5.9	15	55.6
Requirements for childcare / flexibility	2	11.8	3	11.1
Ex-Armed Forces	12	70.6	14	51.9
Female	1	5.9	2	7.4
Other	1	5.9	4	14.8
<b>N=</b>	<b>17</b>		<b>27</b>	



**Table 4-15: Perceived ease of finding work compared to civilians generally**

<b>Civilians (male and female)</b>	<b>Easier</b>		<b>Difficult</b>	
	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
Job-related skills	7	77.8	8	47.1
Job-related experience	7	77.8	9	52.9
Experience at job hunting / interviews	5	55.6	11	64.7
Requirements for childcare / flexibility	3	33.3	1	5.9
Ex-Armed Forces	7	77.8	9	52.9
Female	2	22.2	2	11.8
Other	0	0.0	3	17.6
<b>N=</b>	<b>9</b>		<b>17</b>	

Respondents were also asked to indicate, based on their experience, the extent to which the skills, experiences and attitudes that they developed during their service were appreciated and valued by civilian employers. Views were generally positive, with 18 per cent feeling that civilian employers completely valued their skills, experiences and attitudes, and a further 25 per cent feeling that employers valued them to a large extent. Only 11 per cent felt that civilian employers did not value their skills, experiences and attitudes at all.

**Table 4-16: Extent to which civilian employers value SLs skills, experience and attitudes**

	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
Not at all	15	10.8
To a little extent	22	15.8
To some extent	42	30.2
To a large extent	35	25.2
Completely	25	18.0
<b>N=</b>	<b>139</b>	

Views about the extent to which employers value FSLs' skills, experiences and attitudes varied significantly by age, with respondents aged in their 40s being most positive, and those aged under 35 being least positive.

On average, respondents found it neither easy nor difficult to adjust to civilian life – 18 per cent said that they found the adjustment very easy, and a further 18 per cent said it was easy, while 26 per cent said it was difficult, and 13 per cent said it was very difficult. Age was a significant influence on views, with respondents in their 30s finding it slightly difficult on average, and younger and older respondents finding it slightly easy, with those in their 50s finding it relatively easy.



**Table 4-17: Ease of adjusting to civilian life**

	Number	%
Very difficult	20	13.2
Difficult	39	25.7
Neither	39	25.7
Easy	27	17.8
Very easy	27	17.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>152</b>	

Respondents who did not find the adjustment to civilian life very easy were asked whether they felt it was more difficult than it would be for male SLs because they are female. Just under one in five (19%) felt that it was more difficult because they are female, and was significantly higher among single respondents, at 27 per cent.

Matching the pay and rewards that respondents received in their military role in civilian jobs was somewhat difficult on average. One in three respondents (35%) said that it was very difficult to match their military pay and rewards, and 17 per cent said that it was difficult, while 11 per cent said it was easy and 17 per cent said that it was very easy. These views were similar across respondents of all characteristics with no significant variations by sub-group, although respondents aged under 30 were more positive than older respondents about being able to match their military pay, and single respondents were less positive than married/cohabiting respondents. In particular, there was no significant difference between Officers and ORs, or between the junior NCOs and senior NCOs.

**Table 4-18: Ease of matching military pay and rewards**

	Number	%
Very difficult	46	34.6
Difficult	23	17.3
Neither	27	20.3
Easy	14	10.5
Very easy	23	17.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>133</b>	

#### 4.3.11 Discrimination while looking for a job

Respondents who were in work at the time of the survey, or had looked for work in the last four weeks, were asked whether they had ever experienced discrimination in relation to getting a job because of being a SL, being a woman, or a combination of the two.

Overall, just under one third of respondents said that had experienced discrimination in relation to getting a job. Discrimination because of being a SL was the most commonly reported type of discrimination, with 27 per cent of respondents reporting this compared with 15 per cent who reported discrimination because of being a woman, and 11 per cent who reported discrimination because of being a female Service leaver.

**Table 4-19: Experience of discrimination while job seeking**

	Number	%
Experienced discrimination - any reason	43	31.6
Experienced discrimination - being a SL	36	26.5
Experienced discrimination - being a woman	21	15.4
Experienced discrimination - combination	15	11.0
Has not experienced discrimination	93	68.4
<b>N=</b>	<b>136</b>	

More than half (56%) of respondents in their early 30s reported experiencing discrimination while trying to get a job, as did 37 per cent of those in their late 30s, and 41 per cent of those aged 50 and over, while only 29 per cent of under 30s, and 13 per cent of those in their 40s, reported experiencing discrimination. Leavers from the RAF were more likely to report experiencing discrimination than other leavers (40%, compared with 32% of RN leavers and 27% of Army leavers). One respondent explained:

*“As an ex-military female officer - 1) people don't believe I've served because “you don't look like an Army officer”. 2) I am probably 10 x more confident than a lot of civilian woman (not all), and that I think puts people off, 3) the huge variety of skills that I have because of Army service means I'm over qualified for most jobs in my area. Male managers want someone that they perceive that they can control - confident ex-Military women in their 40s don't meet their perception 4) I've been told by a civilian consultant that people don't want to work with ex-military because they assume they will be bossed about and shouted at - the civilian perception of what military people are is very skewed to a Dad's Army image!!!”*

Another respondent said:

*“As a woman in engineering I think it affects which employers will offer jobs as it's different to what they are used to and maybe think that a female will need more help or training.”*

Others mentioned that military experience and qualifications were not recognised by civilian employers. In addition, stereotypes of Service leavers being aggressive or intimidating – ‘*veterans are trouble*’, and not being able to cope with the lack of variety in civilian job, are issues in being discriminated against for being a Service leaver. Women of child-bearing age reported that they were perceived as at risk of being off on pregnancy/maternity leave, and requiring more training than male service leavers.

Respondents who reported experiencing discrimination while looking for work were much more likely to report difficulties matching their military pay and rewards in civilian employment; 70 per cent of those who felt they had experienced discrimination said that it was difficult or very difficult to match their military pay and rewards, compared with 43 per cent of those who did not report experiencing discrimination in looking for work.

#### **4.3.12 Discrimination while in employment**

Respondents who were in work at the time of the survey were also asked whether they had experienced discrimination whilst in employment, as were those currently out

of work but who had worked since their discharge. Just under one in four respondents (24%) had experienced discrimination in employment, and this was more commonly because of being a woman than being a SL (14% compared with 13%; 8% reported discrimination because of a combination of being a SL and a woman).

There was a very strong and significant association between experiencing discrimination in relation to getting a job and experiencing discrimination whilst in employment. Over half (54%) of respondents who reported experiencing discrimination in relation to getting a job also experienced discrimination whilst in employment, and these respondents who experienced discrimination in both situations comprised 72 per cent of all those who reported experiencing discrimination whilst in employment. Those who had experienced discrimination while in employment were also more likely to report it being very difficult to match military pay and reward in the civilian world (55%, compared with 28% of those who had not experienced discrimination in work).

**Table 4-20: Experience of discrimination while in employment**

	Number	%
Experienced discrimination - any reason	32	24.1
Experienced discrimination - being a SL	17	12.8
Experienced discrimination - being a woman	19	14.3
Experienced discrimination - combination	10	7.5
Has not experienced discrimination	101	75.9
<b>N=</b>	<b>133</b>	

Single respondents, and those with a husband or partner who was not serving in the Armed Forces, were much more likely to report experiencing discrimination whilst in employment than married/cohabiting respondents with a serving partner (28% and 12% respectively). For example:

*"Having young children and a deployed husband means that I sometimes have to have unplanned days off work due to them becoming unwell. This has led to me being seen as 'failing to become established' by my line manager. I have explained that it is a temporary situation, but my flexible working agreement was rescinded, leading to my resignation."*

*"I didn't realise what some civvies thought of soldiers, not good impressions. One employer didn't help me on my course (even though he was my course mentor) because I was ex-Army and "didn't have a clue about the real world"*

Other issues mentioned were being a female in male-dominated environments (one example given was fork-lift truck driving) where colleagues often expressed views that women can't do the job as effectively as men, receiving derogatory or sarcastic comments about their service (eg "Yes Sgt Major!"), being asked about family plans or being viewed differently for wanting stability over promotion, and being put in the 'odd person' category for being both female and ex-Service by people who don't understand motivations for females to have joined the Armed Forces.

### 4.3.13 Impact of being a FSL

Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they felt being a FSL had on their finding and retaining employment, and on their career progression. Only a small minority felt that being a FSL had had a very high impact on them gaining, staying in, and progressing in employment, as table 4-21 shows, while between ten and 20 per cent felt it had a high impact. The only significant variation was by how long ago respondents had left the Armed Forces, with those who left more than two years ago reporting that being a FSL had a greater impact on their employment prospects than those who left in the last two years. This may reflect improving attitudes towards SLs among employers over time, but may also reflect the shorter experiences in the labour market that more recent leavers have had.

**Table 4-21: Perceived impact of being a FSL**

	Very low	Low	Moderate	High	Very high	N=
...finding employment?	22.4	25.0	27.6	17.2	7.8	116
...retaining employment?	30.9	33.6	20.9	10.0	4.5	110
...career progression?	28.3	29.2	22.6	14.2	5.7	106

Views on the impact of being a FSL on finding employment were generally positive, due to employers valuing the skills and experience that the Armed Forces provide (including attributes such as work ethic, confidence, and determination) and some mentioned that the situation is no different than for male SLs.

*“The fact that I served 25 years in the Armed Forces is seen as a positive by potential employers. I think this is the case for both male and females and I do not think being a female Service leaver is any different to being a male Service leaver. We are all ex-Services.”*

*“I found it relatively easy to find employment, but I do not think this had anything to do with being female, even though I work in a male dominated field. I think that having an Armed Forces background, in general, was a huge advantage.”*

However, some respondents felt that civilian employers did not know what to make of female applicants from the Armed Forces, which had a negative impact on them finding employment.

*“Being a female Service leaver I was regarded as a bit of an enigma. Civilians find it difficult to reconcile the image of a female in the military, even now. Some sectors find the military a difficult sector to understand and this affected me being successful even at the application stage as prejudice stopped me being invited to interview.”*

*“Many do not understand previous roles or believe a woman has served in the military. A lack of trust and understanding. Mainly assume veterans are male and possibly engineers”*

*“I feel as a female Service leaver that I do not fit in to the civilian environment, I feel that organisations do not believe my CV.”*

Comments regarding the impact of being a FSL on retaining employment were more mixed. Positive comments centred on resilience, perseverance and organisation skills facilitating success with new employers, while negative comments were around civilian employers finding it difficult to deal with confident, assertive and direct females, and a culture change from stability in the Armed Forces to short term and transitory civilian employment.

In terms of the impact on career progression, respondents provided both positive and negative examples of the impact of being a FSL. Positive impacts included confidence and a greater drive for progression from being in the Armed Forces, being more forthcoming in seizing and appreciating the opportunities available, and the skills and experience obtained in the Armed Forces, including transferable skills such as dealing with change. Negative impacts mentioned were around starting from scratch or not being able to demonstrate successes from their time in Service, and not fitting in with civilian stereotypes.

*“Feel I have to prove myself again. I wish potential civilian employers could see how I've succeeded in the face of adversity especially in the operational field.”*

*“I have no career progression - I'm now self-employed and not continuing in the same career field that I was employed in the Army with.”*

*“I feel invisible, and having been brought up (so to speak) by the military I am now 'boyish' and do not fit the usual stereotype of a female.”*

## 5. Summary and Conclusions

This section draws together the detailed findings from the research, forms conclusions and discuss the implications of these.

### 5.1 Reasons for leaving the Armed Forces

This section addresses the research question: what are the reasons that female Service personnel decide to leave the Armed Forces?

The results suggest that most FSLs leave the Armed Forces voluntarily, with just over half (52%) of the survey respondents choosing to leave, while just under a third (29%) had left because they reached the end of their commitment and ten per cent left on medical grounds. For those who left voluntarily, the most common reasons related to work life balance, job satisfaction, quality of management, lack of future opportunities and organisational reasons such as dissatisfaction with duties, equipment and bureaucracy. However, family was the most commonly mentioned reason for leaving in the free-text answers and by our interviewees. Indeed, the commitment of a military career and the periods away from home are a driver for females to leave the Armed Forces, particularly those couples where both partners are serving. In addition, interviewees discussed the unpredictability of a military career as problematic. This finding supports earlier findings from the Armed Forces Attitude Survey (AFCAS) that family reasons are a major driver of people generally leaving the Armed Forces. It is also in line with the literature reviewed for this research. Indeed, this finding in the literature is true of SLs generally so is not necessarily unique to FSLs. However if a FSL is the primary caregiver to children it is likely to affect her more.

### 5.2 Factors affecting employment outcomes of FSLs

This section addresses the questions: Why are FSLs less likely to be economically active and have successful employments outcomes than males? What are the factors that affect the employment outcomes of FSLs? How do these compare to male SLs?

#### **Employers' desire to employ FSLs**

There was no suggestion from this research that employers are reluctant to employ FSLs. In fact, this research supported previous research that employers recognise the benefits in recruiting SLs of either gender. Most survey respondents felt that employers valued their skills and experience to at least some extent, with only 11 per cent feeling that they were not valued at all.

Employers view the benefits as: work ethic, self-discipline, self-motivation, resilience, loyalty, adaptability, an ability to 'get things done', experience of shift work and of other countries, and communication skills. However, a minority of employers also report SLs as having a lack of commercial and market experience, although they added that these skill gaps could be plugged relatively quickly. A small number of employers felt that some SLs can be a little uncomfortable with working in more flexible, less structured environments, leading them to be more at home in larger, reasonably formal, organisations. Survey responses supported the existence of these benefits to employers, with respondents suggesting that they were recruited because of their skills, experience and qualifications.

Generally, employers did not distinguish between FSLs and male SLs, feeling that there were few differences. However, they did feel that FSLs were on the whole better organised and better prepared for civilian employment than their male counterparts, with the result that they often had a position lined up before leaving.

### **Choice of destination after leaving**

Only a minority (11%) of our survey respondents wanted to take a career break for family reasons, suggesting that the reason behind lower economic activity in FSLs was not due to choice. Indeed, most FSLs wanted to go into a job after leaving the Armed Forces, with the majority of the others wanting to enter either training or be self-employed. The vast majority had looked for work during transition, with the interviews suggesting that there was a need to do so for financial reasons.

Despite the need to work, over a fifth of survey respondents were not in employment at the time of the survey. Indeed, the FSLs interviewed said that finding a job was the greatest challenge of transition. This figure was higher for those who were medically discharged or those who had reached the end of their commitment. Of those in employment, most were an employee, with only ten per cent of the entire sample in self-employment. Of the employees, just under a fifth were working part-time, usually through choice, and 16 per cent were on a temporary contract. Employees worked in a range of sectors (mostly services) with Officers more likely to work in financial and business services or education compared to ORs. Officers and those with higher education qualifications were also more likely to work in managerial or professional jobs. This finding is in line with the literature on SLs generally, although a small number of employers said that they were increasingly finding that experienced senior NCOs were also suitable for managerial and professional positions, and were adjusting their recruitment efforts accordingly.

Those who were self-employed appear to have chosen this route due to a desire for flexibility and freedom, particularly around children and family, although wanting to do something 'completely different' also played a part. Most self-employed FSLs were working part-time. Just under a third of unemployed respondents were unemployed because they were looking after their family.

### **Difficulties in finding employment**

Only a minority of survey respondents and interviewees saw the impact of being a FSL on finding employment as minimal. However, of those who were unemployed at the time of the survey, almost half had recently looked for employment, suggesting some difficulties in locating a suitable job. Those who had been Officers or who were married or cohabiting were less likely to be seeking work.

Although employers saw benefits to employing SLs and some of the employers interviewed did not see any barriers to employing FSLs (or indeed SLs in general), most employers thought that the biggest issue faced by SLs in gaining employment was that it was difficult for them to translate their military skills and experience into the civilian world. Again, this is in line with the literature on SLs generally, which also finds that employers have difficulty in understanding what SLs have achieved and experienced during their time in the Armed Forces.



There was some suggestion that workshops run by CTP are helpful in addressing this issue for SLs, as are the workshops and internships offered by some large companies. The FSLs interviewed also found these workshops helpful although there was some suggestion that these were not widely available enough and were too broad and general in tone. It is interesting to note that those interviewees in employment did not recognise the translation of military skills and experience as an issue. Some employers had put in place systems by which CVs from veterans were separated out from the rest and considered more carefully. Finally, the recruitment process itself was seen as potentially off-putting due to the often long and complicated processes required, the terminology, and the unfamiliarity with being interviewed.

The survey results indicate that FSLs perceive their experience in finding employment to be slightly more difficult than male SLs, female civilians and civilians generally (although it should be noted this is a perception; we do not have comparative data from male SLs or civilians). In comparison with male SLs, those who felt that their experience was more difficult ascribed this to requirements for flexibility and childcare and generally being female. When comparing themselves with civilians, those who felt that their experiences had been more difficult did so because of a relative lack of experience. This finding suggests that FSLs experience difficulties both due to being a SL and due to being female, or specifically because of having caring responsibilities. This might provide some insight into the lower levels of employment among FSLs.

Some of the employers who were interviewed also said that FSLs, unlike male SLs, are reluctant to apply for positions unless they see themselves as having all of the experience necessary, and therefore often deselect themselves from jobs that they might be suitable for. However, this was considered by these employers to be an issue with women generally, not just FSLs – a view supported by the literature about women and employment. This finding was also supported via the free-text answers in the survey in which respondents suggested that further support was needed to counteract women's tendency to undervalue themselves.

Some FSLs experience discrimination when job seeking, either because they are a SL, female or both. Around a third of survey respondents felt that they had been discriminated against, most commonly because they are a SL rather than for being female. Conversely, once in employment, FSLs appear more likely to be discriminated against for being a woman than for being a FSL, with around a quarter experiencing discrimination overall.

