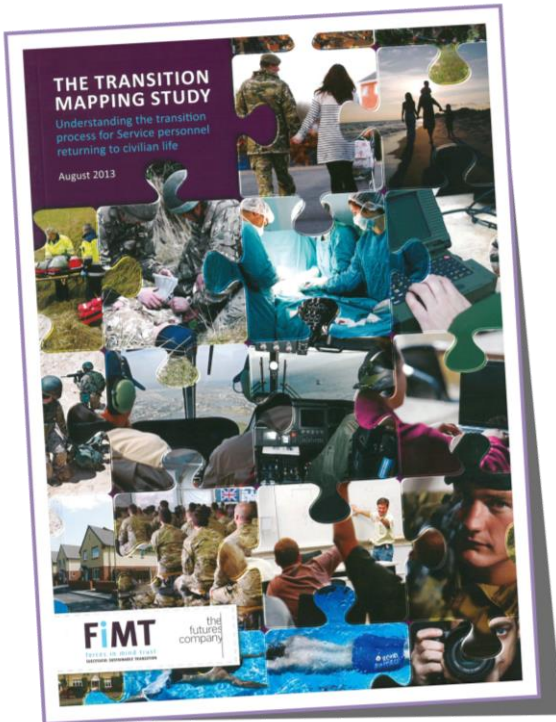


2013 Transition Mapping Study Evaluation Report January 2017



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Executive Summary

Introduction

In 2013, the Forces in Mind Trust (FiMT) published and launched the Transition Mapping Study (TMS). The study was commissioned to develop understanding of the transition process for Service personnel returning to civilian life. FiMT subsequently commissioned Arkenford, an independent market research and evaluation company to conduct an evaluation of the impact and perceived value of the 2013 TMS (the 'report') and an update of the study, due for publication in 2017.

Five key questions were identified for evaluation using a combination of qualitative in-depth interviews and a web-based online survey.

1. How has awareness and understanding of transition changed since the report was published?
2. What actions have been stimulated by the report?
3. What is the relevance and perceived value of the cost model?
4. What is the relevance and perceived value of the alternative employment model?
5. Has the report provided value for money?

Evaluation participants were recruited from academic, commercial, charity and government sectors and organisations whose activities spanned a range of service delivery themes including employment, housing, education, health, social care support and community integration.

Key Findings

Awareness and Understanding of Transition

- The 2013 TMS has provided a holistic overview and created a lexicon for transition.
- The 2013 TMS was perceived as laying out the transition process for the first time, including identifying what needs to work better to support successful transition.
- The findings and recommendations of the 2013 TMS are complementary alongside Lord Ashcroft's Veterans' Transition Review.
- The 2013 TMS was judged to provide an independent perspective, important for holding government to account.
- The 2013 TMS received national media coverage at launch, informed high level debate including in the House of Lords, and has been presented and referenced regularly as part of FiMT briefings and presentations.
- The 2013 TMS has become a key reading source for staff induction and training.
- Perceived gaps in the report's content included providing detailed transitioning personnel profiling data and covering Reservist, Foreign and Commonwealth and BAME perspectives.

Reaction to and Actions Stimulated by the Report's Recommendations

- The recommendations were generally understood to be logical, well-articulated and reasoned.
- The recommendations have provided validation for organisations supporting Service personnel.
- The 2013 TMS raised the need to further clarify who is responsible for achieving the recommendations. Is it the individual, the Ministry of Defence, or a combination of both?
- The recommendations have assisted the Ministry of Defence in changing the way it looks at transition and sets its priorities.
- The recommendations were reported to have provided endorsement for Early Service Leaver (ESL) support policy development.
- The report's recommendations contributed to refining the focus of the CTP resettlement contract provision, in particular the development of the Future Horizons Project for ESLs.

A Closer Look at Each Recommendation Theme

- The emphasis on creating transferable skills does not place enough focus on enabling the Service leaver to identify which of their skills are transferable.
- The report was recognised as reinforcing the importance of an independent mindset in successful transition.
- Personalising the pathway for each individual is considered critical but challenging alongside the need to deliver packages of transition support.
- Focusing on the role of family has stimulated further research, but family needs to be considered as extending beyond the spouse or partner and additional research is required.
- A new King's Centre for Military Health Research initiative to enhance the tracking data that they collect as part of their ongoing cohort study of UK Armed Forces Personnel has directly referenced the report in applications for funding.
- Investment was seen as critical for improving transition outcomes and reducing the cost of poor transition, but there is a need to clarify where the responsibility to invest falls.

Reviewing the Cost Model

- The cost model was perceived as providing content for gaining media headlines.
- It was praised for being the first study to attempt to put a value upon the cost of poor transition to assist policy makers.
- To increase its credibility there is a requirement to provide access to a more detailed explanation of how the cost model was developed, whilst recognising that some data
- It was recommended that reporting the economic contribution made by those transitioning successfully should also be included.
- The cost model was perceived as having the potential to guide policy and investment priorities.
- The cost model includes variables relevant to a range of Government department interests (e.g. Department of Health, the Home Office and Department of Work and Pensions).
- Provision of national cost projections was perceived as less relevant to smaller, regional charities or local government.
- Any update to the cost model should consider comparison by the same variables and metrics in order to evaluate impact over time.

Reviewing the Exploratory Alternative Employment Concept

- The alternative employment model was perceived as innovative by some, but impractical to implement in full and lacked evidence to support it.
- The model may have merit for securing funding support from larger employers recruiting high volumes of personnel.
- If the model was adopted, it has the potential to limit opportunity and freedom of choice of employment options for transitioning personnel.
- The suggested model could potentially create disparate and competitive recruitment agency style employment support services.
- Any cost savings achieved by the alternative employment model had the potential to be redirected to support other aspects of transition.

Value for Money Perceptions

- There was a wide-held view that the content of the 2013 TMS has provided value for money as a source of transition knowledge and evidence.
- A recognised difficulty was in justifying investment in research when front line services themselves require funding support.
- The report was recognised as a source for guiding policy and funding priorities that have the potential to reduce the cost of poor transition.
- The evaluation has shown that the report provides value for different stakeholders in a range of financial, knowledge and action related contexts.

Concluding Legacy

The 2013 Transition Mapping Study was perceived as independent and still relevant today. It was regarded as not being designed to be critical of work underway to support transition but focused more on providing an independent and evidence led perspective that can inform actions that help Service leavers transition more effectively in the future.

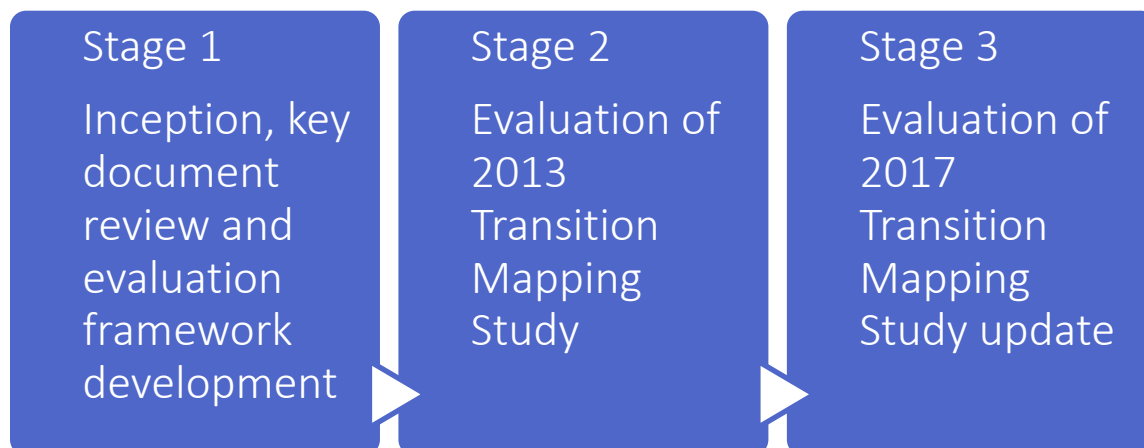
Introduction

In 2013, FiMT published and launched the Transition Mapping Study. The study was commissioned to develop understanding of the transition process for Service personnel returning to civilian life. FiMT commissioned the Futures Company to conduct the study which, at the time, included:

- Reviewing existing research on transition.
- Understanding how the transition process worked at that time.
- Researching how the current transition process was viewed by stakeholders and by recent Service leavers.
- Making recommendations on how to reduce the number of poor transitions.
- Developing a model that quantified the costs of poor transition to the UK as a whole.

