

50+

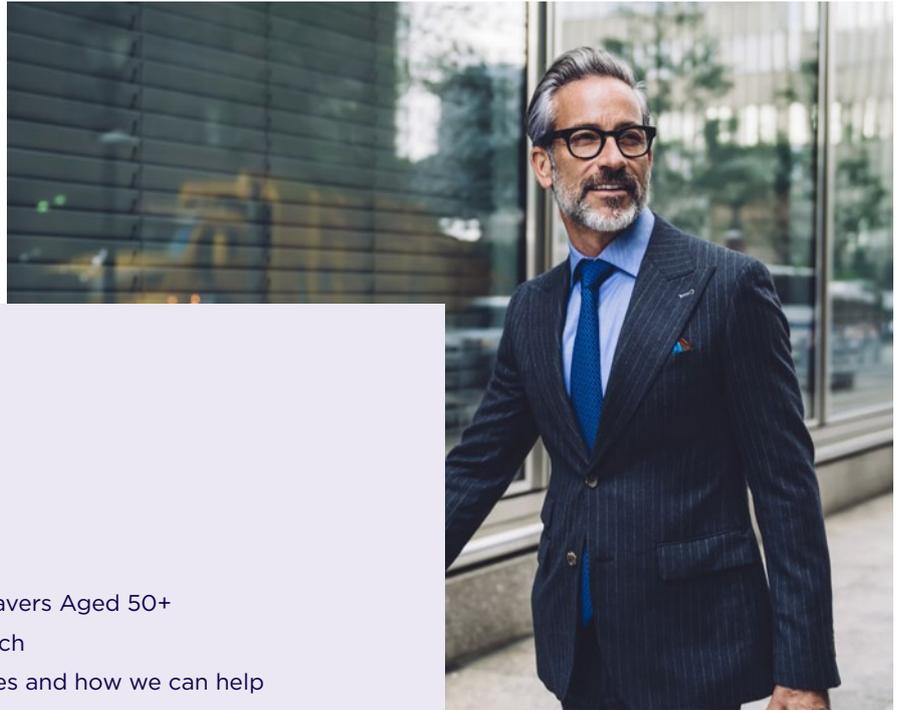
50+
JOB SEEKERS
GUIDE



OFFICERS'
ASSOCIATION

FiMT
forces in mind trust
SUCCESSFUL SUSTAINABLE TRANSITION





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1. INTRODUCTION



LAURA BLAIR

Director of Executive Employment
Forces Employment Charity

FOREWORD

Our Armed Forces is a young workforce by both necessity and design and to ensure a continuous flow of new talent through the ranks, most of our senior personnel must leave by the age of 55. Finding yourself searching for your first civilian position after a lifetime of military service is a challenge we recognise.

Nor does it make economic or social sense to have highly skilled military personnel economically inactive when older workers are crucial to the future of the UK economy.

A third of ex-service people said that their transition into civilian employment was difficult.

We were therefore delighted to have the opportunity to work with the Forces in Mind Trust (FiMT), which funded much-needed research by the Centre for Research into the Older Workforce to identify the unique challenges faced by 50+ Service leavers, and ways in which employers can support them into work.

The findings of the research allowed several recommendations to be made to help overcome the barriers and challenges Service leavers face. Some of the recommendations concern organisations which support Service leavers into civilian work, but others focus on the Service leavers themselves.

As a military charity, we work closely with employers to champion the talents across the business community. We are experts in mapping military skills to in-demand roles, ensuring that employers understand how best to recruit and retain military talent.

