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# Profile of provision for armed forces veterans under probation supervision

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REPORT to the  
Probation  
Institute  
September  
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By Matt Ford, Helen Mills and Roger Grimshaw  
with Callum Allison

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**Matt Ford, Helen Mills and Roger Grimshaw**

**With Callum Allison**

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## Introduction

### Background

This report builds on the Phillips Review into ex-armed forces personnel in the criminal justice system. Announced in January 2014 and published in November the same year, the Phillips Review aimed to ‘identify properly the reasons for ex-service personnel ending up in the criminal justice system, to look at the support provided to them and how that support could be improved.’ It covered both custody and the community, and made a series of recommendations. With respect to probation, these included: routine identification of veterans, as well as collection of data on offences convicted for and the factors and characteristics associated with their conviction; for the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) to publish guidance on how to address the needs of convicted veterans on probation within twelve months of the release of the Review; that NOMS work with service charities and other bodies to better coordinate support for veterans in criminal justice; and, that a senior civil servant within the Ministry of Justice should be appointed to have responsibility for ex-armed forces personnel involved with the criminal justice system, aiming to implement an identifiable national strategy in England and Wales for best practice in working with this group.

The Phillips Review is underpinned by the Armed Forces Covenant, which states that no-one who has served in HM armed forces should face disadvantage in public or commercial services, and in some cases should receive special consideration. With respect to involvement with the criminal justice system, this would refer to how military service may relate to their conviction.

Reforms to the probation service under the Government’s Transforming Rehabilitation agenda began during the period of Phillips. Under this programme the 35 old Probation Trusts were replaced by a single National Probation Service responsible for supervising ‘high risk’ convicted offenders, and 21 privately owned Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs) which would supervise ‘medium’ to ‘low risk’ convicted offenders. Contracts to run these CRCs were awarded in December 2014, and these providers have since been building supply chains made up of public, private, and voluntary sector organisations which are subcontracted to supply services.

### Aims

Funded by the Forces in Mind Trust and commissioned by the Probation Institute, this report sets out to profile and analyse the current state of services for veterans under probation supervision in England and Wales. It is intended to inform an emerging national network of support, organised by the Probation Institute, thereby bringing tangible benefits to all public, private, and voluntary sector agencies that seek to rehabilitate and reintegrate people who have served their country in the armed forces. The Probation Institute Network is composed of people from probation and from the charities and other agencies, all of whom have a common interest in developing services for veterans.

The key messages are to members of the Network. Hence our findings should be generally comprehensible but we have assumed some specialist knowledge.

At its heart, our project was intended to be an analysis of how services were developing to meet known needs and how outcomes were being monitored within an evolving evidence base. The original topics for the profiling can be set out briefly under a number of headings:

1. Current provision
2. Funding of current provision
3. Provision in relation to known needs
4. Service impact monitoring
5. Availability of services and barriers to access
6. Co-production of services in conjunction with service users
7. Consideration of other factors (such as being a victim as well as an offender)
8. Guidance and training
9. Evidence and effective practice

The actual questions we were asked to explore are reproduced in full in the sections that follow.

### **Context**

As far as possible we have avoided straying from our brief but we are aware that there remain challenging questions about the context for this piece of work.

- What weight will be given to the Armed Forces Covenant and how will government press forward with it?
- How will government funding decisions impact on criminal justice?
- How will the funding cake be divided across all veterans' needs, not just those in criminal justice?
- How far does the general transformation of probation under Transforming Rehabilitation help to advance change?

- How far are veteran organisations effective providers for veterans' needs, compared with generic public services?
- Will veterans and communities benefit most from services outside, or inside, criminal justice?

Whether in the future there are significantly positive developments in services for veterans will depend on the answers to these broader questions.

### How to find good evidence

Our focus has been on evidence, in terms of defining needs and assessing how far services respond to them adequately. However evidence does not emerge from a vacuum; in many cases its existence depends on there being a reliable organisation that is committed to improving its understanding of needs and scrutinising its operations. Better evidence is associated with good organisational frameworks. Hence there is a 'chicken and egg' problem:

- How can good evidence of need be developed without an effective system of identification of veterans?
- How can useful evidence of outcomes emerge without skilled and knowledgeable staff and well-designed and funded services?

As we shall see there are evidence gaps that we believe are a result of such developmental shortcomings.

### Informing the practical reader

It is vital to consider how the findings can stimulate action to address developmental and evidence gaps. We have thought about how we can distil the findings into something readers can understand and act upon. We have avoided speculation and where we refer to our expectations, these are based on informed sources.

The report deals with currently known developments since the Phillips Review, which provides a benchmark for our study. We have tried to make clear the findings relating to probation, whereas Phillips reviewed the whole criminal justice scene.

As we shall see in Chapter 1 the study attempts to give an overview of developments across the country and to identify consistent patterns where the evidence allows. In sifting the evidence, we have referred to strategic and operational priorities for the whole of probation, rather than one sector in particular.

We hope that readers working in local areas and local projects will be able to see how their own knowledge and experience fit into the broader context that we have sought to provide. Equally, there are organisations with a national remit which should find the patterns informative and useful for their

policy consideration. The regional consultative events which we organised in the Spring of 2016 brought together many representatives with both local and national perspectives. Our survey and the discussions at the events were invaluable in grounding our information collection and we are grateful to those attenders for all their support.

As Chapter 2 will indicate, we realise that expectations about service development may differ, depending on how far veterans' needs are seen as distinctive in type or quantity. In Chapter 3 a number of the challenges to service development are discussed and we set forth some considerations for the future. Using our evidence, all these informed readers will wish to assess for themselves how much progress is being made to develop effective services based on a good understanding of need. The most important responsibility of the report is to enable the network of specialists and decision-makers to judge what can best be done to move forward.

What we have sought to do is provide a clear and up to date picture which dispels doubts and reduces uncertainty as far as possible. The details of the picture are bound by a time period and therefore will start to lose some accuracy as the months go by. However, we are convinced that the outlines of our evidence will be informative for some time to come. They emphasise the amount of work that needs to be done before practitioners and policymakers can have a clear grasp of a positive future agenda for all veterans under probation supervision.

#### **A note on terms**

We have used a number of terms in common usage to describe people who have left the Armed Services. These include 'ex-Armed Services personnel', 'ex-forces', and 'veterans'. The term 'veteran' has the merit of being short and is widely understood in the general literature on the subject. However, as we shall later describe, it can be misleading as operationally it refers to individuals with as little as one day's service. It also raises the question whether people who have served in the armed services of other countries should qualify for inclusion.

#### **A note on method**

In the appendix our methods are described in some detail, showing the steps taken to collect information, the invitations we made to organisations to provide it, and the results over the seven months during which evidence was collected.

## Chapter 1 - Landscape

**What services are currently being provided in the community to ex-service personnel offenders by probation service providers and other organisations which can be accessed by probation service providers (including liaison and diversion schemes, health services, forces charities)?**

Services available to ex-forces personnel supervised in the community are delivered by organisations in the probation, health, charity and private sectors. Despite the aspirations of the Phillips Review, there is currently no consistent, national strategy guiding provision for veterans on probation. Whilst there is national coordination of services for veterans as a whole in the health sector, and national coverage of service charities, the probation landscape is characterised by uneven development, with tailored services ranging from relatively well established, to recently operational, through to no identified existing provision. In April 2016 the National Audit Office cited the results of a mapping exercise by The National Offender Management Service which identified gaps in support for armed forces veterans in some geographic areas. (NAO 2016).