FiMT subsequently commissioned Arkenford, an independent market research and evaluation company to conduct an evaluation of the impact and perceived value of the 2013 TMS and an update of the study, due for publication in 2017. Arkenford specialise in applying qualitative and quantitative research approaches to inform and evaluate commercial, public and third sector initiatives. The intention is that this evaluation will help to inform and guide priority setting and future publications that focus on improving successful transition.

The evaluation has been designed in 3 stages, summarised in the schematic diagram below. First, a short inception phase was undertaken to review key documentation related to the genesis, development, and publication of the 2013 TMS. The second stage was the evaluation of the 2013 TMS itself which forms the majority of the content of this report. The third stage, planned for 2017, will evaluate the impact and perceived value of an update to the 2013 TMS that is currently being developed and is due for publication in early 2017.



The key findings from the evaluation of the 2013 TMS are presented at the start of each chapter that focuses on a specific evaluation question drawn from the evaluation framework that follows. The 2013 TMS concludes with several recommendations given by evaluation participants to be considered when developing future publications for supporting successful transition.

Document Review and Evaluation Framework

FiMT made available for review by the evaluation team several documents that were directly relevant to the genesis, design, and dissemination of the 2013 TMS. These included:

- A summary of a pre-tender industry workshop.
- RFQ and associated ITT and tender documents.
- Numerous design and content related documents prepared by The Futures Company during report development.
- Launch event press release.
- Launch event and other presentations featuring the study.
- Post-launch PR impact report.
- Report distribution information.
- Strategic media plan.
- Hansard transcript of House of Lords report related debate.
- List of briefings where the 2013 TMS has been featured.

FiMT was established in 2012 with the primary goal of improving the transition of Service personnel and their families, from military into civilian life. At the time of inception and as detailed in the ITT documentation, the goal of the 2013 TMS was initially to:

- Quantify the ideal state for transition from the veteran’s perspective.
- Identify and qualify the actionable improvements to structure, procedure and policy that result in cost savings and improvements to the current service provision infrastructures and any resulting benefits to the wider industry.

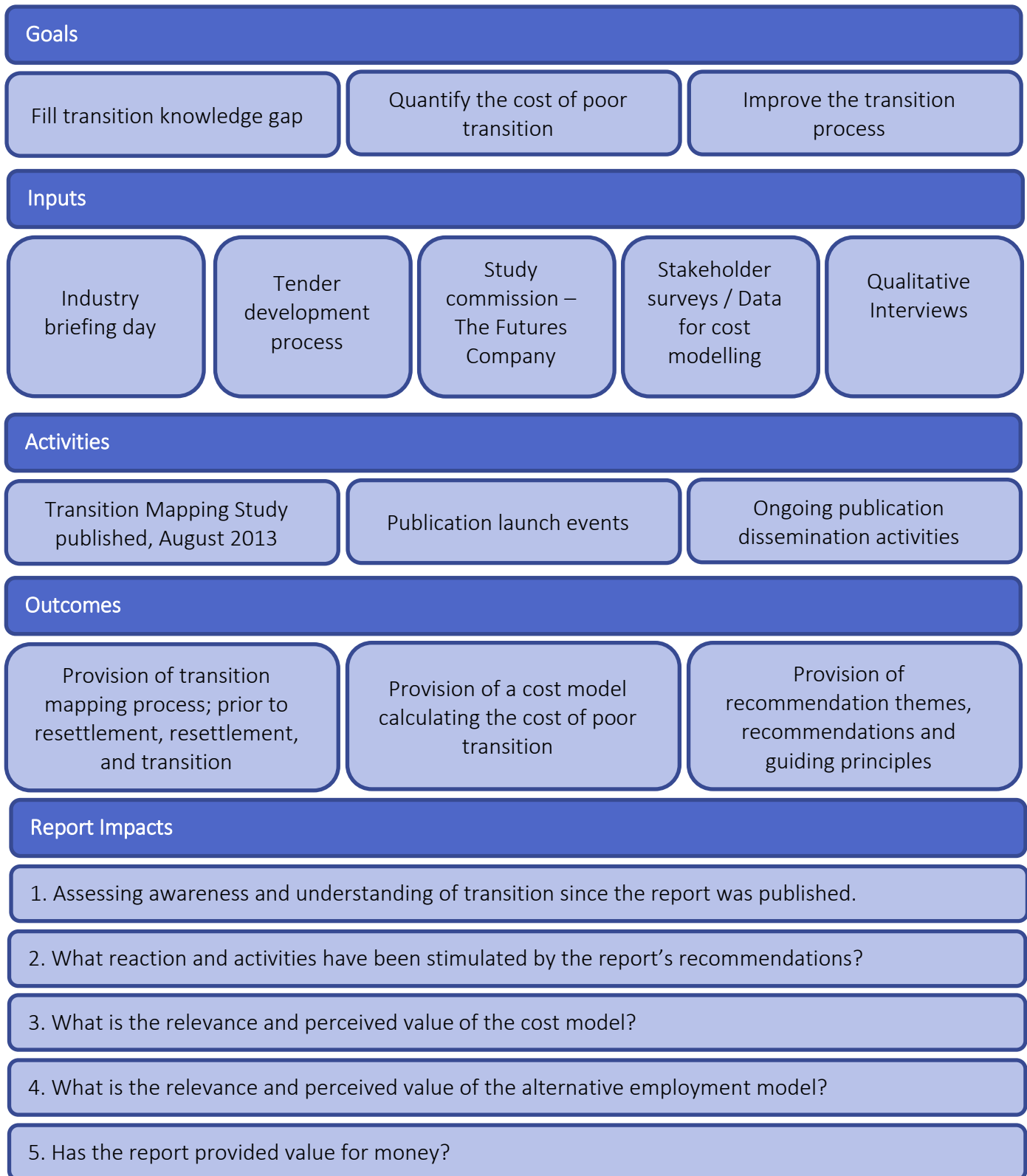
The final report had a revised emphasis related to, but not directly reflecting the initial scope of work. Under two work streams the 2013 TMS is described as providing:

Stream 1	Stream 2
A coherent view of how the transition process was perceived by stakeholders, and by Service and ex-Service personnel.	Quantification of the costs of poor transition to the country as a whole, and the identification of areas where there were cost effective opportunities for cost effective intervention.
Guiding Principles for good practice and recommendations for improvement of the transition process.	

The project documentation provided a source of evidence of dissemination activities associated with the publication which are referenced during the course of this evaluation report. The document review also informed the development of an evaluation framework that sets out:

- The overall goals of the project, informed by the RFQ and tender documentation.
- An overview of the inputs that were required to produce the report.
- A summary of the key activities related to the production and dissemination of the report.
- The outcomes of these production and dissemination activities.
- A number of evaluation questions assessed the impact of the report during the course of the evaluation.

Table 1: Evaluation Framework



In addition to the five main evaluation questions, the evaluation also provides feedback on the layout and design features of the report and explores perceptions of the longer-term legacy the report has developed. These are both reported in additional chapters that follow the main evaluation questions.