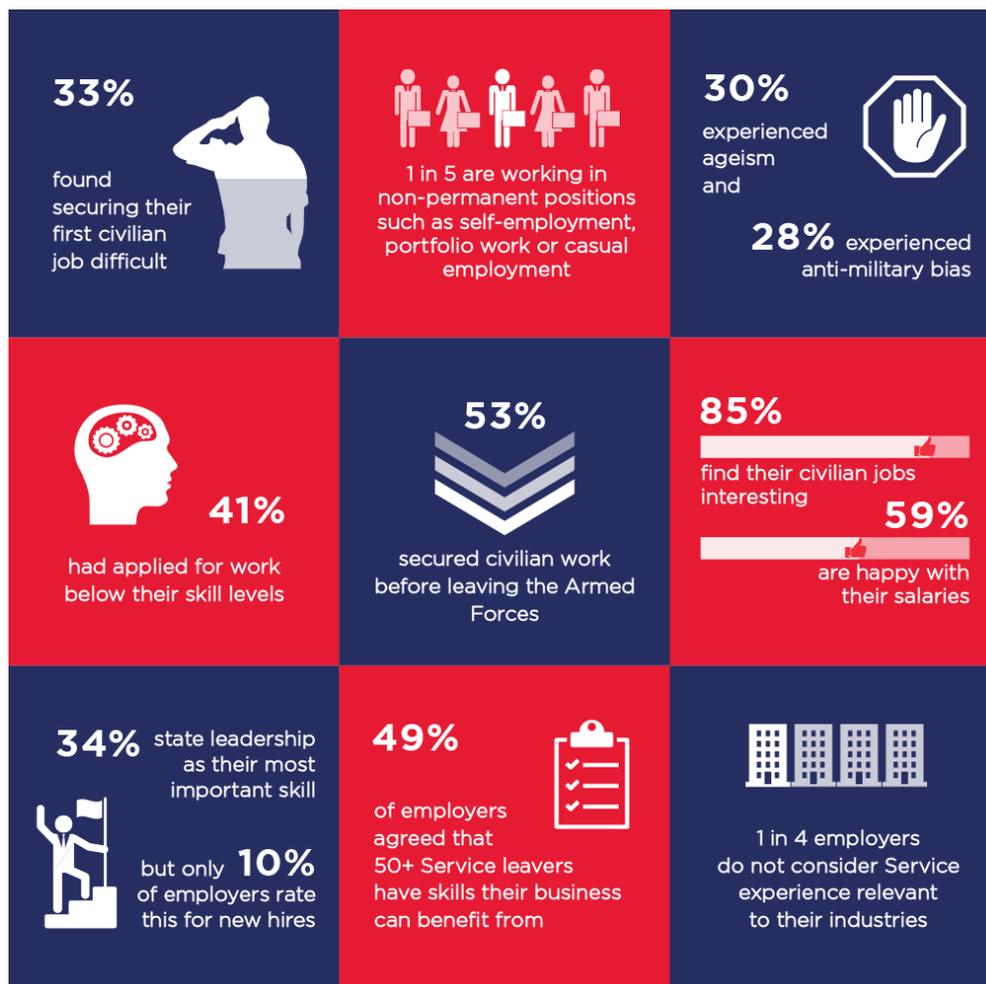
In this guide, we aim to address some of the challenges highlighted by the research and look at how 50+ Service leavers can best plan and prepare for a successful transition into the civilian career of their choice.

UNDERSTANDING 50+ SERVICE LEAVERS

Understanding Service leavers 50+: Their challenges and experiences in the civilian jobs market is a study for the Officers' Association by the Centre for Research into the Older Workforce, funded by the Forces in Mind Trust.

The research explores the experiences of Service leavers transitioning out of the Armed Forces at or after the age of 50 and searching for work in the civilian job market. The main objectives of the research were to understand the perception of 50+ Service leavers regarding the barriers and challenges to mid-career transitions and the perceptions and motivations of employers around hiring Service leavers in this age group.

Through a series of interviews and workshops, the project investigated 50+ Service leavers' experiences of and attitudes towards transition. In addition, it revealed some examples of good practices being undertaken by employers and the perspectives of managers who engaged with 50+ Service leavers in civilian employment.



SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

The key findings of the study can be summarised as follows:

TIME TO LEAVE

- Reaching the military pension age was the most common reason for 50+ Service leavers deciding to transition from the Armed Forces.
- Family context shapes the decision-making of 50+ Service leavers in terms of timings.
- 50+ Service leavers are generally encouraged to maintain personal development plans (PDPs) throughout their military service.
- Many 50+ Service leavers say they feel a sense of loss on leaving the Armed Forces.

JOBS MARKET

- Some 50+ Service leavers reported making efforts to hide their age and/or past military service when looking for work.
- 50+ Service leavers with long military service can struggle in navigating a civilian jobs market which they have not participated in for decades, if at all.
- Some 50+ Service leavers said they struggled to understand the customs and practices of the job searching process.
- There is a significant mismatch between the skills which 50+ Service leavers have to offer and what employers say they need.
- Social networks were cited by most 50+ Service leavers as crucial in the job search process.
- Experiences of 50+ Service leavers in the civilian jobs market is varied, but a significant minority struggle to find work which they value and makes good use of their skills and abilities.
- 50+ Service leavers report widespread experiences of discrimination. 30% of people who have left the Armed Forces at this age have experienced ageism when looking for civilian work and 28% say that they have experienced anti-military bias.



CONCLUSIONS

- While most 50+ Service leavers find work before or soon after leaving the Armed Forces, a minority experience long term unemployment, under-employment, or precarious work.
- 50+ Service leavers said that their main priorities when looking for work were to find a role which is interesting (75%), made good use of their skills (67%) and made them feel valued (52%).
- Employers generally recognise and value the skills which 50+ Service leavers have to offer.
- 50+ Service leavers said they were happy with the work they had found in the civilian world.
- One in five 50+ former Service people is in non-permanent work such as self-employment, portfolio work or casual employment.
- Many Service leavers reported having made multiple job transitions since leaving the Armed Forces.
- On average 50+ Service leavers said they planned to retire at the age of 63.

You can download a full copy of this report on the OA website at officersassociation.org.uk/research/understanding-service-leavers-aged-50



OVERCOMING THE JOB SEEKER CHALLENGES - HOW WE CAN HELP

Every year, approximately 1,200 Regular Service members aged 50 or over leave the Armed Forces, the majority of whom will transition to a second career in the civilian workforce.

However, 50+ Service leavers are not unique in making a mid-life career transition. As people remain healthier and able to work longer, they may want or need to make a career change in the latter part of their working lives, either driven by a desire for change or circumstance.

Some 50+ Service leavers transition out of the Armed Forces with a civilian job waiting for them, but others may feel anxious or ill-prepared for entering a civilian labour market. This is where employment support is vital, and good preparation and planning can make all the difference.