Criminal justice based provision specifically for veterans that we have identified falls into two categories:

1. Services which focus on ex-forces personnel in their transition from custody to the community or who are serving a community sentence only.
2. Services which focus on ex-forces personnel who are involved with criminal justice at any stage.

There are two prominent features which recur in the services we have identified. Firstly, they are mainly about connecting veterans to existing provision in the community. Secondly, delivery by veterans is seen as a fundamental aspect of the support in many of the services.

In terms of veteran specific probation services, we received details about projects in Community Rehabilitation Companies only. However, we understand there are ongoing localised schemes within NPS which pre-date Transforming Rehabilitation, but have been advised that these are legacy projects and as such, their futures are uncertain. Services for veterans on probation supervision only can be further subdivided into two categories. Some services are subcontracted by Community Rehabilitation Companies to external organisations. Others are provided within the Community Rehabilitation Company itself.

### **Veterans' services subcontracted by CRCs**

CRC	Subcontractor	Type of service
Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire	Bold Moves	Mentoring. Ten session programme addressing attitudes, thinking and behaviour and relationships. Motivation programme.
Northumbria	Northern Learning Trust	Mentoring.
South Yorkshire	Inspiring Intelligence	Mentoring.

Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire (Bench) CRC currently operates a model of veterans' provision which involves a subcontractor delivering the service. Bench CRC subcontracts to Bold Moves, a company specialising in interventions focusing on attitudes, thinking, behaviour and family relationships. Bold Moves provide a 12 session (2 individual and 10 group sessions) programme which addresses issues around identity, pre-military and military experiences, masculinity, emotional management and healthy relationships. They also offer a motivation programme and encourage veterans to attend their domestic abuse perpetrator programme.

Psychological assessments at the beginning of veterans' contact with the service help identify behavioural and emotional problems, as well as early life trauma, enabling interventions to be modified to account for these problems, and help support any further external medical support.

Ongoing mentoring is available to support programme attendance and participation, and to help navigate and support with accessing external employment and education services, mental and physical health services, local authority and private housing and accommodation providers and alcohol and substance abuse services. Bold Moves have close working arrangements with the national armed forces charities SSAFA and Royal British Legion.

#### Veterans' services provided within CRCs

CRC	Type of service
Norfolk and Suffolk	Veterans' Coordinator
Hampshire and Isle of Wight	Veterans' Peer Mentoring Scheme
Humberside, Lincolnshire and North Yorkshire	Systematic identification, awareness of needs and signposting to services. 'Informal' arrangement

Norfolk and Suffolk Community Rehabilitation Company operates an internal model of veterans' provision, through a Veterans Co-ordinator position. The Veterans Co-ordinator supports offender managers by:

1. Confirming that an individual has indeed served in the UK Armed Forces and meets the criteria for support from 3rd sector organisations.
2. Identifying appropriate services/support for clients including those within the 3rd sector and to make the referrals accordingly. Services available include, but are not restricted to, support with accommodation, finances, pensions, mental health (including PTSD) physical injuries, substance misuse, alcohol misuse, employment, motivational work, family support, white goods, electrical appliances, and mentoring services.
3. Acting as the point of contact between offender managers and any support commenced with 3rd sector organisations for offenders during the term of their Licence/PSS and/or Order.
4. Attending the Veteran forums held by local custodial establishments, identifying any work commenced/completed whilst in custody feeding back to offender managers where appropriate, with a view to arranging for such work to continue within the community.

Norfolk and Suffolk CRC is also part of the Confederation of Service Charities (COBSEO) Criminal Justice System East of England Cluster, with the hope that this will provide another means of direct contact between the service charities and the CRC.

We identified a number of projects that focus on veterans at any stage of the criminal justice process, and which veterans on probation supervision can access. The Ex-Forces Action Network (E-FAN) is delivered by Cheshire and Greater Manchester Community Rehabilitation Company in conjunction with the Defence Medical Welfare Service and 42<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Brigade. It aims to improve identification of veterans and connect them with existing veterans' services. Referrals can come from the police, courts, the NHS, NPS, local councils, charities, ex-forces associations or substance misuse teams. The process involves:

- Referral to the network.
- Client receives a full assessment within 10 days.
- Within 5 days of the completed assessment an E-FAN key worker creates an individual action plan for each client.
- The key worker helps the client identify their strengths and needs and actively involves them in the assessment, goal setting and the drawing up of their action plan.
- The key worker pulls together access to, and help from, those services that most effectively address the needs of the client.
- Within 12 weeks the client is working with all the key services identified in their action plan.

### Services for veterans in contact with criminal justice at any stage

Service	Area	Type of service
Ex-Forces Action Network	Cheshire and greater Manchester	Comprehensive network of coordinated services for veterans involved with criminal justice system at any stage.
Remember Veterans	Warwickshire and West Mercia	Comprehensive network of coordinated services service for veterans involved with criminal justice system at any stage.
Active Plus	Cornwall, Plymouth, Exeter, Bournemouth and Dorchester	Employability programme.
IOM Cymru STOMP project (Supporting Transition of Military Personnel)	Wales	Comprehensive network of coordinated services for veterans involved with criminal justice system at any stage under governance of Integrated Offender Management Cymru.

There is also a national specialist employability service run by the National Offender Management Service. The NOMS Co-Financing Organisation runs regional contracts with providers of employability services for offenders who find it difficult to engage with mainstream services, and the main contractor in each region has spot purchasing or subcontracting arrangements with armed forces charities to deal with veterans on their caseloads.

### NOMS Co-Financing Organisation providers

Region	Prime provider	Veterans' organisation and contracting relationship
North East	Advanced Personnel Management	Subcontracting to Northern Learning Trust. Spot purchase arrangements or referrals on to Veterans at Ease and Combat Stress and Joining Forces.
Yorkshire	Advanced Personnel Management	Spot purchase arrangement with RBLI.
North West	Career Connect	Spot purchase arrangement with Live at Ease and British Legion.
West Midlands	Ixon	Spot purchase arrangement with RFEA.
East Midlands	Advanced Personnel Management	Spot purchase arrangement with RBLI.

East of England	Shaw Trust	Spot purchase arrangement with RFEA.
London	Shaw Trust	Spot purchase arrangement RFEA.
South East	Ixion	Spot purchase arrangement with RFEA.
South West	Shaw Trust	Spot purchase arrangement with Dame Hannah Trust and Joining Forces.

Since this is a report about probation services specifically, we won't delve too far into the existing services for veterans in general. We will merely outline certain important aspects. In England and Wales 278 service charities provide direct welfare services to serving and ex-service personnel, which those under probation supervision are entitled to access (Poza and Walker, 2014). The probation services we have identified have partnership working arrangements with selected national ex-forces charities to bring specialist support to veterans on their caseloads. Others, in CRCs and the NPS, describe an awareness of the range of charities available in the ex-forces voluntary sector and signpost veterans on their caseloads to relevant services.