2013 Transition Mapping Study Definitions

FiMT commissioned the 2013 TMS in order to provide an independent and comprehensive understanding of the transition process; prior to joining, in Service (resettlement) and after leaving. The report adopts a ‘whole career view of transition’¹ and provides ‘Policy makers, operational deliverers in both the charity and statutory sectors and each individual member of the Armed Forces Community’² with a series of recommendations and guiding principles for improving transition.

Two definitions drawn from the 2013 TMS are relevant to the narrative of this report, particularly where separate reference is made to transition and resettlement in analysis.

Transition

Transition is used to describe the period of reintegration into civilian life from the Armed Forces. Starting with the point in service at which Service personnel start their resettlement process and then continues for three years from discharge date.³

Resettlement

Resettlement describes the formal processes and procedures by which transition is managed, and the formal support provided to Service leavers during transition. It starts with the activation of the Resettlement process and continues until the end of the Resettlement provision (for those with support from the Career Transition Partnership (CTP), until 2 years after discharge date, earlier for others).

¹ Forces in Mind Trust (2013) The Transition Mapping Study, p14

² Forces in Mind Trust (2013) The Transition Mapping Study, p2

³ Since the 2013 TMS was published, FiMT has developed a broader view of transition as starting at enlistment “and concluding once successful and fulfilled civilian lives are assured”.

Evaluation Methodology

A mixed methodological approach was used to gather feedback to inform the evaluation. A series of qualitative in-depth interviews were conducted with key stakeholders from a spectrum of organisations who play an active role in supporting transition. In addition, a short online survey was used to gather additional input on the relevance and application of the report's recommendations.

Consent to participate was requested from all evaluation participants, the purpose of the evaluation was explained and anonymity was assured where requested. Any direct quotations that are used in this evaluation have been reviewed and approved by the contributor when they requested to do so.

In-depth Interviews

Developed in consultation with FiMT, our research identified 98 potential participants, and in-depth interviews were completed with a total of 24 people (23 actual interviews). The pool of in-depth interview participants was developed to gather perspectives from academic, commercial, charity and government sectors and spanned a range of service delivery themes including employment, housing, education, health, social care support and community integration.

The interview process itself included speaking with organisations providing specific transition support and expertise in areas of mental health, alcohol and drug misuse, and criminal offending. Initial in-depth interview participants were asked to advise on any additional contributors to approach for interview who they judged as having a valuable perspective to offer the evaluation.

A full list of organisations who contributed to this evaluation can be found in the acknowledgements section at the end of this report.

Online Survey

The online questionnaire contained 12 questions in total and obtained feedback from respondents on a series of prompted areas, including:

- When and how they first heard about the study.
- What they remembered about the report (from a prompted list of options).
- Relevance of certain areas of the report to their organisation.
- Influence of, and activities, conducted as a result of the recommendation themes.
- Suggestions for areas to focus on in future publications.

The online survey was sent to an additional 18 organisations and was designed to be complementary to the in-depth interviews. It was therefore sent to people and organisations that were not part of the in-depth interview process.

Analysis

Perspectives gathered during in-depth interviews have been analysed against each evaluation question as detailed in the evaluation framework. Where relevant, direct quotes have been used to provide examples of a specific point that has been reported. In addition, both the in-depth interviews and online survey have been used to develop examples of how the report has impacted the activities of specific organisations.

Caveat on evaluation of report, not transition itself

This evaluation focuses on the impacts and perceived value of the 2013 TMS but does not seek to evaluate current transition support provision. However, during a number of the evaluation interviews, comments and recommendations were given on areas of transition where support should be prioritised. We feel that it is important that these perspectives are not overlooked and they are summarised in the recommendations chapter at the end of the report.

Awareness and Understanding of Transition

Assessing changes in awareness and understanding of transition since the publication was launched

This section explores factors that have influenced changes in awareness, understanding and support for transition since the TMS was launched in 2013. It includes feedback on perceived knowledge gaps that remain in 2016.

Key Findings

- The 2013 TMS has provided a holistic overview and created a lexicon for transition.
- The 2013 TMS was perceived as laying out the transition process for the first time, including identifying what needs to work better to support successful transition.
- The findings and recommendations of the 2013 TMS are complementary alongside Lord Ashcroft's Veterans' Transition Review.
- The 2013 TMS was judged to provide an independent perspective, important for holding government to account.
- The 2013 TMS received national media coverage at launch, informed high level debate including in the House of Lords, and has been presented and referenced regularly as part of FiMT briefings and presentations.
- The 2013 TMS has become a key reading source for staff induction and training.
- Perceived gaps in the report's content included providing detailed transitioning personnel profiling data and covering Reservist, Foreign and Commonwealth and BAME perspectives.

Providing a Holistic Overview of Transition

Awareness and understanding of the transition process was commented as having changed in a positive way since the 2013 TMS was launched. It was almost universally mentioned that before the study was commissioned, no organisation had attempted to make such a holistic review of the issue of transition, with everything laid out in one place before:

“Before the Transition Mapping Study, there were little bits of research and bits of evidence out there...the Transition Mapping Study helped meld these all together.”
Bill Mahon, RAF Families Federation

“It was the first document to really collate all the issues in one place. The first to look at the whole process of transition.”
John Lavery, The White Ensign Association

The 2013 TMS was summarised as delivering a lexicon for talking about transition and providing a robust analysis of the transition process at the time. It was reported by FiMT as being their handbook of transition, reasonably comprehensive and presented in a credible and accessible way. This view was supported by others who expressed that the report had brought the whole subject together and had therefore given transition more publicity than it had received before.

“We (the Department of Health) welcomed the report as it does such a good job in bringing together a number of themes in a coherent way for the first time”.

Dave Rutter, Department of Health

Value was placed on the report providing a holistic view of transition that extended beyond the largely employment focused resettlement support provided through the Career Transition Partnership⁴ (CTP). The focus on the whole transition process and the types of problems that people face was valuable because it meant that if reported independently they ought to be taken notice of.

Further comment was received that the document provided an independent source of information to support ongoing work and to help convince others of the need to invest time and resources. The report has influenced the work of doctoral students at the King’s Centre for Military Health Research by underscoring the importance of families in the transition process. This has led to spouses and partners being interviewed as part of their programme of research.

FROM REPORT TO ACTION 1 - A number of organisations, including the King’s Centre for Military Health Research, the resettlement team at the Ministry of Defence and FiMT, reported that the 2013 TMS had become a key reading resource for current staff who are familiarising themselves with the transition process and for new staff during transition.

That the report acknowledges the number of wider transition issues that are at play, including employment but also housing and health, was also praised. The report was seen to be quite clear about the fact that the Ministry of Defence needed to be more structured about the transition process and recognise that whilst the majority will get through the process easily, some will struggle and require more support. That said, some felt that the level of detail of the different aspects of transition that get mentioned was only top-line, and that without more detail the report could only ever raise awareness but not influence change or development of new strategies. This was not necessarily viewed as a bad thing though, as a more holistic or generic approach enabled the report to connect with a wider range of organisations involved in transition.

Another positive for some was the fact that through the period 2013-15 the Ministry of Defence recognised the need for spend on transition programmes for everyone leaving the Services. Previously some of these groups, such as Early Service Leavers (ESLs), had been declined support, and evidence showed that this group disproportionately got into the most difficulty after discharge. The resulting pressure from the third sector was a reason why the Ministry of Defence changed their stance on this, and the 2013 TMS played a part in informing this.

⁴ The Career Transition Partnership is the Ministry of Defence working with Right Management to provide resettlement support, career transition advice and training opportunities to service personnel.