### **Practices in recruiting and attracting FSLs**

The results suggest that few organisations have policies or practices for recording or tracking the employment of FSLs and SLs in general. This might be because being a veteran is not considered a protected characteristic under UK equality and diversity legislation. Some organisations, however, are making efforts to identify and engage with their SL employees, and the larger 'Forces friendly' employers have put into place processes for purposefully recruiting veterans such as special events, internship programmes, and support for CV writing and interviews. Again, employers did not generally distinguish between FSLs and SLs in this discussion, and any practices that were in place were aimed at SLs generally rather than being gender specific.



The level of engagement between employers and CTP varied, with larger organisations, and organisations holding silver or gold awards, in particular seeming to have a close relationship. In addition, some organisations work with other bodies (e.g. Veterans Employment Transitions Support) or are members of military networks (e.g. Officers Association, Forces Connect South East) in order to promote their vacancies to SLs. Despite this, there was a suggestion from both employers and FSLs that more could be done to support them in finding employment. It is clear that the failure of some employers to engage with appropriate organisations, or a lack of support and encouragement for employers to do so, acts as a barrier to the employment of SLs generally. It is likely that this effect is common across both male and female SLs, although access to a wider range of employers during resettlement could help FSLs in particular find employment that also suited any family or caring responsibilities.

Employers also emphasised the importance of family-friendly policies, flexible working and locations being particularly important in recruiting FSLs with children. In addition, aspects such as the organisational brand and reputation, organisational values, training and development, career prospects, and ability to use existing skills and experience are important to all SLs. Interviewees suggested that the industry or employment sector was not important to them in choosing a job, but that the nature of the work itself was.

### **5.3 How is the transition of FSLs managed and supported both by the MOD and employers?**

#### **Resettlement**

The results suggest that resettlement periods vary dramatically from those of less than six months to those of up to two years. The support received during transition can also vary with less than half of our survey respondents feeling that they had received enough support during transition. Survey respondents suggested that the support available during resettlement in relation to finding employment was not sufficiently tailored to their needs as FSLs.

In particular, respondents suggested that the support tended to focus on full-time careers in a limited range of roles that often were not attractive to FSLs. There was also some suggestion that more one-to-one support was needed. While the majority of interviewees were positive about the support and guidance they had received during resettlement, some felt that more needed to be done to guide FSLs towards a broader range of sectors, organisations and occupations, as the current provision tended to reinforce gender stereo-typing. Some employers also believed that FSLs could be unaware of the range of opportunities available in sectors such as financial services.

#### **Transition into an organisation**

Most employers did not think that SLs of either gender required particular support once they had entered the organisation. However, some organisations did provide a buddying or mentoring system in which SLs were paired with other veterans within the organisation; some larger organisations have an internal military network that can provide additional support. This was mirrored in the interviews with FSLs. This support was offered to SLs of either gender rather than to FSLs specifically.

FSL interviewees suggested that transition involved the need to adapt to the civilian context, including differences in the management approach, way of working, terminology and organisational culture. Generally, there is a large variation in how easy FSLs find it to adjust to civilian life and work. Of the survey respondents, just over a third stated that they had found it difficult or very difficult to adjust to civilian life with a similar number finding it easy or very easy. The interview findings suggest that those who left voluntarily, and planned their departure carefully, found adjustment easier than those who had not wanted to leave. These findings are likely to apply to SLs generally rather than being specific to FSLs.

### **Summary**

The results suggest that FSLs are subject to the issues experienced both by SLs generally and also by women in the labour market generally. It is this combination of potential disadvantages (detailed above), rather than issues that are specific to FSLs in particular, that is likely to lead to the poorer employment outcomes of this group. The next section of this report discusses ways in which these disadvantages might be addressed.

## 6. Recommendations

This section answers the research question: how might the reasons for the poorer employment outcomes in FSLs be addressed?

### Recommendations for the MOD

- It is clear that the unpredictability of postings, deployment and availability of support for those with caring responsibilities are significant factors in decisions to leave the Armed Forces for SLs in general, but potentially especially for women. It is therefore recommended that the MOD examine additional support that could be provided for those with caring responsibilities. In relation to deployment and posting cycles, new legislation in relation to flexible service within the Armed Forces (1st April 2019) that allows Service personnel to work part-time or to restrict separation from their home base might help to retain female Service personnel. This should be monitored carefully in order to evaluate its impact.
- While FSLs do find aspects of the resettlement process useful, there is also a lack of support tailored to them. It is therefore recommended that the MOD (and/or relevant external bodies) considers developing advice and support for this group specifically. In particular, FSLs might require help in finding work that allows flexible working or is outside sectors that are traditionally thought to be suitable for FSLs; interviews with employers in the engineering and financial services showed that FSLs can have successful careers in these sectors, but are not traditionally directed to them by careers advisers. In addition female mentors might also be useful in supporting FSLs.
- FSLs who have been medically discharged or who have served for a long time are likely to need additional support to understand the civilian employment world, and to negotiate civilian recruitment and assessment processes; it is recommended that additional support is provided for SLs in this position, particularly in interview skills and understanding terminology.
- It is clear that the main challenge for FSLs, and probably SLs in general, is in translating their military skills and experience into those that are valuable for civilian organisations; in addition, FSLs need help in matching their skills to specific jobs. A further issue is that FSLs may be reluctant to apply for a job if they are not confident that they satisfy all of the requirements. It is therefore recommended that the MOD and other relevant bodies focus on providing support for FSLs in understanding their skills and experience and translating these into those that are valued by civilian organisations. In addition, support should be provided for employers to better understand the skills and experience that SLs bring.
- It appears that organisations might not track the presence of SLs or FSLs in their workforce, meaning that the monitoring of their recruitment and career progression is unlikely to be taking place. In addition, it seems that organisations that provide specific attention to the conscious recruitment of FSLs and SLs, or support for them during the transition into the workforce,

might be relatively few and far between. While many FSLs feel that they do not need special support, this is not true of all. Therefore it is recommended that steps be taken to promote the benefits of employing SLs to employers and also to provide support for employers in supporting SLs through the recruitment process and transition. The employer briefing associated with this project might be useful as part of this.

## Recommendations for employers

- It is clear that SLs are primarily attracted to the job and organisation itself and therefore seek work that they find interesting and rewarding in an organisation with values that attract them. However, many FSLs in particular are also keen to find work that is both flexible and in a convenient location, in order to address caring responsibilities. Employers should therefore seek to promote these aspects of their organisations when trying to attract FSLs.
- There is some indication that FSLs might be discriminated against, either as a SL or a female or both (depending on the situation). While veteran status is not a protected characteristic under UK equality and diversity legislation, it is recommended that employers consider how they can address perceived or actual discrimination against veterans and SLs.
- While it appears that FSLs do not need much additional support when transitioning into an organisation, the use of a mentor or buddy system (or informal chats in smaller organisations) does seem helpful. Therefore it is recommended that employers consider adopting such approaches. There might also be scope for a military charity to set up a cross-organisation mentoring system to support SLs through the job search and transition process.

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## Appendix A: Interview protocol for Employers

This interview is in relation to research being undertaken by Cranfield University and the Institute for Employment Studies on behalf of Forces in Mind Trust (FiMT). The research aims to increase stakeholders' understanding of the transition of female SLs (FSLs) to civilian employment, and to identify any reasons for the apparently less positive employment outcomes for female SLs compared to their male counterparts.

I would therefore like to ask you a few questions about whether your organisation employs female SLs, and if so, how you manage the transition of these individuals from the Armed Forces into the organisation. We would like to include a list of the organisations who have taken part in this research (with your permission). However, the information that you provide will not be ascribed to you and will only be used in aggregate with information from other interviews. We might use direct quotes from this interview but we will not ascribe them to you. The interview should take no longer than one hour.

### Background

1. What is the nature of your organisation?
2. Is it part of the Defence Enterprise i.e. has Defence contracts or formally contributes to Defence capabilities in any way?
3. What is your role within the organisation?
4. Roughly how many FSLs does your organisation employ, and how many male SLs?
5. In what types of role, typically, do you employ FSLs?
6. Do you track the progress of FSLs, to monitor aspects such as career progression, performance and length of service etc? If so, are there differences between FSLs and male SLs, or between FSLs and female employees generally?

### Benefits and challenges of recruiting SLs

7. Do you take steps to purposefully recruit SLs, and FSLs in particular?
8. If so, what are these steps?
9. If not, why not?
10. If yes, how do you go about this? What are the policies and practices that you have in place?
  - a. Prompt: relationship with MoD
11. When applying/being assessed/being interviewed for positions in your organisation, are FSLs able to present their skills and experience in a way that makes sense to civilian employees?
12. What are the challenges of recruiting FSLs?
  - a. Does this differ by e.g. length of military Service, role, level?
  - b. Are there any issues around the mental health of SLs, and if so, any particular issues with regard to FSLs?
13. What are the benefits of employing SLs in your organisation?
  - a. Prompt: technical skills, leadership, work ethic, discipline, self-organisation
  - b. Do FSLs have anything in particular to offer to your organisation? If so, what differentiates them?
  - c. Do the skills and experiences of FSLs translate well to the requirements of civilian employers like your organisation?

- d. Do FSLs have any gaps in their skill sets, compared to applicants generally?
- 14. What are the challenges of working with FSLs?
- 15. Do you think more can be done to mitigate the challenges of recruiting or working with FSLs? Who would be responsible for this?

#### Transition of SLs

- 16. Tell me about the transition that SLs make into the organisation. Is it any different for FSLs compared to male SLs?
- 17. How is this transition managed? What practices do you have in place?
- 18. Do you collaborate or draw on resources from any other body in managing this transition e.g. CTP?
- 19. Do you provide any training specifically for FSLs? Is there any training that you would usually provide that they do not need?
  - a. Do you draw on MoD funding or other support for this training?

#### Motivation and preferences of SLs

- 20. What are your perceptions of the motivations or preferences of FSLs when looking for work? Does this differ from male SLs or from non-SLs?
- 21. Do you make any special provision for this, e.g. rewards, terms and conditions?
- 22. Why do you think they choose your organisation?
- 23. What would be your advice to other organisations regarding the employment of FSLs – would you encourage them to do so? Why/why not?

#### Finally

- 24. Is there anything else that you would like to add?
- 25. Would it be acceptable for your organisation to be named in the report? If so, how should we refer to the organisation? If not, how would you like your organisation to be described (e.g. 'a financial services company', 'an NHS trust' etc)?

Thank you very much for your participation



# Appendix B: Survey of Female Service Leavers

## SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

### Female Service Leavers Questionnaire – those who have already left the Armed Forces

- A1 When did you leave the Armed Forces? (month and year)
- A2 How many years had you served in the Armed Forces prior to this? – number
- A3 Why did you leave the Service? (Tick one only)
- I reached the end of my commitment
  - I left voluntarily – PVR (VO)
  - I left on medical grounds (Medical Discharge)
  - I left for disciplinary reasons
  - Redundancy
  - Other
- A4 [IF PVR(VO) or OTHER at A3] What factors influenced your decision to leave the Service? (Tick all that apply).
- Impact on spouse
  - Desire to have a family
  - Pregnancy
  - Impact on current children
  - Work life balance
  - Lack of support from spouse/partner for continued Service
  - Other family reasons [follow-up Please specify]
  - Deployments / Separation (e.g. amount of separation, acceptance of separation, nature of deployment)
  - Accommodation (e.g. availability and quality of Service accommodation, desire to live with family)
  - Relocation (e.g. impact of moves on spouse/partner's career and children's education)
  - Lack of future opportunities within the Service (e.g. lack of career/promotion opportunities, future employment expectations)
  - Job satisfaction
  - Management (e.g. quality of management or leadership)
  - Relationships with colleagues (e.g. relationships with peers)
  - Bullying/harassment
  - Organisational reasons (e.g. types of duties, equipment, lack of fun in Service, bureaucracy)
  - Pre-determined reason for leaving (e.g. planned to leave at certain point)
  - Pay and rewards (e.g. salary, desire for financial security)
  - Job opportunities outside the Service (e.g. jobs available, desire for career change)
  - Being headhunted by Civilian employer
  - Health (e.g. physical or mental health)
  - Lack of public support for the Services
  - Other [follow-up Please specify]
- A5 [if more than one ticked at 4] Which of these was the most significant factor affecting your decision to leave?
- A6 [all respondents] please explain further in your own words your reasons for leaving? (Write in)

- A7 How long was your resettlement period, from confirmation of leaving to time of leaving?
- 1-6 months
  - 7-12 months
  - 13-18 months
  - 19-24 months
- A8 General distribution – What elements of resettlement support from the Career Transition Partnership (CTP) did you make use of while still in Service (tick all that apply)?
- Career Consultant support
  - Housing Briefs
  - Finance Briefs
  - RightJob website
  - Events
  - Self-help guides
  - Civilian work attachment
  - CTP vocational training courses
  - Non-CTP vocational training courses
  - 3 day Career Transition Workshop
  - Other workshops/seminars (retirement, self-employment, CV writing, etc.)
  - Additional leave (Graduated Resettlement Time – up to 35 days)
  - Additional Funding (Individual Resettlement Training Cost - £534), plus expenses while on GRT
  - CTP Assist (if medical discharge) [A3=3]
  - None of the above
- A8 CTP distribution – What elements of resettlement support did you make use of while still in Service (tick all that apply)?
- Career Consultant support
  - Housing Briefs
  - Finance Briefs
  - RightJob website
  - Charity events
  - Career Transition Partnership Employment Fairs
  - Specific company/employer recruitment events
  - Insight Days
  - Self-help guides
  - Civilian work attachment
  - CTP vocational training courses
  - Non-CTP vocational training courses
  - 3 day Career Transition Workshop
  - Other workshops/seminars (retirement, self-employment, CV writing, etc.)
  - Additional leave (Graduated Resettlement Time – up to 35 days)
  - Additional Funding (Individual Resettlement Training Cost - £534), plus expenses while on GRT
  - CTP Assist (if medical discharge) [A3=3]
  - None of the above
- A9 (if ticked CTP training courses at A8) What type of CTP vocational training courses were these/was this?
- Top-up training (to refresh or extend existing skills)
  - Conversion training (to learn new skills not related to your trade)
  - Mixture/both
  - Other – please specify
- A10 Please describe the type of CTP vocational training courses you attended – write in

- A11 (if ticked non-CTP training courses at A8) What type of non-CTP vocational training courses were these/was this?  
 Top-up training (to refresh or extend existing skills)  
 Conversion training (to learn new skills not related to your trade)  
 Mixture/both  
 Other – please specify
- A12 Please describe the type of non-CTP vocational training courses you attended – write in
- A13 Have you looked for work at all either during transition or since leaving your Service?  
 Yes/no
- A14 [If yes at A13] When did you first start looking for work?  
 Before entering resettlement [option on CTP distribution only]  
 During resettlement  
 Immediately after leaving my Service  
 I had a break initially and then looked for work sometime after leaving
- A15 [If break at A14] What were your reasons for having a break before looking for work?  
 Write in
- A16 [If break at A14] How long a break did you have before looking for work? Years and months
- A17 [If yes at A14] What careers support (e.g. help in looking for jobs, applying for job, accessing training etc.) have you received since you left the Armed Forces, either from CTP or from civilian support services? (please tick all that apply)  
 CTP  
 Other Civilian services  
 Received help updating my CV  
 Received help with interview preparation  
 Support from a careers advisor  
 Attended a careers fair  
 Signed up to a recruitment agency  
 Re-training/Educational activity  
 Networking  
 Other (please specify)  
 None
- A18 (for every type of support ticked at A17) How would you rate the usefulness of this support you received  
 Very poor      Poor      Average      Good      Very good
- A19 [If yes at A14] Was there any other type of support that would have been useful that you did not receive  
 Yes – please describe  
 No

- A20 How strongly do you agree that the support you received during transition was tailored to you (as a Female Service Leaver – general distribution only)  
 Support from Resettlement Information Staff  
 Support from Early Service Leavers Staff  
 Support from Service Resettlement Adviser (e.g. NRIO, IERO, RRO)  
 Support from CTP  
 Strongly disagree   Disagree   Neither   Agree   Strongly agree   Not applicable
- A21 [if any strongly disagree or disagrees at A20] Please describe how could the support have been more tailored to you as a Female Service Leaver – write in
- A22 How strongly do you agree that you had enough support during transition?  
 Strongly disagree   Disagree   Neither   Agree   Strongly agree   Not applicable
- A23 [if Strongly disagree or disagree at A14A] Please describe the additional support you would have like to have received but didn't – write in
- A24 What was your preferred destination activity at the point of leaving? (tick all that apply)  
 Employment as an employee  
 Self-employment  
 Education/training  
 Temporary career break for family reasons  
 Temporary career break for other reasons – please describe  
 Long term break from working for family reasons  
 Long term break from working for other reason – please describe  
 Other – please describe
- A25 [If employment/self-employment at A24] And at the point of leaving what was your preferred type of employer/industrial sector (eg engineering, health, education etc.)?  
 Write in
- A26 [If employment/self-employment at A24] And at the point of leaving what was your preferred type of job (eg engineer, doctor, teacher, etc. )?  
 Write in

### **Current situation**

- B1 Are you currently in employment?  
 Yes  
 No -> E1
- B2 Have you Re-joined the Armed Forces or are you currently serving on Full-Time Reserve Service (FTRS)?  
 Yes -> G1  
 No - > B3
- B3 Are you working as an employee or are you self-employed? – must answer  
 Employee – go to C1  
 Self-employed – got to D1

## Employees

- C1 General distribution (if received CTP or non-CTP training courses at A8) Do you think you would have secured employment without the vocational training you received?  
Yes  
No
- C2 General distribution (if no at C1) How did the training help you secure employment – write in
- C1 CTP distribution (if received CTP or non-CTP training courses at A8) Do you believe the training received benefitted you in securing employment?  
Yes  
No
- C2 CTP distribution (if yes at C1) How did the training help you secure employment – write in
- C3 Are you working full time or part time?  
Full time  
Part time
- C4 (If Part time at C3) What is your reason for working part-time?  
Preferred part-time work/did not want full time job – follow-up Please describe reasons for not wanting full time job  
Studying  
Health reasons  
Could not find full time job  
Other – Please describe
- C5 Is your job permanent or not?  
Permanent  
Not permanent in some way
- C6 (If not permanent at C5) Please indicate the way in which your job is not permanent  
Working for an employment agency  
Casual type of work  
Seasonal work  
Under contract for a fixed period or fixed task  
Some other reason for not being permanent – please describe
- C7 (If not permanent at C5) What is the reason for taking a non-permanent job?  
Preferred temporary work/did not want a permanent job  
Contract which includes period of training  
Had a contract for probationary period  
Could not find a permanent job  
Some other reason – please describe
- C8 What type of employer do you work for/sector do you work in? – Must answer  
Agriculture, Forestry And Fishing  
Mining And Quarrying  
Manufacturing  
Electricity, Gas, Steam And Air Conditioning Supply  
Water Supply; Sewerage, Waste Management And Remediation Activities  
Construction

Wholesale And Retail Trade; Repair Of Motor Vehicles And Motorcycles  
 Transportation And Storage  
 Accommodation And Food Service Activities  
 Information And Communication  
 Financial And Insurance Activities  
 Real Estate Activities  
 Professional, Scientific And Technical Activities  
 Administrative And Support Service Activities  
 Public Administration; Compulsory Social Security  
 Education  
 Human Health And Social Work Activities  
 Charity  
 Arts, Entertainment And Recreation  
 Other Service Activities (eg membership organisations, repair of household goods, personal services such as hairdressing, dry cleaning, funeral parlours etc.)