Liaison and diversion schemes identify and assess people at any stage of the criminal justice system against set criteria (usually based on priority groups with particular criminogenic needs, such as physical or mental health, or substance misuse issues) and refer to appropriate treatment or support. Identifying needs and signposting to services can affect criminal justice decision making formally or informally, leading to different outcomes at arrest or charge stage or lead to adjustments to sentences (Disley *et al*, 2016). For instance, a community sentence may be deemed safer for someone than a custodial sentence. Liaison and diversion schemes aim to improve health and wellbeing outcomes and reduce reoffending.

A new national model Liaison and Diversion Programme, led by NHS England, was rolled out across ten trial sites in England in April 2014, and the screening tool included a specific question on previous military service. In April 2015, implementation in another 13 sites began, taking coverage to 53 per cent of the country. Following the Treasury's approval of the full business case for Liaison and Diversion Programme in July 2016, the service will be rolled out to cover 75 per cent of England by 2017/18.

As well as these services, the NHS provides funding for 12 veterans' mental health services across England, providing treatment for conditions such as depression, alcohol and substance misuse, anger management and PTSD. They also fund Combat Stress to provide specialist inpatient services for complex PTSD. An NHS funded online counselling service for veterans is provided by the Big White Wall.

In Wales, liaison and diversion schemes are also well established for a number of priority groups, including young offenders, 18-25 year olds, women and substance misusers. Regarding veteran specific processes, all Welsh police forces are encouraged to identify veterans within custody suites and refer to local specialist services for support. This process is particularly well established in North Wales who refer to Change Step, a peer mentoring service. Gwent police are at the time of writing considering a formal diversion scheme model, offering veterans the opportunity to engage with a third sector specialist service voluntarily instead of proceeding to court. In South Wales, front line officers have been trained to ask members of the public if anyone in the household is a veteran, record this and offer a referral to Change Step for support.

Specialist veteran support services and criminal justice organisations also work closely with Veterans' NHS Wales which coordinates Veteran Therapists, (clinicians with interest and experience of military mental health problems,) from each Local Health Board. These veteran therapists can offer treatment themselves and/or refer on to other NHS departments for further treatment and other veteran charities.

### **Explaining the uneven development**

This uneven probation landscape is in part a consequence of institutional divisions between the various bodies responsible for managing offenders in the community, which allow or constrain development. Separate developments are occurring within the National Offender Management Service, the National Probation Service and the new Community Rehabilitation Companies. The National Probation Service is currently developing a national approach to veterans including guidance for Offender Managers to complement the NOMS guidance on how practitioners should work with veterans in custody and on probation (awaiting publication). Ownership of Community Rehabilitation Companies was only transferred to the private providers in February 2015, and supply chains are either still not finalised or in their infancy. So far there are a number of Project and overall Veterans' Leads at a national level in NOMS and the NPS and we also found a number of senior managers in CRCs whose remit explicitly included veterans.

It is also clear, as will be explored in the second chapter, that evidence around the needs of veterans under probation supervision is still not robust enough to warrant designing specific services. It follows that evidence of the effectiveness of services for veterans is also patchy. Based on the current evidence, a needs profile which is broadly similar to the rest of the probation caseload also begs the question whether tailored services are required at all. The new NPS Equality Information Form includes a question on service history, but this was only implemented in July 2016, and will take some time to start seeing useful data emerge from this.

We have identified three factors driving the development of veteran specific services currently in existence. Firstly, the more established services, like the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Veterans Peer Mentoring Project, came about on the initiative of local individuals or organisations with a specialist interest in and commitment to this group. Secondly, innovation depends on a commitment high up in the parent companies of CRCs to developing services for veterans, with the shape of services in CRCs being left to local discretion. Thirdly, the last round of Covenant funding, the £10 million a year fund set aside for services for veterans, included ex-forces personnel in the criminal justice system as one of its priority streams. This has allowed a number of large-scale, experimental services to develop, albeit with a focus on veterans involved with criminal justice at any point rather than just probation. This includes the £390,200 grant for National Probation Service in Wales to develop its SToMP project (Supporting Transition of Military Personnel) on behalf of Integrated Offender Management (IOM) Cymru. This project is providing strategic coordination of services to veterans involved in the criminal justice system across Wales; encouraging identification, recording and signposting of veterans to specialist services at all stages of the criminal justice ‘journey’.

Service development could potentially be driven by numbers of veterans on caseloads. A study by the Defence Analytical Services Agency (2010) estimated veteran caseload volumes in Probation Trusts before the Transforming Rehabilitation reforms. Four of the services we identified were in the top ten former Probation Trust areas in term of veteran caseloads (see Box One in the chapter on needs). Adding up the numbers of veterans on the caseloads of the four Probation Trusts that were to become Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire CRC pushes it into the top ten too, bringing the total to five CRC areas. However, we would need to find more evidence of how veterans’ services were developed in these areas to be sure of this interpretation.

#### **How is provision for ex-service personnel offenders funded? And how sustainable is that funding?**

Funding sources for the provision available to veterans on probation supervision reflect the disparate nature of the services themselves. For the three services subcontracted by CRCs under Transforming Rehabilitation, recommended minimum contract terms for tier 2 and tier 3 providers are three years. Northern Learning Trust confirmed that their contract with Northumbria CRC to provide a Veterans’ mentoring service lasts three years beginning in June 2015. Veterans services provided within CRCs have less formal assurances about continuation of funding. It is expected, for example, that Hampshire and Isle of Wight Community Rehabilitation Company will continue to fund the Veterans’ Peer Mentoring Scheme into the future, based on informal assurances.

The projects we identified for veterans in contact with the criminal justice system at any stage are funded through the Covenant Fund. These are block grants, lasting two years. Although Covenant grants are awarded every year, the priority streams change. Veterans involved with the criminal justice system were a priority in the most recent round of awards. There is therefore no guarantee

that these services will be maintained beyond the duration of this round of funding. However, the Remember Veterans Project in Warwickshire and West Mercia aims to embed change in the strategy, delivery and practice of the organisations of the criminal justice system so that the project does not need to be maintained as a separate entity. The project's legacy is expected to include the processes for data collection and knowledge exchange; training materials and programmes; and improved partnership working through capacity building initiatives. The SToMP project in Wales is similarly aiming to embed improvements over the two year duration of the project.

The current NOMS Co-Financing Organisation programme runs to 2020. However, most of the charities providing employability services to veterans through this programme have spot purchasing arrangements with the main contractors, implying funding is not necessarily consistent. That it is financed by the European Social Fund also calls into question its sustainability due to the recent vote to leave the European Union.

The largest service charities providing for the various types of need are well resourced and funding over the last three years has been stable. Whilst probation services seem willing to refer or signpost to service charities, the sustainability of this arrangement should be reassessed, particularly if referrals are expected to increase as the services become embedded and identification improves.

The initial rollout of the national model of liaison and diversion services in England received funding of £25 million. After the Treasury approved the full business case in July 2016, the services received a further £12 million.

NHS England provides 12 mental health services specifically for veterans. It has a £1.8 million per year baseline funding every year until 2019/20. Contracts for most of these services are due to expire in September 2016, and a user consultation ran earlier in 2016 to inform how services would be recommissioned. NHS England's funding commitment to 2020 also covers online mental health support for veterans through the Big White Wall. NHS England pays £3.2 million a year for Combat Stress to provide specialised inpatient services for complex PTSD.