<https://www.ctp.org.uk/>

Aligning with The Veterans’ Transition Review

Contributions to changes in awareness and understanding of transition were attributed to different factors and in particular, references were made to Lord Ashcroft’s Veterans’ Transition Review. However, improvements in awareness and understanding have only led to certain improvements in supporting successful transition. For example, where the 2013 TMS presented the whole family as affected by transition this was an area identified where more support was still required.

Several references were made to the complementary nature and close alignment of the 2013 TMS report and recommendations, published in August 2013, alongside the Veterans’ Transition Review published in February 2014. Only one participant made a clear distinction between the launch timing of both reports with the majority seeing each as overlapping and both on the same page, but at the same time, optimised for differing audiences. The Veterans’ Transition Review was primarily understood as being commissioned under direct instruction from Government and the recommendations were reported as closely correlating with the resettlement support strategy that is being delivered by the Ministry of Defence.

It was commented that the 2013 TMS followed a different methodological approach compared with the Veterans’ Transition Review. The former used a combination of qualitative interviews with Service leavers going through transition, stakeholder interviews and a survey of all Cobseo members. The Veterans’ Transition Review also used qualitative research with a combination of focus groups and in-depth interviews with recent Service leavers. They also used a participatory website for collecting comments, feedback and recommendations from Service leavers, their families and others with an interest in transition⁵.

Although using different approaches, as mentioned, the findings of each were perceived as complementary and overlapping in many areas. This is reinforced by the Veterans’ Transition Review’s direct reference to considering the ‘extensive pool of research that has been conducted by others in the field, particularly the Forces in Mind Trust and the King’s Centre for Military Health Research’⁶.

“The role of reports like the 2013 Transition Mapping Study is to hold the government to account on how it supports Service personnel transition – warts and all.”
Anonymous

Alongside the Veterans’ Transition Review, the 2013 TMS played a strong and invaluable role in raising wider awareness of transition and starting the conversations that would push for change in support for transition. Positive value was also placed on how FiMT, as a charitable organisation, can produce independent studies that can hold the government to account, and make these accessible in the public domain.

“Suddenly there was lots of noise about transition, and more importantly, noise at the right levels.”
Anonymous

“Even if the right people at the right level were having the right conversations, that would be considered a success.”
Mark Hancock, Consultant

⁵ Lord Ashcroft (2014) The Veterans’ Transition Review, p29

⁶ Lord Ashcroft (2014) The Veterans’ Transition Review, p29

However, in contrast to the almost universally positive view regarding the release of the study, one participant felt that the 2013 TMS was overshadowed by the publication of the Veterans' Transition Review so soon after it. They commented that these studies could risk victimising the veteran's community as the focus and perception was that all veterans were victims. One particular article in the Evening Standard was cited as suggesting that if an individual's transition is unsuccessful then they have 'problems'.

The timing of the 2013 TMS was also perceived to be good given that at the time of release there was a lot of interest in the military in general, not just transition so it was appropriate to make use of the topic being high on the current agenda. However, at the same time, some also point out that a backdrop to the report were cuts in military defence spending meaning that whilst it was the 'right report', it came at the 'wrong time'.

For some, there was a perceived lack of specific detail meaning some aspects of transition were only given 'top-line service'. This meant the Local Government Association felt that neither the 2013 TMS nor the Veterans' Transition Review report articulated the role of local councils or provided enough detail about the specific areas of transition that they could influence.

Raising Awareness - Launch and Post-Launch

At the time of launch, efforts were made by FiMT to raise awareness of the report and its findings including hosting a launch event and tasking their PR company, The PR Office, to develop and circulate a press release to stimulate media coverage. The PR Office produced a report on the impacts of press release circulation that identified coverage achieved between August 14th and 16th 2013 in national newspapers (on and offline), broadcast mediums (predominantly radio, though some TV), regional publications (on and offline) and sectoral publications. These can all be considered as contributing to raising awareness and understanding of transition, particularly in the early days surrounding the report's launch.

At and following the launch FiMT have actively presented and referenced the report at numerous events including sector briefing events, transition review meetings, the Veterans Research Hub and specific FiMT briefing events. A summary of these events, provided by FiMT, is presented overleaf in Table 2. The 2013 TMS was reported as having stood the test of time with its overview of the transition journey perceived as still relevant today.

Table 2: Events Featuring the 2013 Transition Mapping Study

Event	Location	Date
Pre-release FiMT Sector Briefing Event	London	Jun-13
FiMT Sector Briefing Event	Edinburgh	Oct-13
Army Welfare Forum	Andover	Oct-13
True Patriot Love Symposium - International Symposium	London	Oct-13
TRBL Household Survey - Launch Event	London	Jul-14
FiMT Sector Briefing Event	Belfast	Sep-14
Veterans Research Hub - House of Lords - Launch Event	London	Nov-14
St George's House Consultation on Transition	Windsor	Nov-14
Directory of Social Change Sector Insight Report - Launch event	London	Nov-14
FiMT Sector Briefing Event	Cardiff	Jan-15
FiMT Sector Briefing Event	Wrexham	Jan-15
Presentation in Palace of Westminster - Sponsored by Gordon Marsden MP	London	Mar-15
FiMT Sector Briefing Event	Durham	May-15
Army Families Federation Symposium	Andover	Jun-15
Armed Forces Champions Conference - Briefing to Welsh Armed Forces Champions	Wrexham	Jun-15
FiMT Sector Briefing Event	Manchester	Sep-15
Meeting with Keith Brown MSP	Edinburgh	Oct-15
Scottish Veteran's Commissioner - FiMT Briefing	Edinburgh	Dec-15
FiMT Sector Briefing Event	Birmingham	Apr-16
Meeting with Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP - FiMT Briefing	London	Jun-16
FiMT Sector Briefing Event	Plymouth	Jul-16

Other Factors Influencing Awareness and Understanding

While both the 2013 TMS and the Veterans' Transition Review were discussed as influencing awareness and understanding of transition issues, other factors to consider included the Armed Forces Covenant and the work of other charitable organisations such as SSAFA and reports that they had produced for informing transition knowledge. Regarding the Armed Forces Covenant, it was considered important that signing up must result in direct action and be more than just a box ticking exercise.

Remaining Knowledge Gaps

A number of gaps were identified that, if filled, would enable greater awareness and understanding of transition. These included the provision of more detailed descriptive profiling data for Service leavers, including gender and reason for discharge (e.g. medically discharged, completed term of service, disciplinary etc.). It was also commented that the report focused on the regular armed forces and did not include Reservists, Foreign and Commonwealth or BAME⁷ personnel who were important to consider as their transition journey was different.

⁷ Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic, used to refer to non-white ethnic communities in the UK.

Reviewing the Recommendations

Assessing the response to and actions stimulated by the report's recommendations

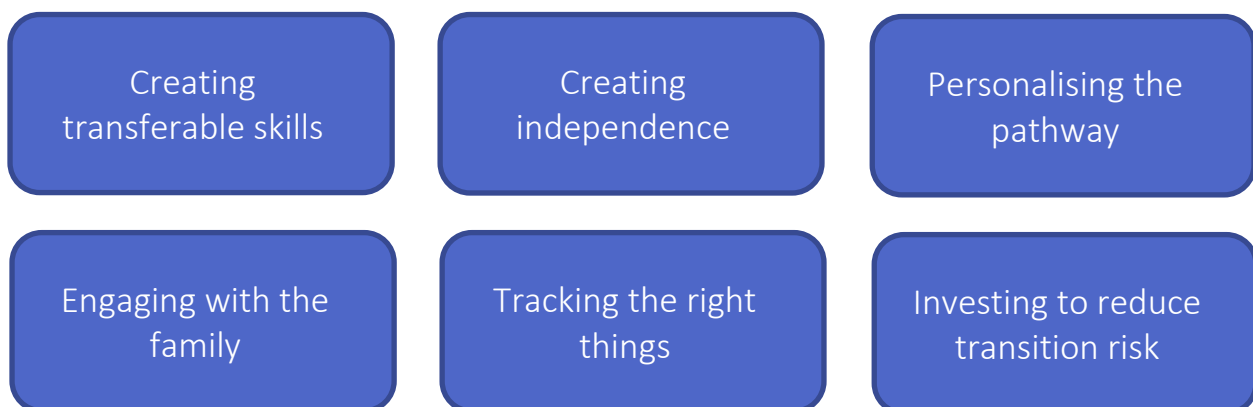
During the in-depth interviews, feedback was collected on the recommendation themes presented in the report as well as more detailed insight into activities stimulated in support of them. We have structured this section to contain key findings, an overall summary of reactions to the recommendations findings and a more detailed analysis of each recommendation theme.

