

## Assessment of Scottish Government Progress against SVC Recommendations

November 2020

Key		2019 Total	2020 Total
Not implemented		7	2
Partially implemented		27	18
Implemented but work should continue to embed		29	19
Fully implemented		-	22
Superseded		-	2

## Recommendations from *Transition in Scotland, 2015*

	2019 Status	2020 Status	2020 update provided by the Scottish Government
<p><b>1</b></p> <p><b>MOD advice and briefings relevant to Scotland</b> - The Scottish Government should continue to work with the UK Government to ensure that online advice and briefings reflect housing policy and provision in Scotland, so that Service Leavers choosing to settle in Scotland are not disadvantaged.</p>		>	Recommendation has been pulled through to Housing Report and progress reported there.
<p><b>2</b></p> <p><b>Information for Local Authorities</b> - The Scottish Government and COSLA should engage with the UK Government to ensure that work on providing more information about resettlement destinations reflects the information needs of Scottish Local Authorities.</p>			As part of the wider revision of the Scottish Government website, a veteran support area has been created on mygov.scot.
<p><b>3</b></p> <p><b>Effective devolved services</b> - The Scottish Government and its agencies should engage closely with the UK Government once the new Career Transition Partnership (CTP) programme is in place to ensure that devolved services can provide the full range of employability, skills and learning support to Service Leavers in Scotland.</p>			Response to this recommendation is continuing and has largely been superseded by current work. CTP have copies of our publication "Welcome to Scotland" which provides a range of information on a variety of topics, including housing, education and employability. Links to the publication are available on the CTP website via the Forces Families Federation website. Following delay due to COVID-19, Welcome to Scotland will be updated in Summer 2021 and will be distributed appropriately, including to Military bases, family information centres and published via different channels online. The Veterans Employability Strategic Group and the Scottish Government engages regularly with CTP to

ensure that those completing their service in Scotland have the best available information.

4	<b>Extending "Opportunities for All" programme</b> - The Scottish Government should consider introducing flexibility to relax the age restrictions, extending the eligibility for criteria within 'Opportunities for All' for Early Service Leavers.	 	Work has continued throughout 2020 and recommendation has now been assessed as fully met.
5	<b>Early Service Leaver pilot scheme</b> - The Scottish Government and the Third Sector should consider piloting a Community Jobs Scotland (CJS) programme aimed at Early Service Leavers.	 	The pilot has now completed and Early Service Leavers and veterans are eligible for support through CJS.
6	<b>Incentives for employers</b> - The Scottish Government, in partnership with Skills Development Scotland, Local Authorities and the Third Sector, should consider options to extend recruitment incentives so that they encourage employers to recruit Early Service Leavers.	 	<p>The Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO), which delivers the programme on behalf of Scottish Government, works closely with veterans organisations including Poppyscotland's Employment team, RFEA/CTP Future Horizons, Veterans Scotland, ASAP, Employable and many more to promote the Community Jobs Scotland opportunities to Early Service Leavers. CJS is now business as usual and Early Service Leavers and veterans are eligible for support through CJS.</p> <p>No One Left Behind offers a flexible, person-centred employability support to those who are furthest from the labour market, helping them to progress through the Employability Pipeline towards obtaining sustainable work. There is no timescale for eligibility therefore unemployed veterans would be eligible from day one.</p>

7	<p><b>Employability Fund</b> - The Scottish Government, Local Authorities and Skills Development Scotland should consider options for targeting the Employability Fund, and future employability services, at Service Leavers.</p>			<p>Unemployed veterans and Early Service Leavers have always been eligible for support through Employability Fund after 13 weeks of unemployment, and there are a wide range of circumstances where they would be eligible for immediate entry.</p> <p>No One Left Behind offers a flexible, person-centred employability support to those who are furthest from the labour market, helping them to progress through the Employability Pipeline towards obtaining sustainable work. There is no timescale for eligibility therefore unemployed veterans would be eligible from day one.</p> <p>Skills Development Scotland is working with key partners to raise awareness of their offer to veterans and their families.</p>
8	<p><b>Modern Apprenticeships</b> - The Scottish Government and Skills Development Scotland should consider actively promoting Modern Apprenticeships to Early Service Leavers and to their potential employers.</p>			<p>Work has continued throughout 2020 and recommendation has now been assessed as fully met.</p>
9	<p><b>Invest in Young People Groups</b> - The Scottish Government should utilise Regional Invest in Young People Groups across Scotland to promote young Service Leavers amongst prospective employers.</p>			<p>Due to the impact of COVID-19 the nature of how the Scottish Government, and its partner agencies and networks, engage with young people has had to adapt to the current circumstances. We continue to have industry led regional DYW networks in place who are tasked with making the link with employers and education to give all young people insight into available opportunities for their future career prospects. Young People can also access DYW's digital services on <a href="http://www.dyw.scot">www.dyw.scot</a> which can support their entry into the labour market and access employers.</p>
10	<p><b>Youth employment initiatives</b> - The Scottish Government, working with devolved partners and engaging with the</p>			<p>Due to the immediate nature of the economic impact on young people, the Scottish Government and partners have developed the Young Person's Guarantee to connect all young people to all</p>

UK Government and Armed Forces, should identify opportunities and consider options for marketing its youth employment initiatives to Early and young Service Leavers, which might include targeted presentations, tailored leaflets, accessible on-line information and wider campaigns to raise awareness of the support available.

available opportunities whether through training, volunteering or job placements. The Guarantee was formally launched on 5 November and will form the basis of the support offer to young people. The Guarantee has an online portal where information on all interventions can be found: [www.youngpersonsguarantee.scot](http://www.youngpersonsguarantee.scot).