UK job vacancies are currently¹ at their highest levels since the turn of the millennium and many of the occupations facing the greatest skills shortages like engineers, scientists, directors, and project managers are those Service leavers have the skills to fill, albeit with top-up training and support.

Employers report struggling to find people with the skills required for the job and the right attitude and

¹ ONS Labour Market Review



1,200
Regular Service members aged 50+ leave the Armed Forces each year

soft skills. Research shows that employers think of people with military experience as being disciplined, willing to support their teams and having a strong work ethic and that older workers are considered as loyal, hardworking, and mature.

Career planning and understanding how to translate and maximise the value of your military skills and experience for the civilian jobs market are fundamental in to creating a successful path to transition.

We will look at how you can start that journey and how a one-to-one career consultation can support you through each stage of the process and beyond.

IDENTIFYING YOUR NEEDS AND CAREER GOALS

Leaving the Service can be a daunting prospect. However, taking time to plan and prepare yourself, both practically and mentally, will help you feel more in control of the transition process.

- You should aim to start working on your career options as early as possible, at least three months before leaving the Service and ideally as much as 12-18 months beforehand.
- Creating a transition plan will not only help focus your thoughts and ideas, but it will also help you to maximise your time and efficiency and build your confidence and positivity. Every transition is different, so don't worry if you are still unsure about the future direction of your civilian career. It's easy to feel overwhelmed by the options out there, so try breaking the process down into manageable stages.
- Consider all aspects of your life holistically, not just your job options. Ask yourself these questions:

WHAT
job roles
interest you?

WHERE
would you like to work,
and how long are you
willing to travel?

HOW MUCH
would you like to earn,
and what is the minimum
you need to live on?

“Employers generally had positive perceptions of service leavers, especially those with long military service.”

- The time it takes to evaluate these factors varies. Everyone has different pressures in their job, but, if possible, aim to give yourself 3 - 12 months for research prior to leaving the Services.
- Try to be clear about your priorities for both the short and longer term. Do you want a job that evolves into a long-term career, or just a job for the next five years? If you are thinking about starting your own business, what start-up costs would be involved and what profits will you need to generate? If you are considering a complete change, are you prepared to retrain or complete further study? Look at which sectors are buoyant or developing with genuine opportunities.
- What are your family circumstances and how will these impact your choice of role or any relocation? Do you have children and schools to consider, elderly family members or other dependants who rely on your support? Also think about what sort of a commute you are willing to undertake, either daily or as a longer weekly commute? It is true that the post pandemic working world is already evolving with greater emphasis on flexible working, but bear in mind that you will most likely be expected to attend face to face meetings to build relationships with colleagues and clients, so location is still an important factor to consider.
- Put together a home budget and determine what you need to earn to maintain your current lifestyle. Look at the likely earning potential of your preferred job roles and consider how your Armed Forces pension may affect earning requirements and taxation. You may need to compromise during the initial stages but bear in mind that income has the potential to grow.

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 start-up 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?	✓

SECTORS - Some questions for you to consider

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?	✓

HOW MUCH? - Some questions for you to consider

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 during your initial transition stages, but bear in mind that income has the potential to grow.	✓



2. REFINING YOUR CAREER STRATEGY

THE VIEW FROM EMPLOYERS - WHAT ARE THEY LOOKING FOR?

There is a significant mismatch between the skills which 50+ Service leavers have to offer and what employers say they need.

The skill which older Service leavers say they have which is most important is leadership, but only 10% of employers say that leadership skills are what they are looking for.

The two skills which employers say they are in most need of are technical skills and industry-based experience, but only 15% and 13% respectively of 50+ Service leavers list these as the most valuable skills they have to offer.

Employers generally recognise and value the skills which 50+ Service leavers have to offer.

They say that employers can make good use of military skills, that 50+ Service leavers have a good range of experience and that they are dedicated and loyal. However, many employers struggle to match the skills of older Service leavers with the needs of their organisation.

Perceptions employers have of 50+ Service leavers often do not match reality. For example, many employers think of older Service people as being regimented and unadaptable, but Service leavers themselves say that military service requires them to be resilient within the context of uncertainty and change.

While there is a widespread perception that older Service leavers have career and salary expectations which are unrealistically high, Service leavers themselves report a range of aspirations for their post-military careers.

Some employers recognise the difficulties which older Service leavers have in applying for work. Examples of supportive practices include insight days, guaranteed job interviews to Service people, job placements, and the allocation of Service mentors.

