

Action plan to ensure Service Leavers receive appropriate Outreach Transition Support to help them transition into civilian life

For most people transition from the Armed Forces into civilian life is successful, but not everyone makes that transition easily.

The evidence in this report shows that Stoll's Outreach Transition Service has provided effective and much-needed life interventions for some particularly vulnerable Service leavers over a two-year period. The service has been highly effective in delivering very positive outcomes for those most vulnerable Veterans who have been identified as likely to struggle after service, including Foreign and Commonwealth Veterans and Early Service Leavers. These Outreach interventions have been especially effective for those who have been in urgent need of appropriate housing – preventing a lot of problems down the line.

Providing effective support at an early stage to those who need it the most is an approach Forces in Mind Trust have been advocating since the publication of the Transition Mapping Study in 2013 which the Ministry of Defence has supported. We can now state with confidence that the most vulnerable individuals going through transition benefit greatly from early intervention, and those engaged in this pilot project would not have had this support without the Outreach Transition Service. Stoll's Outreach Transition model is effective because:

- Those in the greatest need are able to access bespoke personalised one-to-one support, tailored to their needs.
- Early intervention resolves problems before they spiral out of control. They are very cost-effective for the State and the Veterans' charitable sector.
- There is a cohort of vulnerable Veterans that need this extra support if they are to transition effectively into society. These individuals are not transitioning effectively at the moment.
- Vulnerable Veterans are able to get an appropriate home that is right for them with this support; 70 vulnerable people were found a home during the period of the study who would have been homeless or in inappropriate housing otherwise.
- Each individual received different tailored advice and support; for some the focus was on health services, for others it was around employment mentoring or learning financial skills.

Given the evidence that the model is effective in London, where access to housing is most problematic, this report sets out what should be done to ensure Service Leavers based in other parts of the country have an opportunity to access the same quality of outreach support - regardless of their location. The Career Transition Pathway may well be working for the majority of Veterans - but it doesn't meet the specific needs of vulnerable Veterans, such as those with PTSD and other mental health problems.

Action for stakeholders

Below we set out how different partners and stakeholders can help.

Ministry of Defence

- Positively identify those who may be vulnerable and need bespoke support in order to make a successful transition.
- Endorse the personalised outreach model for the most vulnerable Veterans going through transition.
- Communicate the benefits of this approach through the chain of command and to each Brigade area, particularly in London District where such a service is already available.
- Recommend this service for funding.
- Consider how other vulnerable Veterans across the country can access tailored support to meet their needs so that they transition effectively into civilian life.
- Champion the forthcoming Veterans' Housing Advice Office and strongly encourage Local Authorities and charities to use it.
- Ensure all Service Leavers have access to better information before they leave the Armed Forces.

Local Authorities

- Staff must ask the simple question: have you served in the Armed Forces?
- Provide advice and assistance to Veterans. If this cannot result in a home locally, Local Authorities must signpost Veterans to the Veterans Gateway to ensure they access the most appropriate service.
- Provide statistical evidence about the numbers of Veterans locally when submitting annual data returns on housing and homelessness.

Veterans' sector

- Commit to using the Veterans' Gateway effectively.
- Work more closely with Brigades, homelessness organisations, Local Authorities and other groups supporting people in need of help in the community to help identify Veterans at risk.
- Collaborate and work in partnership to meet the individual needs of Veterans, especially with the Career Transition Partnership.

Voluntary sector organisations

- Organisations supporting people who are homeless or at risk of being homeless should identify whether the client has a Service background and if so signpost to organisations like Stoll and the Veterans' Gateway. This applies to homelessness organisations but also to the network of Citizens Advice Bureaux and other community organisations that support people living in poverty.

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If you would like any further information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

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