Clearly, service charities and health services for veterans are far better and more systematically funded than provision for veterans on probation supervision.

## Chapter 2 – Needs and provision

**How does this provision compare to the known needs of ex-service personnel offenders? How much of the needs are met by probation service provision and how much by other organisations?**

### **Size and profile of population**

As others have found, it is not currently possible to comprehensively establish the number of ex-forces individuals subject to probation supervision as this information is not routinely asked about, recorded and collated by probation services. It is possible to estimate the proportion of the probation caseload that are ex-forces using various surveys and studies.

The most reliable source estimates 5,860 ex-service personnel were subject to probation supervision in England and Wales on the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2009. This equates to 3.4 per cent of all those subject to probation supervision (DASA, 2010). This figure is based on a data matching study between a Ministry of Defence database of armed forces leavers and 35 Probation Trusts databases.

Whilst this research has produced the most reliable estimate to date it has a number of limitations:

- It is a ‘snapshot’ referring to one day of the probation caseload several years ago, hence may not represent the current probation caseload more broadly.
- Reservists were not included.
- It is subject to false positives (for example data was matched in cases where there was incomplete data about first names and the same details such as date of birth) and missed positives (for example those who changed surnames after they left the forces and women changing their surname after marriage would be missed).

Another study estimates five per cent of the probation caseload are ex-service personnel (Kelly, 2014). This study has the benefit of including individuals subject to probation supervision over a year period (2009 – 2010) rather than one day. However it is a much smaller sample size (151 individuals out of 2,919 survey respondents), is based on self-reported veteran status, and includes only those subject to community orders.

While ex-forces personnel are not overrepresented in the probation caseload, there is evidence that they are overrepresented in relation to particular offence convictions (DASA, 2010), namely, violence against the person, sexual offences, robbery and the category ‘other summary offences’. A more detailed investigation of 141 veterans’ convictions in one probation area’s caseload also found violence and sexual offence convictions to be prevalent (Macdonald, 2014). After assessment, violence towards partners was the most frequent type of violence conviction. The vast majority of sexual offending involved child victims and longer serving military personnel (serving four or more years) perpetrators. As this author points out, this is a subject worthy of further exploration (Macdonald, 2014). Some of the key demographic characteristics of the ex-forces population subject

to probation supervision using data from the previously mentioned DASA study are outlined in Box One.

### **Box One: Summary of key characteristics (DASA, 2010)**

n= 5,860

#### **Demographics**

- Approximately half aged 35 or over
- 99% male
- 81% ex-army, 12 % ex-Naval service, 7% ex-RAF
- 1% recorded as officers
- 27% of current supervision began within five years of leaving the armed forces

#### **Offence type**

- Nearly a third (31%) convicted for 'other' summary offences (includes wide range of offences such as criminal damage and trespass)
- Next most common convictions were for violence against the person (19%) and summary motoring offences 11%

#### **Geographic spread**

Ten Probation Trust areas with the greatest number of ex-service personnel in caseload:

1. Wales (510)
2. Staffordshire and the West Midlands (362)
3. Greater Manchester (348)
4. London (301)
5. Durham Tees Valley (284)
6. Lancashire (283)
7. West Yorkshire (271)
8. Northumbria (240)
9. Merseyside (226)
10. Hampshire (189)

Data from the Offender Management Community Cohort Study (OMCCS) suggests the ex-forces population subject to probation supervision is predominately white (Kelly, 2014, found 96% of the ex-service personnel subject to probation supervision were white, compared to 87% of the general probation population). There is no clear evidence to date about the presence in the caseload of veterans of armed services other than the UK's. Should indications emerge of their presence, new research would be informative because of the likelihood that they might have particular needs. As it

stands, the Armed Services Covenant extends only to UK armed service veterans. There could be a case for reciprocal agreements with other countries.

While ex-forces personnel are not overrepresented in the probation caseload, the systematic approach to identifying veterans, used by the data matching survey, shows that to date they have been under-identified. For example, a Probation Inspectorate report on violent offending found only eight of the 437 casefiles they looked at were identified as having an ex-forces background (1.8 per cent) (HMIP, 2014). Given the more robust approach of the DASA study, it seems likely this low figure is in part a reflection of the unsystematic approach to identifying veterans in the probation caseload. Knowledge about the numbers of ex-forces personnel subject to probation supervision will be clarified in the future. Last year the Ministry of Justice announced probationees will be routinely asked about their military experience (Ministry of Justice, 2015) and in July 2016 a new system was implemented.

### **Needs in comparison to the overall probation caseload**

Knowledge about the needs of ex-service personnel subject to probation supervision is far from comprehensive. Studies produced as part of the Phillips Review looked at veteran probation supervisees (Kelly, 2014 Analysis from Offender Management Community Cohort Study, based on 151 identified military veterans in a survey of nearly 3,000) and reviewed evidence about ex-service personnel in the criminal justice system generally (Lyne and Packham, 2014.). The Kelly study only refers to those subject to a community order between October 2009 and December 2010 who self-identified as having served in the military. The Lyne and Packham evidence review looked at the standard needs of ex-forces personnel in the criminal justice system generally. Most of the sources refer to prison and general welfare needs, only three references in the evidence review being specific to probation. Hence the needs it identifies are not always disaggregated to the probation caseload in particular.

Both these sources suggest ex-service personnel appear to have similar or lower levels of need in areas such as mental and physical health, drug misuse and employment compared to the general criminal justice population (Kelly, 2014 and Lynne and Packham, 2014). An exception to this was the category 'homeless / living in temporary accommodation'. Twelve per cent of military veteran respondents' in the Kelly study identified as being homeless or living in temporary accommodation compared to five per cent of non-veteran respondents. Ex-service personnel subject to community orders were also found no more likely to reoffend within a year from the start of their community order than those who have not served in the military (Kelly, 2014).

On the surface of it, this evidence appears to allay previous fears. It suggests veterans are not:

- Overrepresented in the probation caseload.
- In obviously greater need compared to the general criminal justice population.

However, there are reasons to be cautious about this interpretation. Firstly, these studies tell us something about the standard probation recognition of needs. If there is anything particular about the ex-forces community outside this standard set of needs it would be missed. For example, information about post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is not routinely collected across the probation caseload. Secondly, they look at the ex-forces population subject to probation supervision as a whole, usually applying the very broad definition of one day of military service. The wider literature about the ex-forces community suggests the significance and impact of military experience and other factors varies a great deal between individuals. Accounting for ex-forces as a homogenous group would not identify any subsets of specific or greater need within the general population. Thirdly, using the criminal justice population as a reference point for need is inviting comparison to a population known to face typically poor material circumstances, low attainment and multiple needs. In stating veterans are doing 'no worse' than this it also suggests these veterans are doing no better. This is a matter for concern in itself.

### **Specific needs**

To address this question about potential specific needs within the ex-forces caseload requires examining evidence about who, typically, these men are. What are their pathways to problematic behaviours, criminal conviction and probation supervision? How does this relate to military service? In other words, rather than attempting simply to describe this population, we move on to consider studies that aim to explain their characteristics and their presence in the criminal justice system.

Pathways to criminal convictions present important clues for assessing and working with need in the probation caseload. For ex-service personnel, exploring these pathways can raise controversy as it necessarily calls into question the role of military service itself in influencing behaviour, particularly with regard to violence.