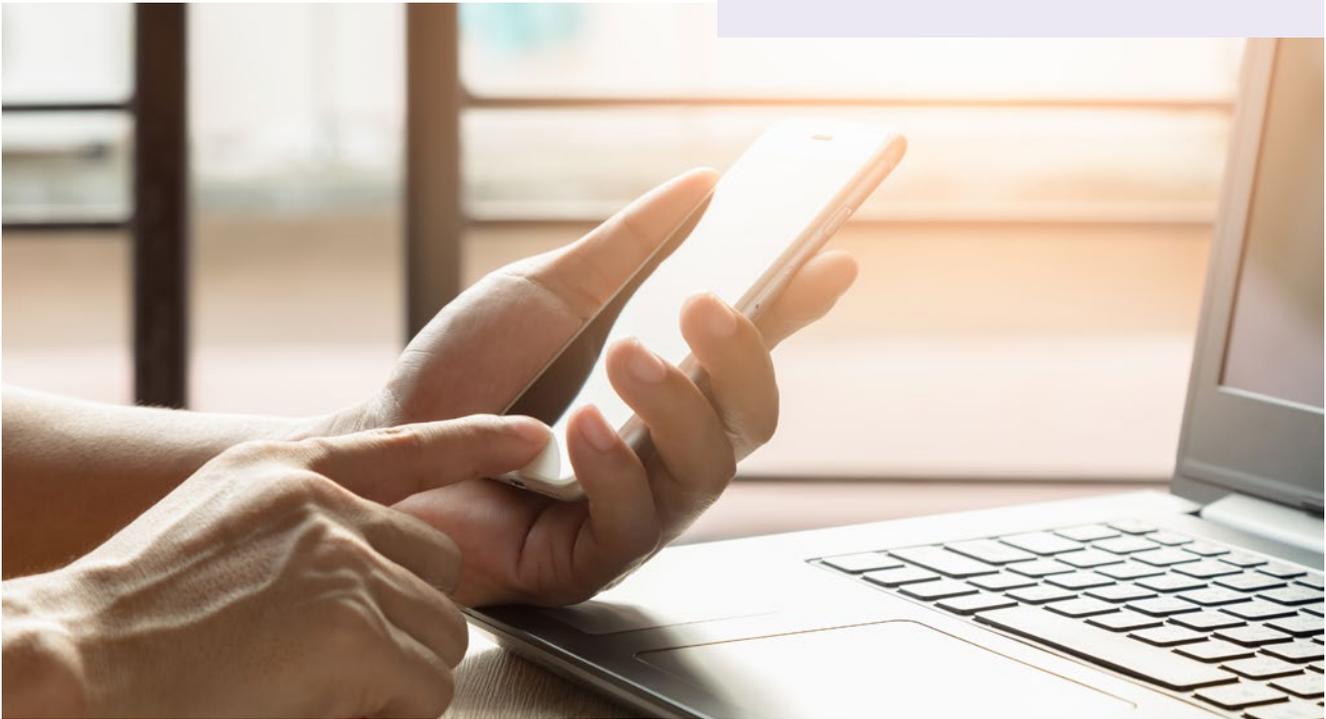


THE MOST IN DEMAND SKILLS

Skills gaps continue to be high as in-demand skills across jobs change.

The [Future of Jobs Report](#) found that the top skills and skill groups which employers see increasing in importance in the lead up to 2025 include **critical thinking and analysis**, **problem-solving** and **skills in self-management** such as active learning, resilience, stress tolerance and flexibility. On average, companies estimate that around 40% of workers will require reskilling and 94% of business leaders said that they expect employees to pick up new skills on the job.

84%
of employers are set to rapidly digitalise working processes and expand remote working



The future of work is already a reality for a large majority of the online white-collar workforce. 84% of employers are set to rapidly digitalise working processes and expand remote working, with the potential to move 44% of their workforce to operate remotely.

With job vacancies in the UK at a record high, [research](#) conducted by The Skills Network, which analysed 1.5 million jobs, has highlighted **finance**, **auditing**, **agile methodology**, **KPI's**, **business development**, **warehousing**, **nursing**, **mental health** and **SQL** as some of the most in-demand hard skills in the country, while **communications**, **management**, **customer service**, **sales**, **planning**, **leadership**, **detail orientation** and **innovation** feature in top rankings when it comes to soft skills.

THE ARMED FORCES COVENANT

The Armed Forces Covenant provides the central focus of current Government policy towards the estimated 2.07 million UK Armed Forces veterans living in households across Great Britain. The Covenant outlines two core principles:

- ✓ No current or former member of the Armed Forces, or their families, should be at a disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public and commercial services.
- ✓ Special consideration is appropriate in some cases, particularly for those who have been injured or bereaved.

More than 7,000 organisations have now signed the Armed Forces Covenant and a further 140 organisations were awarded gold in the Defence Employers Recognition Scheme. Organisations come from all regions of the UK and from different sectors as well as in a variety of sizes, with micro and small companies and larger employers such as Skanska, 3M, and Highways England.

Activities run by organisations and employers that benefit or remove disadvantage for the Armed Forces community include employers providing focused organisational HR policies, communications campaigns, advocacy, and internal military networks. The most successful activities recorded this year are bespoke HR policies, to provide additional paid leave for reservists to conduct their annual training, and to ensure positive recruitment procedures for Service leavers. For Service leavers, guaranteed interview schemes are especially valuable. There has also been a significant number



of communication campaigns recorded which include employers supporting Reserves Day, Armed Forces Day, the Armed Forces Covenant, and the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme.

As a military charity, the Forces Employment Charity works alongside the Career Transition Partnership (CTP) as experts in mapping military skills to in-demand roles ensuring employers understand how best to recruit and retain former military talent within their business.