Key Findings

- The recommendations were generally understood to be logical, well-articulated and reasoned.
- The recommendations have provided validation for organisations supporting Service personnel.
- The 2013 TMS raised the need to further clarify who is responsible for achieving the recommendations. Is it the individual, the Ministry of Defence, or a combination of both?
- The recommendations have assisted the Ministry of Defence in changing the way it looks at transition and sets its priorities.
- The recommendations were reported to have provided endorsement for Early Service Leaver (ESL) support policy development.
- The report's recommendations contributed to refining the focus of the CTP resettlement contract provision. In particular, the development of the Future Horizons Project for ESLs.

Reviewing Recommendation Themes

The report contains six Recommendation Themes, listed below, which were reviewed by and discussed with participants.



Overall Reaction to Recommendations

The recommendation themes were considered logical and well-articulated and were viewed as providing a working baseline. Perhaps most importantly, all the recommendations were considered relevant particularly as a number of different organisations were, to a lesser or greater extent, looking at or already working on different initiatives in these areas. There was consensus amongst participants that Service personnel should be engaged with and start thinking about transition from their first day of Service. If this were to happen, the recommendations were viewed as being more achievable. There was

a view though, that however good and well-intentioned the recommendations were, ensuring that they work in practice is a lot more difficult.

By summarising the recommendations thematically, and not by length of Service, armed force, or age group, one commentator observed that the recommendations appeared very generic. By not distinguishing these factors the recommendations seemed harder to impart on the transition process. A common point throughout discussions was that transition is not a 'one-size-fits-all' process suggesting that the recommendation to personalise the pathway has cross cutting relevance to each recommendation theme. This is reflected in the report's guiding principles for those developing new services or reviewing existing services which reinforce the importance of understanding that everyone is different and the need to look at the experience through the user's eyes.

For the service support providers and charities that we interviewed, the report provided validation that the focus and direction of their work was on track. In the case of the White Ensign Association, this validation was to their own board of trustees, confirming to them that the organisation was looking at the right things and following best practices as laid out by the 2013 TMS. It also provided a validation for the training they were providing; specifically, in terms of the lectures they were delivering, with the recommendations laid out in the 2013 TMS providing evidence for why they were standing in front of people.

FROM REPORT TO ACTION 2 - SSAFA reported that the report reinforced their existing knowledge of transition and areas they were focused on trying to improve, such as increasing financial awareness and planning. In areas where there were gaps in transition support, it identified which organisations were already working in them, enabling providers to reach out and liaise with them for help and advice or to learn from each other's work.

Clarifying Responsibility?

A common point of contention was determining where responsibility lay for ensuring that these recommendations were adhered to. For example, was it the responsibility of the individual or the Service? This point arose specifically regarding 'creating transferable skills' and 'creating independence'. It was suggested that some of the high-tech skills learnt by Service personnel were difficult to transfer to a civilian life. The primary focus of the military is ensuring personnel are fully trained to perform their in-service role, therefore it was questioned by some whether it is reasonable and realistic to expect them to also fully train and prepare personnel for life outside the military?

Similarly, creating independence was viewed as an important recommendation, but with reference to younger personnel in particular, often what is required in-service, where the emphasis is on following orders and team work, is the opposite of independence.

All of the recommendations laid out in the 2013 TMS were viewed as praiseworthy and relevant and there was no doubt that the study had helped raise the awareness of, and highlight the importance of these themes and the part they play in the transition process. Every service provider and charity that we engaged with said they had stimulated discussion amongst them around these areas, how they can be adhered to, where gaps exist in the process and how they can be addressed.

What was not perceived as addressed by the report was how these recommendations could become ingrained in the transition process and where responsibility lay to make them ‘policy’ and ensure they are carried out. It was also commented that the report did not set out where the resource, time and money to carry these recommendations forward needed to come from.

A Closer Look at Reactions to Each Recommendation Theme

Each recommendation theme was discussed with evaluation interviewees and their feedback is summarised in the following section, broken out by each theme.

Key Findings

- The emphasis on creating transferable skills does not place enough focus on enabling the Service leaver to identify which of their skills are transferable.
- The report was recognised as reinforcing the importance of an independent mindset in successful transition.
- Personalising the pathway for each individual is considered critical but challenging alongside the need to deliver packages of transition support.
- Focusing on the role of family has stimulated further research, but family needs to be considered as extending beyond the spouse or partner and additional research is required.
- A new King’s Centre for Military Health Research initiative to enhance the tracking data that they collect as part of their ongoing cohort study of UK Armed Forces Personnel has directly referenced the report in applications for funding.
- Investment is seen as critical for improving transition outcome and reducing the cost of poor transition, but there is a need to clarify where the responsibility to invest falls.

Creating Transferable Skills

This was perceived as a valuable recommendation due to the importance of ensuring personnel recognised where their in-service skills were transferrable to the civilian world. It was commented that the value placed on personnel recognising and articulating their skills for civilian life was almost immeasurable. To ensure this takes place, it was suggested that more education is needed to increase awareness amongst personnel that the skills they have can be ‘civilianised’.

“It is, and should continue to influence, the Services’ ability to attract and retain committed and motivated people.”

Anonymous

“It’s very valuable if people can finally work out what those skills are and how you articulate those skills in an understandable way.”

Anonymous

There is belief that this understanding is improving, and when the resettlement process is started, personnel are encouraged to think about their skills and abilities in a transferable way. It was also considered that better accreditation and a review of in-service qualifications has in turn driven courses to become more refined and targeted for supporting successful transition. Whether this change has been

driven directly by the recommendation in the 2013 TMS is uncertain, but changes were reported as certainly being under way to identify and ‘civilianise’ skills and qualifications.

Some respondents felt that the report was slightly more negative than was actually the case, particularly in relation to the Ministry of Defence’s efforts to gain civilian accreditation for the training received in service. It was expressed that there were initiatives underway to align military training and skills with civilian accreditation where possible.

A further pertinent comment made was that referencing ‘creating’ skills was misleading and that the theme should have been ‘identify’ transferable skills. This was because the term ‘creating’ implies the teaching of skills that are separate to those taught and developed during in-service training and practice. It was also commented that skill development should be tracked, possibly by an independent careers adviser. In the civilian world, employees in many workplaces have a file with a log of courses attended and skills obtained. It was suggested that this personal development plan approach could be transferred to the military, and focused specifically on transition.

Creating Independence

Where the responsibility lies for ensuring personnel engage with the transition process was slightly contentious. Some viewed this as something that is as much down to the individual as well as to those in-service.

“My understanding is that it’s up to the individual about how much they engage with it (resettlement)”.

Abigail Gallop, Local Government Agency

Ensuring that responsibility is taken where it should be, was considered as critically important for empowering Service leaver independence which was vital for a successful transition. It was further commented that the nature of this independence is more to do with a leaver’s mindset and them having the confidence to ‘make the jump’ to civilian life, rather than providing independence training or education.