There is ongoing discussion in the literature regarding how military service and criminal justice system contact may or may not be linked. The four main theories which may go some way to explain military veterans contact with the criminal justice system are summarised in Box Two.

### Box Two: Summary of common explanations for military veterans' contact with the criminal justice system

1. Military cultural spillover. This includes heavy alcohol use, hyper masculinity, the use of violence to resolve conflict, and a reluctance to seek help (McGarry et al, 2015).
2. Problems transitioning to civilian life. Some veterans return to poor socio-economic circumstances. Some struggle with the loss of routine and reference points that military life provided. Military service can disrupt key life course trajectories such as intimate relationships, finding stable employment, and housing (Poza and Walker, 2014). Problems may be exacerbated by wider social factors, for example, the strength of the economy and job opportunities at the time civilian integration is taking place (Bouffard, 2005).
3. Impairment as a result of combat situations. This includes physical and mental health problems such as traumatic brain injury (Murphy et al, 2015), PTSD, links between combat and problematic alcohol use, anxiety and depression, and a propensity for violence (MacManus et al, 2015).
4. Military as a protective factor. The armed services attracts some people with difficult childhoods and a pre-military career propensity for offending. Those with a criminal record are not prevented from enlisting (Phillips, 2014).

Establishing evidence about the relative contribution of these factors to problematic behaviour has been hampered by how intractable these factors are. For example, in relation to veteran violence, is it that individuals with a propensity for violence are more attracted to the military or that violence experienced during the military spills over into civilian life (Bouffard, 2005)? The broader significance particular studies provide is limited by the historic specificity of particular periods of military enlistment in the last fifty years.

Bearing this in mind, a recent systematic review and meta-analysis of risk factors in violence amongst UK veterans of active deployment in Iraq and Afghanistan is particularly relevant to questions about need in the current UK probation workload (MacManus et al, 2015). This work confirms violent behaviour to be prevalent amongst this group of military veterans. Four significant risk factors for violent behaviour identified were:

- Exposure to combat.
- Post-deployment mental health problems.
- Alcohol misuse
- Significant childhood adversity and pre-deployment violence (MacManus et al, 2015).

The latter suggests an agenda of needs, particularly mental health needs, that would not simply be addressed by looking at an individual's offending in isolation.

Qualitative research with ex-forces in the criminal justice system similarly suggests an interplay between the explanations outlined in Box Two. Rather than confirming one particular explanation, this research identifies factors influencing individuals' offending pre-, during and post-military service (for example see Wainwright, 2016 and Murray, 2014).

However, when it comes to which ex-forces face the greatest ongoing disadvantage, it is early service leavers (those who leave before the armed forces before completing three to four and a half years minimum service contracts) that have the poorest life outcomes, rather than the long serving (Poza and Walker, 2014). It is important to point out that because an individual is identified as ex-forces does not mean their needs are defined by their military service.

The risk factors identified in the MacManus research, and evidence about which service leavers face the greatest ongoing disadvantage, signal the diversity of what is going on. 'Ex-forces' is a container for a wide variety of issues. And in reference to probation needs, it is a subject about which there remains much unpacking to do.

### **Implications for provision**

There is a lack of studies about how probation works with these needs (exceptions are Macdonald, 2014 and Murray, 2014). In the previous chapter the extent of co-working between probation and other organisations was outlined, but evidence about the relevance and effectiveness of current provision is limited (see Chapter 3 for more discussion). Certainly the needs identified here including alcohol misuse, violence, mental health, general welfare, employment and education support, appear well recognised by service provision. However it is unclear how effective these interventions are in meeting these needs. When requested no probation organisation or veterans' charity shared outcomes data with us about their ex-forces probation supervisees' caseload. It is also unclear how interventions for veterans differ from standard services and indeed, if they need to be different at all. Two significant issues raised in the literature regarding this are:

- 1. Whether the standard model of probation is limited in how far it can address veteran specific need.**

A suggested limitation of probation attempting to provide ex-forces support in-house rather than signposting on is that they lack regular training, enthusiasm, time and resources (Murray, 2014). In practice Murray found an in-house veteran probation intervention improved identification of veterans but appeared similar to standard probation work rather than tailored to specific ex-forces need. For example, working with supervisees focused on 'how

their week has been' rather than bringing an understanding of supervisees' prior experiences of combat (Murray, 2014).

**2. Whether it is helpful for interventions to be delivered by military veterans.**

There are questions about the benefits and potential drawbacks of this approach in the provision of support to veterans generally (see Cronin, 2013 and Macdonald, 2014). Appropriate training and support has been suggested by some as more important than the military background of those providing support (Macdonald, 2014).

**Recommendations for the future**

Evidence about need could inform improved assessments of risk as well as work to reduce the future risk of harm. In this context being a veteran should be best understood as a starting point for disentangling who these individuals are. This includes what their military experiences have been and whether this has an ongoing impact on their life outcomes. For example, by asking about length of service, early service leavers – who are likely to face poorer outcomes - could be identified for additional support. Similarly screening questions related to alcohol use and combat experience could be used.

Former armed forces personnel's contact with the criminal justice system has been the subject of increased interest and attention over the last few years. This work largely attempted to gauge the size and characteristics of the ex-service personnel population in the criminal justice system. Given the lack of basic information about this population routinely collected prior to the Phillips Review, this focus is understandable. While this work fulfils an important function, an understanding of who these (mostly men) are is still to be addressed, the pathways that led them into probation supervision and how this relates to their military service. We found limited examples of research in this vein. Future qualitative research could better understand the specific needs of veterans and how probation does and can intervene to meet these needs.

## Chapter 3 – Service development challenges

**How are probation service providers monitoring the impact of these services and what evidence is there that they are effectively meeting the needs of ex-service personnel offenders? What measures of effectiveness of existing practice might be required to secure investment? Are other measures along with reducing reoffending needed to inform service commissioning and provision?**

We received little information about how effectively services for veterans on probation supervision are meeting needs. This is hardly surprising since most of the services have only recently become operational, with CRCs being transferred to private ownership in February 2015, and contracts for services identified going live later that year.

There are three main issues affecting how well the impact of services can be measured, outlined below.

### **Veterans are still under-identified on probation caseloads**

Under-identification is an ongoing problem. A few pieces of anecdotal evidence we have received suggest numbers of identified veterans on CRC caseloads are low. It will be difficult to draw conclusions about how effective services are in achieving outcomes with this group unless accurate numbers begin to be identified. The mandatory question about military service included in the new NPS Equality Information Monitoring form, implemented in July, should greatly improve identification. However, it will still be some time before outcomes for those identified through the new form can be measured.

### **Evidence on the needs of veterans on probation is still unclear**

As Chapter 2 explained, there are a number of issues around the current evidence about needs of veterans on probation supervision. The evidence on needs and the outcomes services are being measured against are based on the standard probation recognition of needs. Important needs falling outside of this may not be identified or addressed. Military veterans on probation supervision are also treated as one homogenous group. But this group probably contains many subsets of people with diverse needs profiles and experiences. Without a more sophisticated understanding of the specific needs of these subgroups, and a broader scope of the types of needs that may be important to consider when working with veterans on probation supervision, we cannot be sure of what outcomes, or indeed what practices, are appropriate for this group.