The Youth Guarantee Directorate within the Scottish Government will work closely with the Veterans and Armed Forces Personnel Unit to ensure that opportunities are inclusive and reflective of the unique circumstances and experiences of young veterans and Early Service Leavers. The Scottish Government was represented at the virtual Career Transition Partnership recruitment fair in 2020 to promote and highlight opportunities within the Scottish Government to Service Leavers.

- 11 Engage with employers** - The Scottish Government should use its existing mechanisms for engaging with employers to promote the employment of, and work placements for, Service Leavers within its broader employability policy framework and delivery infrastructure.



Skills Development Scotland (SDS) is Scotland's skills agency and works alongside the Scottish Funding Council to ensure the skills needs of individuals and organisations in all sectors – public, private and the third sector - are met. A key element of that is its work with employers across Scotland, developing sector and regional level Skills Investment Plans and advising individual businesses on addressing skills gaps through Our Skillsforce. A key part of SDS' work with employers is to promote opportunities for those individuals or groups who may face disadvantage in the labour market including veterans. An example of this is the work with partners earlier this year to support veterans to train to address skills gaps in the nation's cyber security workforce. Work is also continuing through the Veterans Employability Strategic Group which is being refreshed in 2020 with new co-chairs, including a Private Sector Director.

In 2017 and in partnership with Business in the Community, the Scottish Government published "Capitalising on Military Talent".

This showcases best practice and offers practical advice to employers who may not already employ veterans. The Scottish and Welsh Governments jointly funded a refresh of the toolkit in 2020 to include information for employers on the benefits of employing military spouses/partners and how to do so. This will be formally launched in late 2020.

12	<p><b>Personal Development Plan</b> - The Scottish Government, its agencies and Scottish Local Authorities should work with the UK Government to ensure that the new Personal Development Plan and related course modules are relevant to those settling in Scotland.</p>			<p>Personal Development Plans have now been superseded by the concept of Lifelong Learning and Personnel Development Records.</p>
13	<p><b>Access to medical records</b> - The Scottish Government and NHS Scotland should retain the current procedures whereby GPs in Scotland retrieve Service Leavers' medical records but also keep them under review.</p>			<p>This work is underway through separate initiatives. This includes guidance for GPs in Scotland on how veterans can share their full Service Medical Records. In addition, UK Government is developing Programme Cortisone which is due for delivery during 2020-22. As part of the programme, Service medical records will be digitised to allow for easier and more rapid sharing of documents.</p>
14	<p><b>Veterans and Families Research Institute</b> - The Scottish Government should engage with the Veterans and Families Research Institute at Anglia Ruskin University to help identify evidence needs and ensure research into transition in Scotland is also included in future programmes.</p>			<p>Work has continued throughout 2020 and recommendation has now been assessed as fully met.</p>

Recommendations from *Housing for Service Leavers & Veterans in Scotland, 2016*

		2019 Status	2020 Status	2020 update provided by the Scottish Government
1	<p><b>MOD advice and briefings relevant to Scotland</b> - The Scottish Government should continue to work with the UK Government to ensure that online advice and briefings reflect housing policy and provision in Scotland, so that Service Leavers choosing to settle in Scotland are not disadvantaged.</p> <p>(This recommendation was pulled through from Recommendation 1 in the 2015 Transition Report.)</p>			We have provided housing information from a Scottish perspective for inclusion in advice, briefings and guidance published by the MOD. We will continue to provide updates to publications and share information as and when required in order to ensure Service Leavers choosing to settle in Scotland are not disadvantaged.
2	<p><b>Proving a “local connection”</b> - The requirement to prove a “local connection” needs far better explanation in MOD, Scottish Government and Local Authority publications, including leaflets and websites, targeted at housing providers, veterans and Service personnel.</p>			Work has continued throughout 2020 and recommendation has now been assessed as fully met.
3	<p><b>Routes into social housing</b> - If Scotland is to become the destination of choice for Service Leavers, then the Scottish Government and housing providers</p>			Work has continued throughout 2020 and recommendation has now been assessed as fully met.

should give consideration to smoothing their route into social housing. Particular attention should be given to and removing any potential disadvantage caused by a lack of “local connection” brought about by military Service, both for those serving in Scotland and elsewhere.

4	<b>Scottish Housing Guide for People Leaving the Armed Forces</b> - The Scottish Government should consider wider distribution of the Scottish Housing Guide for People Leaving the Armed Forces and work with MOD, public sector organisations and charities in Scotland to raise its profile, ensuring it appears on all Scottish Local Authority websites and on relevant UK Government websites.			Work has continued throughout 2020 and recommendation has now been assessed as fully met.
5	<b>Review and improve Housing Guide</b> - The Scottish Government should review its Scottish Housing Guide for People Leaving the Armed Forces with the aim of improving content, visual impact and accessibility.			Work has continued throughout 2020 and recommendation has now been assessed as fully met.
6	<b>Review Scottish Government website housing information</b> - The Scottish Government should review the information provided on its website relating to housing targeted at Service			Work has continued throughout 2020 and recommendation has now been assessed as fully met.

Leavers, veterans and their families in order to improve accessibility and currency.

**7** **Consolidation of Scottish Government information for veterans** - The Scottish Government should consider placing all information for veterans and Service Leavers (not just information on housing) in one area like the mygov.scot website.



Work has continued throughout 2020 and recommendation has now been assessed as fully met.

**8** **Improve Local Authority website housing information** - All Scottish Local Authorities should consider offering housing information for Service Leavers, veterans and their families on their websites with direct links from Housing home pages to improve accessibility.



The Social housing allocations in Scotland- a practice guide (February 2019) reinforces the need to have clear information and housing options advice services in place for all applicants, including veterans. However, the design of a Local Authority website is a matter for each individual Local Authority.

**9** **Provide guidance for frontline Local Authority staff** - Local Authorities should consider providing additional guidance to their frontline staff on the principles of the Covenant and the council's policy on housing support for veterans.