It was suggested that moves to support this recommendation are already underway, though whether the 2013 TMS directly influenced this support is uncertain. In particular, the Ministry of Defence’s Future Accommodation Model and the CTP contract were reported as being more focused on ensuring leavers are better prepared for successfully transitioning to civilian life. In relation to employment, it was felt that this recommendation challenged the Ministry of Defence to move away from their fixation on getting ex-Service personnel ‘into a job’ to getting them ‘into the right job’. It is felt that if this objective is achieved then the chances that this employment will last will be greatly improved, which will ultimately be a positive influence on successful transition.

One suggestion was that to further ensure this theme is successful would be for some sort of mentoring or sponsor network be set up, maybe as part of the CTP, so that before leaving personnel are put in touch with people that have already gone through the transition process and that experience. Their advice or guidance would potentially be more valuable than what they receive in-Service or even independently from external service support providers.

Personalising the Pathway

This was viewed as a highly relevant recommendation with the potential to impact the transition process if adequately addressed. It was also recognised as one of the most difficult recommendations to carry out, as although each Service leaver’s journey is different there is a practical need for transition support to be generic at certain levels, by length of Service for example.

There were different views expressed about whether this recommendation is being acted upon. Some interviewees who had a previous career in the military said that their own transition was as personalised as possible and that through things like the CTP, they had access to a variety of advice. In contrast, the recommendation was viewed by some as impossible to enforce given that there was a practical need to deliver packages of transition support. It was reported that understanding where responsibility lies for ensuring both the personalisation of the pathway and the engagement of the individual Service leaver in their own transition was not clear.

“It’s a positive aspiration. However one of the key observations that the report made is that if somebody does not wish to engage with the process for whatever reason, you can make the process as personalised as possible, but if they do not want to touch in and do anything to engage, what more can you do?”

Anonymous

Engaging with the Family

This was viewed by some as perhaps the most important recommendation made in the 2013 TMS, one which could play the most crucial role in increasing the number of successful transitions, and one which historically has been overlooked. The recommendation highlighted a fact that many people we interviewed believe gets lost, in that the whole family is transitioning, not just the Service individual. Families being granted better access to advice on all things from financial support and planning to employment and housing advice was outlined and it was unanimously agreed that this should happen. It was suggested that spouses and partners should be involved in transition conversations as early in the process as possible.

FROM REPORT TO ACTION 3 - Royal British Legion Industries run the LifeWorks program, designed to equip transitioning personnel with the individual skills they need to get into and maintain a civilian job. This includes LifeWorks Families which provides support to the spouses and partners of military personnel who require additional employment support due to frequent moves, time away from the labour market and to build their individual confidence. The 2013 TMS was identified as providing confirming evidence that the provision of support to families was the right area of focus for supporting successful transition.

This recommendation resonated most with the three Families Federations that we spoke to. The 2013 TMS was praised for championing this recommendation and for helping raise awareness and increasing discussion on ways to help engage with and benefit the family. The recent announcement that the three Families Federations were successful in a joint grant application to FiMT for funding to employ and train Transition Liaison Officers is a significant and progressive step forward. This initiative was stimulated by

the work that FiMT have commissioned including the 2013 TMS and subsequent work on family engagement. It was noted that the report has helped provide both a voice and a factual source of evidence for promoting support and research into transitioning families.

“This has given the Families Federations independent evidence and an independent voice, stressing the importance of families and has helped raise the awareness of the need for research in this area.”

Anonymous

“Ensuring that support is given, not only to Service personnel, but also their partner, is critical.”

Anonymous

The new CTP contract was reported as including a new pilot programme of spousal employment support. Whilst it cannot be certain this is as a result of the report flagging the importance of the family, the attention it created was perceived as influencing its inclusion. This recommendation has given organisations promoting the importance of the family a voice and has revealed a need for more resources and research into the effects of transition on the family.

One suggested criticism was that the majority of the focus of this recommendation was on the spouse or partner and not on the wider family, particularly children, where it was viewed that little or no research has been carried out. It was also noted that the recommendation did not go far enough in identifying how best to engage with the family. It was suggested that increased efforts needed to be made to engage with the family and that transition support staff should include both the Service leaver and their spouse or partner in a transition support interview to holistically support their path forward.

Tracking the right things

This recommendation was well received but it was considered that there will be a range of views on what the ‘right things’ to track are. It is also intrinsically linked to the question of what a successful and unsuccessful transition is and the metrics that are used to measure both.

Tracking transition related activities was viewed as something that should be done throughout somebody’s time in-service. It would be an invaluable tool for charities and service providers because it would identify those personnel who are falling short or struggling early on, and would enable them to reach out and assist them.

“Once you are out of the Service, there is no tracking done, no tracking of individuals to say this person has been successful or this person has been unsuccessful.”

Anonymous

FROM REPORT TO ACTION 4 - The King's Centre for Military Health Research has recently received funding to link their Health and Well-being Study cohort data with Department of Health and Pensions data. This will enable them to track employment status, benefits and pensions receipts and tax and National Insurance contributions alongside measures of health and well-being. The 2013 TMS was reported as providing a source of evidence and justification to support the successful funding application for this research initiative.

However, what constitutes the right things and thus success is not clear and what the report did not identify was a set of service-wide metrics or guidelines that could be used. There was also limited awareness of any tracking that is currently carried out, including the work of the CTP to track employment status following resettlement. A suggestion was made that the sector would benefit from a single military population database through which transition preparations and outcomes could be tracked.

Investing to Reduce Transition Risk

This was perceived as a clear and, for many, obvious recommendation and necessary for supporting successful transition. However, the main barrier was determining where the burden of investment falls with suggestions made that it was the Government's responsibility to invest to reduce risk. Investment was seen as a positive and probably the only real way of achieving the other recommendations put forward by the study.

The recommendation outlined how a small increase in resources directed at ESLs could have a big effect, but did not indicate where and how funding would also aid other types of Service leavers. At what point this investment comes in the transition process and where investment would achieve the greatest results was also perceived as not outlined clearly. This was however addressed to some extent by the economic model of poor transition that was included in the report and is discussed in the following chapter.

Relevance and Perceived Value of the Cost Model

The 2013 TMS contains a cost model that estimates the cost of poor transition on an annual basis. Evaluation interview participants were asked to discuss their understanding of the model and its relevance and value.

Key Findings

- The cost model was perceived as providing content for gaining media headlines.
- It was praised for being the first study to attempt to put a value upon the cost of poor transition to assist policy makers.
- To increase its credibility there is a requirement to provide access to a more detailed explanation of how the cost model was developed.
- It was recommended that reporting the economic contribution made by those transitioning successfully should also be included.
- The cost model was perceived as having the potential to guide policy and investment priorities.
- The cost model includes variables relevant to a range of Government department interests (e.g. Department of Health, the Home Office and Department of Work and Pensions).
- Provision of national cost projections perceived as less relevant to smaller, regional charities or local government.
- Any update to the cost model should consider comparison by the same variables and metrics in order to evaluate impact over time.

Analysis

Opinion was split amongst evaluation participants regarding the validity of the cost model published in the 2013 study. It was reported by some that focusing on the cost of poor transition was the right approach in terms of giving the report legitimacy and credibility and in terms of making people stand up and take notice. However, at the same time the actual figure of £113 million that was quoted was perceived by some to be arbitrary and it was commented that the figure could have been anything depending on how the model was constructed.

“The methodology used was broadly right but precisely wrong. Whichever method you use will get out roughly the same figure. There are always factors you can’t put into the model.”