Air Commodore David Tait, Head of Training, Education, Support, Recruiting and Resettlement (TESRR) at the MOD said: "Service leavers and reservists bring a lot to organisations. They have the specialist technical and business skills as well as the soft skills organisations need: leadership, team working and a strong work ethic with an approach to problem-solving and strategy which is unparalleled."

3. DEVELOPING YOUR JOB CAMPAIGN

BOOK A CAREER CONSULTATION

Each military transition is different and presents its own unique challenges, which is why a tailored consultation with a careers expert can be an essential step to achieving the ex-military career you are seeking.

Use the free career advice services that are on offer from the Career Transition Partnership (CTP), as early as possible in the process. The Forces Employment Charity is an independent charity working to help all Service leavers find jobs outside the military. Whether you are still serving or in transition, our experienced career consultants offer focused, impartial, and practical advice on all aspects of employment.

FIONA JACKSON



Fiona is a qualified HR professional with a focus on learning and development, talent management, succession planning and recruitment. She is also an experienced coach and mentor.

After an eight-year career as an Army officer, Fiona joined the John Lewis Partnership. She recruited and trained staff for new department store openings, as well as running outplacement programmes for staff relocating after taking redundancy or early retirement.

More recently, Fiona has worked in the third sector, first in a training and recruitment role for the charity Voluntary Services Overseas and then as a Career Consultant for the OA. She has supported officers being made redundant because of defence cuts and more recently has worked with two of her colleagues designing and delivering an outplacement programme for staff at the Union Jack Club in London.

“Really knowledgeable consultant, easy to talk to, and gave really useful tips and advice for someone at my stage of resettlement. Lisa gave constructive criticism in a sensitive and helpful way and used military examples to help me better understand aspects of civilian work.”

Job seeker feedback

“The career consultation, CV advice, network and job opportunities Fiona supplied rapidly reduced that anxiety level. It was replaced with a clear vision, reinforced with confidence and some exciting job opportunities to chase.”

Job seeker feedback

LISA JONES



Lisa started her career as an Army officer, serving in Bosnia, Northern Ireland, Cyprus, Germany, the British Embassy in Paris, and Afghanistan. Her experiences gave her an excellent foundation in people development and management.

After almost 10 years' service, Lisa joined a major US investment bank where she ran their Listed Derivatives Client Services team and was involved in several recruitment initiatives, including graduate and internship programmes as well as the growth and development of her team.

Upon joining the OA as a Career Consultant, Lisa was involved in helping Service leavers through an extensive redundancy programme, involving 11,000 personnel over four years. She also helped to deliver an external outplacement programme for a military-related charity in 2020.

Lisa is a qualified coach and mentor and has a wealth of experience to draw upon, including being made redundant herself.

CREATING YOUR CV



Think about the skills and experience you have built up in your Service roles and how these can be translated on your CV to match those needed for the civilian careers you want to target.

Consider how you can develop these skills over the next 3-5 years and whether you can bridge any gaps with additional courses or qualifications. If your ideal role requires additional qualifications, look to see if you can use any ELCs to add value to your profile.

If you are interested in several different roles, tailor a template CV for each highlighting relevant areas of your skills and experience. It is common for officers to be able to generate differing CVs to cover such topics as project management, security, defence, education, etc. Your OA Careers Consultant will be able to work with you to help you translate your military CV into skills and experience civilian employers are looking for.

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DEVELOPING YOUR NETWORKS

OA research shows that 7 out of 10 people find work through their networks, so building your network during transition is key.

Ask friends and family for help, from bouncing ideas to introducing useful contacts, they can be more helpful than you might realise.

LinkedIn is the most popular business social network and the perfect place to find contacts. You will need to create an online member profile and develop it to 'civilianise' your military experience. There are many guides and tutorials online to help you with this and the OA run training workshops aimed at getting you up to speed on LinkedIn and using it to its best effect.

Once you have identified organisations you would like to work for, go to their LinkedIn page and find their list of employees to contact. If possible, aim to message employees who are also veterans as they are more likely to help and can share insights from their career journey.

Connect with veteran organisations and research relevant networking events and opportunities that are taking place, such as the OA network events or CTP Job Fairs. You may also want to look at military organisations who may hold regional networking events or LinkedIn military focused groups such as X-Forces Enterprise.

Of course, now that in-person employment and industry events are happening again, you can register to attend these, but as they take up more time and effort than online activities, do consider what you want to achieve from the event before signing up.



7 out of 10 people find work through their networks

STARTING YOUR JOB CAMPAIGN



Identify and monitor relevant job websites and recruitment agencies that are advertising the types of roles you are looking for.

However, it is worth noting that over 50% of jobs are never advertised, so accessing the 'hidden' jobs market is important. Networking is the best way to increase your access to these roles. Create a shortlist of the organisations you want to target and look on their jobs boards to see what roles are available, alongside networking internally to increase your chances of success. The Forces Employment Executive Jobs Board and the CTP's 'Right Job' also feature opportunities from a wide range of military-friendly employers.

Keep a record of your networking activity, job adverts, applications and events on a spreadsheet or notebook so that you can review your progress. If you feel you need to build up commercial experience in your chosen sector, consider a work placement, shadowing scheme or a short internship to find out more about a business or organisation. Stay positive, but always try to have a Plan B in place as a backup in case your preferred role doesn't come to fruition.