C9 And what is your job role?

Managers, Directors And Senior Officials  
 Science, Research, Engineering And Technology Professionals  
 Other Professional Occupations  
 Associate Professional And Technical Occupations  
 Administrative And Secretarial Occupations  
 Skilled Trades Occupations  
 Caring, Leisure And Other Service Occupations  
 Sales And Customer Service Occupations  
 Process, Plant And Machine Operatives  
 Elementary Occupations

C10 What is your job title? Please write in

C11 How long have you worked for this employer? Years and months

C12 How many different employers have you worked for since discharge? Number

C13 (If more than one employer at C12) When did you first secure employment?

Prior to discharge  
 Up to one month after discharge  
 One month after discharge but less than 2 months  
 Two months after discharge but less than 3 months  
 Three months after discharge but less than 4 months  
 Four months after discharge but less than 5 months  
 Five months after discharge but less than 6 months  
 Six months or more after discharge

C14 How strong an influence were the following factors in your decision to work for your current employer/work in your current sector

Very strong	Strong	Moderate	Weak	No influence at all
A keen interest to work in the sector or organisation				
Interest in the content of the job itself				
Transferability of skills from Armed Forces				
Relevant experience gained from Armed Forces				
Recognition of my qualifications and training in the Armed Forces				
Personal contacts (family, friends etc.) in the sector or organisation				
Easiest/most likely route into employment				
Attractive pay and rewards				

Location of employment  
 Good training opportunities  
 Good progression opportunities  
 Flexibility of work hours  
 Suggestion from Resettlement Information Staff  
 Suggestion from Early Service Leavers Staff  
 Suggestion from Service Resettlement Adviser (eg NRIO, IERO, RRO)  
 Suggestion from CTP  
 [order of options randomised for each respondent]

- C15 Did your current employer explain their reasons for offering you the job following your application?  
Yes/No
- C16 (If yes at C15) Please describe the reasons given by your employer for recruiting you  
Write in
- C17 Did your employer offer you any additional support during the application process, or in employment, because you were a Service Leaver  
Yes – during application process  
Yes – in employment  
Yes – both  
No
- C18 [if yes at C17] Please describe the additional support you received from your employer – write in
- C19 (If only one employer at C12) Did you apply for jobs in other sectors before this job?  
Yes/No
- C20 (If more than one employer at C12) Did you work in, or apply for jobs in, other sectors before this job?  
Yes/No
- C21 (If Yes at C19) Which sectors  
 Agriculture, Forestry And Fishing  
 Mining And Quarrying  
 Manufacturing  
 Electricity, Gas, Steam And Air Conditioning Supply  
 Water Supply; Sewerage, Waste Management And Remediation Activities  
 Construction  
 Wholesale And Retail Trade; Repair Of Motor Vehicles And Motorcycles  
 Transportation And Storage  
 Accommodation And Food Service Activities  
 Information And Communication  
 Financial And Insurance Activities  
 Real Estate Activities  
 Professional, Scientific And Technical Activities  
 Administrative And Support Service Activities  
 Public Administration; Compulsory Social Security  
 Education  
 Human Health And Social Work Activities  
 Charity  
 Arts, Entertainment And Recreation



Other Service Activities (eg membership organisations, repair of household goods, personal services such as hairdressing, dry cleaning, funeral parlours etc.)

C22 (If Yes at C20) Which sectors did you work in, or apply for, before your current job?

Agriculture, Forestry And Fishing

Mining And Quarrying

Manufacturing

Electricity, Gas, Steam And Air Conditioning Supply

Water Supply; Sewerage, Waste Management And Remediation Activities

Construction

Wholesale And Retail Trade; Repair Of Motor Vehicles And Motorcycles

Transportation And Storage

Accommodation And Food Service Activities

Information And Communication

Financial And Insurance Activities

Real Estate Activities

Professional, Scientific And Technical Activities

Administrative And Support Service Activities

Public Administration; Compulsory Social Security

Education

Human Health And Social Work Activities

Charity

Arts, Entertainment And Recreation

Other Service Activities (eg membership organisations, repair of household goods, personal services such as hairdressing, dry cleaning, funeral parlours etc.)

C23 (If Yes at C19 or C20) Why did you prefer working in your current sector to these other opportunities in different sectors?

Open, write in

### ***Go to questions about reserves – F1***

#### **Self-employment**

D1 (if received CTP or non-CTP training courses at A8) Do you think you would have set up as self-employed without the training you received?

Yes

No

D2 (if no at D1) How did the training help you set up as self-employed – write in

D3 Are you working full time or part time?

Full time

Part time

D4 (If Part time at D3) What are your reasons for working part-time? Please write in

D5 What is the main type of self-employed work you undertake? Please describe

D6 How long have you been self-employed? Years and months

D7 What are your reasons for being self-employed? Please describe

### ***Go to questions about reserves [F1]***

### **For those not in employment**

- E1 Have you looked for any kind of paid work in the last four weeks?  
Yes/No
- E2 [if no at E1] Are you waiting to take up a job that you have already obtained?  
Yes -> go to E13  
No
- E3 [if no at E2] Even though you were not looking for work in the last four weeks, would you like to have a regular paid job at the moment, either a full- or part-time job?  
Yes/no
- E4 [if no at E2] what were the reasons you did not look for paid work (in the last 4 weeks)  
Waiting for the results of an application for a job/being assessed by a training agent  
Student  
Looking after the family/home  
Temporarily sick or injured  
Long-term sick or disabled  
Believe(s) no jobs available  
Not yet started looking  
Do (does) not need employment  
Retired from paid work  
Any other reason
- E5 [if more than one ticked at E4] What was the main reason?
- E6 [if single reason at E4 is code 3, or main reason at E5 is code 3] Was the main reason that you did not look for paid work because...  
You were caring for children below school age  
You were caring for other children  
You were caring for a dependent adult relative  
Some other reason?
- E7 [if caring reason ticked at E6] Are suitable care services...  
Not available or affordable for children?  
Not available or affordable for ill, disabled or elderly adults?  
Irrelevant to your decision not to look for work?
- E8 [if single reason at E4 is code 2, or main reason at E5 is code 2] Please describe the education or training course you are currently undertaking – write in
- E9 [if single reason at E4 is code 2, or main reason at E5 is code 2] And What is your main reason for studying  
Wanted a change in career  
Could not find a job  
Other – please write in
- E10 [if no at E2] Please describe briefly in your own words your reasons for not undertaking paid work – write in
- E11 [if no at E2] If a job became available, would you be able to start within the next two weeks?  
Yes/no

E12 [if no at E11] Why would you not have been able to start within 2 weeks? Please write in  
[go to E15]

E13 What type of employer are waiting to start working for?  
Agriculture, Forestry And Fishing  
Mining And Quarrying  
Manufacturing  
Electricity, Gas, Steam And Air Conditioning Supply  
Water Supply; Sewerage, Waste Management And Remediation Activities  
Construction  
Wholesale And Retail Trade; Repair Of Motor Vehicles And Motorcycles  
Transportation And Storage  
Accommodation And Food Service Activities  
Information And Communication  
Financial And Insurance Activities  
Real Estate Activities  
Professional, Scientific And Technical Activities  
Administrative And Support Service Activities  
Public Administration; Compulsory Social Security  
Education  
Human Health And Social Work Activities  
Charity  
Arts, Entertainment And Recreation  
Other Service Activities (eg membership organisations, repair of household goods, personal services such as hairdressing, dry cleaning, funeral parlours etc.)

E14 And what will your job title be?  
Write in

E15 Have you worked since you left the Service?  
Yes  
No – go to E20

E16 (If yes at E15) What type of employer did you work for? (tick one):  
Agriculture, Forestry And Fishing  
Mining And Quarrying  
Manufacturing  
Electricity, Gas, Steam And Air Conditioning Supply  
Water Supply; Sewerage, Waste Management And Remediation Activities  
Construction  
Wholesale And Retail Trade; Repair Of Motor Vehicles And Motorcycles  
Transportation And Storage  
Accommodation And Food Service Activities  
Information And Communication  
Financial And Insurance Activities  
Real Estate Activities  
Professional, Scientific And Technical Activities  
Administrative And Support Service Activities  
Public Administration; Compulsory Social Security  
Education  
Human Health And Social Work Activities  
Charity  
Arts, Entertainment And Recreation

Other Service Activities (eg membership organisations, repair of household goods, personal services such as hairdressing, dry cleaning, funeral parlours etc.)

E17 (If yes at E15) What was your job title? Please write in

E18 (If yes at E15) When did you first secure employment?

Prior to discharge

Up to one month after discharge

One month after discharge but less than 2 months

Two months after discharge but less than 3 months

Three months after discharge but less than 4 months

Four months after discharge but less than 5 months

Five months after discharge but less than 6 months

Six months or more after discharge

E19 (If yes at E15) What was your reason for leaving this job?

Fixed term contract came to an end

Made redundant

Left voluntarily – please provide details

Dismissed – please provide details

Other – please provide details

***[If yes at E15, go to F1 Reserves]***

E20 (If no at E15) Have you applied for any jobs since your discharge?

Yes -> E21

No -> E24

If not in work but have applied for jobs

E21 (If yes at E20) What type of employer have you applied to (tick all that apply)

List of sectors

E22 [if yes at E20] Did you receive any job offers? Yes/no

E23 [if yes at E22] Why did you not take up any job offers? Write in

E24 (If no at E15) Do you think you will undertake paid work in the future?

Definitely

Probably

Probably not

Definitely not

Don't know / Can't say

E25 [if def., prob., or DK at E24] When do you think this might be...

Within the next year

More than one year but less than five

More than five years?

Don't know

Go to F1

## **Intentions regarding Reserves and Rejoining**

- F1 Are you currently volunteering in the Reserve Forces?  
Yes/No
- F2 (If yes at F1) Which Reserve Service have you joined?  
Royal Navy, Army, Royal Air Force
- F3 (If yes at F1) What are your reasons for volunteering in the Reserves?  
Write in
- F4 (If no at F1) How likely are you to volunteer for the Reserves in the next two years?  
Very unlikely      Unlikely      Neither likely nor unlikely      Likely      Very likely
- F5 (If Very likely or Likely at F4) What are your reasons for considering volunteering in the Reserves?  
Open, write in
- F6 How likely are you to apply to re-join the Armed Forces in the next two years?  
Very unlikely      Unlikely      Neither likely nor unlikely      Likely      Very likely
- F7 (If Very likely or Likely at F6) What are your reasons for considering re-joining the Armed Forces?  
Open, write in

## **Go to H1**

### **For those who have re-joined the Armed Forces (At B2)**

- G1 Which Service have you joined?  
Royal Navy  
Army  
Royal Air Force
- G2 Are you in the Regulars, or the Full-Time Reserve Service?  
Regulars  
Full-Time Reserves
- G3 Why did you decide to re-join the Armed Forces?  
Write in
- G4 Did you work for another employer after initially leaving the Armed Forces and before re-joining?  
Yes – go to G5  
No – go to H1
- G5 [if yes at G4] Which sector/type of employer?  
Agriculture, Forestry And Fishing  
Mining And Quarrying  
Manufacturing

Electricity, Gas, Steam And Air Conditioning Supply  
 Water Supply; Sewerage, Waste Management And Remediation Activities  
 Construction  
 Wholesale And Retail Trade; Repair Of Motor Vehicles And Motorcycles  
 Transportation And Storage  
 Accommodation And Food Service Activities  
 Information And Communication  
 Financial And Insurance Activities  
 Real Estate Activities  
 Professional, Scientific And Technical Activities  
 Administrative And Support Service Activities  
 Public Administration; Compulsory Social Security  
 Education  
 Human Health And Social Work Activities  
 Charity  
 Arts, Entertainment And Recreation  
 Other Service Activities (eg membership organisations, repair of household goods, personal services such as hairdressing, dry cleaning, funeral parlours etc.)

G6 What was your job title?

G7 When did you first secure employment?

Prior to discharge

Up to 1 month after discharge

1 month after discharge but less than 2 months

2 months after discharge but less than 3 months

3 months after discharge but less than 4 months

4 months after discharge but less than 5 months

5 months after discharge but less than 6 months

6 months or more after discharge

G8 What was your reason for leaving this job?

Fixed term contract came to an end

Made redundant – please provide details

Left voluntarily – please provide details

Other – please provide details

### **Views about employment of Service Leavers (All respondents)**

H1 How do you think your experience of finding a job compared to

a) Other Female Service Leavers

b) Male Service Leavers

c1) non-Service leavers (General distribution)

c2) female civilians (CTP distribution)

Much easier    Slightly easier    About the same    slightly more difficult    Much more difficult

H2 [if different at H1a] Why do you think your experience differed to that of other Female Service Leavers? (please tick all that apply)

- H3 [if different at H1b] Why do you think your experience differed to that of Male Service Leavers? (please tick all that apply)
- H4 [if different at H1c] Why do you think your experience differed to that of non-Service Leavers? (please tick all that apply)
- Job related skills
  - Job related experience
  - Experience at job hunting/interviews
  - Requirements for childcare/flexibility
  - Ex Armed Forces [H1c only]
  - Female [H1b and H1c only]
  - Other
- H5 In your experience, to what extent are the skills, experiences and attitudes that you developed during your service appreciated and valued by civilian employers?
- Completely   To a large extent   To some extent   To a little extent   Not at all
- H6 How difficult did you find it to adjust to civilian life?
- Very easy   Easy   Neither easy nor difficult   Difficult   Very difficult
- H7 [if not very easy at H6] Do you think this was more difficult because you are female than it would be for male SLs?
- H8 How easy have you found it to match the pay and rewards that you received in your military role?
- Very easy   Easy   Neither easy nor difficult   Difficult   Very difficult
- H9 [if in employment or have looked for work] Have you experienced discrimination in relation to getting a job because of
- a) Being a SL – yes/no
  - b) Being a woman – yes/no
  - c) The combination of the two? – yes/no
- H10 [if yes at any of H9] Please provide details?
- H11 [if in employment or have worked since discharge] Have you experienced discrimination whilst in employment because of
- a) Being a SL – yes/no
  - b) Being a woman – yes/no
  - c) The combination of the two? – yes/no
- H12 [if yes at any of H11] Please provide details?



H13 How significant an effect do you feel being a female service leaver has had on your

Finding employment  
Retaining employment  
Career progression?

Very low      Low      Moderate      High      Very high

H14 [if high or very high at finding employment H13a] Please describe the effect that being a Female Service Leaver has had on you in terms of finding employment – write in

H15 [if high or very high at retaining employment H13b] Please describe the effect that being a Female Service Leaver has had on you in terms of retaining employment – write in

H16 [if high or very high at career progression H13c] Please describe the effect that being a Female Service Leaver has had on you in terms of career progression – write in

### **Any other comments**

I1 Please add any other comments about your transition out of your Service that you have not mentioned so far  
Write in

### **Demographic Information**

J1 What is your age?

J2 What is your ethnic origin?

White (English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish, British, Irish, any other white background)

Mixed/multiple ethnic groups (White and Black Caribbean, White and Black African, White and Asian, any other mixed/multiple ethnic group)

Asian/Asian British (Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Chinese, any other Asian background)

Black/African/Caribbean/Black British (African, Caribbean, any other Black background)

Other ethnic group

Prefer not to say

J3 What is your marital status?

Single (never been married / formed a civil partnership)

Married/in a civil partnership

In a long-term established relationship (but not married / in a civil partnership)

Divorced/formerly in a civil partnership which is now dissolved

Separated (but still legally married / in a civil partnership)

Widowed / the surviving partner from a civil partnership

- J4 [If married/civil partnership at J3] Is your spouse/partner currently a member of the Armed Forces?  
Yes/no
- J5 What is the highest level of qualification you hold?  
Higher Degree (e.g. PhD, Masters etc.)  
First Degree (e.g. BSc, BEng etc.)  
Higher education below degree level (e.g. HNC, HND etc.)  
A-levels or equivalent  
GCSEs or equivalent  
Qualifications below GCSE level  
Other qualifications – write in  
No qualifications
- J6 Which Service did you serve with (the first time you were in the Armed Forces if you have subsequently re-joined)?  
Royal Navy  
Army  
Royal Air Force
- J7 Please write in details of your Regiment/Branch/main trade
- J8 What was your rank when you left?