Some services we identified in this study, like Bold Moves' Grey Man project, did demonstrate a greater awareness of some of these issues, such as screening for PTSD and a willingness to explore with veterans if and how military experience related to their offending.

### **Impact has to be deemed to be attributable to a veteran specific service**

We will explore this in greater detail in the section on how effectiveness should be defined for this group, but it needs a little discussion here. It is not enough to simply measure outcomes for veterans who have engaged with the service that is being evaluated. Even if accurate numbers of veterans were identified on probation caseloads and needs were comprehensively understood, it would still be necessary to find some way of attributing any change in outcomes to that specific service, rather than to other factors. When measuring impact, some attempt must be made to compare outcomes for the group who received the service, against a similar group who did not. According to the Scientific Methods Scale officially approved for use in probation studies, this can range from comparing predictions of what the outcomes may have been for the treatment group without the intervention with the actual outcomes for the group after engaging with a service, through to a full scale randomised control trial. The closer to a randomised control trial you go up the scale, the more robust the results are deemed to be.

We received two evaluative studies, based on a Social Return on Investment methodology which attempts to quantify, monetarily, the wider social benefits of a service or intervention (Aeron-Thomas et al, 2004). The SROI report for the Veterans' Contact Point in Nuneaton demonstrated positive effects on outcomes, but they are generic rather than specific to probation (Bates and Yentumi-Ofori, 2013). The results are therefore not particularly relevant to this study. The evaluation of Northern Learning Trust's Veterans Employability Skills Project (now a more comprehensive mentoring project) is more promising in terms of demonstrating its effectiveness in addressing the needs of veterans on probation supervision in particular (Edwards, 2014). Good progress on a number of outcomes pertinent to this group were identified, and the methodology makes some attempt to estimate the independent contribution the service made to the total benefit when calculating the social return figure. Northern Learning Trust's Veterans' Employment Skills Project was found to deliver £10.79 in social impact for every £1 spent.

SROI methodologies use a number of criteria to assess the impact of an intervention on outcomes. These are: deadweight (how much of the outcome would have occurred anyway); displacement (how much the outcome displaced other outcomes); and attribution (how much of the outcome was caused by other factors). In the Cabinet Office guide to SROI, it suggests a number of different ways of assessing these criteria (Office of the Third Sector, 2009). Most of these are not suitable ways of producing robust assessments of how effective an intervention is. For instance, rather than comparisons with a similar control group that receives no intervention, treatment groups are compared with estimations of what would have happened had there been no intervention. This estimation is often based just on stakeholders' subjective assessments of the effects of the intervention. Similarly, estimations of the contribution of other services are made, rather than

controlling for their effects systematically. As we will explain further in relation to the question about effective practice, systematic approaches clearly linking outcomes to antecedents through comparison with a similar control group which receives no intervention are recommended in order to assess independent effects of services. However, the use of outcomes which are much broader in scope than the narrow conception used in probation is desirable. For a start, this could include a set of outcomes based on some of the complex needs we identified in Chapter Two. Both studies draw attention to an issue which could represent a useful indicator to measure services against. Both used referrals to other relevant services as an output or outcome measure. Given that linking veterans with existing provision is a key feature of the services identified in our profiling work, how well this is achieved should be a key measurement of success, at least provisionally while needs are explored in greater depth.

Social Return on Investment (SROI) methodologies not only attempt to give an indication of the effectiveness of an intervention, they also assess its efficiency, taking account of externalities. Before undertaking an SROI, consideration must be given to whether the funder prioritises these externalities. For instance, there are questions around whether commercial funders would consider a high social return on investment as a legitimate reason to invest if their input is greater than the financial gains they make per unit cost.

**Are the services available being used to their full potential? If not, what are the barriers to accessing relevant provision?**

That ex-services personnel have not been systematically identified in the probation caseload to date is a well-recognised barrier to accessing support for this group. Similarly, the evaluation of the national model of the Liaison and Diversion pilots in England identified only 283 veterans out of 22,500 cases, with around 5,500 cases having data on veteran status that was either missing or unknown. This raises questions about how well the mandatory screening question included in the NPS equality monitoring form will improve identification.

As Chapter 2 outlines, our current understanding of the needs of veterans on probation is based on standard probation-related needs. Screening tools which do not identify needs falling outside of these, or do not properly explore the range of potential needs and how they interact, could be preventing access to an expansive and well-funded range of services for veterans in the health and forces charity sectors.

The services we identified designed for veterans on probation supervision or who are involved in the criminal justice system more generally are mainly about connecting veterans to the extensive provision already available. This coordination of services suggests, at least theoretically, that, depending on how effective identification processes are, barriers to provision created by a landscape

that was previously disparate and disconnected in relation to veterans on probation supervision, are being rolled back. Duplication of intervention may also be minimised.

The table below gives, for each issue, the number of attendees from probation services at our three regional events who confirmed that it was a barrier to veterans accessing support services. To put it in perspective, 19 grids were returned by probation employees out of 25 who attended (see Appendix A). Only four of these people did not tick any of the boxes identifying possible barriers to access, indicating that the majority identified at least one of these issues as preventing veterans accessing support.

Lack of information	12
Lack of evidence of effectiveness	8
Support frowned upon by veterans	5
Lack of funding	7
Veterans don't want military specific interventions	2
Veterans conceal service history due to shame over conviction	9

Other barriers raised were:

- Identification and provision depends on whether prisons run a Veterans in Custody Support (VICS) programme. Sex offenders cannot get veteran specific housing. Information sharing in prison and probation services is poor.
- Veterans do not want veteran specific intervention because military service was many years ago and so it is not considered an 'active' need.
- The limited research that exists suggests this group is reluctant to seek help even when specialist interventions are available.
- Upheaval produced by the probation service split necessitates constant refresher briefings about a veteran scheme for offender managers and other key workers.
- Lack of training on military culture and veteran awareness in community services produces barriers to help-seeking by veterans.

### **To what extent are existing services developed and operated in collaboration with ex-service personnel service users?**

Although five of the criminal justice focused veteran services we identified confirmed that users were involved in design or development, we received little in the way of details about what this entailed. The little information we did receive suggests it involves consultative exercises and client feedback. Mental health services for veterans seem to have a more established and rigorous process for involving service users in programme development, with a national online consultation about the existing 12 services completed in 2016.

Evidence of delivery or operation by service users was not immediately apparent, but delivery or operation by general veterans was a very common theme in the projects we identified. The Ex-Forces Action Network delivered in Cheshire and Greater Manchester can support service users to become peer mentors, and some have the opportunity to design Community Impact Projects. The veterans mentoring project delivered by Inspiring Intelligence for South Yorkshire CRC is operated by people who have been convicted of offending in the past, but we were unable to glean whether they are also veterans because we could not make contact with the community interest company.

In the absence of robust evidence around needs and effective practice for veterans on probation supervision, development and delivery by service users could offer a pragmatic way of advancing services whilst the evidence base is improved. There has been recent investment in projects to amplify the voices of users more widely in criminal justice: <http://www.socialbusinesstrust.org/news/user-voice-support/>

In addition to legitimating and articulating the voices of veteran service users, there is work to be done in supporting the creation of new projects that reflect those views.