10 TOP TIPS FOR PREPARING FOR AN INTERVIEW



1. **Research the company** and the interviewers, spend time looking at their website and their social media posts.
2. **Make sure you are familiar with the job description** and how your experience aligns to it.
3. **Prepare and practise answers to some common interview questions.** Think about how you would summarise your relevant skills and experience in a two-minute elevator pitch.
4. **Be prepared to demonstrate** times when you have used a specific skill - use the STAR method to help provide examples (Situation, Task, Action, Result).
5. **Ask a friend to help with a practice interview** to hone your answers and build your confidence.
6. **Have some questions ready to ask** the interviewer about the role. It will demonstrate your enthusiasm and showcase the research you have done.
7. **Plan your interview outfit** in advance and take copies of your CV, a notepad and pen.
8. **Arrive 10-15 minutes early.** Try to stay relaxed and aim to make a great first impression with everyone you encounter on your arrival.
9. **Avoid answering any questions negatively.** Companies want to hire problem solvers.
10. Focus on your key strengths and why you are uniquely qualified for the position. **Tie your answers back to your skills and accomplishments and stay concise and focused.**

DEVELOPING COMMERCIAL AWARENESS

Commercial awareness is the ability to understand what makes a business or organisation successful by buying or selling products or supplying services to a market.

For job seekers, it refers to a candidate's general knowledge of business, their business experiences (or work experience) and their understanding of the industry they are applying to join.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR SERVICE LEAVERS?

As a Service leaver you may not be able to demonstrate tangible or practical experience of 'commercial awareness' so think about:

- What makes a business or organisation successful?
- Keep up to date on daily happenings and developments in the business and commercial world
- Focus on the sector(s) that interest you - Who are the major players or competitors?
- What recent economic, political, or regulatory events might impact them?
- What emerging challenges might there be?
- Which are sectors that are the 'ones to watch'? Where might there be an opportunity?

Demonstrating that you **'get it'** is always positive, particularly if you can relate your knowledge to a particular organisation. Courses run by several business schools can help develop knowledge but cannot provide commercial experience.



HIGHLIGHT YOUR SKILLS

Focus on what you are good at and can offer an organisation rather than dwelling on what you may lack.

- What makes you different and valuable to an employer?
- What are they looking for, and how do you match these requirements?
- Is this obvious on your CV?
- Seek help and advice on your CV. Forces Employment Career Consultants can help.



QUALIFICATIONS

Look at what additional qualifications will allow you to target the jobs you want. Speak to the CTP and your Resettlement Officer about funded courses:

- What is available to you?
- Do you know how many ELCs you have, and which courses you can use them against?

SKILLS TO FOCUS ON

Some skills military personnel can focus on are as follows:

- Risk management/awareness/mitigation.
- Analysing data.
- Future forecasting.
- Relationship building/management.
- Stakeholder engagement.
- Client focus and customer service.

THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU HAVE DONE

- Support Arms provides a service to other units and formations - this is client service!
- Understanding client needs, adjusting delivery or requirements, and providing excellent communication channels are all valid skills to provide good client service
- Stakeholder engagement, dealing with different, often conflicting needs or requirements and adjusting accordingly
- Transformational change, delivering efficiency, adding value
- Have you worked with external agencies, governments, civilian suppliers?
- Have you worked in a multinational environment and built relationships?
- Can you put yourself in the shoes of the client?

YOU HAVE MORE TO CONTRIBUTE THAN YOU THINK

- Do your research - demonstrate an understanding of the industry you are looking to join
- Think about your experiences from a slightly different angle where possible
- Look at your CV and achievements from an employer's perspective
- Focus on what you are good at and how you can add value to an organisation
- Adding value is commercial.

DO'S AND DON'TS OF JOB HUNTING FOR THE OVER 50'S

1 DO YOUR RESEARCH

Explore the qualifications, training and experience needed to secure your ideal job. The National Careers Service website offers advice on training and salary levels for different job roles.

2 KEEP YOUR CV RELEVANT

Providing dates for your birthday and early career or education on a CV is no longer necessary. Keep your CV to two pages, with a focus on your last 10-12 years' relevant experience. Try to keep it specific to the position you're applying for and tailor your CV for each application where possible.

3 IDENTIFY ANY SKILLS GAPS

Make sure you are up to date in your areas of expertise and if not, undertake training. While you have experience on your side, you should still be open to learning new things. Demonstrate to employers that you are flexible and adaptable and make it clear that you're open to learning new things and taking on new responsibilities.

4 ONLINE REFRESH

Make sure that your social media accounts, especially professional ones such as LinkedIn, are up to date as potential employers may review them before they invite you for interview. Don't forget to include a short summary of your background, highlight your key skills, and include a photograph.

5 NETWORK

Consider virtual job events and research any sector relevant groups and forums you may want to join. Regularly sharing your opinions or things that interest you, like an engaging video or article, is a great way to stay connected with your professional community. Don't forget to continue building your network and let your social media contacts know you are looking for new opportunities.