During 2020 the Scottish Government, in partnership with local authorities, MOD and veterans organisations, promoted and distributed Armed Forces and veterans awareness training to all local authorities in Scotland via the network of Armed Forces Champions. The e-learning is a simple, user-friendly resource which aims to raise awareness and understanding of the Armed Forces Covenant, how it is implemented in the community and how the principles should be applied at a local level. The training package also provides sources of further information and support for the Armed Forces and veterans community.

10.

**Improve links between Local Authorities and MOD** - The Scottish Government should work with Local Authorities and MOD to improve information-sharing in order that those leaving the Services are aware of the opportunities available in Scotland and Local Authorities are given advance notice of those expressing a wish to live in their area (also recommended in Transition in Scotland report).



The 'Scottish Housing Guide for people leaving the Armed Forces & ex-Service personnel' was launched in November 2018. This was issued to all Local Authorities, Housing Associations, Local Authority Armed Forces and Veterans Champions, veterans charities and other external stakeholders. The Social Housing Allocations guidance was published in 2019 and highlights that the Scottish Government is committed to good housing outcomes for ex-Service personnel, and their families, and encourages landlord to consider their needs and respond appropriately. The guide also highlights that people in the Armed Forces should be encouraged to make a housing application well in advance of needing a new home.

'Welcome to Scotland – A guide for Service personnel and their families moving to Scotland' was updated in 2019 and this included a contribution on how to apply for social housing in Scotland. This will be updated again in 2021.

The Scottish Government's veterans webpage provides information about applying for social housing in Scotland and includes a link to the page which provides a drop down list to each individual council website. The Housing pages on the Veterans Gateway are also linked to the my.gov pages.

JSHAO have two factsheets on their website, one which is similar to the Scottish Government veterans page and the other is more general information about housing in Scotland.

The Preventing Veterans Homelessness Pathway is currently being developed with Veterans Scotland Housing Group and this will ensure the housing system in Scotland responds to the needs of veterans and prevents homelessness. This is expected to start at the end of 2020.

11	<p><b>Consider promoting Shelter Scotland and ASAP Citizens Advice Scotland websites</b> - The Scottish Government and other housing information providers should consider taking a lead from Shelter Scotland and ASAP Citizens Advice Scotland when looking to upgrade their websites and generate a more extensive online presence, and should consider promoting these organisations' websites more extensively.</p>			<p>Work has continued throughout 2020 and recommendation has now been assessed as fully met.</p>
12	<p><b>Ensure housing information is available to a wider audience</b> - The Scottish Government and Veterans Scotland should work together with partners, including the UK Government and other parts of the Third sector, to ensure that housing information is easily visible on the Veterans UK and other pan-UK websites in order to reach a wider audience.</p>			<p>Work has continued throughout 2020 and recommendation has now been assessed as fully met.</p>

**Recommendations from *The Veterans Community – Employability, Skills and Learning, 2016***

		2019 Status	2020 Status	2020 update provided by the Scottish Government
1	<p><b>Establish a Veterans Employability, Skills and Learning Working Group -</b> The Scottish Government should establish a Veterans Employability Strategic Working Group of key partners to provide strategic leadership and to oversee the activity required to fulfil the ambitions of more, and better, employment.</p>			The Veterans Employability Strategic Group (VESG), formed in response to recommendations from the Scottish Veterans Commissioner’s Employability, Skills and Learning, has been refreshed in 2020 with two new co-chairs - a private sector director and a senior civil servant. The group is considering a new and ambitious purpose and a clear focus. It will continue to build on and strengthen its partnership approach to employability and skills, working in collaboration to identify and strengthen pathways into employment for our Service leavers and veterans and identify ways to promote the value, skills and attributes veterans bring.
2	<p><b>Scottish Veterans Fund -</b> The Scottish Government should support proposals that promote employability and increase job opportunities amongst the veterans community as the priority when allocating resources from the Scottish Veterans Fund.</p>			Work has continued throughout 2020 and recommendation has now been assessed as fully met.
3	<p><b>Address skills gaps -</b> The Scottish Government to review how the veterans community could be most effectively utilised to fill the known skills gaps in key sectors like education, health, IT, engineering, construction, finance and insurance. In doing so, it should consider whether</p>			Some exploratory work has been undertaken, including looking at the example of attracting former oil and gas workers into teaching. Information was also shared by CTP on the sectors to which those transitioning were most commonly moving to and the skills they had to offer. The engagement of SDS in the work of the group has been very positive, however there has not been a specific output thus far.

its recent initiative to attract former oil and gas workers into teaching in the North East of Scotland should be replicated for the veterans community. This recommendation should be considered by the Veterans Employability Strategic Working Group (see Recommendation 1) as one of its early priorities.

The Scottish Funding Council (SFC) 2020-21 funding for the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) Partnership includes support for continued and extended work on the mapping of military qualifications against those which are recognised by employers in Scotland. This work has so far published guides to Infantry, Royal Artillery, Royal Electrical & Mechanical Engineers and Royal Logistic Corps qualifications. This will help employers and educational institutions understand the range of skills and expertise that those leaving the forces have to offer, and in addition support individuals to articulate their skills clearly in order to find employment or education. The Scottish Government has committed to fund this valuable work through to 2023.

The collection of reliable data in respect of the long-term employment destinations for Service Leavers is inherently complex. Whilst a snapshot of the position is taken 6 months after discharge we will need to analyse the data available in the 2022 Census to get a view of the longer term picture.

Finally, Scottish veterans are being retrained via a pilot that tests a new approach to help address a significant skills gap in the nation's cyber security workforce following funding from the Scottish Government.