**What guidance or training for probation workers exists on good practice in working with ex-service personnel offenders in the community? What is missing from existing guidance and can it be adapted for probation?**

The current criminal justice based guidance for working with veterans, ‘A guide to working with veterans in custody’ (James, 2010), was published in 2010, before needs analyses included in the Philips Review had been carried out. Updated NOMS guidance, ‘Better outcomes for ex-armed service personnel’ covering advice on how to deal with veterans in custody and in the community, was due to be published early in March 2016, but is still awaiting release. As Chapter 2 of this report demonstrates, any existing or forthcoming guidance will be based on, at best, a patchy understanding of the needs of veterans in probation. Whilst we have a broad understanding of some of the possible standard probation-recognised needs that veterans may present with, needs falling out of this scope, as well as evidence about effective ways of addressing veterans’ needs in total, are not available to be included in any guidance.

The 2010 guidance, although it is outdated, does have some useful practical relevance. It offers practitioners some important pointers about how veterans in general might think, what they might have experienced, and how military culture may have shaped their identity, behaviour and values. Guidance about how to empathise with and relate to veterans in this way may be productive when applied to people engaging with veterans on probation. One of the authors of the guidance, Nick

Wood, also delivers military culture awareness-raising training days for health and social care professionals which should be taken advantage of by probation employees. The SToMP project in Wales has utilised this training for its NPS, CRC, prison and police force veteran champions and feedback has been positive. Both the guidance and the training raise awareness of the types of existing provision available to veterans in the health and voluntary sector.

Probably the most important issue raised in Wood's training and in the guidance, and it's a point which we again reiterate, is that the evidence base is still poor. Improved, accurate identification of veterans on probation supervision is the essential prerequisite to better understand needs and how to address them effectively, which can then inform appropriate guidance. Probation services should monitor the impact of the new Equality Information Form implemented by NPS in July 2016.

**How should 'effective practice' be defined for this group given the inevitable small sample sizes for any monitoring or evaluation? What would be required to develop the evidence base incrementally, and what can the other parts of this Project do to facilitate that?**

In a systematic evaluation it should be possible to link an outcome to its antecedents in a clear cut manner. This would involve some kind of comparison to a similar group who do not experience the intervention. From a systematic evaluation information about effective practice can be gleaned. This information can be applied to design services and improve practice outcomes.

In probation a five level scale of scientific methods has been used to determine how robust evaluation findings are deemed to be (Merrington and Stanley, 2007). It is not judged to be possible to draw robust conclusions about effective practice unless research reaches point four or five on this scale, where comparison groups are either matched selectively or cases are randomly assigned to treatment and control groups. These types of evaluations are not well suited to programmes in the early stages of implementation and development, where services are likely to be adjusted as practical obstacles are encountered in application (Rossi and Freeman, 1993). As such, most of the services we have identified here are not amenable to these kinds of systematic evaluation of outcomes.

When such evaluations are undertaken, power analyses should be conducted to determine appropriate sample sizes. The calculation of sample sizes would depend on the outcomes intended. Once the complexity of needs is better understood, studies should be designed to study intermediate outcomes that affect risk of reconviction. The smaller the expected change in outcome, the larger the sample size required to produce reliable results. This points to the need to develop a national sample base of veterans to ensure large enough sample sizes for future effectiveness studies. Veterans' boost samples should always be included in standard probation studies designed to show the effects of generic programmes on reconviction.

Other conditions need to be satisfied before systematic approaches to evaluation can be applied. A relatively comprehensive understanding of the nature and scale of the problem is required before a programme can be designed to address it. Chapter 2 of this report demonstrated some of the issues with the current evidence base, particularly around the broad definition of a veteran used and the huge variation in needs profiles it encapsulates. Is the target group for a specialised intervention really ‘veterans on probation supervision’? Should we actually be focusing tailored interventions on veterans with traumatic pre-military histories, experience of combat and post-service mental health and alcohol problems? Do other groups of veterans on probation supervision have needs profiles similar to the rest of the caseload and so should be processed accordingly? Without a deeper understanding of the nature and extent of the problem, the goals of veteran services cannot be clearly identified, and the objectives precisely defined. Appropriate criteria to measure effectiveness of the service therefore cannot be accurately specified.

Similarly, without a comprehensive understanding of the needs of the population, and the variation within it, a logical schema linking the conceptualisation of the problem, inputs, outputs and outcomes cannot be devised. A credible impact model essentially provides the theoretical framework that helps explain why positive change occurs. Models have become more sophisticated as research has come to focus on different aspects of change such as social capital and opportunities, as well as the user’s self-concept, as they manifest themselves over periods of time (McNeill 2009).

A thoroughly developed impact model also provides a useful intermediary blueprint for evaluating why change did not occur. For instance, positive changes in outcomes for veterans could be predicated on programme completion, or committed and properly qualified staff who relate well to the users. If these kinds of inputs and outputs are monitored along the way, any deficiencies can help explain no, or less than expected, positive change in outcomes. Delivery mechanisms can then be adjusted. These kinds of issues were encountered in Murray’s study of the Veterans in Custody Support programme in Cheshire, where staff and client buy-in were affected by resistance to the definition of veterans as having served for ‘one day employed’.

We reiterate the point again that efforts should be focused on developing a more sophisticated understanding of the specific needs of veterans on probation, perhaps through qualitative studies exploring longer term issues and the role of military service in their involvement with the criminal justice system. Some useful information about programme efficacy could come from the new NPS Equality Monitoring form. In areas with no veteran specific provision, outcomes for veterans could be compared against those of the normal probation caseload, matched on certain background characteristics to see if, across a range of indicators, veterans as a whole fare any worse from standard probation programmes and practice. This could help determine if veteran specific services are required for the whole group in the first place. Outcomes for veterans in areas where there are veteran specific services could be matched against the normal probation caseload to identify any

differences in outcomes, but results should be interpreted with caution since the key veteran status will not be shared between the two groups. Empirical work should also examine the benefits of service delivery by veterans. Again, does the impact model imply better relationships with the user because the service is veteran delivered, or because it involves giving a greater range or quality of support than is otherwise available? In an investigation of the impact model, a comparison of benefits could be achieved by assigning veterans to either, say, a veteran delivered mentoring service, or a mentoring service delivered by non-veterans, and comparing outcomes for the two groups.

In the long term the effectiveness of services should be measured using the same methods and comparative benchmarks as for probation supervisees as a whole (Merrington and Stanley, 2007). However, the comparative weight given to analysis and measurement, compared with understanding context, process and mechanism, is always a matter of judgement and debate. Because measurement depends on stable parameters, such arguments will intensify at times when probation itself is undergoing change. In the medium term this may come to mean more studies using level three standards, while in the short term the critical objective should be better qualitative understanding and therefore an appreciation of the range of outcomes arising from the multiple interactions between criminal justice, service provision and users. It may mean that configurations of need should be identified in order to design new 'bundles' of services that increase their relevance and impact. Hence the evidence base will be strengthened in more than one way.

It will be important for national research and development initiatives to be shaped and supported by grassroots practitioners. In order to build the evidence base, members of the Probation Institute's Veterans' Network could encourage service users to articulate their needs with a view to informing veterans' service managers. Network members could also begin reporting the numbers of veterans identified on their caseloads, allowing a national veteran sample base, large enough to draw upon for systematic evaluations, to be developed.