**RN**

Able Seaman  
Leading Rate  
Petty Officer  
Chief Petty Officer  
Warrant Officer Class 2  
Warrant Officer Class 1  
Sub Lieutenant/Midshipman/Officer Cadet  
Lieutenant  
Lieutenant Commander  
Commander  
Captain or above

**Army**

Private  
Lance Corporal  
Corporal  
Sergeant  
Staff Sergeant  
Warrant Officer Class 2  
Warrant Officer Class 1  
Lieutenant/Second Lieutenant/Officer Cadet  
Captain  
Major  
Lieutenant Colonel  
Colonel or above

**RAF**

Aircraftman

Leading Aircraftman

Senior Aircraftman

Senior Aircraftman (Technician)

Corporal

Sergeant

Chief Technician

Flight Sergeant

Warrant Officer

Flying Officer/Pilot Officer/Acting Pilot Officer/Officer Cadet

Flight Lieutenant

Squadron Leader

Wing Commander

Group Captain or above

- K1 We would like to interview a small number of respondents to the survey to explore these issues in more depth. If you would be willing for a member of the research team to contact you please tick yes and leave a contact email address
- Yes, here is my email address
- No

(Not everyone who volunteers will be interviewed. One of our research team will be in touch with those selected within six weeks to arrange an interview)

## Appendix C: Interview Protocol for Female Service Leavers

This research has been commissioned by the charity *Forces in Mind Trust*. The purpose of the research is to understand the transition of Female Service Leavers (FSLs) to civilian employment. We are examining how FSLs currently experience this transition, their employment decisions and how this is managed supported by the Ministry of Defence, employers and other relevant charities and bodies.

We would like to ask you, as a former female member of the Armed Forces a number of questions about your experiences when seeking and undertaking civilian employment.

Your responses to these questions will remain anonymous and be kept confidential; responses from all participants will be collated and no quotes will be identifiable, so we would encourage you to be as open as possible when answering these questions. However, you do not have to answer questions if you would prefer not to, as your participation is entirely voluntary and you can withdraw at any point and your responses will be destroyed. You may also withdraw your data for up to seven days after this interview.

Background information:

- How long were you in the Armed Forces?
  - Service
  - Role
  - Rank when left
  - Year left
  - Are you now employed?
  - What employment sector are you in?
  - Are you a Reservist?
1. Why did you decide to leave the Armed Forces? How long did you consider leaving before making the final decision?
  2. Describe your experience of the transition process / career support you received. What did you find most useful / least useful? What other information/improvements would you have liked? Would you do anything different if you were about to go through the same process again? Did you receive, or would you have liked, any different support because you were female?
  3. Did you seek employment immediately on leaving the Armed Forces? Why/why not? What factors affected this decision?
  4. What were you looking for from a company / from a new job when leaving the service? What 'level' of job were you looking for? (Prompt: similar to currently military; higher level/grade than current). Do you feel you got a job that reflected your original requirements? (Prompt: Grade, role, location)?

5. Were you attracted to any particular industry or type of job? Why?
6. Were you attracted to any particular company / employer? Why?
7. Did you come across any difficulties in applying for jobs? (Prompt: transferable skills, HR, applied for jobs but had difficulties, did some sectors do more to try and attract you?). Do you feel you had more or fewer difficulties because you are female?
8. Is your current job the job you got when you left the service? If no can you provide brief details on the role / companies you have worked (Prompt: why took this first job / when moved/how long in each role and why)
9. How well equipped did you feel for your new / first job? [Prompt: did you need additional training / did you need any conversion training?] Do you feel you needed any particular support because you are female?
10. What type of role are you in? How similar is this to your military job?
11. What attracted you to this / those job(s)/employers? (Prompt: attraction to sector, transferability of skills, head-hunted, pay and rewards, location, childcare).
12. Does your current company have anything set-up for recruiting ex-military personnel? What? Do they provide any additional support? What? (Prompt: training, networking, charity events). How did this influence your decision?
13. Were you offered any other jobs when leaving the military (that you turned down)? What industry? What made you turn them down?
14. Were you turned down for any roles? Why do you think that was? What feedback did you receive? Do you think the fact that you are female made a difference to this?
15. Would you consider re-joining the Armed Forces in the future? Why?
16. If not a Reservist – would you consider joining in the future? Why?
17. Is there anything else you would like to add?

If the interviewee appears distressed or upset, they might be provided with the following contacts: Mental health and bullying issues – MIND ([mind.org.uk](http://mind.org.uk), helpline 0300 123 3393)

Workplace issues - ACAS ([acas.org.uk](http://acas.org.uk), helpline 0300 123 1100)

Other problems relating to a range of aspects of daily living such as housing, benefits and financial/debt management - Citizens Advice ([citizensadvice.org.uk](http://citizensadvice.org.uk))

A number of charities provide support for SLs and veterans in particular – these are listed at <https://www.ctp.org.uk/resettlement-guides/charities-396677>.

Currently serving personnel can also contact their Padre or contact one of the services listed at: <https://www.gov.uk/topic/defence-armed-forces/support-services-military-defence-personnel-families>.

## Appendix D: Literature Review Findings

This section is split into three sub-sections in line with the research questions: veterans generally; female veterans; and women and employment generally. The first two sections are based upon the findings of the evidence review, whereas the third section (women and employment generally) also includes data from the secondary data analysis.

### Veterans and employment

This literature focused on veterans and SLs generally and does not distinguish between male and female SLs. The evidence related to FSLs in particular is discussed in a separate section below. Very little evidence was found on UK veterans' employment outcomes in both the academic and non-academic literature.

Employment rates in the veteran population can only be estimated because the MOD does not track its ex-servicemen and women in the way some countries do, nor is this information captured in the census. One source that tracks the year-on-year change in veterans' employment is the annual statistical bulletin of the CTP, which estimates the employment outcomes for UK personnel who left the Armed Forces and used the programme. According to the latest survey (MOD, 2018), in 2015-2016, 82 per cent of SLs were in employment, nine per cent were unemployed and ten per cent were economically inactive. This compares favourably to the 75 per cent employment rate in the UK population overall in the same year, although direct comparisons between the CTP user data and the LFS are difficult to draw due to differences in the demographic makeup of the two groups and the definition of unemployment used for the CTP survey. The CTP user data are also limited in applicability to the wider veteran population as the eligibility criteria excludes early SLs and is governed by length of service, so that those who have served longest receive the most support. This is likely to skew the data in favour of those SLs who are already more advantaged and who are therefore more likely to find civilian employment (The Centre for Social Justice, 2014).

Another source that seeks to gauge veterans' employment in the UK is the MOD's statistical bulletin on UK Armed Forces (MoD, 2017) based on the Annual Population Survey, a UK household survey conducted by the ONS, but excluding questions in Northern Ireland. In 2016, this survey reported no statistical difference between the employment rates of working-age veterans and non-veterans (78 per cent and 79 per cent respectively). The statistical bulletin also estimates differences in industry and occupation between the two populations: SLs are more likely to work in public administration and defence than the general population (12 per cent and 6 per cent respectively; for FSLs the figures are 15 per cent and 8 per cent), as well as in transport and storage (12 per cent and 8 per cent). Veterans are also more likely to work as process, plant and machine operatives (16 per cent and 10 per cent) and in associate professional and technical occupations (19 per cent and 15 per cent).

The Royal British Legion's Household Survey (2014) of the ex-Service community meanwhile suggests a much larger employment gap between veterans and non-veterans. It is based on a sample of individuals who took part in a national omnibus survey in 2014 and who were subsequently screened to identify service members or their dependants. From the resulting dataset they estimate the employment rate among the working age population (aged 16-64) to be 60 per cent, unemployment rate



8 per cent and economic inactivity rate 32 per cent when the equivalent rates were the non-veteran working age population were 72 per cent, 5 per cent and 22 per cent. The Royal British Legion's report on the veteran employment gap (Royal British Legion, 2016) also estimate differences in working hours between the two populations by comparing the statistics for working-age men from the 2014 LFS to the Household Survey, and found that veterans were less likely to be in full-time work than the general population (57 per cent and 68 per cent). This report does not separate out FSLs. The report also compares the working hours of veterans to those of the civilian population, and found that veterans are less likely to be in full-time work than the general population (57 per cent compared to 68 per cent).

It is clear that finding employment is a major concern to veterans generally. This is supported by Ashcroft's (2012) survey, which found that 81 per cent of those in the Armed Forces were worried about employment upon discharge. Participants in this survey suggested that employers would not consider them for work because they were institutionalised and difficult to work with. This concern has also been supported by Bergman et al (2014).

The evidence base lacks qualitative research on veterans' employment and is largely descriptive of the different barriers veterans face in the civilian labour market. Lord Ashcroft's review of veterans' transition (2014) considers resettlement activities currently available to SLs in the Armed Forces and is partly based on interviews and focus groups with SLs. It identifies negative attitudes among senior officers and employers, and the lack of job-readiness among SLs, as key barriers to gaining civilian employment. A wide range of support and advice is available to SLs but gaining access to them is not straightforward – senior officers were found to be supportive of resettlement activities in principle but they do not prioritise them in comparison to other responsibilities, especially operational ones. The qualifications personnel undertook in the resettlement activities were often not relevant for applying for jobs, and SLs themselves felt unsure about how their skills and experience could be of value to a civilian employer. On the employer side, the review found evidence of misrepresentative ideas about SLs being unsuited to a civilian workplace (such that they are aggressive or incapable of independent thinking) and employers underestimating the skills of SLs or finding candidates lacking the right qualifications, accreditations or CVs that reflect their true skillset.

The Centre for Social Justice (2014) interviewed stakeholders and individuals as part of their report into veteran transitions, and noted similar barriers: some Service personnel lack the basic skills (such as adequate literacy and numeracy skills) required for civilian jobs, which is often the result of the disadvantaged backgrounds they come from before they joined the Armed Forces; the cultural divide between the Armed Forces and civilian employment, which means that the skills and qualifications personnel have gained during their service are not useful to them when applying for jobs; and negative perceptions about veterans among the civilian population, especially around their physical and mental health, which may deter some civilian employers from hiring veterans. The Royal British Legion's (2016) research, based partly on stakeholder interviews in the defence sector, report barriers such as lower educational attainment among veterans (partly due, they explain, because the Armed Forces are exempt from minimum standards of education); vocational training and qualifications in the military not being recognised by civilian employers; SLs finding it

difficult to accurately describe their transferable skills to a civilian employer and having poor-quality and CVs unrepresentative of their skills; and negative perceptions among civilian employers as well as unrealistic expectations among SLs themselves, especially regarding pay.

Evidence relating to the reasons why veterans might be less likely to be employed is also sparse in the USA. Indeed, Hosek and Shelley (2013) commented that the reasons why veterans are more likely to be unemployed than non-veterans have not been definitely established by research. However, the research in the USA that does exist supports many of the findings discussed above. For example, survey research by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM, 2010) examined the challenges faced by employers in hiring veterans. SHRM found that 60 per cent of employers saw translating military skills into civilian work experience as a challenge; 48 per cent highlighted difficulties in transitioning from the structured military culture to a civilian organisation, and 46 per cent endorsed post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or other mental health issues as a challenge. Hosek and Shelly (2013) suggested that the causes for higher unemployment in veterans (compared to non-veterans) might include: difficulty looking for a new job while still in the military; lack of a professional network; being disappointed by a civilian job compared to the excitement of the military; and mental health conditions such as PTSD.

Difficulties in translating military experience into civilian requirements has also been highlighted more recently by David and Minnis (2017). Similarly, Minnis (2014 and 2017) found that veterans in the USA struggled to articulate the skills they obtained in military service and tended to focus on technical skills that were often not relevant to the employment they were seeking. RAND Corporation (2015) provided further support for this difficulty in the USA from the perspective of employers who found it difficult to apply military skills within their business. RAND Corporation (2015) went on to explain that the softer skills that military veterans had developed, such as flexibility, decision making and leadership, often got overlooked because the focus was on their technical skills. Similarly, Ford (2017) emphasised the need for organisations to focus on aligning the veterans' skills with the job requirements.

The influence of mental health problems has also been highlighted by a number of authors in the USA (for example, Horton et al., 2013).

One study in the USA (Harrod et al., 2017) moved away from the emphasis on veterans obtaining a job and focused instead on the ability of veterans to keep a job. This study suggested that the focus of support for veterans has been very much on getting them into employment, and yet many fail to keep a job and move through several jobs after leaving the military. This supports an earlier suggestion by Maury et al (2014) that nearly half of newly hired veterans in the USA left their first post-military job within a year. Harrod et al. found that several of the veterans included in their qualitative study struggled to stay in their jobs because they felt that they had been demoted from the jobs they performed in the military and had difficulty relating to civilian co-workers.

## **Female veterans and employment**

It is important to note that both academic and non-academic literature relating to the employment experiences of female veterans is sparse, with very few papers being

found. Most of the literature that is available is based in the USA and focuses on the nature of employment outcomes for female veterans, rather than on the factors affecting these outcomes. This supports the notion that the current research project is desperately needed.

The data support the existence of lower employment outcomes for female, compared to male, veterans and SLs. For example, according to the MOD's Annual Population Survey (MOD, 2017), in 2016 female veterans had a lower employment rate than male veterans: 72 per cent compared to 79 per cent. These figures are higher than in the previous year when the figures were 66 and 78 per cent respectively (MOD, 2017). The employment rates among female veterans and non-veterans, on the other hand, are similar: 72 per cent compared to 69 per cent. Female veterans were also more likely to be economically inactive than male veterans (25 per cent compared to 18 per cent) but not significantly more likely than female non-veterans who had an economic inactivity rate of 28 per cent.

In the survey, several statistically significant differences were found between the percentages of employed males and females in different occupations and industries within the veteran and non-veteran populations. However these are in line with wider UK gender differences in the workplace and were not found to be specific to an individual's veteran or non-veteran status. Men were significantly more likely to work in skilled trade occupations; process, plant and machine operative occupations; manufacturing and construction industries; and transport and storage industry occupations industries. Women were significantly more likely to work in administrative and secretarial occupations; caring, leisure and other service occupations; health and social work industries; and the education industry (MoD, 2017).

More research is required to understand the reasons behind economic inactivity in the veteran population and why it is more common among female than male veterans. Generally, research in this area is lacking. According to survey results from the CTP (MOD, 2018), in 2016-17 FSLs (27 per cent) were much more likely than men (4 per cent) to report economic activity due to looking after family; this is consistent with the broader economic literature on male and female employment trends. However the sample size for the survey is small which makes it difficult to extrapolate on the results to the broader veteran population in the UK. Moreover, no qualitative research into the reasons behind economic activity and employment outcomes among veterans was found in the UK grey literature.

Outside the UK, the US was found to have some literature on veteran employment outcomes, although caution should be taken when making direct comparisons between the countries, as they are very different in relation to the support offered to veterans generally. For example, a paper for the US Department of Labor (2016) showed that the proportion of female veterans in employment (61 per cent) is not significantly different from that of female non-veterans (59 per cent) or male veterans (63 per cent). However, earlier studies suggest that, despite the fact that female veterans have overall higher education levels than male veterans, their incomes are lower and unemployment rates higher (Thom & Bassuk, 2012). Walker and Borberly (2014) found that unemployment rates for female veterans aged 25-34 in the USA were higher than for female non-veterans in the same age group. It is not clear

whether the situation for female veterans in the USA has changed over time or whether this is merely a difference between studies.

The US Department of Labor (2016) also analysed self-reported survey results conducted in the US veteran population, which showed that women – both veterans and non-veterans – were far more likely than men to be out of the labour force to stay home and take care of the family (34 and 37 per cent respectively) than their male counterparts (4 per cent and 5 per cent). This suggestion supports the findings of Van Steenwyck (2013) that female veterans are more likely to pursue options other than employment such as being a stay-at-home mother, self-employed or a student.

The second most endorsed reason for female veterans not to enter the labour force in the US Department of Labor (2016) report was because they are ill or have a disability (27 per cent) – higher than the proportion of female non-veterans who were ill or had a disability (21 per cent). By contrast, for male veterans the most common reason to stay out of the labour force was illness or disability (42 per cent), followed by retirement (41 per cent). In fact, in research in the USA, disability was found to be the main factor affecting employment of female veterans, with female veterans without a disability actually more likely to be employed than their non-veteran counterparts (Prokos & Cabage 2017).

Research by Schnurr and Lunney (2011) suggested that PTSD was a major factor in affecting whether female veterans in the USA were employed and also whether they experienced occupational satisfaction. Other research has found that female veterans in the USA, particularly younger women, are more likely than male veterans to develop a mental health condition (Foster & Vince 2009).

Szelwach et al. (2011) suggested that the needs of female veterans in the USA mirrored those of other female workers – employment that provides fair compensation, opportunities for advancement and work-family flexibility – but that they struggled to translate their military skills into civilian work experience. Similarly, research by Overman and Leonard (2010) in the USA, suggested that female veterans often lack experience outside the military, and that, like male veterans, they find it difficult to relate the military experience that they do have to the requirements of civilian work. This was supported by Gibbons (2013) who suggested that female veterans have difficulty in adapting the skills that they have acquired in the military to the skills civilian employers are seeking, and also Foster and Vince (2009). Daywalt (2013) suggested that many female American veterans aged 18-24 decided to remain unemployed as they cannot find meaningful work at comparable pay.

With the exception of childcare and work-family balance issues, which might be seen as applying to women in particular, most of the issues discussed in this section apply to both male and female veterans. It could be suggested that issues around childcare and work-family balance also apply to women who are not veterans. We might suggest here therefore that female veterans suffer from a double disadvantage. The employment of women generally will be discussed in the next section.

Interestingly, a paper by Greer (2017) suggests that, in the USA, many of the policies aimed to support veterans with civilian employment are aimed primarily at men and are less effective at enhancing employability of female veterans. It is not clear whether

this is the case in the UK. Greer also went on to emphasise the importance of social support and childcare facilities for getting female veterans into civilian employment.