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**Regional employability pilot** - The Scottish Government should initiate and co-ordinate a regional employability pilot project, based in an area where there is a high military and veteran population. The purpose should be to deliver an increased number of meaningful and sustainable employment opportunities for Service



This is an important pilot which has the potential to identify the value accrued when statutory services provide information, advice and guidance for those due to leave the Services and their families. As of 19 August 2020, 31 clients have accessed the Inverness & Elgin centres. In addition, a further five spouses/partners have engaged with SDS services in this area. The ambition from the pilot of partnership working is that this service offer be rolled out across Scotland. This was agreed at a meeting with MOD, Scottish Government and SDS in October 2019. Following COVID-related disruption, Scottish Government and SDS are now re-engaging with

Leavers, veterans, and spouses and partners.

MOD with a view to SDS engaging with Individual Education and Resettlement Officers (IEROS) and others (including CTP) to progress this process towards business as usual.

5

**Research and evaluation** - The Scottish Government should commission research to provide analysis of the current baseline of the employment situation for the veterans community and to evaluate the impact of national and local initiatives to improve job prospects.



Our response to this recommendation committed the Scottish Government to considering what gaps there were in the data and what needed to be done to address these. In 2017, we were given access to data from CTP on future cohorts of veterans which enabled the VESG to better consider priorities. The activity to date has been aligning existing services and programmes of support. The impact of this work will be monitored which could result in future research work to understand where systems and programmes could be improved. As a result of having access to CTP's data the Scottish Government will now consider forming focus groups to enable a further understanding of access to services.

Furthermore, we have previously committed to setting out a plan for additional qualitative research to identify barriers and using the results of this research to help shape thinking on a pilot approach. The research plan was discussed at the VESG but has not yet progressed further. It is likely that this work could be re-considered and taken forward as part of the VESG's refresh.

Additionally, the 2022 Census is likely to be a rich source of information on veterans' employment.

6

**Work placement scheme** - The Scottish Government should work with employers - both small and large - to find ways of offering more placements to Service Leavers, veterans, spouses and partners. This should be in



The refreshed VESG will consider the suitability and value in taking forward work placements through an employer's network. Additionally, the SDS "Certificate of Work Readiness" qualification may also be helpful for very early Service Leavers but less relevant for the older age group. It can be signposted from [Apprenticeships.scot](http://Apprenticeships.scot).

addition to those offered by Career Transition Partnership.

In addition, the Scottish Government has, throughout 2020, been working with Officer's Association Scotland to provide Fixed Term Appointments within Scottish Government primarily, initially, within the Health & Social Care Directorate to support COVID-19 priorities.

The Scottish Government is offering work placements and Fixed Term Appointments (FTA) to veterans through the Going Forward Into Employment (GFIE) programme. We are working with the Career Transition Partnership to identify suitable candidates and the initiative will give us the opportunity to take on Service leavers and veterans through short placements and FTA which could subsequently be converted to permanent. The initiative is sponsored by the Chief Executive of the Civil Service Commission and veterans are one of a number of categories of people covered by the scheme, which is intended to help them overcome potential barriers in securing employment.

Some initial guidance was given on work placements through the Capitalising on Military Talent toolkit that the Scottish Government developed and launched with Business in the Community (BITC) in early 2017. The Scottish and Welsh Governments jointly funded a refresh of the toolkit in 2020 to include information for employers on the benefits of employing military spouses/partners and how to do so. This will be formally launched in late 2020.

7

**Improving literacy and numeracy -**

The Career Transition Partnership (CTP), Local Authority community-based support services, colleges, Skills Development Scotland (SDS) and charities should promote the benefits of improved literacy and numeracy skills amongst Service Leavers and



Work has continued throughout 2020 and recommendation has now been assessed as fully met.

veterans, directing them to appropriate community-based support, including the 'Big Plus' initiative. The aim should be to generate greater awareness amongst veterans with specific needs, their families and employers in order that learning opportunities can be accessed more readily.

#### **Recognition of qualifications and skills**

- The Veterans Employability Strategic Working Group (see Recommendation 1) should produce a plan for building understanding and recognition amongst Scottish employers (especially SMEs) of the skills and qualifications gained in the military. The Group should also consider whether the current system for translating and mapping qualifications could be simplified and how it might be better utilised and understood.



This is being taken forward by SCQF Partnership and is being supported by Scottish Government funding through the Scottish Funding Council. All qualification matrices across all three Armed Forces have been revised and updated. This was a huge piece of work and vitally important as it informs everything else that we do on the project. There were many inaccuracies in the matrices and each of the 1300+ qualifications has been checked and revised where necessary.

This has now been passed back to the MOD with suggestions that they develop a plan around training and responsibilities for ensuring the matrices are kept up to date. We have offered help with this. We have had initial discussions with the three main awarding bodies around recognition of more qualifications on the SCQF. These are DAO, City and Guilds and Pearson.

Infographics have been developed to show the breakdown of qualifications across these awarding bodies as well as a version that summarises all of the qualifications on the matrices. These will be used to inform further conversations with awarding bodies which can take place now that the matrices are up to date.

Leaflets have so far been produced across Army cap badges - Infantry, REME, Royal Artillery and Royal Logistics Corps. These are

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available on the SCQF website. The Scottish Government will continue to fund this valuable work through to 2023.

9 **CTP and SDS to build on existing relationship** - The Career Transition Partnership (CTP) and Skills Development Scotland (SDS) should build on their existing relationship with the aim of ensuring Service Leavers and veterans have seamless access to SDS once their period of support from CTP comes to an end. This will be particularly important for Early Service Leavers and others in danger of 'falling between the gaps'.



Relationship between SDS/CTP remains consistent at a local level but further collaboration via the VESG is required to achieve the ambition of rolling out SDS services, in particular career guidance, across Scotland.

10 **Veterans attending college** - Colleges Scotland to work with their members to engage the veterans sector more closely in order to promote the benefits of, and opportunities to participate in, college education. Ultimately the outcome should be an increase in numbers from the veterans community taking up college places.



