

# Your three steps to career success



## KICKSTART YOUR TRANSITION

### The smart way to get on track with your next career

The OA supports thousands of officers in their move to careers outside the military providing careers advice, connecting them with job opportunities, employers and a network of industry experts to help them succeed.



# Meet Our Career Consultants

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## **Fiona Jackson, London**

Fiona completed a Short Service Commission with the Royal Army Education Corps and then three years in the TA with the Royal Artillery. Fiona has worked in HR for both the commercial and not-for-profit sectors, including John Lewis and Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO). Fiona joined the OA in November 2010.

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## **Lisa Jones, London**

Lisa left the Army in 2001 after serving for eight years and embarked on a career in investment banking, which included roles at Morgan Stanley and UBS. Lisa joined the OA in October 2012.

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## **Clive Lowe, London**

Clive served with the Royal Engineers and Gurkha Engineers for 12 years. After completing his MBA, Clive joined the management company of the Dubai World Trade Centre, and worked for the NEC Birmingham. Clive joined the OA in February 2013.

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## **Jo Sturdy, Bristol**

Jo is an experienced Career Consultant who has worked in the private and public sectors, including Right Management and CTP. Jo is a qualified Executive Coach with a Masters degree in Social Ecology. Jo joined the OA in 2018.

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# The Transition Process

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There are three main steps to follow in transition:



**Research > Refinement > Job Campaign**

You may be clear about the career path you want to take and have already started your research. Or you may be overwhelmed by the options out there. Every transition is different so do not be too concerned if you are still unsure about your next steps.

## Stage 1 - Research

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Consider all aspects of your life holistically, not just your job options. Take into account other factors that will influence your decision, such as your family or social circumstances.

Ask yourself these three questions:

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|-----------------|--|
| <b>WHAT</b>     | <b>– job roles are you interested in?</b>                                    |
| <b>WHERE</b>    | <b>– would you like to work and how much are you willing to travel?</b>      |
| <b>HOW MUCH</b> | <b>– would you like to earn and what is the minimum you need to live on?</b> |

The time it takes to evaluate these factors varies for each individual. Everyone has different pressures in their job, but if possible, aim to give yourself 3 - 12 months for research prior to leaving the Services.

# Stage 1 - Research (continued)

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**Roles** - Some questions for you to consider

- Do you understand how your skills and experience match targeted roles, and can you describe them succinctly on your CV?
- Have you considered how these skills might evolve into a new career over the next 3-5 years?
- Will the role be sufficiently stimulating and satisfying for you?
- What are your salary expectations – do you know if the role will match them?
- Can you find this role in your preferred location?
- Have you identified any gaps in your learning? What qualifications might be advantageous?
- Can you bridge any gaps sufficiently with the use of ELCs on appropriate courses?
- Are you networking with those already in target roles/sectors to find out more about the real characteristics of the job?
- What are your priorities? Do you want a job that evolves into a career or do you want a job for the next five years before retirement, or moving abroad?
- Do you want to focus on a completely new sector or type of role? How will this affect your salary?
- Do you want to start your own business or consultancy? How much funding is needed for the startup and how long will it take to generate the required profits to meet your income needs?
- Are you intending to build a portfolio career and looking for Non-Executive Director roles?
- Are you considering overseas roles? Have you assessed whether an overseas job role will permit you to work in a similar role back in the UK?
- Full Time Reserve Service (FTRS) roles – how does this strengthen your profile when you look for non military jobs?

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**Sectors** – Consider your personal values and what is important to you. This will help guide you in your job choices and the companies you decide to work for.

- Do you prefer the private, public or third sector?
- Do you want a complete change? Are you prepared to go back to college and undertake more study (e.g. to train as a teacher or solicitor)?
- Your values – How would you feel if you told your friends you worked for any of the following brands or organisations - John Lewis, Barclays, Tesco, Aldi, Lidl, Wills Tobacco, William Hill Bookmakers, Serco, Ann Summers, BAE Systems, Police or the Fire Services?
- Which sectors are buoyant or developing with genuine opportunities?

“Don't underestimate your ability to cope under pressure. I hear time and time again that employers are impressed by ex-military because of their can-do attitude.”

Liz Coombs - Head of Talent Brand, Deloitte

# Stage 1 - Research (continued)

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**Family** - How will family circumstances impact your choice of role?

- Children – their ages and educational needs.
- Family members who may be elderly, less able or dependant on you or your spouse/partner.
- If your spouse/partner is already in an established career – could this affect relocation?
- Is it an opportunity to move to a new part of the UK or overseas?
- Look ahead – what events could affect your choices in the coming years? Will you receive an inheritance or need to take over a family business?
- What sort of a weekly commute are you willing to undertake?
- Will you need to take short notice accommodation into consideration, or will you need to travel long distances for a weekly commute? Airbnb and SpareRoom websites are potential options.

“The OA really helped me to understand my career options. I felt more confident in my decisions, knowing I could ask for advice.”