## **Women and employment generally**

### ***Findings from the evidence review***

Women's employment rates are lower than men's across Europe. The current female employment rate in the EU is 65.3 per cent compared to 76.9 per cent for men, and in the UK 72.1 per cent for women and 83.1 per cent for men (Eurostat, 2017; ONS, 2017). There has been significant improvement in female employment rates in recent decades following a change from a male-dominated manufacturing economy to a more gender-balanced service sector economy in large parts of Western and Northern Europe since the 1960s, and the introduction of national and European legislation targeting gender-based discrimination in the workplace since the 1970s (ONS, 2017). While legislation has been effective in reducing the gender employment gap, it nonetheless persists and has remained largely unchanged in the last decade.

Academic research (Eikhof, 2012; Jensen and Møberg, 2017; Severini et al., 2018) suggests that a greater inclusion of women in the labour market would be beneficial for society, as the integration of women into paid jobs represents a major means to advance the financial independence of women, gender equality, and economic growth. To this regard, Eikhof (2012) reports how a key economic development in the last 50 years in the UK has been the increased participation of women in the labour market, with female employment "inching closer to men's employment rates all the time" (Eikhof, 2012, p. 7). Over the time, regulations have been introduced to prohibit gender discrimination in the workplace, as for recruitment and redundancy decisions, and new forms of flexible working have been established. Amin and Islam (2015) explored the effect of the inclusion of mandatory clause of non-discrimination in 58 developing countries finding a large positive association with the increase of female employment especially for smaller firms, relatively richer countries, and countries with a larger proportion of women in total population. Important progresses have been made over time however, research highlights that "gender equality in work and employment is still the aspiration, not the reality" (Eikhof, 2012, p. 8). Indeed, although the gender gap in employment has narrowed in recent decades, inequalities and several criticisms remain in many aspects.

Broadbridge (2010) suggests that the majority of women are employed in non-managerial, unskilled positions with over two-thirds of women working on a part-time basis. Women have more difficulties in accessing the labour market, and these difficulties translate into high inactivity and or unemployment rates. Many women are inactive because salaries are considered insufficient. Indeed, women end up earning less because 'women jobs' are concentrated in low-wage sectors and low-skilled positions and women face more obstacles than men to ascend to senior positions (Severini et al., 2018). This is a common phenomenon in several European countries where women are over-represented in the healthcare, education, and public administration sectors, characterised by lower than average salaries. Jensen and Møberg (2017) suggest there are massive differences between the men's and women's salaries and, often, women are employed in precarious and atypical jobs, which deprive them of full social security rights. Indeed, many women work only short part-time hours performing basic work in lower paid jobs, which results in new types of inequalities in the form of 'working poor' and income polarisation. Across the EU, a

significant proportion of women work part-time, which, although it provides women with more flexibility, sometimes leads to limited opportunities for career progression.

Severini et al. (2018) observed that women still account for less than a quarter of company board members despite representing 40 per cent of the global labour force. Carrieri et al. (2013) reported that women, due to the business context that is highly male-dominated, face many obstacles to progress in their career. Women are over-represented in low pay jobs while remaining under-represented in top leadership positions reflecting a variety of barriers that identify the so-called *glass ceiling effect* (Clevenger & Singh, 2013; Cook & Glass, 2014; Omran et al., 2015). The term 'glass ceiling' refers to women in the workplace who are paid unfairly low and face barriers to be promoted to upper level positions within the organisational hierarchy. It is considered to be discrimination on the basis of gender, limiting women to inferiority and harassment by society (Clevenger & Singh, 2013). Eikhof (2012) maintains that gender inequalities in labour market and career progress has always existed, some of these inequalities are rooted in belief about gendered capabilities and skills and about women's and men's role in society.

The literature explains the remaining gap between men and women's employment in terms of the different barriers women face in the labour market. At the root of much of the inequality is the differing trajectories men and women's careers take after they become parents, with a disproportionately high number of women leaving or not entering the labour market due to care responsibilities after childbirth. A number of papers from target organisations discussed the impact of motherhood on employment, including a Eurofound report from 2016 (Eurofound, 2016) that compares EU-SILC data from different EU countries and found a positive correlation between the following individual characteristics and female labour force participation: educational achievement and marital status of the individual, the educational achievement and employment status of their spouse if they are married, individual's own health status and whether or not they live with elderly people with sickness or disability. Motherhood was found to be one of the most significant individual variables, especially when the children are very young.

The OECD report calls this the 'motherhood penalty' that negatively impacts female employment, even in those OECD countries where male and female employment patterns are similar among young people but where patterns tend to diverge around the time of childbirth (OECD, 2017a). Data from the OECD (2017b) shows the gender gap in employment between childless men and women is relatively small, at 4.8 per cent across the OECD, but this gap more than quadruples to 22.6 per cent when comparing men and women who have at least one child. The negative effects are especially pronounced for women with low levels of education; highly educated and childless women fare better than others, with gender gaps in employment smaller among men and women with high levels of education. In England, the employment rate for mothers has increased from 61.9 per cent in 1996 to 73.7 per cent in 2017, but working-age mothers are still less likely to be in employment than women without dependent children of the same age (ONS, 2017).

The barrier to employment faced by women is largely due to the disproportionate amount of caring responsibilities they take on after childbirth; women spend between twice and four times the number of hours on caring responsibilities than men.

Although men often work very long hours in paid work, when unpaid working hours are taken into account, it is women who have longer working weeks than men overall (Eurofound, 2013). A Eurofound report in 2013 looked at working times in a life-course perspective and found that cohabitating mothers of pre-school children devote on average 28 hours more to care activities – more than twice as much as fathers with children of the same age. When entering the parenting phase, employed women reduce their paid work by four hours a week but increase their unpaid work by 25 hours while men's unpaid work increases by 22 hours. A recent report by the EC found that women in the EU spend on average 33 hours in paid work compared to 39 hours for men, but women spend an average of 22 hours per week doing household and care activities compared to fewer than ten hours per week for men (EC, 2017). In the UK, IPPR analysis found that women work fewer hours than men at every life stage but this gap widens significantly once households have children. A woman with a child below the age of seven reduces her working time by an average of ten hours compared to a woman without children, while the gap between the working hours of men and women grow to an equivalent of 14 hours' difference between men and women with children under seven and who are in a relationship (IPPR, 2014). An OECD report (2017b) also found evidence of gender inequality in unpaid work: in all but six OECD countries women spend more time than men on paid and unpaid work, including the UK. The gender gap in unpaid working hours also corresponds closely with the gender gap in paid working hours – in countries where there are only small differences in unpaid work there are small differences in hours spent in the labour market. This imbalance restricts women's paid work prospects as the responsibility for unpaid work often impedes careers progression and can relegate them to low-skill, temporary and part-time work.

Women are also more likely than men to adapt their paid work according to the additional caring responsibilities that come with parenthood, especially with very young children, which has a damaging effect on mothers' compared to single women's incomes in almost all OECD countries including the UK, according to the OECD (2017b). Women are especially likely to move into part-time work after childbirth when they typically assume a disproportionate responsibility for unpaid childcare. While part-time work keeps women attached to the labour market, it has important drawbacks, such as earning less than fathers and missing out on opportunities to advance their careers due to not working full-time. The uneven distribution of paid hours between men and women was discussed in a Eurofound report, which found that in 2010 employed men in the EU worked an average of 40.6 hours per week compared with 33.9 hours for women (Eurofound, 2013), and around ten per cent of women in the EU worked short part-time hours (20 hours a week and a further 25 per cent long part-time hours (between 20 and 34 hours) compared to five per cent and eight per cent respectively for men (Eurofound, 2013). Gender differences in working hours are largest where female employment rate is high, and female employment rate is positively correlated with the proportion of the general part-time rate – in other words, where women work, they are often in part-time employment (Eurofound, 2012). This is reflected in England where mothers working part-time and men working full-time is the most common way families organise their economic activity (ONS, 2017). An OECD report (2017b) considers other inequalities in the labour market that may act as a barrier to women entering or re-entering the labour market. These include women and men working in different sectors and occupations – women are overrepresented in

low-paid sectors such as retail, health and social care and they face higher levels of occupational segregation than men.

Topping the list of barriers to women's career progress in the workplace however, are not socio-cultural aspects but the lack of flexible working. Indeed, flexibility in the length and scheduling of working hours continues to be regarded as the central facilitator for reconciling work and life/family demands and therefore for women to participate and advance in the labour market. However, part-time jobs are frequently criticised and interpreted as "imitable creation of equal opportunities that sentences women to lower professional positions, lower salaries and concerning culture, it promotes the consolidation of sexism provisions about the fact that women are not willing and are not powerful enough to compete in the labour market equivalently" (Kiaušienė, 2015, p. 96). Men still account for less than a quarter (8 per cent) of part-time employees across the European countries, whilst almost a third (32 per cent) of women is employed in part-time positions and in some countries such as UK, this figure is above 40 per cent. Women work part-time as a form of reconciling work and care and to meet work-life balance problems due to an uneven gendered distribution of domestic labour.

To this regard, a stream of research (e.g., Schleutker, 2013) has focused on the importance of personal preferences in relation to the choice of having a family. Indeed, these studies suggest that is important to not consider women as one homogeneous group when it comes to family and work. Indeed, women have heterogeneous preferences, which eventually lead to different choices about "lifetime career strategies in relation to childbearing" (Schleutker, 2013, p. 104). Surely, family policy enables the combination of work and family, given that women do not need to choose between being employed and having a family. However, preferences are as important as determinants of behaviour as the presence of other constraints such as family policy, financial situation, and attitudes (Schleutker, 2013).

Women also face gender-specific challenges to advancing their careers, such as weaker professional networks or fewer professional managers that make progression in employment harder than for men. What is more, women often face wage penalties upon their return to work, making it potentially an unattractive option when weighed in with childcare costs. According to research carried out by the TUC (2016), by the age of 42 mothers who are in full-time work are earning 11 per cent less than full-time women without children, 7 per cent when personal characteristics such as education, region and occupational social class are controlled for.

Another important financial obstacle for mothers re-entering the workforce is the high cost of formal childcare that puts it out of reach for many families, especially those on lower incomes (OECD, 2017a). According to OECD figures, the UK has the highest childcare costs in the developed world in that couples in Britain spend more than 30 per cent of their income on childcare, which may make it financially non-viable for both parents to work, especially in families with several children, and it is most commonly mothers who stay home (OECD, 2017a). Childcare fees reduce the attractiveness of labour force participation, especially for less-educated women, and low wages may reduce the financial incentive even further (OECD, 2017b).



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## Appendix E: Secondary Data Analysis Findings

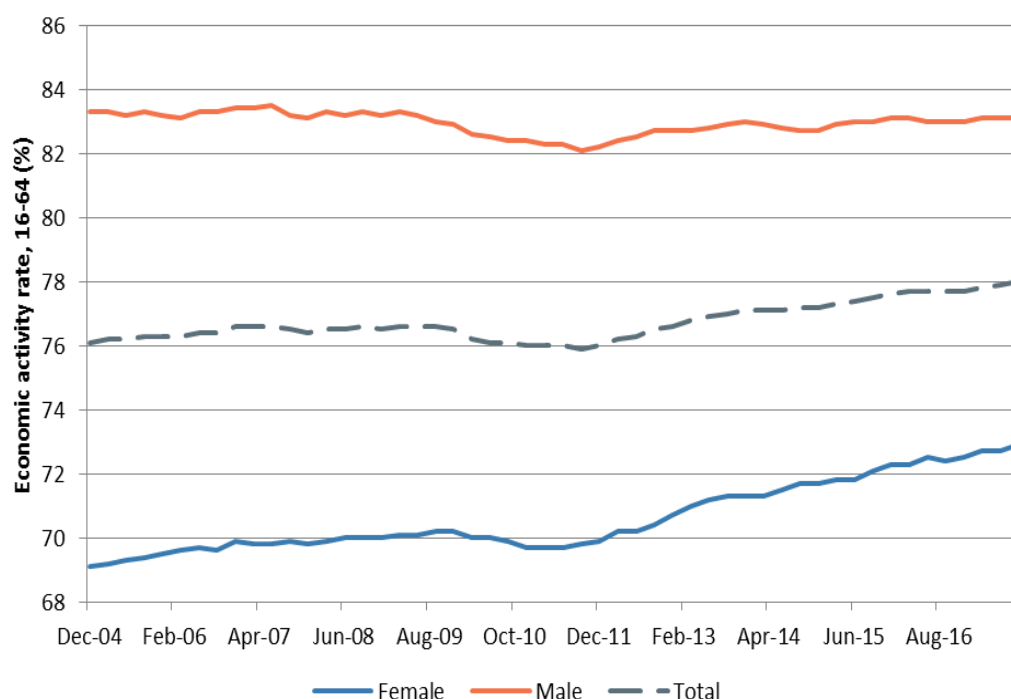
### Economic Activity

The economic activity rate is defined as the proportion of the working age population who are economically active, that is either in work, or actively seeking work.

Figure E-1 shows the trends in economic activity rates by gender since 2004. The gap between the male and female rate has been shrinking, particularly since the onset of the recession. The female activity rate has increased from 69 per cent in 2004 to nearly 73 per cent in 2017, while the male rate has remained stable at around 83 per cent.

The economic activity rates for the 16+ population shows a very similar pattern with the gap between the male and female rates shrinking over time.

**Figure E-1: Economic activity rates of 16-64 year olds by gender, UK, 2004-2017**

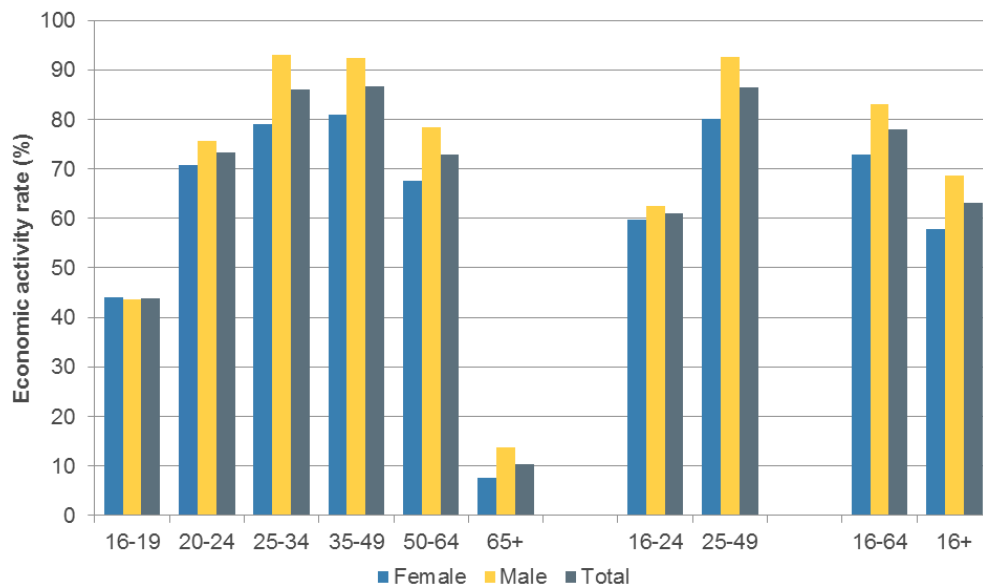


Source: ONS; Annual Population Survey December 2004-September 2017 via NOMIS

Economic activity rates vary by age, rising from 16 through to a peak in the 30s and 40s, before declining to retirement age.

Figure E-2 shows that among those aged under 25, the economic activity rates of males and females are very similar, but from 25 onwards the rates diverge and the difference is greatest among 25-34 year olds, where the male rate, at 93 per cent, is 14 percentage points higher than the female rate. The gap narrows slightly among 35 to 49 years olds, to 12 percentage points, and is lower again among 50 to 64 year olds, at 11 percentage points.

**Figure E-2: Economic activity rate by age and gender, UK, Oct 2016-Sept 2017**

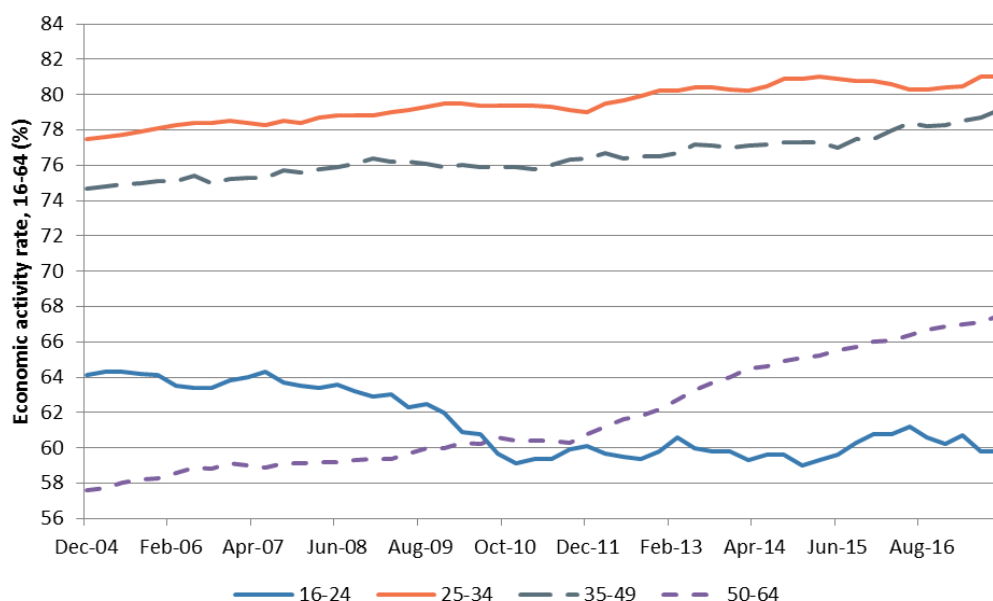


Source: ONS; Annual Population Survey October 2016-September 2017 via NOMIS

The trends in female economic activity rates by age are shown in Figure E-3. The rates for those aged 25 to 34 and 35 to 49 have increased steadily since 2004, although the rate among 25 to 34 year olds has remained broadly stable for the last three years or so, while the rate among 35 to 49 year olds has continued to increase. The fastest increase has been in the rate among 50 to 64 year olds since the recession – there had been a steady increase from 2004 to 2011, from 58 per cent to 60 per cent, but since then the rate has increased to 68 per cent.