The HE:FE Veterans & Armed Forces Champions Network was established in January 2019 by Glasgow Caledonian and Edinburgh Napier Universities. Since its creation, every University in Scotland and around 85% of FE Colleges have joined the network. This is up from 70% and 60% respectively last year. The majority of members have now signed the Armed Forces Covenant and appointed Veterans and Armed Forces Champions. The Network has established geographical hubs and produced a toolkit for use by the staff. It held a conference in February 2020 to review the way forward. Colleges continue to plan their course and curriculum provision in line with the economic needs of their regions. This includes taking into account the needs of the learners in their regions, including veterans.

11 **Modern Apprenticeships** - The Scottish Government, Skills Development Scotland and Colleges



Work has continued throughout 2020 and recommendation has now been assessed as fully met.

Scotland should develop a plan to promote the Modern Apprenticeship programme to Early Service Leavers, veterans who would benefit from upskilling or retraining, and spouses and partners.

12

**Sponsorship at college** - The Scottish Government should work with employers to identify ways of supporting, and perhaps incentivising, sponsorship schemes that will allow a greater number of Service Leavers and veterans to undertake college studies in conjunction with full time employment.



The college sector now has the opportunity to participate in the Scottish Government's £10 million Flexible Workforce Development Fund (FWDF). It supports employers to upskill and reskill members of their workforce through college training provision enabling them to adapt and grow. Employers can undertake training and development which will increase productivity, fill identified skills gaps, upskill and retrain the existing workforce. The fund has enabled employers to flex their training budgets to support a broader range of staff. In many cases, staff supported through this fund would otherwise not have had any other opportunities for workforce development support whilst in employment.

13

**Access thresholds** - In fulfilling the recommendations from the Commission on Widening Access, all universities should consider how access thresholds can be specifically applied to the veterans community. Subsequently, they should advertise and promote these thresholds widely across the military and veterans sectors.



The Commission on Widening Access asked all Universities to implement access thresholds and they had been progressing with work to implement these for those from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds and those with care experience. SFC were asked to monitor progress on this but this has been impacted due to COVID.

However, we have considered the specific barriers veterans face when trying to access higher education, and the most appropriate interventions that can assist them. As many members of the Armed Forces leave with skills and qualifications, we consider recognition and accreditation of this prior learning to be a more effective approach than implementing access thresholds for

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**Articulation** - The Scottish Funding Council, universities and colleges to specifically consider the veterans community as they embark on the expansion of articulation, as recommended by the Commission on Widening Access.



veterans. We are taking forward work in this area through the Scottish Funding Council-funded Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework Partnership (SCQFP) project on mapping learning pathways and accrediting prior learning for Service Leavers and veterans.

The Scottish Funding Council (SFC) has developed a new National Articulation Database, which will enable a deeper analysis of articulation between colleges and universities. The first report was first published on 30 April 2019 and reported on the articulation of college Higher National Certificate (HNC)/Higher National Diploma (HND) students, their movement to Scottish HEIs and the prior academic credit they attain. SFC will use this database to improve access through the use of data analysis, for example from academic year 2017-18 onwards SFC began collecting data in the college sector about veterans, which is now available and is receiving further analysis. Officials anticipate figures will be low in the early years of collection, until wider awareness-raising and work on Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) is implemented. This will also be carried out through institutional Outcome Agreements.

SFC has also arranged with the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) for the inclusion of a field to identify veterans in the university sector. Once that data is gathered and returned, SFC will be able to consider veterans' representation, success rates, and how many are supported by articulation and other routes such as the Scottish Widening Access Programme (SWAP). This will enable interventions to be put in place through the Outcome Agreement process as required.

Articulation work for the SFC was covered by a SFC, Universities Scotland and Colleges Scotland temporary tri-partite post, which supported the work of the National Articulation Forum between

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**Information about colleges and universities** - The Scottish Funding Council should work with relevant organisations - including Universities Scotland, Colleges Scotland and Student Awards Agency Scotland - to produce material designed specifically for the veterans community. This should include information about finance and the support available for those enrolling at college or university. Subsequently, this material should be made available widely amongst the serving and veterans communities, and those like CTP and SDS who support them.



November 2018 and May 2020. The National Articulation Forum published their report in August 2020. This recommendation is also supported by the Scottish Credit & Qualification Framework Partnership (SCQFP) Mapping Project and subsequent development of leaflets and dedicated webpages.

The SFC is not responsible for funding to students in higher education at college or university, therefore the Student Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS) continues to review its existing Armed Forces Guidance as part of its annual 'Change of Session' activities. The content of the guide relates specifically to SAAS eligibility criteria and the exceptions applicable to members of the Armed Forces and their families. An updated version of the guide was made available on the SAAS website in April 2019 in advance of the 2019-2020 academic session. The updated version includes additional information for veterans of the Armed Forces.

A project has also been established, as recommended by the Student Support Review (SSR), to develop an information portal that will cover Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) on funding across further and higher education. The development of the portal is being taken forward by the Student Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS) on behalf of the Scottish Government.

Through continued engagement with SFC's Armed Forces and Veterans Community Group, we aim to ensure that all Further and Higher Education providers give the Armed Forces and veterans community consistent information around education opportunities in Scotland. The group was responsible for supporting the development of the HE:FE Champions Network and the creation of a dedicated page on the SFC website outlining sources of information, advice and guidance for veterans, Service Leavers and their families. This recommendation is also supported by the Scottish Credit & Qualification Framework Partnership (SCQFP)

Mapping Project and subsequent development of leaflets and dedicated webpages.

16	<p><b>Veterans Network/Champions in colleges and universities</b> - Colleges Scotland and Universities Scotland should work with their members and Veterans Scotland to establish a network of champions across all colleges and universities. The champions can provide the first point of contact for members of the ex-Service community applying for, or undertaking, further and higher education. They should also consider offering mentoring, advice on applications and funding, and be part of the wider champions' network in Scotland.</p>			Work has continued throughout 2020 and recommendation has now been assessed as fully met.
17	<p><b>Parliamentary scrutiny of veterans issues</b> - The Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Jobs and Fair Work should in due course report the progress made against implementing the recommendations in this report (and my two previous reports) to the Scottish Parliament. The aim should be to raise the profile of veterans issues amongst Parliamentarians and provide them with the information necessary</p>			Work has continued throughout 2020 and recommendation has now been assessed as fully met.

to scrutinise the Scottish Government's work in this field.

