



Veterans' Transition Review



PRESS RELEASE

Lord Ashcroft publishes Veterans' Transition Review

Lord Ashcroft KCMG PC has today published the Veterans' Transition Review, his report examining the transition of Armed Forces personnel from their military careers to civilian life at the end of their service.

In his role as the Prime Minister's Special Representative on Veterans' Transition Lord Ashcroft has considered the policies and provision for Service Leavers in areas including education, training, employment, health, housing, welfare, finance and information. He has also looked at the operation of Service charities and the role of advocacy, including the delivery of the Armed Forces Covenant.

The independent Review has consulted widely with the Armed Forces, the MOD and other government bodies, industry and the Third Sector, and has heard directly from hundreds of Service Leavers about their experience of transition.

Lord Ashcroft's principal recommendations are as follows:

- **The MOD and the Armed Forces should be more proactive in changing perceptions of Service Leavers.** Lord Ashcroft's research has found that most people think it is common for those leaving the Forces to have been physically, mentally or emotionally damaged by their Service career. This view is mistaken and has the effect of restricting Service Leavers' prospects in civilian life.
- **A new work placement scheme should be created in partnership with industry,** to give Service Leavers practical experience of civilian work. This would replace the current system of resettlement training courses. The Career Transition Partnership should also be given a direct incentive for job finding, such as payment by results, which ensures sufficient attention is paid to the more junior and less qualified, of whom there will be larger numbers once the full resettlement package is made available to all Service Leavers. New structures in the MOD and an employers' Council will greatly improve employment prospects.
- **Early Service Leavers should get the same transition support as longer serving personnel,** including a personal career consultant and advice on CV preparation provided by the Career Transition Partnership. Those leaving with less than four years service – who may have completed tours in places like Afghanistan – are the most likely to be unemployed and to have a range of other problems, but the full resettlement service is currently available only to those who have served six years or more (plus those being made redundant and the



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Wounded, Injured and Sick). All Service Leavers who have completed basic training should receive the full resettlement package.

- **A new Veterans' Card should be given to all Service Leavers with the number and web address of a single 24/7 contact centre for Forces charities.** This would replace the confusing array of information that currently exists, and ensure that those who need help can find it straight away without having to make several calls or being passed from one organisation to another. The Veterans' Card could also be the basis of a discount or loyalty scheme in partnership with business.
- **All personnel should complete an online Personal Development Plan,** beginning at the end of basic training, detailing the individual's education, skills and achievements, a plan to achieve long term career aspirations, and education on life skills including housing and financial management. This would promote take-up of the many educational opportunities available in the Forces and ultimately make for a smoother and more successful transition.

Speaking at the launch of the Review, at the RAF Club in London on 11 February, Lord Ashcroft said:

"As well as doing a superb job of protecting our freedom around the world, the Armed Forces are perhaps the biggest and best training and apprenticeship scheme we have, and a remarkable engine of social mobility. Not surprisingly, most of those leaving the Forces go on to do well in civilian life. The great majority find work quickly, and contrary to popular belief, Service Leavers as a whole are no more likely to have serious problems than the general population.

"Nevertheless, some do struggle with the transition or find it harder than they should to achieve their full potential in the civilian world. There is already a great deal of provision in place to support Service Leavers, and this has improved considerably in recent years with the advent of the Armed Forces Covenant and greater public understanding of the needs of the Forces community.

"This can still be improved upon, however. I hope the straightforward, practical proposals in my Review will help achieve a smoother and more successful transition for more of our Service Leavers, change perceptions of Service personnel and veterans, and ensure the country is better prepared to make the most of the extraordinary resource this group of people represents."

Responding to the Review, Anna Soubry MP, Minister for Defence Personnel, Welfare and Veterans, said:

"We thank Lord Ashcroft for this comprehensive review which has reinforced the significant provision already in place to support all our Armed Forces veterans who have bravely served our country. We have worked hard to ensure that all our



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service leavers, including those who have left with less than four years service, now have the same access to our robust resettlement system which provides crucial employment support, housing advice and financial advice. Furthermore we continue to work closely with employers and local authorities through the Armed Forces Covenant to ensure that veterans across the country have all the support they need and are treated with the dignity they deserve.

“Whilst this review highlights that most service leavers make a successful transition into civilian life, go on to play important roles in their local communities and are highly coveted for jobs, we know we can still do more. We will continue to work closely with Service charities, employers, other Government departments and local government to consider how best to take these recommendations forward and ensure that all our Armed Forces receive the very best transition into civilian life.”

ENDS

Notes to Editors

- Lord Ashcroft KCMG PC was appointed the Prime Minister's Special Representative on Veterans' Transition in September 2012.
- The Review's Terms of Reference were “to review the policies, legislation, regulations, guidelines and provision in place for the government to meet its commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant with respect to veterans' transition to civilian life, with a view to making recommendations that will ensure it is complete and successful.”
- The Review has been independent and the government has not funded its costs.
- The full version of the Veterans' Transition Review will be available from 10.30am on Tuesday 11 February at <http://www.veteranstransition.co.uk>
- A full biography of Lord Ashcroft is available at <http://www.lordashcroft.com/about/>

In response to the Review, the Ministry of Defence has stated:

- The Ministry of Defence has made significant progress in supporting all our Service Leavers make a successful transition into civilian life. Most recently we have introduced the Future Horizons Programme to ensure that all those serving for less than four years have an entitlement to access resettlement provision in the same way as those who have served for longer. The Programme has been developed in response to the recognition and commitment from the MOD to improve resettlement provision to Early Service Leavers (ESLs) and provides the



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dedicated services of a career consultant and employment consultant to determine and assist individuals into civilian employment.

- The successful Career Transition Partnership used by the vast majority of Service leavers has already ensured that 85 per cent of all those seeking work are in full-time employment within 6 months of leaving. We anticipate that over the next few years the new programme for Early Service Leavers will bring similar successes and ensure that all service leavers are fully supported into the civilian workplace.
- Through the Armed Forces Covenant we have worked closely with employers and local authorities to ensure that veterans across the country have all the support they need and treated with the dignity they deserve. Last year we developed the Defence Recovery Career Service to provide competitive work placements for all injured and wounded Personnel to give them the best opportunity to compete in the civilian employment market. Almost 100 companies have pledged to support the Armed Forces community through the Corporate Covenant to ensure they are not disadvantaged in the workplace and almost 400 local authorities have signed up to pledge their support locally which shows the immense amount of respect and gratitude there is for our Armed Forces across society.
- Last week we launched the new veterans' helpline number to ensure that veterans can seek help at any time. The new number has been improved to become more memorable for veterans with extended opening hours to provide support for any callers in crisis. All veterans are able to apply for the Defence Discount Card which provides discounts across 2,500 companies and provides details of a single website for all veterans to seek support.
- For further information please contact:

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