6 SHOW OFF YOUR TECH SKILLS

Being tech-savvy is essential in most jobs today, so highlight any skills and experience in this area. Even if you're not a tech whizz or social media lover, make sure you're up to date and you understand which technology solutions are important to the company you're applying to.



7 DRESS TO IMPRESS

Check what clothes people in your line of work are wearing today and sort out your wardrobe. Appearances and first impressions count for a lot. Eat well and take regular exercise. In addition to feeling and looking better, you will be boosting your job opportunities.

8 DON'T GET FLUSTERED OR ANNOYED

The job-hunting process is about mutual respect. Be careful not to take your own unconscious bias into any interview situation. Do not take offence at being interviewed by someone much younger (or, in your eyes) less experienced than you. Be professional in all circumstances and listen carefully to the questions asked.

9 USE YOUR AGE TO YOUR ADVANTAGE

With age comes dependability, wisdom, fortitude, a strong work ethic, dedication, promptness, a wealth of knowledge, resilience, plus organisational and communication skills. You may also be able to advise and train younger staff. For employers, your past track record is the best indicator of your future performance, so think about key accomplishments throughout your career and use them to promote yourself.

10 THINK TEMPORARY AS WELL AS PERMANENT

Don't rule out short-term contracts, temporary, interim, or part-time work. It's the modern way of working - and many people find their ideal permanent position this way. It gives a company the chance to get to know you and you can demonstrate all the advantages your experience can bring them.

11 SMALLER COMPANIES VALUE EXPERIENCE TOO

Smaller businesses are also more willing to employ older people and they often prize the loyalty and range of skills an older employee can offer. Don't rule them out if you think you can add value to a potential role within an SME (Small medium sized enterprise).

12 FINALLY, STAY POSITIVE!

Don't take it personally if your job search takes longer than you'd like. If you get a rejection, move on, and focus on future applications. Job hunting is also a numbers game - the more roles you apply for, the greater your chances of job success.





OVERCOMING A SENSE OF LOSS

Some Service leavers find the transition from military to civilian life to be a relatively smooth process, but for others, it can be a challenging time and involve a period of adjustment which can trigger a mixture of emotions.

This may include a sense of losing your vocation, identity and status when leaving the Service to which you have been committed for so long, or a perceived lack of purpose or sense of isolation within new civilian surroundings.

Ensuring that you retain links with civilian life and start to prepare for your transition as early as possible may help reduce this feeling loss and assist the process of adjustment.



FAMILY SUPPORT

You may not be the only person affected by this change. It is important that you or your family do not shoulder the burden of change in isolation and that the whole family is involved in facing the future together and providing mutual support.

Communicating with family and friends is key. Creating time to talk is vital so that everyone in the family can prepare themselves for the challenges and changes ahead. Talking openly and honestly about the inevitability of change with all family members, especially children, may prevent unnecessary worry about the future and reduce the emotional strain for all.

ADJUSTMENT

There will be a period of adjustment for the whole family as you adapt to new routines and new ways of doing things. You may be at home a lot more than previously experienced. While this may be welcome, it could also present a challenge to the family routine which might cause frustration. A way of dealing with this period of adjustment is honest discussion and compromise.

INSECURITY

You may feel that life appears uncertain and unpredictable when compared to the stability and security of life in the Services. This insecurity is perfectly normal. Again, talking routinely and regularly about the transition journey with all members of your family, friends and others who have experienced the 'journey' will share the burden and help you and your family members to work towards a common goal.

PROGRESS

A sound transition plan, reviewed and adjusted throughout your career and developed in detail around Resettlement should smooth your transition progress. This should allow the efficient use of time and resources and hopefully reduce stress and anxiety levels and provide confidence, clarity of thought, purpose and a positive frame of mind which may assist in the process of securing work. There is no set time to complete this stage. However, it is believed that the sooner you consider 'breaking from the old lifestyle' the easier and smoother this adjustment might be.

THE WORKPLACE

You have left an institution with a unique culture and ethos, values, and standards, where a common bond and a commitment to the cause and to colleagues is absolute. The civilian workplace can be different and there is likely to be a greater focus on individual achievement and personal satisfaction.

Career management in the military is undertaken by the chain of command with courses, postings and promotion largely based on annual evaluations, whereas in the civilian workplace job security may be dependent on meeting or exceeding individual targets and advancement is something that is achieved by the individual competing with colleagues daily. Selling yourself at work and in interviews is routine in a successful civilian career and understanding this in advance may help prepare you to make the necessary adjustment.



BE FLEXIBLE AND STAY REALISTIC

It often takes time to realise that change has been achieved and the period of uncertainty has all but passed. Accept that plans sometimes change and ambitions may not always be reached within your ideal timelines. This is common and should not be a reason for undue concern.

- Accept that building a future is hard work so plan early & keep planning as you go
- Continue to believe in yourself and your abilities & try and think of change as an opportunity for you and your family
- Take advantage of all the opportunities that your military resettlement package offers you & your family
- Transition to civilian life tests most people - actively look after the health and well-being of you and your family
- Accept that new ways of thinking and behaving are required as well as new skills
- Be open and listen and learn from those in your new civilian environment
- Recognise when you are "stuck" & don't be afraid to seek help
- Reflect and consider how you have successfully coped with stress. Recall what coping strategies you have used in the past
- Don't leave it too long to get assistance or advice if you feel you need support
- Make financial provision so you have access to funds around your discharge date



4. PRACTICAL NEXT STEPS

USEFUL ORGANISATIONS

RFEA - The Forces Employment Charity

The charity provides life-long, life changing support, jobs and training opportunities to service leavers and veterans.