18

**Jobs within the Scottish Government -**  
The Scottish Government to assess its current and future recruitment policies with a view to identifying opportunities to better target and support the veterans community in securing Scottish Government jobs. In doing so, it should consider Police Scotland's approach of providing tailored information, personal support in completing applications, and advice in preparing for interviews. Mentoring from ex-Service personnel within the Civil Service is likely to play a crucial role.



During July 2020, the Scottish Government participated in an online session for the Officers Association Scotland. This session highlighted the opportunities that existed, predominantly within Health and Social Care roles, but also in the wider Scottish Government. More than 50 individuals signed up for the event which was recorded for those unable to attend.

The genesis of this session followed the successful deployment of a military planning team to the Scottish Government to support the health response to COVID-19. As of 2 October 2020, 19 expressions of interest for fixed term appointments have been received. Thus far, four have started in the Outbreak Management Directorate with a further three individuals starting shortly. Six others are being discussed with offers likely to be made soon. Two others are being offered roles elsewhere within Scottish Government including a role within Education. Though the specific nature of these appointments will not permit conversion to permanent, this is another positive step in providing employment opportunities for veterans.

The Scottish Government Armed Forces and Veterans Staff Network continues to develop and this year provided advice and support directly to veterans including mentoring, CV-writing, interview preparation and skills translation. Some of the mentored individuals were successfully offered fixed term appointments in the Scottish Government and at least one secured a job in the third sector.

The Scottish Government is offering work placements and Fixed Term Appointments (FTA) to veterans through the Going Forward Into Employment (GFIE) programme. We are working with the

**Jobs within NHS Scotland** - NHS Scotland and individual Health Boards should develop and deliver commitments made at the last Armed Forces and Veterans Joint Group meeting to utilise the talents of the veterans community and provide better support and advice to those applying for jobs within the NHS.



Career Transition Partnership to identify suitable candidates and the initiative will give us the opportunity to take on Service leavers and veterans through short placements and FTA which could subsequently be converted to permanent. The initiative is sponsored by the Chief Executive of the Civil Service Commission and veterans are one of a number of categories of people covered by the scheme, which is intended to help them overcome potential barriers in securing employment.

The NHS Scotland Careers website contains case studies from NHS employees who have previously served in the forces, giving a testimonial of their experience moving from the forces to the NHS. A recent Virtual Insight Day for veterans was well attended and a number were interested in NHS roles - ten candidates are being progressed to temporary contracts. In February 2020, the Chief Medical Officer wrote to the Head of HR within every NHS Scotland Board to highlight the importance and benefit of employing veterans. Although paused by COVID-19, we are building a range of case studies to highlight the spectrum of employment opportunities open to those who served in our forces. Additionally, following a virtual event organised with the Officers Association (Scotland), Scottish Government have been able to offer a number of veterans fixed term appointments, using their skills and experience to help us to respond to the impact of the pandemic.

As we continue through the pandemic, our policy leads will continue to look at careers events where NHS / Scottish Government jobs could be showcased – our recent experience shows that virtual events are equally valuable, so we will continue to pursue these opportunities. Specific, practical, work within local Boards will be resumed when it is appropriate and safe to do so but we will continue to explore opportunities as we move through

these unprecedented times. With the involvement of NHS Scotland’s Chief People Officer and the Office of the Chief Executive for NHS Scotland, this work remains a priority.

Recommendations from <i>Veterans Health and Wellbeing - A Distinctive Scottish Approach, 2018</i>			
	2019 Status	2020 Status	2020 update provided by the Scottish Government
1	<p><b>‘A Distinctive Scottish Approach to Veterans’ Health’</b> - The Scottish Government and NHS(S) should commit to establishing a distinctive Scottish Approach to Veterans’ Health at a strategic level, accept or adapt the guiding principles of this approach and work with their partners to embed it at an operational level.</p> 		<p>The Armed Forces Personnel and Veterans Health Joint Group will continue to keep the recommendations from this document central to its work going forward, as a directive and impetus for improvement. The SVCN via the proposed governance structures and delivery mechanisms will bring a distinctive Scottish Approach to Veterans’ Health at both a strategic and operational level.</p>
2	<p><b>Improving collaboration and partnership</b> - The Scottish Government should reinvigorate senior participation in cross-border networks with a view to improved information sharing and increased involvement in collaborative working and initiatives.</p> 		<p>We have established mutually beneficial relationships and networks with organisations in England and the devolved nations. During this reporting period we have utilised these to take a central role in sharing best practice on priority treatment messaging at four-nation level; with Welsh counterparts on messaging around veterans identifying their status. In November 2019, Scotland hosted the MOD / DHSC / Devolved Nations Partnership Board where we took the opportunity for the National Clinical Director and the Scottish Veterans Commissioner to address this group to highlight the Scottish landscape in terms of</p>

health, veterans and what we have achieved. This was well received and further strengthened links.

