

Giving struggling veterans the tools to succeed

Call to Action



Need for change

Too many ex-Service personnel find themselves struggling to integrate fully into civilian life, especially Early Service Leavers, people with poor mental health and those with deeper-seated issues that may be made worse by the stresses of transition.

Across Scotland there are hundreds of veterans in the prison system; hundreds per year declaring themselves homeless; and tens of thousands resigned to living on unemployment benefits. There are unknown numbers of others who are misusing drugs and alcohol and significant numbers who feel trapped in unproductive lives from which they can see no way out.

A loss of self-confidence, a lack of (or inability to deploy) life-skills and inter-personal skills to a civilian environment, and under-developed resilience in civilian life can all make the transition difficult, compounded by under-developed independent living and financial skills.

The costs of not addressing these issues for the individual are clear. What is also clear is that if the latent and unrecognised skills and abilities of these veterans can be unlocked and developed further, there is the potential for significant enduring benefit for individuals, families and communities.

Independent research proves that Venture Trust's Positive Futures programme provides the tools to help struggling ex-Service personnel - but these tools need to be shared and used to give people the foundation to successfully move into civilian life.



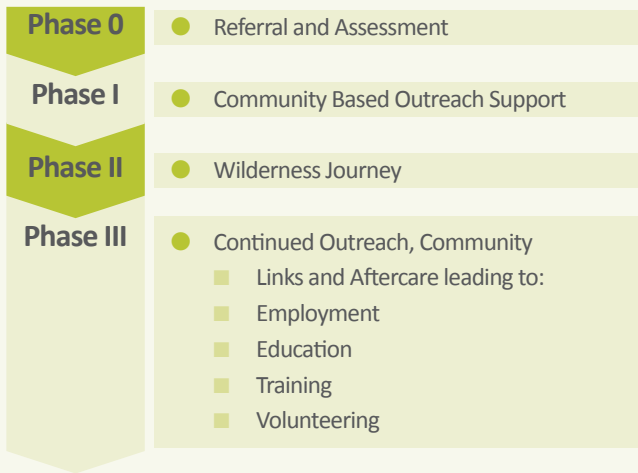
Positive Futures in action

Positive Futures is shown to be a successful, cost-effective, high value for money programme, delivering positive outcomes for veterans who have struggled in civilian life, and helping to achieve cross-cutting policy objectives.

The Positive Futures programme, and its evaluation, have been primarily funded by the Forces in Mind Trust (FiMT). The programme has delivered benefit impacts to society in the region of £2.6M to £4.0M: for every £1.00 spent, **£4.56** of societal benefit impact has been generated.

The model

Positive Futures: the phases



Positive Futures: the inputs



Positive Futures: the impacts

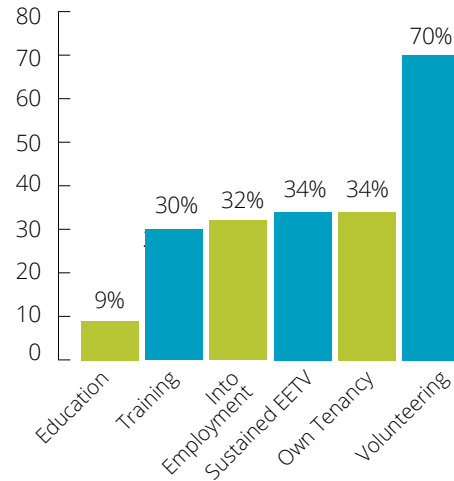


The results

Re-offending rate for Criminal Justice participants: **0%**

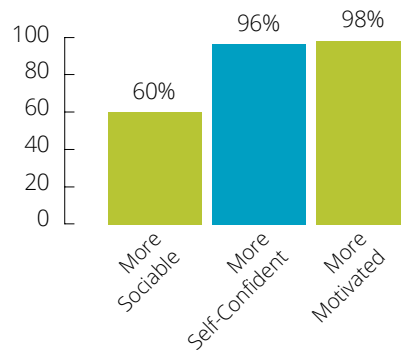
Impact: Hard Destinations

(share of all doing Wilderness Journey)



Unemployed participants going into employment, education or training: **43%**

Impact: Personal Capacity Outcomes



Homeless/insecure participants now sustaining own tenancy: **34%**

" I'd've never applied for the job or even thought about applying... but I did and I got the job."

LSV, Army, Non-CJ



Our recommendations for the Veterans' support sector:

Sustain and replicate

- Statutory bodies, philanthropic institutions and military fundraising charities must continue investment in programmes like Positive Futures
- All service providers and stakeholders must market services more effectively to veterans' families: particularly to the spouses/partners and adult children of veterans
- All support service providers and stakeholders must market their services more effectively to veterans by telling them they are not alone in needing help

Co-operate across veteran and non-veteran services

- Learn and understand each other's language
- Increase levels of co-operation and partnership
- Identify areas where "single point of referral" to veterans' services is occurring naturally
- Military services must recognize the innate value that wholly civilian programmes bring to those struggling with becoming civilians

Find 'hidden veterans'

ALL agencies, charities and support services:

- Must enquire much more rigorously about Service in the military i.e. they should ask the right question "Have you ever Served in the armed forces?"
- Must educate services, particularly non-veterans' services, on the importance of collecting accurate Service data

Understand the individual

- The armed forces should look at introducing, based on the markers identified, a mechanism to identify, and monitor those at risk of poor transition from point of application and throughout an individual's career
- That all support and statutory services and the armed forces become much more aware that an individual's challenges:
 - are not always related to Service
 - may pre-date Service
 - may not occur immediately post Service

Taking Positive Futures beyond Scotland

There is an opportunity to support struggling veterans across the UK. The key factors for replicating the Positive Futures model in other areas of the UK are:

Contextual:

- Local pool of non-statutory and statutory organisations, veterans' and otherwise
- An experienced civilian delivery organisation(s) with an interest in, or connection, to:
 - the outdoors as a therapeutic environment
 - personal development of challenged individuals;
 - working with veterans
- Accessible area of wilderness for expeditioning

Service approach:

- Ability to deliver outreach in local communities.
- Offers a well-developed and relevant personal development framework/curriculum, backed by theory of change and proven by robust evidence
- Can deliver movement towards employability, education, training and volunteering in local communities
- Ongoing participant monitoring system to determine sustained benefit

Sectoral knowledge and capability:

- Knowledge of local, national and UK policy and practice
- Reach in areas where veterans live and the majority of support services are located/headquartered
- Ability to establish, and maintain strong links with a wide network of potential referrers and support services

Expertise, systems and processes:

- The delivery organisation(s) or partnership can establish and maintain the systems, accreditations, and associated logistics and legal requirements to safely deliver expedition-based personal development work with individuals where challenging behaviour may emerge
- Has access to a pool of highly trained development workers, who are also certified outdoor activity leaders

Call to Action

Venture Trust and FiMT are committed to delivering effective support for ex-Service personnel struggling in civilian life. We invite you to endorse this call for action and be part of the movement to provide veterans with opportunities to get and keep their life on track. Please email your support to: info@venturetrust.org.uk or enquiries@fim-trust.org

For further information about supporting veterans and to download the independent research behind this Call to Action, please visit one of the websites below.

www.venturetrust.org.uk

www.fim-trust.org