However, the economic activity rate for females under 25 fell between 2004 and 2011, driven by a large decrease in the rate among 16 to 19 year olds, while the rate among 20 to 24 year olds was stable until the onset of the recession, and then dipped. The economic activity rate for 16-19 year old males also fell during this period, and is most likely due to increased rates of staying on in education post-16.

**Figure E-3: Female economic activity rates by age, UK, 2004-2017**

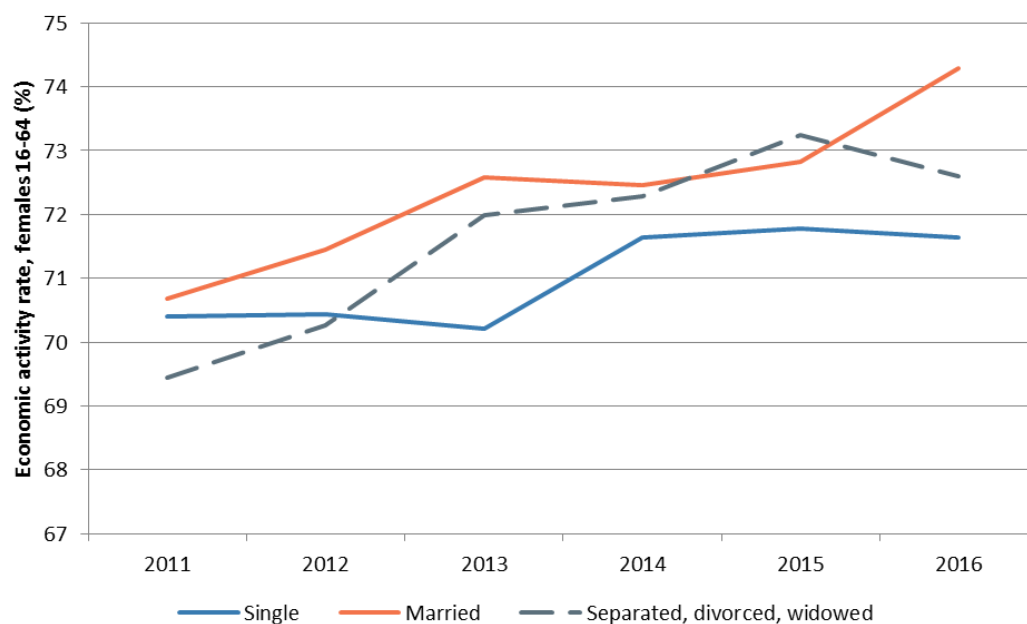


Source: ONS; Annual Population Survey December 2004-September 2017 via NOMIS

### Economic activity by marital status

Figure E-4 shows the variation in economic activity rates by marital status among females of working age. There is relatively little variation by marital status – married females generally have the highest activity rate, and single (never married) females generally have the lowest rate, but the pattern has been fluctuating over the last few years and the different rates have generally been within two percentage points of each other. It should be noted that single females will potentially include a high proportion of those who are students.

**Figure E-4: Female economic activity rates by marital status, UK, 2011-16**



Source: ONS; Labour Force Survey, April-June quarters 2011-16

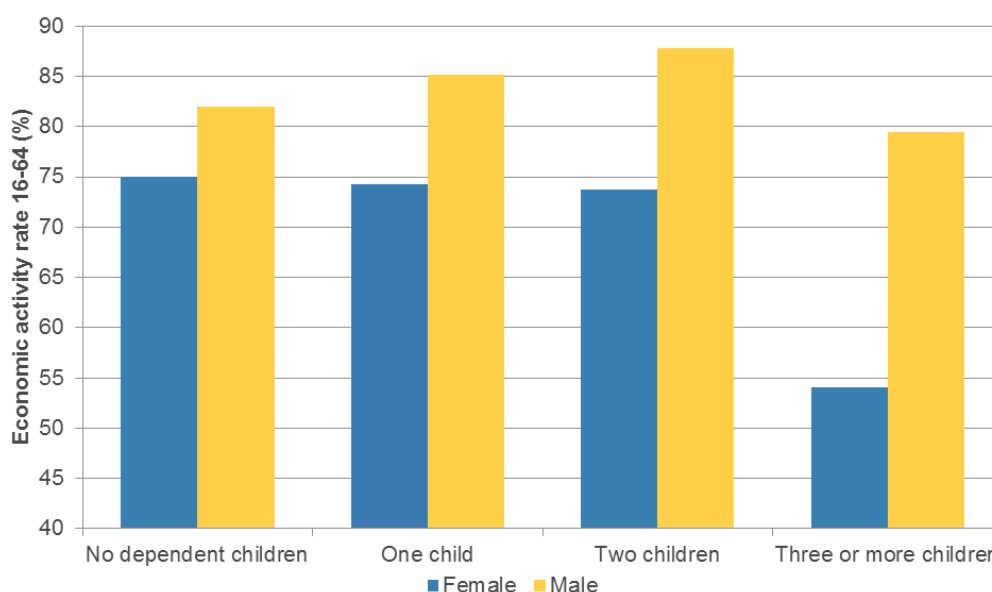
### Economic activity by dependent children

Figure E-5 shows the variation in economic activity rates by number of dependent children, for males and females. There is relatively little difference in the economic activity rates of females with fewer than three children – 75.0 per cent of those with no dependent children were economically active, compared with 74.3 per cent of those with one child, and 73.8 per cent of those with two children. However after two children economic activity drops off dramatically, and only 54 per cent of females with three or more children were economically active.

The pattern among males is somewhat different, with the activity rate increasing with the number of children, up to two, and then falling among those with three or more, but by much less than the female rate falls off.

Figure E-6 shows economic activity rates by gender and age of youngest child. The gap between the female and male rate is greatest among those with children under four, with 65 per cent of females being economically active compared with 94 per cent of males. The female rate increases as the age of the youngest child increases, up to seven to 10, whereas the male rate decreases as the age of the youngest child increases. Among both males and females, the rate is lowest among those with dependent children aged 16 to 18, although this may reflect the age of the adults more than the impact of having dependent children.

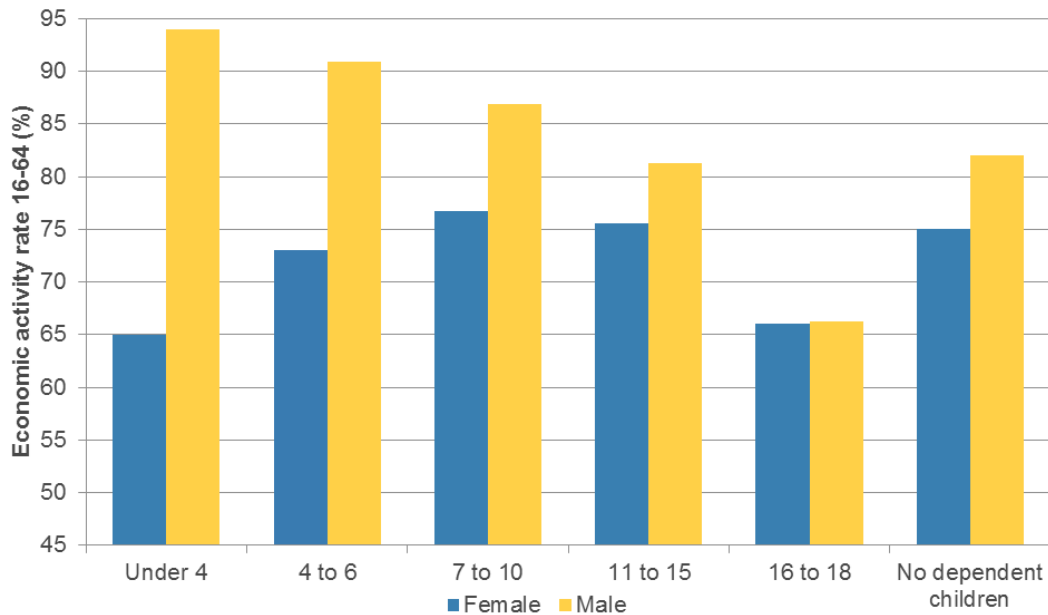
**Figure E-5: Economic activity rates by gender and number of dependent children, UK, 2016**



Source: ONS; Labour Force Survey, April 2015-June 2016



**Figure E-6: Economic activity rates by gender and age of youngest child, UK, 2016**



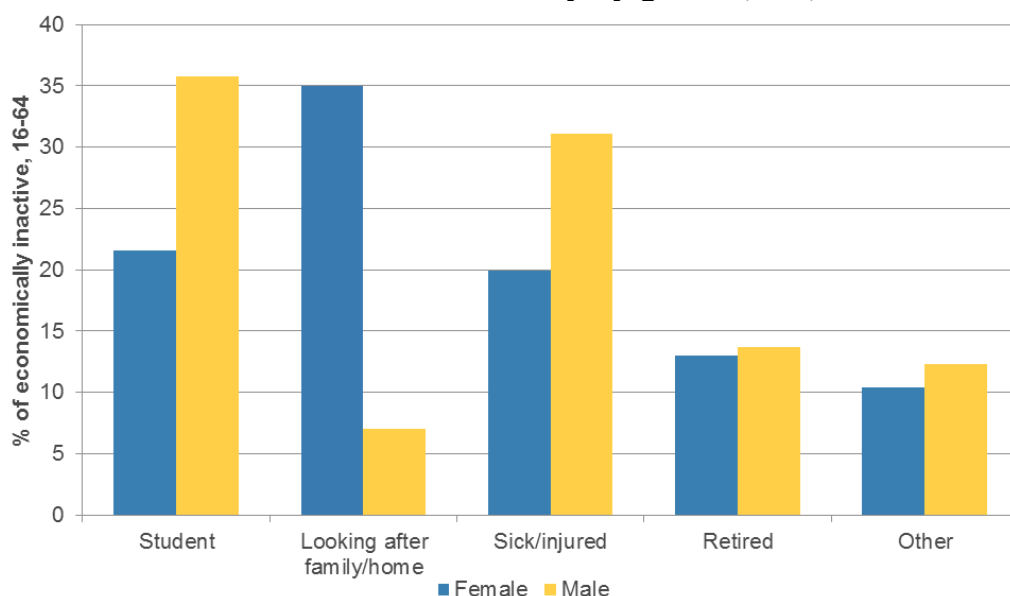
Source: ONS; Labour Force Survey, April 2015-June 2016

### **Economic inactivity**

Figure E-7 shows the reasons for inactivity amongst economically active males and females. Just over one third (35%) of inactive females were looking after the family or home, compared with less than 10 per cent of inactive males, while 22 per cent of inactive females were students, and 20 per cent were sick or injured, either temporarily or long-term. Among males, the most common reason was being a student (36%), followed by being sick or injured (31%).

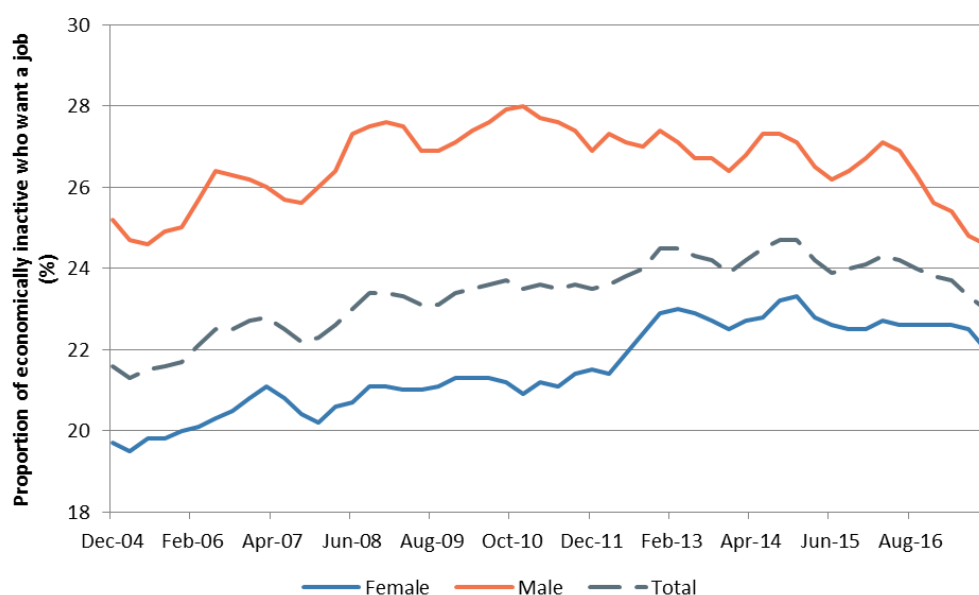
The proportion of the economically active who want a job is shown in Figure E-8. The overall proportion increased somewhat between 2004 and 2013, but has fallen back in the last year or two. Inactive males are more likely to want a job than inactive females, although the gap between them has shrunk, from around five percentage points in 2004 to just over two percentage points in 2017.

**Figure E-7: Reasons for economic inactivity by gender, UK, Oct 2016-Sept 2017**



Source: ONS; Annual Population Survey October 2016-September 2017 via NOMIS

**Figure E-8: Proportion of economically inactive who want a job by gender, UK, 2004-2017**



Source: ONS; Annual Population Survey December 2004-September 2017 via NOMIS

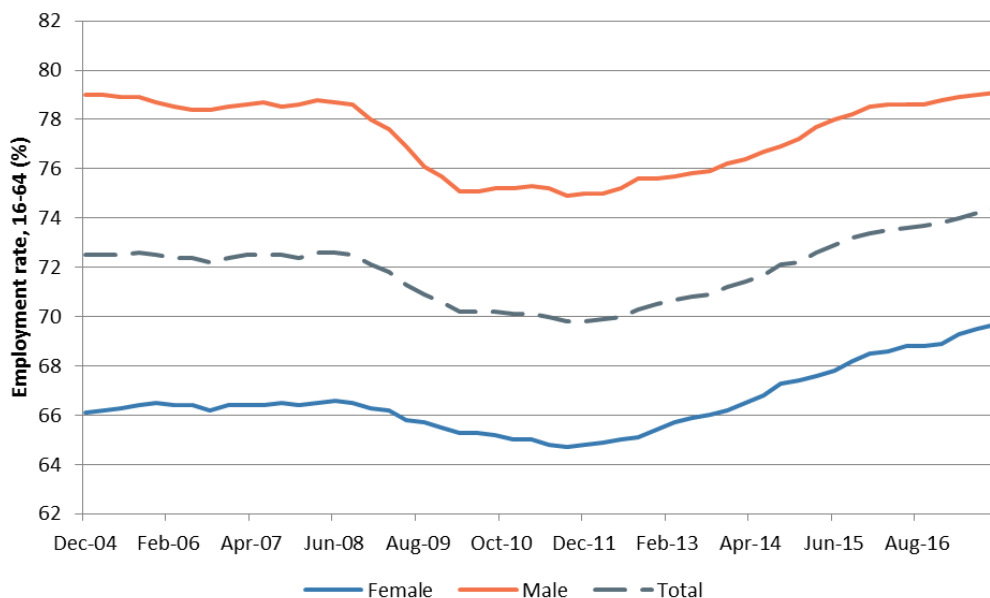
## Employment

This section focuses on those in employment, looking at employment rates (the proportion of the working age population who are in employment), and characteristics of those in employment such as working hours, occupation, industry and earnings.

## Employment rates

The trend in employment rates by gender is shown in Figure E-9. The pattern is similar to that for economic activity rates, with the female rate lower than the male rate, but falling by less during the recession, and rising by more since the recession. The male rate in 2017 was very similar to the level in 2004, whereas the female rate was nearly four percentage points higher – 70 per cent compared with 66 per cent in 2004. The gap between the male and female rates has shrunk from around 13 per cent in 2004, to around nine percentage points in 2017.

**Figure 4- 9: Employment rates of 16-64 year olds by gender, UK, 2004-2017**

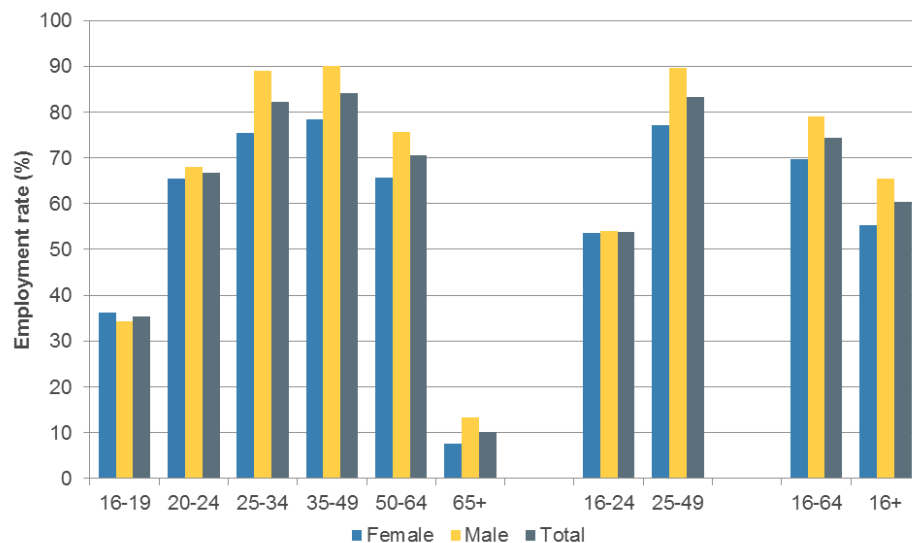


Source: ONS; Annual Population Survey December 2004-September 2017 via NOMIS

## Employment rates by age

Figure E-10 shows the variation in employment rates by age and gender. Among 16 to 24 year olds there is no difference between females and males in the employment rate, while among older age groups the rate for females is below the rate for males, and the gap is widest among 25 to 34 year olds, at 13 percentage points.