## Chapter 4 –Overview of findings

Our report has been able to address a number of key questions about the state of services and support for armed forces veterans and about the evidence base which should underpin their development. These final comments are intended to identify key themes that have emerged and to indicate their significance for the future.

### **After Phillips**

A key finding is that there remains much work to be done before the coherent developments foreshadowed by the Phillips Review will have been put in place. The proper identification of armed services veterans has only recently begun and the information that this will produce will not appear for some time.

### **Landscape**

The development of services remains patchy and there is some way to go before consistent coordination is achieved. In part it seems that services are in effect waiting on the establishment of a fully worked out national strategy. Some services remain legacies of the period before Transforming Rehabilitation; some have been created in its aftermath as part of an evolving market, in which notable initiatives have been started but not in a consistent fashion. Nor are the outcomes of current services as clear-cut as we would like to see. While the findings suggest there is potential for collaboration among probation, health services and the armed services charities, the future role and organisation of interconnecting support services is an important dimension for renewed strategic development.

### **Specific services**

The consequences of military service can include experiences, both positive and negative, that affect civilian adjustment. Our review indicates that understanding such experiences and their relevance to veterans' life problems is key to a productive future. Hence the roles of armed service veterans and armed service charities in communication and providing support bear considerable examination. However we know too little about how to specify this interface of communication and support so that veterans under probation supervision can be properly listened to and supported. More evidence of service users' participation in service design would be likely to follow, if the value of listening and understanding was properly recognised by influential decision-makers.

### **Evidence base**

Our review of the evidence base has shown that many questions are left to be answered, and much will depend on the extent to which improvements in identification of veterans make possible new comparative studies. It will be imperative to undertake such comparative studies if the Armed Services

Covenant is to be upheld. Probation services will be expected to confirm that veterans have, at the very least, not been disadvantaged as a result of their service. A crucial focus of new research should be on clarifying the needs of veterans: we expect that these may shed light on the impact of, for example, dislocating transitions into civilian life and unmet psychological needs that surface later in life. Beyond this, it is possible to envisage more complex studies and trials of new project designs which have strongly encouraging signs that they will be successful.

### **Developing a better future for veterans under probation supervision**

A new horizon for improved and extended services for veterans must include a strategic vision that combines research and development with a plan for funding services and support. It is crucial that knowledge and service development advance together. If a good evidence base is to be created that can inform investment, it is necessary for a clear needs assessment programme to be commissioned using the emerging identification data. Once these needs are better understood it will be possible to explore service designs that look more relevant and to develop a number of projects that are more ambitious than most of the existing services and to assess their impact. The funding for such 'horizon-stretching' work must then combine research and development strands.

It would be quicker, but too easy, to simply commission projects and then evaluate them; instead the knowledge base must be expanded so that future work is fully supported by a growing understanding of need and service impact. There are no short-cuts to the excellent standards that veterans should expect from probation services and their partners, specifically no less than the rest of the caseload.

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## Appendix A

### Audit strategy

#### Stage one – January to April 2016

Key contacts in NOMS, the National Probation Service, Community Rehabilitation Companies, the voluntary sector and health services were identified and contacted using the Probation Institute's network. Contacts included CRC Chief Executives and people with veterans' responsibility, veterans' leads in NOMS, NPS Division Directors and Deputy Directors, and project leads and senior representatives in charities and projects specifically concerned with veterans in the criminal justice system. The contact list contained around 130 people.

Events in Bristol, London and Leeds were publicised through email invitations to contacts on this list as well as through our normal communications output and networks. 83 people in total attended our events. See the table below for a breakdown by agency.

	Bristol	London	Leeds	Total
<b>NOMS</b>	1	2	0	3
<b>NPS</b>	1	3	8	12
<b>CRC</b>	4	5	1	10
<b>Health</b>	1	2	5	8
<b>Vol. Sector</b>	8	6	8	22
<b>Other</b>	9	7	12	28
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>83</b>

Information was collected from attendees at the event using an information collection grid. It sought to identify documents in organisations that contained the information required to answer the profiling questions. It also asked for contact details to establish further contact afterwards, whether through the participant or through other key information holders in their organisation.

Some questions in the grid asked for information directly, rather than relying on documentation. Grids were designed for each type of organisation, modified to account for their position in the commissioning process or cycle. Questions were derived from a commissioning cycle model which provided a framework for assessing how developed services were.

The grids had three sections. The first contained questions around service development (questions on strategy, funding, training etc.). The second covered description of provision and processes, (e.g.

identification, referral, outcomes monitoring etc.). The third was a space for participants to provide any other information not covered in the other two sections.

### **Stage two – May to August 2016**

Numerous follow up emails and phone calls were made to retrieve documents from participants with mixed success. Further leads and contacts were established and followed up after the events, leading to more information gathering. At some point or another, via different routes, every CRC, every NPS division, as well as all the biggest service charities, have been contacted and given the opportunity to share information. However, there were barriers to the many cooperative organisations sharing information, owing to sensitivity issues around performance data, accounts, bids etc.

39 surveys were returned from events, and a further 6 from people contacted afterwards. All contained useful data, and most pointed to documentation and further avenues of investigation. We retrieved documentation from 16 people.

## Appendix B

### Organisations contacted

1st Battalion the Rifles
A number of people with Veterans' responsibility in CRCs
A number of people with Veterans' responsibility in NPS Divisions
Active Plus
All Chief Executives of CRCs
Anglia Ruskin University
Barnardo's
Bold Moves
Care After Combat
COBSEO
Combat Stress
Criminal Justice Policy Directorate
Department of Health
Deputy Director of NPS leading on Veterans
Finchale College
Hastings and Rother CCG
HM Courts and Tribunals Service
HMP & YOI Moorland
HMP & YOI Norwich
HMP Shotts
HMP Winchester
Hull City Council
Inspiring Intelligence
Interserve
London Veterans' Assessment and Treatment Service
Merseyside Liaison and Diversion
National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders
NHS England
NOMS Co-Financing Organisation Policy Lead
NOMS lead for ex-armed forces personnel
Northern Learning Trust
Project NOVA
PTSD Resolution

Regular Forces Employment Agency
RISE Mutual CIC
Royal Air Forces Association
Royal British Legion
Royal Marines Veteran Support
Skill Force
SSAFA
The Director, NPS, and Deputy Directors of NPS Divisions
The Poppy Factory
The Restore Trust
Various Police Forces
Veterans Change Partnership
Walking with the Wounded
Warrior Programme
York St. John University



The Probation Institute is an independent, not-for-profit Company Limited by Guarantee. As the Professional Body and Centre of Excellence on probation, rehabilitation and resettlement practice, the Probation Institute applies rigorous standards to professional development and the assessment of research and best practice. The Institute provides professional leadership for probation and rehabilitation workers, and all those who deliver services that protect the public and rehabilitate offenders. It acts to link probation professionals across the private, public and voluntary sectors.

Membership is open to individual practitioners concerned with the rehabilitation of offenders. Membership is inclusive to all staff, regardless of grade, employer or job role.

The Institute also actively invites a partner relationship with employers in the sector and other organizations or stakeholders in the criminal justice arena

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