3	<p><b>Leadership and governance</b> - The Armed Forces and Veterans Health Joint Group should refresh its membership and remit in order to provide the vital strategic leadership that will deliver the Scottish Approach to Veterans' Health.</p>			<p>Work has continued throughout 2020 and recommendation has now been assessed as fully met.</p>
4	<p><b>National Managed Clinical Network</b> - The Scottish Government and NHS(S) should establish a network on veterans' health. The network will have oversight of delivering the Scottish Approach to Veterans' Health, and will consider the key issues raised in this report and others it deems relevant. It should reflect current structures in the health and social care sector in its membership and approach.</p>			<p>The Scottish Veterans Care Network has been established and will be formally launched in November 2020. Engagement with a broad range of stakeholders has enabled the Network to create a delivery strategy, setting out immediate priorities and a strategy for implementation of these. The SVCN strategy document was accepted and approved by the NHS Chief Executives Group on 4th August. This document will go to the Chief Officers Group shortly.</p>
5	<p><b>Mental Health Action Plan</b> - The Scottish Government and NHS(S), through the network on veterans' health (see Recommendation 4), should produce a Mental Health Action Plan for the long-term delivery of services and support. Systemic issues of funding, collaboration,</p>			<p>This is an immediate priority for the Scottish Veterans Care Network. Early engagement with stakeholders to inform that work is now underway. However, due to the impact of the pandemic response on capacity within the Network, and also the availability of stakeholders to engage in this work, timescales for publication may be slightly delayed until later in 2021. A mapping of stakeholders and the services provided is in progress. An integral part of this work will be involvement in the development with partners, of clear and integrated pathways for/to care for our</p>

leadership, planning, governance and training of staff will be key.

veterans, in relation to mental health. One of the SVCN first consultations was with Scottish Government, Combat stress and Veterans First Point (V1P) as the key mental health providers in Scotland.

6

**Drugs misuse** - The Scottish Government and NHS(S) should assess the scale and nature of drugs misuse – especially prescription and non-prescription painkillers – amongst the veterans community in Scotland and introduce remedial measures. This should be taken forward by the Joint Group and network, and included as part of the Mental Health Action Plan.



The DAISy system will record details of individuals receiving treatment for alcohol and drug problems and will have the facility to highlight veteran status, so that the scale and nature of those receiving treatment can be measured. Timeframes for DAISy have been reviewed externally and an implementation date has been set for before the end of the current calendar year. Once implemented, we will use the first quarter of data collection to construct metrics around alcohol and drug treatment in the veterans population. The Scottish Government has established a Short Life Working Group (SLWG) on Prescription Medicine Dependence and Withdrawal. Its remit is to consider, in a Scottish context, the recommendations made in the Public Health England Prescribed Medicines review (of the evidence for the dependence on, and withdrawal from, prescribed medicines). The group has met virtually during the COVID period and will report its finding (in the form of draft recommendations) to the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport by the end of October. It is envisaged that a public consultation will then follow.

7

**Barriers to accessing services** - The Scottish Government and NHS(S) should build on existing work aimed at reducing barriers to veterans accessing mental health services. This will include measures to address issues of stigma, seeking help, and improving awareness and understanding within the medical profession. This should be



The Scottish Veterans Care Network will focus on mental health services for veterans over its first two years. In addition, messaging on priority treatment will increase awareness of veterans' rights and promote access to services. This recommendation is closely linked to Recommendation 5, in terms of access to mental health services and gathering intelligence on stigma and barriers to accessing services, is included in the proforma detailed above in Recommendation 5. Furthermore,

taken forward by the Joint Group and network, and included as part of the Mental Health Action Plan.

there is a proposed working group within the SVCN directly linked to national frameworks and pathways.

8

**Access to life-long services** - The Scottish Government, NHS(S), Health Boards and local Councils should make a commitment to veterans with the most severe and enduring physical (and mental) conditions that they can access the highest quality health and social care services for life and as their needs change. Health and Social Care Partnerships and Integrated Joint Boards will be instrumental in planning the delivery of these services and the national network recommended in chapter 2 should assume responsibility for oversight of this work as an early priority.



We would expect this to be explored within the remit of the Scottish Veterans Care Network. SVCN has undertaken a stakeholder mapping exercise to ensure that all appropriate bodies and organisations across the landscape of health and social care (and other stakeholders) have representation on the SVCN Governance groups (Oversight Board and Core Steering Group) to ensure engagement in collectively working towards access to life-long services. This includes a Health and Social Care Partnerships (HSCP) Chief Officer representative who will link to the overall Chief Officers Group, as well as NHS Veterans Champions (working regionally) to disseminate and collate intelligence from NHS boards/ HSCPs. This recommendation will interlink with Recommendation 7.

The SVCN has begun work to map the range of existing health and care services available for veterans across Scotland, this will include services provided by NHS Boards, Health and Social Care Partnerships (HSCPs), Integrated Joint Boards (IJB's), Third Sector and Councils and Charities. This will be compiled along with existing published data on veterans' health, in order to develop a Mental Health Action Plan which will inform the planning of services for the future. The SVCN has started collaborative work with Public Health Scotland (PHS) and MoD on sources of data regarding veterans in Scotland. A working group within the SVCN on data and information is in the development stages and this group is intended to drive forward work on this. The proforma to gather intelligence around the Mental Health Action Plan will also go out to HSCPs and IJB's to gather intelligence around strategic planning for veteran's services and will thus link to this