**Figure E-10: Employment rate by age and gender, UK, Oct 2016-Sept 2017**

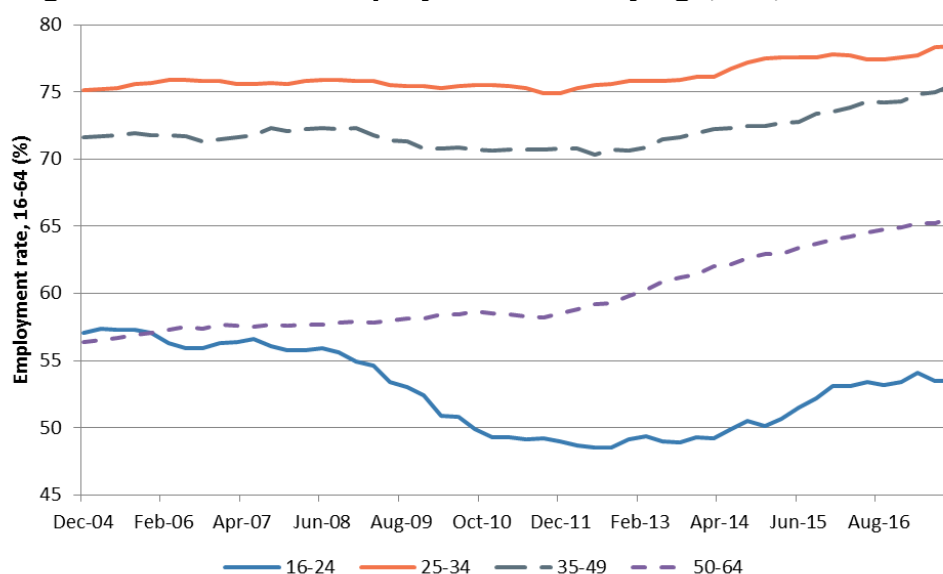


Source: ONS; Annual Population Survey October 2016-September 2017 via NOMIS

Figure E-11 shows the trends in the employment rate by age for females of working age. The employment rate for females aged 25 to 49 has increased somewhat since 2004, albeit with a dip in the rate for 35 to 49 around the time of the recession, while there has been a much larger increase in the employment rate for females aged 50 to 64, from 56 per cent in 2004 to 66 per cent in 2017, with most of the increase occurring in the last six years after the recession.

The employment rate for females aged under 25 was broadly stable before the recession, at just over 55 per cent, and then dipped to below 50 per cent by 2010, influenced both by the economic circumstances and increased participation in education. However, in the last few years the rate has increased, to around 54 per cent, but still below the level before the recession.

**Figure E-11: Female employment rates by age, UK, 2004-2017**



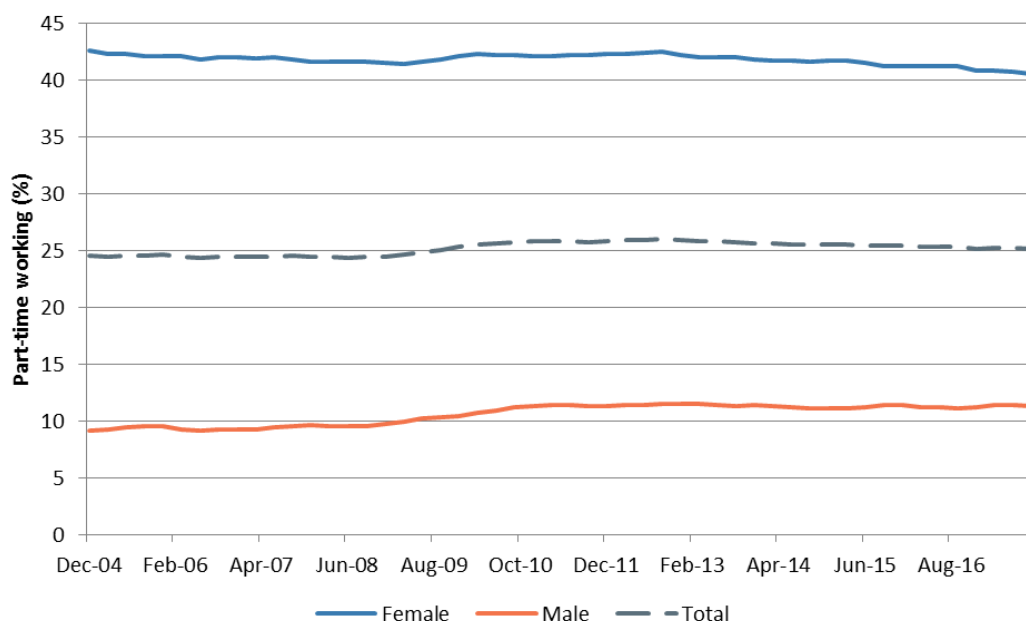
Source: ONS; Annual Population Survey December 2004-September 2017 via NOMIS

**Working hours**

Historically, part-time working has been far more prevalent among females in employment than among males. Figure E-12 shows the trends since 2004 in the part-time employment rates by gender. The female rate has been falling very slowly during the period, to just over 40 per cent in 2017, while the male rate rose somewhat during the recession and has been stable since, at around 11 per cent. Thus the difference between the female and male rates has shrunk from 34 percentage points in 2004 to 29 percentage points in 2017.

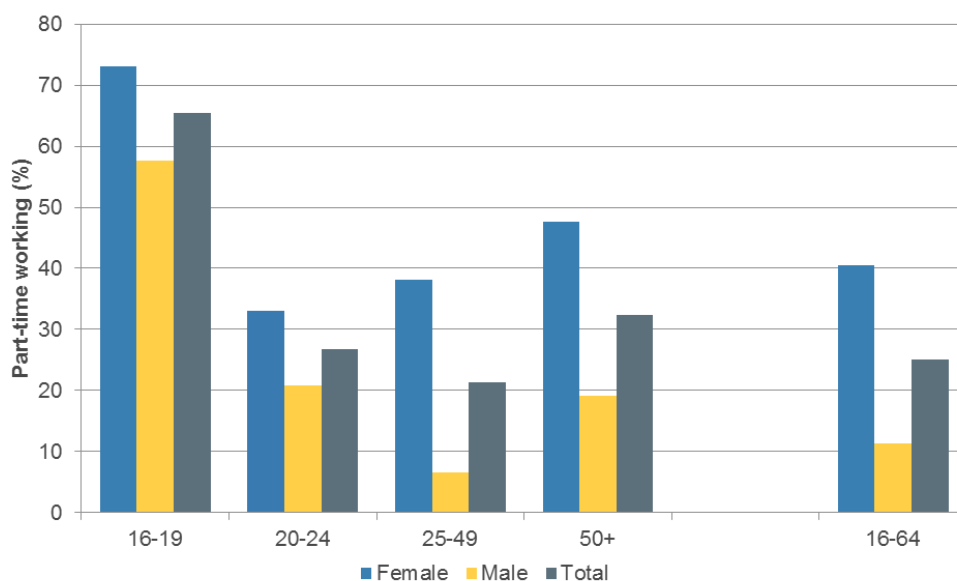
The difference between the female and male rates is much smaller among those aged under 25, than among those in the prime working age years of 25 to 49, as Figure E-13 shows.

**Figure E-12: Proportion of part-time employment by gender, UK, 2004-2017**



Source: ONS; Annual Population Survey December 2004-September 2017 via NOMIS

**Figure E-13: Proportion of part-time employment by age and gender, UK, 2017**

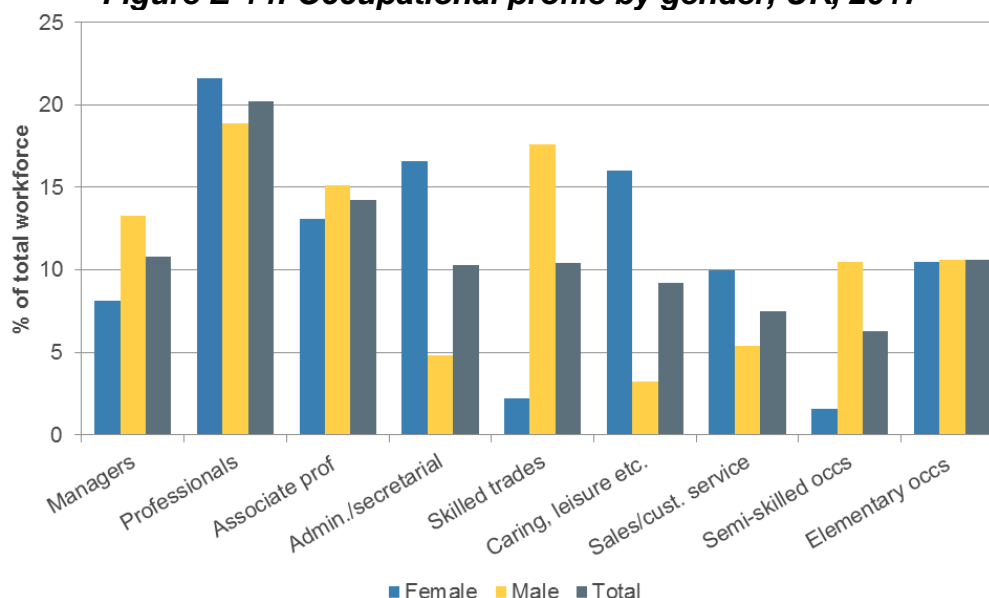


Source: ONS; Annual Population Survey October 2016-September 2017 via NOMIS

## Occupation

There are rather different occupational profiles by gender, as shown in Figure E-14. Female workers are over-represented among administrative and secretarial occupation, caring and leisure service occupations, sales and customer service occupations, and to a lesser extent among professional occupations. Male workers are over-represented among skilled and semi-skilled occupations, and to a lesser extent among managers and senior officials, associate professional and technical occupations. The proportion of female workers in elementary occupations is the same as the proportion of male workers, at 10 per cent.

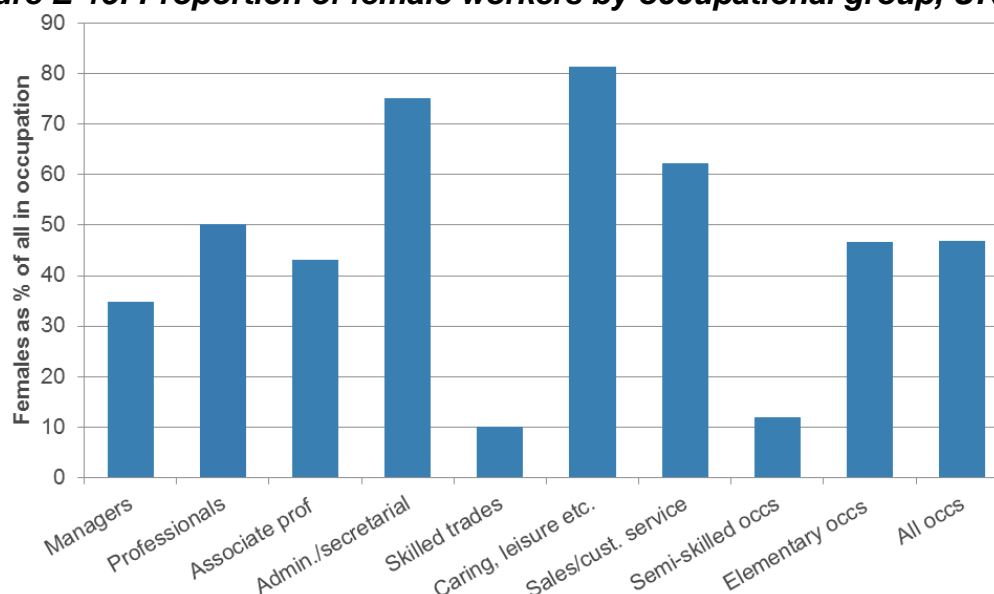
**Figure E-14: Occupational profile by gender, UK, 2017**



Source: ONS; Annual Population Survey October 2016-September 2017 via NOMIS

Figure E-15 presents the same information but in a different way, showing the proportion of all workers in each major occupational group who are female. More than four fifths of caring and leisure service workers, and three quarters of administrative and secretarial workers, are female, while at the other end of the scale, only one in ten workers in skilled trades, and semi-skilled occupations are female. There is a broadly even gender balance among professional occupations, and elementary occupations.

**Figure E-15: Proportion of female workers by occupational group, UK, 2017**



Source: ONS; Annual Population Survey October 2016-September 2017 via NOMIS

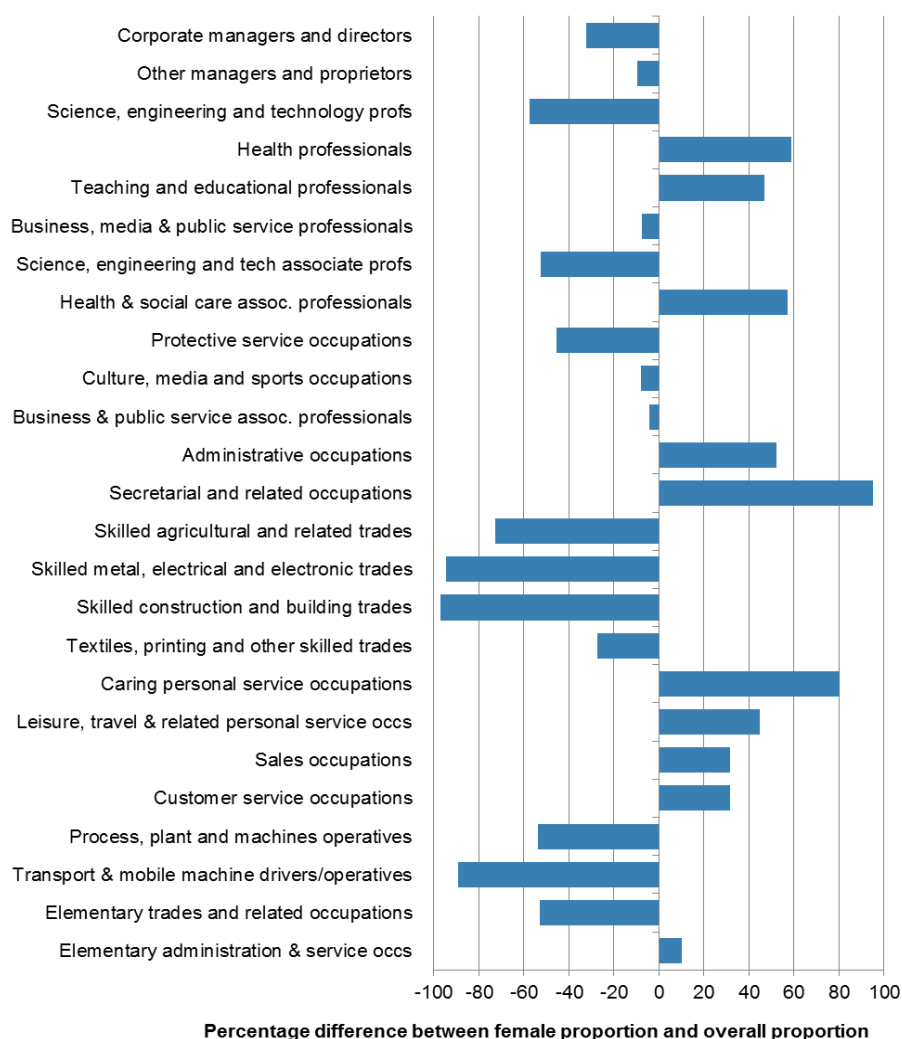
Figure E-16 shows the relative over- and under-representation of female workers at a more detailed occupational level. The figure shows the percentage difference between the proportion of all female workers that the occupational group accounts for, and the proportion of all workers. Positive bars, to the right hand side of the figure, represent

an over-representation of female workers, with a figure of 100 per cent indicating that the occupation accounts for twice as many female workers as it does all workers. Negative bars, to the left hand side of the figure, represent an under-representation of female workers, with a figure of 50 per cent indicating that the occupation accounts for half as many female workers as it does all workers. Key points to note are:

- The over-representation of female workers is much larger in secretarial occupations than in administrative occupations, and is larger in caring personal service occupations than in leisure and related occupations.
- Among professional occupations, female workers are over-represented in health and teaching professionals, but under-represented in science professionals, while business professional occupations has a broadly even gender balance.
- There is an over-representation of female workers among health and social care associate professionals, and under-representations among science associate professionals, and protective service occupations.
- The largest under-representations of female workers are among skilled metal/electrical/electronic trades, skills construction trades, and transport and mobile machine drivers/operatives.