Mark Hancock, 2013 TMS Consultant

Particular concern was expressed about the lack of a clear explanation of how the model was constructed and it was recommended that better clarity be provided to reinforce the legitimacy of the modelling work. The focus of the cost model on poor transition was also noted as being potentially too negative and consideration should be given to reporting the economic value of the positive economic contribution made by the thousands who transition successfully. At the same time, it was commented that publishing the cost of poor transition demanded attention and had the potential to influence future policy development and funding provision. The cost model considered a range of variables for identifying poor transition and it was commented that responsibility for these fell to a number of different Government departments, for example, Department of Health, the Home Office and the Department for Work and Pensions.

Reactions to the Annual Cost of Failed Transition

The figure of £113 million was viewed by some as likely being a conservative estimate but had become the headline of the report stimulated by media coverage at the time. The report produced by the PR Office on the impact of the press release that was circulated before the launch of the report identified the cost of ex-Servicemen transitioning poorly as in excess of £100m (Press Association, Independent & Independent online). The Telegraph online reported a cost of £114m and MSN quoted a cost in excess of £100m. Whilst clearly making the point that poor transition comes at a cost and raising awareness of the issue, these headlines can also be considered as contributing to confusion in exactly how much the cost of poor transition is.

“The figure misses the point. It’s the soft issues that it hides. I would have focused more on the emotional issues effecting transition.”

Bill Mahon, RAF Families Federation

It was felt that publishing an annual cost of poor transition may have overshadowed the report but it was accepted that the figure was needed to raise awareness of transition and also to raise awareness and engagement with the study. The cost model was quoted by some as giving the study of transition additional legitimacy but this view was not universal.

“With any major study if you don’t put a cost to it, it doesn’t have legitimacy. If there is a cost to something, you can work out a cost to fix it. To give the study that headline grabbing piece, it had to be done.”

John Lavery, The White Ensign Association

“This was the headline figure. There wasn’t anything else in the report that would have had that sort of impact, created the public interest or the policy interest that the figure did.”

Louise Simpson, Army Families Federation

The cost model was identified as being valuable to policy makers. If the study had just presented the issues and laid out recommendations to solve them, without adding an indication of the costs associated with not getting things right, then the study would not have had the same impact. It was felt that the figure itself, and the way the cost model was laid out, presented an opportunity to stimulate discussion on addressing failings in the transition process.

“In a context where Government funding is facing huge pressure, tools that prioritise where to place preventative investment to avoid larger spending further down the line are highly valued.”

Anonymous

The downside of the cost model was that whilst it was agreed that it was and had to be the headline to get traction for discussions in terms of policy and provision change, it was commented that it took a lot of the focus away from the content and depth of the study. In one instance, it was felt that the cost model should not have been a focus of the report and its inclusion was misleading.

Individual Interpretations

As has been mentioned elsewhere in this report, the transition process is widely understood as being both personal and individual. This means that what one person defines as poor transition, another may not. It was suggested that the variables used to model poor transition, although appropriate, led to

transition being presented in a potentially distorted way. In addition, it was suggested that producing a cost figure potentially detracts attention from the emotional impacts of poor transition on the Service leaver and their family.

As no attempts had previously been made to attribute a figure to failed transition the 2013 TMS was applauded for doing so. It was commented that it helped drive exposure to and subsequent debate regarding the transition process and how it can be improved. In terms of driving change, it was perceived as having presented an attention-grabbing headline that could help prioritise areas for investment to reduce poor transition costs. It was also suggested though that the headline figure was of less relevance for smaller, regional charities and local government who would benefit from more granular regional analysis.

The 2013 TMS made projections in terms of outflow numbers and the cost of poor transition until the end of 2015. If the model were to be used again, and an updated cost calculated in the 2017 update, it was suggested that comparisons by the same metrics would enable an assessment of how the cost of poor transition has changed over time.

Relevance and Perceived Value of the Exploratory Alternative Employment Concept

The 2013 TMS provides an alternative concept for funding transition employment support. This places an emphasis on employers providing a source of funding for access to transitioning personnel seeking employment. In principle, this would reduce the cost of transition employment support provided by the public sector. Reactions to this idea are discussed in this section.

Key Findings

- The alternative employment concept was perceived as innovative by some, but impractical to implement in full and lacked evidence to support it.
- The concept may have merit for securing funding support from larger employers recruiting high volumes of personnel.
- If the concept was adopted, it has the potential to limit opportunity and freedom of choice of employment options for transitioning personnel.
- It was suggested that the concept could potentially create disparate and competitive recruitment agency style employment support services.
- Any cost savings achieved by the alternative employment concept had the potential to be redirected to support other aspects of transition.

Analysis

The Alternative Employment Concept suggested by the study received mixed reviews. On one hand, it was viewed as an innovative suggestion that was worth investigating further, on the other it was viewed as simply being impractical to achieve in full and lacked any evidence to support it.

One view was that there is already a significant commitment by employers made through the Armed Forces Covenant where approximately 1,000 employers or corporate covenant signatories have committed to recognise the skillsets of Service personnel for future employment. It was suggested that there has been a large shift in the attitude of employers, specifically in them seeing the benefit of transferable skills amongst ex-Service personnel for employment. Looking back at the alternative employment concept proposed in the report, it was offered that this was not necessary given this shift in awareness of and exposure to Service personnel and the value of their skills. However, this view does not take into account consideration of where funding for employment support should originate.

There is also a view that the Services are now looking to increase their engagement with the commercial sector while personnel are still serving and that this will benefit both personnel and employers.

“If it helps more people who are leaving the Services find the right employment, then it is worth exploring.”

Bill Mahon, RAF Families Federation

“Why not? We have people with really good transferable skills, the indications are that a whole range of different companies see the merit of employing ex-Service personnel, why not see how far you can take them.”

Anonymous

This point ties in with the recommendation of not just creating transferable skills, but ensuring they are recognised.

The alternative employment concept was mostly regarded as a good idea but one that was not practical to implement in full. The perception was that for employers it would be no different from them using a civilian recruitment agency and paying for vacancies to be filled. It was noted that the CTP already provides an employer and employee matching service and that third-party businesses have also moved into the area of placing ex-Service personnel into jobs. Current employment provision is free to transitioning personnel at the point of service and available to all that qualify for CTP support. It was commented that adopting a concept of employer funded employment support services would create disparate and competitive recruitment agency style services.

The concept was perceived as not being relevant for all employers and therefore limited in its potential application. Key industries such as telecommunications do have large numbers of posts to fill and already benefit from access to a pool of suitably skilled transitioning Service personnel. This presents a potential funding channel as the alternative employment concept suggests. However, this was suggested as only ever being a partial solution and one that would not cater to the needs of all individuals or employers.

“It is a valid model but it is not a service-wide model, for example, it wouldn’t favour less experienced, earlier Service leavers.”
John Lavery, The White Ensign Association

An impassioned view was that if adopted in its entirety the suggested alternative employment concept contradicted a major theme of the study and the overall transition process which was to empower the individual leaver and enable them to make their own choices. If the alternative employment concept was to be adopted, it was perceived as potentially restricting the employment opportunities that would be available.

“Those that are institutionalised most by being in the Service are most likely to follow this set path, which is not allowing for individual choice. Leaving should be a liberating experience, it’s completely their choice as to where to go next – this model wouldn’t allow that.”
John Lavery, The White Ensign Association

There was understanding that there was value in the cost savings that the suggested concept would create, enabling more funds to be directed at the transition process as a whole, or more targeted at individuals who need more assistance transitioning successfully. As presented though, the alternative employment concept was perceived as too simplistic and its content and structure needed refining and the scope of its application required clarity.

Perceived Value of the Transition Mapping Study

Evaluation participants were asked whether the production of the 2013 TMS provided value for money. It is important to note that perceptions of ‘value’ are based on the content of the report. Whether investing money in research of this kind is valuable is also considered when summarising the report’s ‘value’. A fiscal evaluation of value for money falls beyond the scope of this evaluation.