Vix Anderton - Former RAF officer

**How Much** – Do you have a minimum salary requirement for your next role?

- Have you put together a home budget (including partner/spouse income), and considered what you need to earn to maintain your current lifestyle?
- What is the absolute minimum you must earn to ensure household costs are covered?
- How does your Armed Forces pension affect earning requirements and taxation?
- How does any terminal grant affect your mortgage and earning requirements?
- What about school fees or support for children at university?
- Have you been networking to find out your true value and likely income in preferred roles? You may need to compromise in home budgeting during the initial transition stages, but bear in mind that income has the potential to grow.

**CVs** – Work in progress

- Begin to prepare an outline CV that can be refined throughout your transition – even if you've not completed all your research or selection.
- Recognise and list your skills and experience to reflect your:
  - Achievements
  - Qualifications
  - Project management experience
  - Core skills and knowledge in your professional field of work
  - Non-core areas of activity such as PR, Marketing, Finance, or working with Trade Unions, Commercial Contracts, Facilities Management, Service Level Agreements.

## Stage 2 - Refinement

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After you begin your research, take time to crystallise your thoughts and draw on the knowledge gained. Select the relevant roles and begin to plan your job campaign.

- **Role selection** - choose roles that are realistic in terms of job satisfaction, salary and match your skills and experience.
- **CVs** - prepare a template CV for each role chosen. It is common for officers to be able to generate differing CVs to cover such topics as project management, security, defence, education, etc.
- **LinkedIn profile** – you'll need a professional photograph and a profile that promotes your individual brand. No photos of you in military uniform or with your children. Attend an OA LinkedIn workshop for professional guidance on how to use it to best effect.
- **Salary** - understand your market value for selected roles in the labour market – and in turn, manage expectations of your family.





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- **Networking** – research key people who can help you understand the sectors and companies you are targeting.
  - **Job search** - select the key websites to look at each week that offer relevant job adverts.
  - **Time management – networking versus adverts** - research whether the primary route to the job is via networking or adverts or a combination – this will heavily influence how time is used on each activity (OA research shows that 7 out of 10 officers find work via networking). For example:

- Project Management	Networking
- Defence	Networking
- Livery Companies	Adverts, but with networking
- Financial Services	Networking
- NHS	Adverts, but with networking
- Bursar	Adverts, but with networking
- Civil Engineering	Networking
- Consultancy	Networking
- Security	Networking
  - **Commercial experience** - consider work placement, shadowing or a short internship to find out more about a business or organisation.

“I love the excitement of the new challenges and the very different work culture that I now experience.”

Andy Gordon, former officer

## Stage 2 - Refinement (continued)

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- **Military related agencies** - how relevant are those on the list below:
  - Regional networking events as listed on OA website
  - The List
  - Liquid List
  - White Ensign Association - Royal Navy and Royal Marines officers
  - D Club (for RM)
  - Cavalry and Guards Club networking events
  - LinkedIn military focused groups
  - X-Forces
- **Recruiters** – gather information on recruitment firms that are valuable to monitor or send your template CV to. Targeted use of time rather than random.
- **Qualifications and ELCs** – select training courses that add value to your profile for your future career.
- **Notice period** – officers are frequently unsure of how quickly they can leave the Services, so aim to gain some clarity from your boss.
- **Business cards** – have these to hand for networking opportunities or carry them with you always – you never know who you might meet!

Create a timeline for activities in the months ahead:

- Termination date – is this fixed or negotiable?
- Consider when to start researching. Reach out to people who can help – from peers, former colleagues, to the OA.
- Could your child's schooling influence your leaving date?
- What could be the impact of quieter periods of activity over the holidays? This can greatly reduce effective networking time and there are likely to be fewer job adverts.
- Consider the appropriate time to approach relevant recruiters/ employers, too early could risk causing annoyance if you're on a long notice period.

## Stage 3 - Job Campaign

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By now, you should be in a position to think about what you want and where to go next:

- **Target roles** – perhaps no more than four different types of work/roles at any one time – too many could dilute your use of time to grow effective networks.
- **Networking** – reach out to people who can offer good advice, knowledge and expertise, and add significant value to growing a stronger network in the right sector.
- **Adverts** – which websites will you check each week?
- **Events and military related agencies** – those that add value (OA network events, CTP Job Fairs, Liquid List etc.)
- **Review** progress at key points along the timeline.
- **Plan B** – have a backup plan in case activity in preferred roles doesn't come to fruition.
- **Records** – track networking activity, job adverts, applications and events on a spreadsheet, or in a good old-fashioned notebook.

“Registering with the OA was easy and the staff were very helpful. It was very useful to speak to an advisor who is experienced in dealing with service leavers.”

# Independent, expert careers advice and services for officers

The Officers' Association (OA) is an independent charity working to help officers find jobs outside the military.

Whether you are still serving, in transition or a former officer wishing to change career, the OA is able to offer officer focused, impartial and practical advice on all aspects of employment.

## Your new career checklist:

- Book a one-to-one career consultation
- Get your CV and LinkedIn profile reviewed
- Check our Executive Jobs Board
- Sign up for our workshops and webinars
- Attend our networking events



Manage Your  
Job Search  
Anytime, Anywhere

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The OA Employment App



Download the App:  
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