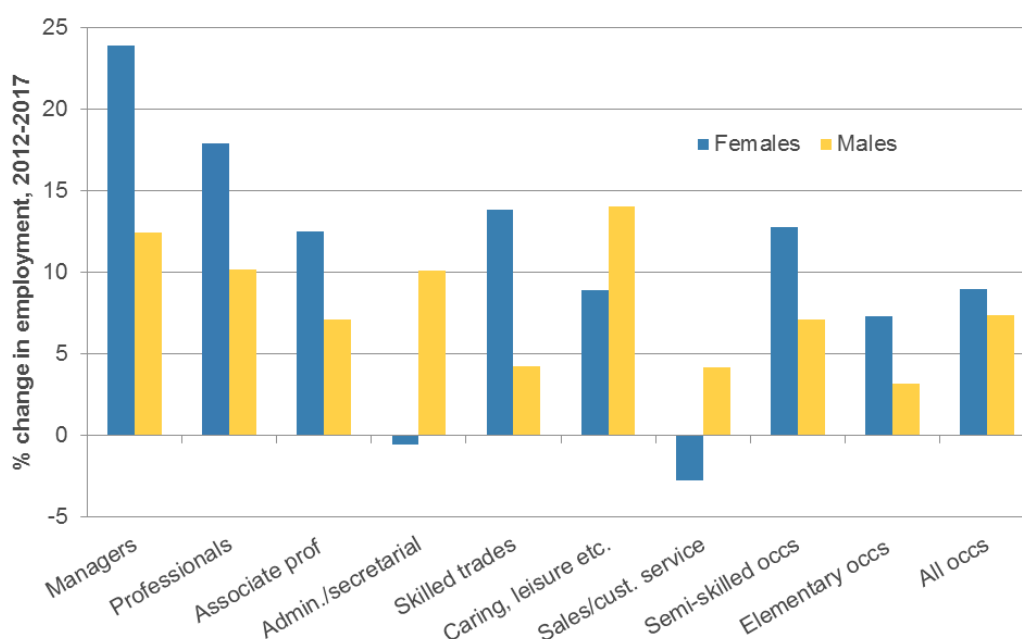
**Figure E-16: Proportion of female workers by occupational group, UK, 2017**



Source: ONS; Annual Population Survey October 2016-September 2017 via NOMIS

The recent trends in employment by occupation amongst females and males is shown in Figure E-17. Looking first at overall employment, there has been a slightly larger increase in female employment than in male employment – 9.0 per cent compared with 7.4 per cent. The number of female managers has grown by nearly a quarter, and the number of female professionals has grown by 18 per cent, while the number of males in these occupational groups has increased by 13 per cent and 10 per cent respectively. There have also been large increases, of more than 10 per cent, in the number of females in associate professional and technical occupations, and among skilled and semi-skilled occupations, albeit from very low baselines. However, the number of females in sales and customer service occupations has fallen by three per cent, and there has been a slight fall in the number of female administrative and secretarial workers. Thus there has been a ‘hollowing out’ of the female workforce, with larger growth at the top and bottom of the occupational scale, and falls among some of the intermediate level occupations. By contrast, the occupational trends for male workers have been more uniform.

**Figure E-17: Change in employment by occupation and gender, UK, 2012-2017**

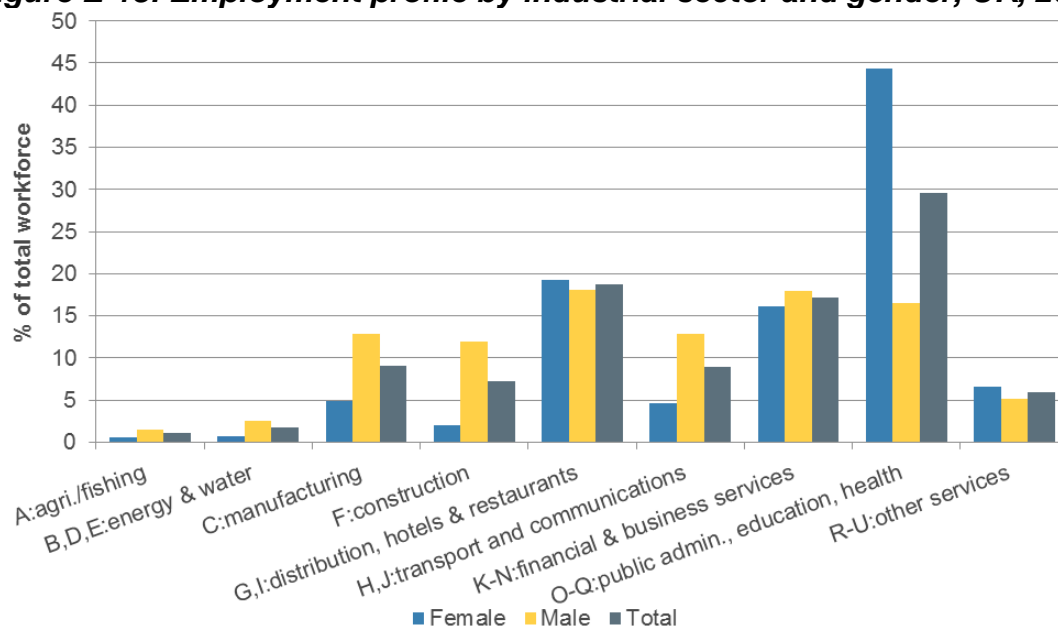


Source: ONS; Annual Population Survey September 2012-September 2017 via NOMIS

## Industry

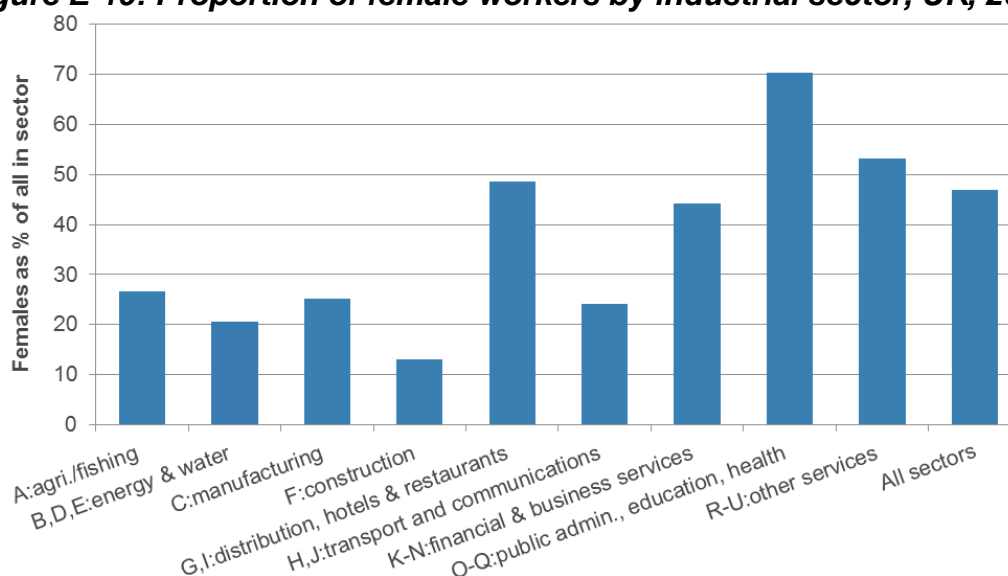
The profile of female employment by industrial sector, in comparison with the male profile, is shown in Figure E-18. More than two fifths (44%) of female workers are employment in public administration, education and health, compared with 17 per cent of male workers, and this is the only broad sector in which there is an over-representation of female workers. The proportion of female workers in distribution, hotels and restaurants, financial and business services, and other services, is broadly similar to the proportion of all males working in these sectors, while there are under-representations of female workers in manufacturing, construction and the other production sectors, and in transport and communications.

**Figure E-18: Employment profile by industrial sector and gender, UK, 2017**



Source: ONS; Annual Population Survey October 2016-September 2017 via NOMIS

**Figure E-19: Proportion of female workers by industrial sector, UK, 2017**



Source: ONS; Annual Population Survey October 2016-September 2017 via NOMIS

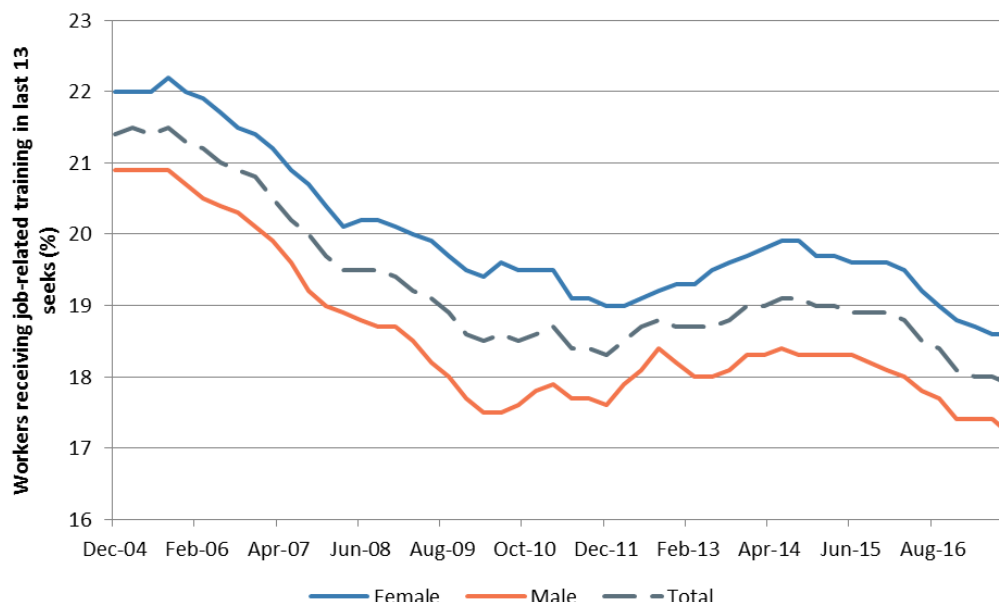
Figure E-19 shows the proportion of all workers in each industrial sector who are female, an alternative way of looking at the same data. Seven out of ten workers in public administration and health are female, while in construction only 13 per cent of all workers are female.

### Job-related training

Figure E-20 shows the proportion of workers who received job-related training in the previous 13 weeks, since 2004. The overall trend was falling before the recession, and although there was a small increase between 2011 and 2014, the proportion has

been falling again in the last three years and is currently at the lowest level in the past 13 years. The proportion of females receiving job-related training has been around one percentage point higher than the proportion of males throughout this period.

**Figure E-20: Proportion of workers receiving job-related training by gender, UK, 2004-2017**



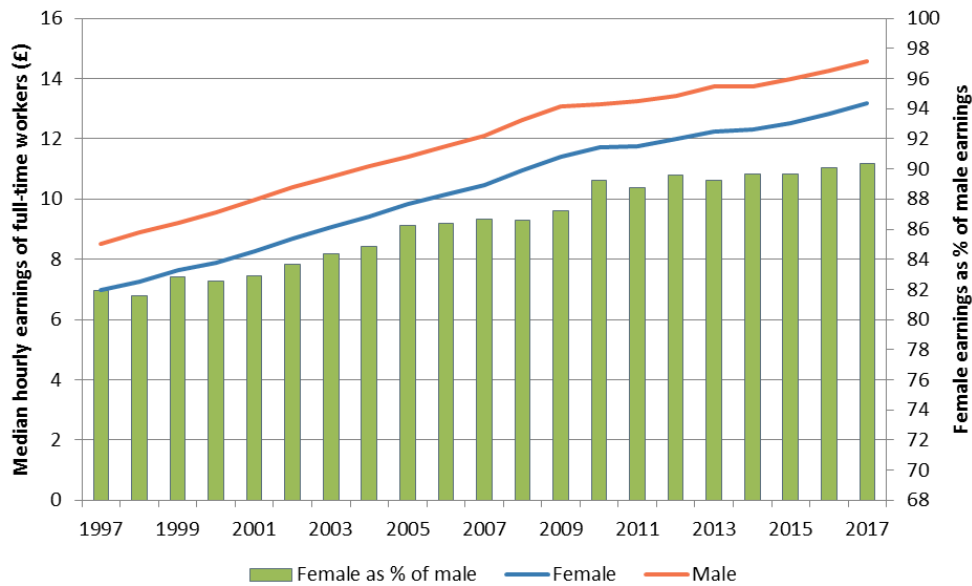
Source: ONS; Annual Population Survey December 2004-September 2017 via NOMIS

## Earnings

There are a number of different ways of examining earnings – gross vs. net, annual vs. weekly vs. hourly, and mean vs. median. We have looked at hourly earnings of full-time workers, to remove the impact of the higher proportion of females working part-time, and have used median earnings rather than mean, to avoid the disproportionate impact of the small number of very high earners, who are predominantly male.

Figure E-21 shows the trend in median hourly earnings of full-time workers by gender since 1997. The trend for both males and females has been upward, albeit with some stagnation around the time of the recession – female hourly earnings rose from £6.98 in 1997 to £13.18 in 2017, while male hourly earnings rose from £8.52 to £14.59 over the same period. The increase was proportionately larger for females than for males – 89 per cent compared with 71 per cent, and so female earnings as a proportion of male earnings have been increasing, from 82 per cent in 1997 to 90 per cent in 2017.

**Figure E-21: Median hourly earnings of full-time workers by gender, UK, 1997-2017**



Source: ONS; Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 1997-2017 via NOMIS

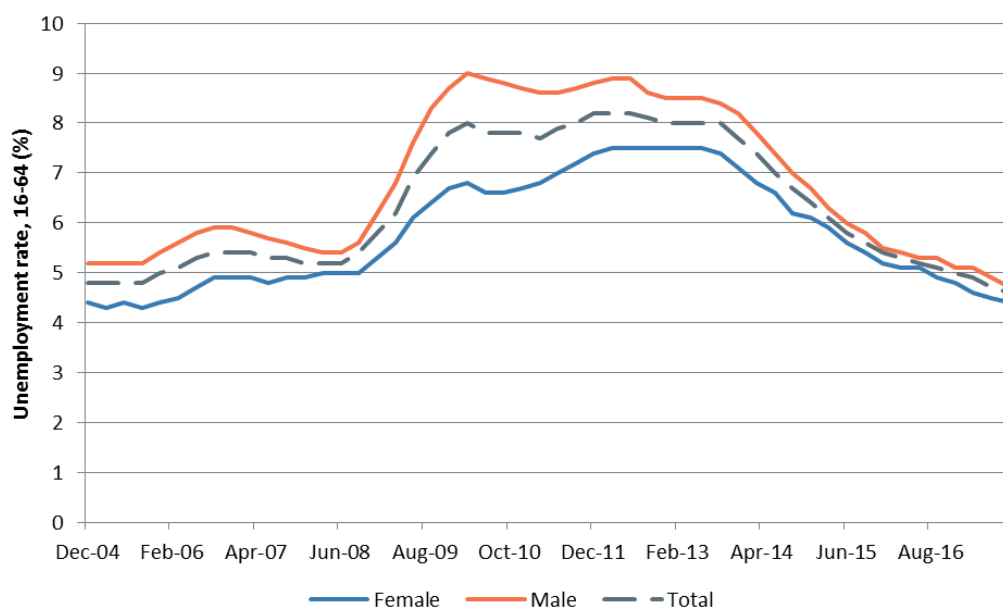
## Unemployment

Having looked at economic activity (and inactivity), and employment, we now go on to consider the gender patterns in unemployment. Over the last decade, unemployment statistics have moved away from the claimant count administrative data, which counted the number of people claiming unemployment-related benefits, to the measure based on the International Labour Organisation's definition of unemployment, which is based on people who are:

- Not in employment currently;
- Have actively looked for work in the last four weeks; and
- Are able to start a job in the next two weeks.

Figure E-22 shows the trend in the ILO unemployment rate by gender since 2004. During the 2000s decade, before the recession, the female rate was between four and five per cent, and around one percentage point lower than the male rate. During the recession, male unemployment rose much quicker than female unemployment, and the gap widened to two percentage points, but this gap has been all but eradicated over the last few years.

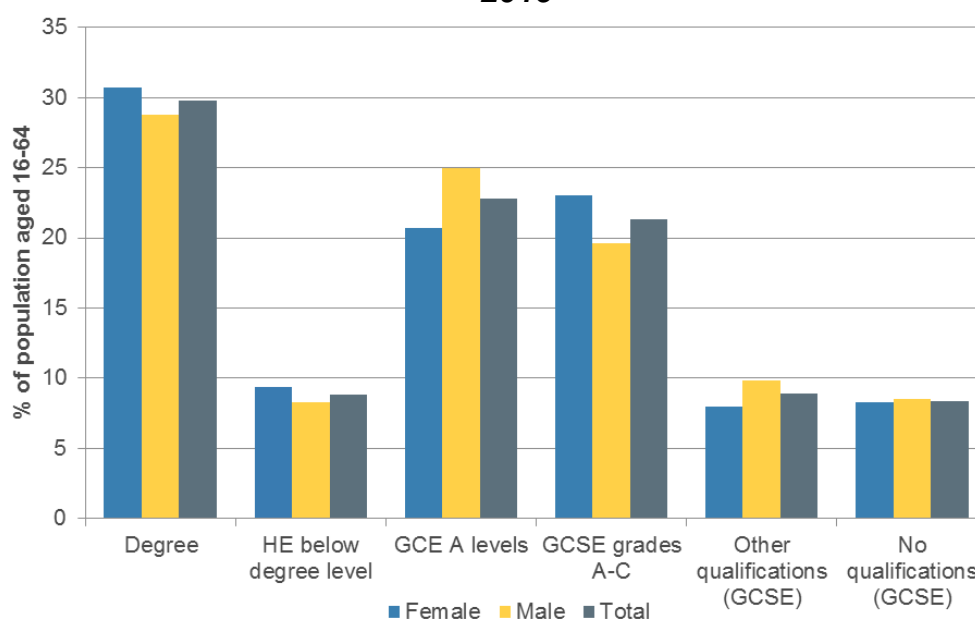
**Figure E-22: ILO unemployment rate of working age population by gender, UK, 2004-2017**



Source: ONS; Annual Population Survey December 2004-September 2017 via NOMIS

Figure E-23 shows the highest qualification of the working age population by gender. A slightly higher proportion of females than males have degrees, or other higher education qualifications below degree level, while a higher proportion of males hold A-levels as their highest qualification. The proportion of working age people with no qualifications is the same among females as it is among males (8%).

**Figure E-23: Highest qualification of working age population by gender, UK, 2016**



Source: ONS; Annual Population Survey January 2016-December 2016 via NOMIS

Figure E-24 shows the same information but for the economically active population aged 16 to 64. The gender gap among graduates is larger among the economically active than among all working age people – 36 per cent of economically active females have degrees or equivalent or higher, compared with 32 per cent of economically active males, whereas among the total working age population the gap was two percentage points.

**Figure E-24: Highest qualification of economically active by gender, UK, 2016**