Career consultants can provide networking advice and a unique directory of ex-military volunteers, on hand to offer advice and guidance on specific sectors and roles.

www.rfea.org.uk

In May 2022 the Officers' Association (OA) employment services were combined with those of RFEA - The Forces Employment Charity (RFEA) to create a new, single charity with a dedicated focus on veteran employment.

The Forces Employment Charity provides exceptional career support to all Service leavers, veterans, reservists, and their families throughout the UK, irrespective of their circumstances, rank, length of service, or reasons for leaving the Armed Forces.

OA Recruit

Access the latest jobs, search across sectors, and manage your job applications.

oarecruit.com

TechVets

A non-profit organisation that exists as a bridge for veterans and service leavers into Cyber Security and Technology careers.

techvets.co

Career Transition Partnership (CTP)

The official provider of resettlement services for those leaving the Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force. Providing flexible support from two years before discharge, through to two years after.

www.ctp.org.uk

Veterans UK

The MOD's organisation that supports veterans and their families. Information on Veterans UK can be found on their website or via their 24/7 helpline on 0808 1914218.

www.veterans-uk.info

The Forces Pension Society

An independent, not-for-profit organisation that acts as a pension watchdog for the entire military community and empowers members to make better informed decisions.

forcespensionsociety.org

Combat Stress

Specialist treatment and support for veterans from every service and conflict, focusing on those with complex mental health issues related to their military service.

combatstress.org.uk

WELFARE SUPPORT

Veterans UK

The MOD's organisation that supports veterans and their families. More information is available at www.veterans-uk.info or via their 24/7 helpline on 0808 1914218.

www.veterans-uk.info



FURTHER READING

You may find it helpful to do some further reading. The following are just a few of the excellent books available to help you maximise your job search journey.

What Colour is Your Parachute by Richard Nelson Bolles, an American book updated every year that is particularly helpful if you are not sure where your next vocation lies.

How to Get a Job You Love by John Lees, is packed with practical and effective strategies to help you find a job you love in a rapidly changing market and aims to help you navigate your career in the new normal.

Your Mid-Career Shift by Iain Maitland, gives advice on making a career change and deals with all the practicalities of job hunting, application forms, interviews, tests and dealing with ageism.

Who Dares Wins in Business by Joff Sharpe, is written by an ex-SAS soldier who explains how the qualities nurtured in the Special Forces can be effectively deployed in business.

Job Hunting by Richard Maun, tips, skills and secrets to help you maximise your achievements, increase your opportunities and sell yourself more effectively.

Mind Flip by Zena Everett, aimed at all different career stages, and for those looking to change jobs, achieve promotion or find more fulfilling work.

You're Hired! Find Work at 50+ by Denise Taylor, the complete guide to finding work for anyone aged 50 and over.

LinkedIn - Creating a Great Profile as a Member of the Armed Forces by Tim Savage, specifically written for members of the Armed Forces to help them create a great profile on LinkedIn.

Brilliant Networking by Steven D'Souza, packed full of tried and tested techniques and secrets from some of the UK's most successful networkers.

The Reluctant Networker by Neil Munz-Jones, learn to view networking in a different yet positive light and discover how to get started, based on individual circumstances.

Business Networking - The Survival Guide by Will Kintish, navigate the networking jungle like an expert as you build your confidence, raise your profile, and create new connections.

Why You? CV Messages to Win Jobs by John Lees, draws on John Lee's 20+ years experience of training recruiters to offer his insider secrets on what really gets a CV noticed and read.

Creating a Successful CV by Simon Howard, understand the role and importance of CVs and learn how to analyse and present your transferable skills.

The Perfect CV by Max Eggert, written by a leading HR professional and providing real-life examples to help you improve your CV and stand out from the competition.

Great Answers to Tough Interview Questions by Martin John Yate, covers networking, CVs, covering letters, interviews.

Perfect Interview by Max Eggert, an invaluable guide on how interviews are constructed with practical advice to show yourself in your best light.

Knockout Interviews by John Lees, whether a first-time jobseeker, career-changer, or returning after a break, Knockout Interview is your indispensable toolkit.

How to Pass the Civil Services Qualifying Tests by Mike Bryon, aims to help applicants reach the standard demanded by the qualifying tests and to work for the Civil Service.

Success at Psychometric Testing by Peter S Rhodes, covers psychometric testing widely used throughout industry and the public sector, with hundreds of practice questions.

The Economist Style Guide by The Economist, for anyone wanting to communicate with the clarity, style and precision for which The Economist is renowned.

Our Iceberg is Melting by John Kotter, a simple fable about penguins that illustrates how to conquer change, with profound lessons for working and living in an ever-changing world.

The First 90 Days: Critical Success Strategies for New Leaders at All Levels by Michael Watkins, a practical book on how to deal with your new job and the people in the organisation.



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