Key Findings

- There was a wide-held view that the content of the 2013 TMS has provided value for money as a source of transition knowledge and evidence.
- A recognised difficulty was in justifying investment in research when front line services themselves require funding support.
- The report was recognised as a source for guiding policy and funding priorities that have the potential to reduce the cost of poor transition.
- The evaluation has shown that the report provides value for different stakeholders in a range of financial, knowledge and action related contexts.

Analysis

The charities and support providers we talked to were almost united in their view that the 2013 TMS was, and did provide, good value for money, though there were some caveats to this, which are addressed further down.

Fact and evidence are viewed as critical. For people to be listened to, for reports to be read, for change to happen, fact is key. The 2013 TMS was praised for the evidence it collected and presented and only through the collation of evidence - facts not anecdotes, as noted by one person we spoke to – can a study such as this achieve the credibility it did. That the study was an external evaluation, and not undertaken by an organisation already ingrained in the Services or transition process, only added to the credibility of the study.

As has already been mentioned, a study of this kind had not been undertaken before. That the 2013 TMS was the first to map the transition process gave it credibility and provided a benchmark against all future research. It also provided a foundation for further debate and discussion of how best to support successful transition.

“FIMT are a very good example of where it is value for money, and especially when you see they are coming back a few years later to look at whether this report had an impact.”
Louise Simpson, Army Families Federation

“If it helps to target resources (at the problems, to drive change)...then it has to be value for money.”
Anonymous

However, one valid observation was the need to clarify what is meant by value and how it is measured. The study mapped the transition pathway and produced recommendations and guiding principles for how to ensure personnel have a ‘successful’ transition. The report was seen as a key document for driving change, but the value of any changes it has supported or contributed to is not yet known. One

view is that it is perhaps only when the 2017 update is produced will the true value of the 2013 study be known. If for example, the same metrics are used to calculate the cost of failed transition, and the overall cost in 2017 is less than 2013, it can be argued that the report has contributed to reducing the cost of poor transition.

The value of the report for different audiences was raised as important to consider. The report was viewed by some as being more relevant for the Army given its higher number of personnel and therefore higher number of potential transition ‘issues’, particularly for Early Service Leavers. Suggestions to improve the support and information available for ESLs, for example, was not viewed as equally relevant for every Service. The report has produced valuable content for a wide-ranging audience including policy makers, Service personnel and staff, and support service providers providing indirect support for policy change and supporting charities and service providers to focus their priorities.

“To see the true value of this study, we will need to see if the cost of failed transition comes down in the next report.”

Anonymous

“It’s a key document, its recognised – but we just don’t know the real impact of it.”

Anonymous

The 2013 TMS was considered to be value for money because a study of this kind had not been produced before. It was commented that the sum of its value is likely to be greater than its individual parts. It was widely praised for bringing the issues to the fore, and making recommendations for change. It has provided a baseline in terms of highlighting the issues, putting them into the public domain and starting discussions for change. But to understand the true value of the study, to understand whether it has truly impacted policy and created change, is difficult to measure and it is perhaps only when the 2017 update is produced will the true value of the 2013 study be known.

Layout and Design Feedback

The majority view was that the overall format and design of the report was right, and followed a traditional report structure in terms of foreword, executive summary and subsequent chapters. It was suggested that the key findings of the report, the cost of failed transition and the recommendations could have been brought further forward, both in the executive summary and their respective sections in the report. There was some sense that the recommendations and guiding principles were 'buried' too far towards the back of the report. One recommendation was for the report to be 'less busy' and have and perhaps produce a 'light' summarising version to support the full report.

The report's size, cover and paper quality were all received positively. It was commented that the font size was readable and the reports size and weight gave it presence and durability. Producing a paper report was perceived as valuable as it was easier to pick up and browse, read or make notes on compared with a digital version.

The sign posting that was used to indicate each chapter and highlight for the reader where they were in the report was also received positively. A general comment was made that the inclusion of infographics in reports of this style that help the reader navigate content or interpret data are always valuable. There was a preference expressed for seeing more infographic style content.

Concluding Legacy of the 2013 Transition Mapping Study

“Something that is looked back upon as the rocket fuel that kicked off, and was the catalyst for, change for the better”.
Bill Mahon, RAF Families Federation

“You cannot underestimate the power of raising the profile of transition as an issue; if the Transition Mapping Study only did that, it was really important and valuable to do so.”
Anonymous

The Transition Mapping Study laid out the transition process in a way that had not been attempted before. It was commented that prior to the study, relevant research was disjointed and the study helped tie the issues affecting transition together in one place. The report was seen as an independent body of work that provided a fact-based foundation on which further debate can be based. Placing a value on the cost of poor transition contributed to increased awareness and understanding of the transition process. The report was perceived as giving weight to discussion and lobbying for investment and encouraging policy and provision changes to support successful transition.

Many of the report’s findings, even the recommendation themes themselves, were not necessarily viewed as revelatory, but because they were laid out in a clear, concise and practical way, made many elements of the transition process that needed focusing on and that needed more research on, appear more approachable than ever before.

The 2013 TMS allowed those involved in the sector to identify where they need to work harder, what they could do to aid more people to successfully transit out of the Services, and where they can use evidence-based lobbying in a different way to continually improve support and advice on all manner of issues relating to transition for everybody involved in the resettlement process, from Service personnel to the whole family.

The 2013 TMS was perceived as independent and still relevant today. It was regarded as not being designed to be critical of work underway to support transition but focused more on providing an independent and evidence led perspective that can inform actions that help Service leavers transition more effectively in the future.

Stakeholder Recommendations

During the course of the evaluation a number of recommendations were offered for further enhancing transition knowledge and action. These recommendations are summarised in the following sections.

Knowledge Building

- Develop understanding of the transition journey for Reservist, Commonwealth and BAME personnel.
- Provide additional data that profiles Service leavers in more detail including gender and reason for discharge.
- Review the recommendations laid out in the 2013 Study and analyse the success of related initiatives.
- Provide a roadmap to guide specific actions for each recommendation theme.
- Update data points presented in the 2013 Study, for example, there was real interest in seeing what the proportion of personnel leaving now who have obtained GCSE Maths and English.
- Where possible, disaggregate data by Service, gender and socio economic groups.
- More information/ case studies relating to work experience outside the Service while they are still in-service, thus aligning military and civilian qualities/qualifications more effectively.
- Provide an increased focus on successful transition, drawing out the positives from those that transition successfully and identify lessons from them.
- Analyse transition for family members in more detail primarily concerning the family, including children's transitions, spousal employment and mental health.

Cost Modelling

- Publish analysis of the value of successful transition.
- Consider publishing a separate methodological paper that provides details of the variables used and assumptions made for financial modelling work.
- Consider the importance of recognising the many individual interpretations of successful, poor and failed transitions and the challenge this presents for developing unified metrics.

Supporting Successful Transition

- Promote a unified and joined-up approach between government and non-government organisations, ensuring they are working closely together to deliver transition support where it is needed.
- Consider opportunities to prepare Service personnel for resettlement and transition soon after joining.
- Measure and track transitioning personnel perceived quality of life during transition.
- Several references were made to the 'softer' aspects of transition and how very little research has been undertaken to explore, for example, personal relationship pressures, adapting to cultural change and bereavement and their bearing on poor transition outcomes.

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Local Government Association (LGA)
The Ministry of Defence
Training, Education, Skills, Recruiting and Resettlement (TESRR, the Ministry of Defence)
Naval Families Federation
Officers' Association
RAF Families Federation
RAF Benevolent Fund
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RFEA - The Forces Employment Charity
The White Ensign Association
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Mark Hancock

A copy of the 2013 Transition Mapping Study can be found here:

<http://www.fim-trust.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/20130810-TMS-Report.pdf>

For more information on the Forces in Mind Trust, please go to:

<http://www.fim-trust.org/>



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