			recommendation and is envisaged will inform planning of services for the future.
9	<p><b>Funding for multiple injuries</b> - The Scottish Government and NHS(S) should give consideration to whether the costs of specialist care for veterans who have suffered polytrauma should be funded through the National Services Division (NSD).</p>	 	<p>We would expect this to be explored within the remit of the Scottish Veterans Care Network. The commissioning of the Scottish Trauma Network (STN), and all the additional funding that has gone to boards to fund services for seriously injured people will help towards this recommendation. This funding is outwith NHS National Services Division (NSD) within which the STN and SVCN are housed. Although NSD and the STN have been the mediators for getting funding approved. See our response around the collaborative working between the STN and SVCN, around veterans.</p>
10	<p><b>The National Trauma Network</b> - NHS(S) should include the specific needs of veterans who have suffered polytrauma as part of its work in setting up a national Trauma Network.</p>	 	<p>The Scottish Trauma (STN) and Scottish Veteran Care Network (SVCN) teams have been discussing how to collaboratively work to support Recommendation 10. A representative from the SVCN has been invited to sit on the STN Rehabilitation working group. Initial discussions have included how to identify veterans who have been discharged from the military with specific ongoing rehabilitation needs following poly trauma in service, as well as those who have suffered physical injury as a veteran which might result in a PTSD response/other mental health needs, to ensure a holistic approach to care. It has been agreed that veterans will be a standing agenda item on the STN rehabilitation group to ensure that veterans' needs (which may be different) are represented and considered and these conversations continue, to ensure holistic person-centred care for all.</p>
11	<p><b>Wheelchairs for amputees</b> - NHS(S) should adapt current arrangements to ensure an appropriate level of funding is available to guarantee that</p>	 	<p>This is a priority of the SOG and has been progressed by the IG. Similar to action taken on Hearing Aids, a National Clinical Director letter will go to all all territorial boards to ask them for Assistive Technology services to provide a like-for-like service and to</p>

wheelchairs provided by the MOD for veterans with severe amputations can be serviced, maintained and replaced with the best possible equipment commensurate with that individual's needs.

establish autonomy for them to maintain MOD-issued wheelchairs. On the broader issue of inequities in wheelchair provision, the Scottish Government team with policy responsibility for wheelchairs will engage with stakeholders to discuss potential resolution.

12	<p><b>Chronic pain management</b> - The National Advisory Committee for Chronic Pain (NACCP) should consider veterans specifically as part of their work to improve chronic pain management in Scotland.</p>	 	<p>The Pain Association Scotland (PAS) ran a very successful pilot from 2018 to 2019 on chronic pain self-management for 41 veterans. This was in the format of group meetings at Erskine House and through 1:1 sessions with 11 veterans. The pilot received excellent feedback from participants, with some describing the course as “informative, educational and interesting”, and commenting that the course has “taught me to accept, manage and deal with” pain. PAS has secured a further 18 months of funding as of March 2020, and will put the pilot findings before the National Advisory Committee for Chronic Pain with the aim of embedding the services provided.</p>
13	<p><b>Funding hearing</b> - The Scottish Government and NHS(S) should make funding available so that veterans with the most severe hearing loss as a result of their military service can have access to the best possible hearing aids and support.</p>	 	<p>Hearing Aid provision has been a priority for the Strategic Oversight Group and Implementation Group (SOG / IG). The National Clinical Director wrote to the Head of Audiology in all NHS Boards to request support to ensure that where a serving member of the Armed Forces or a veteran, presents with a previously issued hearing aid, that every effort will be made to maintain and support their use of that device or, where that is not possible, any change is sympathetic, even where this means that in some cases there is a small additional cost.</p>
14	<p><b>The Invictus Games</b> - The Scottish Government should work with partners, charities and others to scope</p>	 	<p>Superseded – no longer feasible.</p>

a proposal to host a future Invictus Games in Scotland.

15

**Tackling health inequalities** - The Scottish Government, NHS(S) and partners should identify veterans as a distinct group in their work to tackle health inequalities. In doing so they should produce proposals for preventing or mitigating inequalities as they apply to this group, with the ultimate aim of improving health outcomes for all.



NHS Inform has pages dedicated to veterans' health and rights, with links to other services. The information in those pages is replicated in the "Welcome to Scotland" document for serving personnel and their families who are posted in Scotland. Part of the work towards developing the Mental Health Action Plan and the proforma to gather intelligence around this is to identify where current inequalities may lie in terms of access to mental health services for veterans, and also aims to identify unmet need for specific groups within the veterans' community (that may be associated with ethnic group, gender, sexuality, age, nature of their difficulties, type or length of military service, or method of discharge).

16

**Identifying veterans** - The Armed Forces and Veterans Joint Health Group should oversee work to increase the number of veterans declaring their previous service to GPs and others in the system. This will likely involve NHS(S), MOD and veterans organisations.



It is now a mandatory element of training for new GPs to undertake training and demonstrate awareness of veterans and their specific issues. This should mean that GPs are better prepared to initiate a conversation with patients on their Armed Forces career history and any medical need resulting from that. In addition, we are working with Scottish Government primary care policy leads and NHS Scotland to trigger a "yellow flag" on the declared veteran status on a patient's medical record, so that this is immediately visible to the GP during each consultation. The SVCN has started collaborative work with Public Health Scotland (PHS) and MoD on sources of data regarding veterans in Scotland. A working group within the Network on data and information in the development stages and this group is intended to drive forward work on this.

17

**Using information** - The Armed Forces and Veterans Joint Health Group should oversee efforts to improve methods of recording, displaying and sharing information about veterans within the health and social care sector. This will be with a view to providing health professionals with the information needed to better understand and support veterans.



The Implementation Group has initiated work between NHS Fife IT department and Scottish Government eHealth policy leads to overcome challenges with the Trakcare system, with the aim of veterans' status being highlighted on medical referral documents between primary and secondary care. It was necessary to pause this work in February 2020 and we are hopeful that it can be resumed soon. Statisticians from NHS National Services Scotland have been working with MOD to use data on veterans and Service Leavers to better understand the trends and messages that can be drawn from this. Going forward, we will add another layer to this work by working with a Scottish Government Improvement Adviser to establish i) where the data indicates good practice, and share this and ii) where the data indicates a gap or need, we can provide targeted support. The SVCN has started collaborative work with Public Health Scotland (PHS) and MoD on sources of data regarding veterans in Scotland. A working group within the Network on data and information in the development stages and this group is intended to drive forward work on this.

18

**Veterans Champions** - The Scottish Government and Veterans Scotland should build on recent work to support the network of NHS and Council champions to develop the role so that it can continue to be effective in supporting the delivery of health and social care to veterans within the new health landscape of Scotland.



Work has continued throughout 2020 and recommendation has now been assessed as fully met.