



scottish credit and
qualifications framework

Veterans Skills Recognition Project

Final Report March 2019

Introduction and Background

The Scottish Veterans Commissioner was appointed by Scottish Ministers to provide them with impartial advice on the support provided to veterans and their families in Scotland. The Commissioner is operationally independent of the Scottish Government.

One of his original reports, "The Veterans Community – Employability, Skills & Learning", published in November 2016 outlines how areas such as securing employment, qualifications and skills, and further and higher education, affect the veterans community in Scotland.

Through this report, the Commissioner considered how a changing military workforce in Scotland would impact on the next generation of veterans, as well as the need for strategic leadership and governance that could deliver meaningful change and sustained improvement for Scotland's veterans community in the future.

One of the sections of the report deals specifically with qualifications and skills and leads to Recommendation 8. The relevant excerpt from this report is set out below:

Recognition of Qualifications and Skills

There is broad acceptance that employers, colleges, universities and others see formal qualifications, both academic and vocational, as an objective measure of the knowledge and skills an individual has to offer. These qualifications are also often taken as an indication of an ability to learn and take on new challenges - highly desirable qualities that give an indication of future performance and potential. It is, therefore, unfortunate that a significant proportion of these civilian organisations still have difficulty in recognising many of the qualifications obtained during a military career and little understanding of what this offers in the way of relevant skills and personal attributes.

This issue is one that has been raised frequently with me during discussions with employers, especially small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). In most cases, few have the expertise or time to spend on understanding every military qualification or attribute, and when recruiting will look no further than Service Leavers and veterans' academic records, easily recognisable technical skills and/or a degree. Given that SMEs comprise the bulk of businesses in Scotland, and therefore should offer a variety of employment possibilities for the veterans' community, I believe there is a missed opportunity here.

During the past few years the MoD has, however, made inroads into addressing some of these problems. Training received through the Services is now routinely mapped across to the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF), while promotion and career courses are typically recognised by organisations such as the Institute of Leadership & Management, the Chartered Management Institute and City & Guilds. This is starting to have an effect but much of the work is being done in a piecemeal fashion - often through individual Services and branches - which can still lead to confusion amongst employers who are left struggling to recognise the relevance, and importance, of military qualifications presented by applicants.

Also, at an individual and local level, CTP and military charities, specifically the Regular Forces Employment Association (RFEA) and Officers Association Scotland (OA Scotland) provide vital help to Service Leavers and veterans in translating military qualifications into a more readily understood equivalent for a civilian employer. Like many veterans, I

personally benefited from this support when I left the Royal Navy and recognise how valuable it can be.

Notwithstanding this encouraging level of support, and policy changes by MoD, I still come across considerable frustration amongst groups of veterans who believe skills and qualifications gained in the military are neither properly understood nor appreciated. I understand this sentiment but also have sympathy with employers who are unlikely to have had much exposure to the Armed Forces or to know about the benefits of recruiting Service personnel. Unfortunately, this problem is often compounded by veterans being unable to present or explain their achievements in the appropriate and convincing manner, either in applications or at interview. These issues all combine to complicate and hinder the pathway into meaningful employment for many Service Leavers and veterans.

It is, therefore, vital that more is done to ensure that qualifications and skills gained while serving are better understood and more widely recognised by employers in Scotland. This is a challenging undertaking which will require us to break new ground, specifically by including far wider representation from across the public and private sectors. As such, I believe there is a central role for the Veterans Employability Strategic Working Group in co-ordinating efforts and developing a plan that delivers this aim.

Recommendation 8 - Recognition of Qualifications and Skills

The Veterans Employability Strategic Working Group 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.

In February 2018 the SCQF Partnership was asked by the Scottish Funding Council to take forward some work to support Recommendation 8 and in addition to consider how this recommendation and recommendations 14 and 15 could be looked at together to ensure a joined up approach to support and guidance. These other two recommendations are set out below:

Recommendation 14 - 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.

Recommendation 15 - 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.

Aims

This report is intended to capture the background to the project, the scope of the project, the methodology used, conclusions reached, recommendations made and action taken by March 2019. In addition as some further funding has been provided by SFC for 2019-20 it also sets out some of the initial planned next steps to further develop the work undertaken so far. We hope that the report will be useful for a number of stakeholders including our own Board, the Ministry of Defence, Career Transition Partnership, Skills Development Scotland, Scottish Government, Scottish Funding Council, Awarding Bodies, Colleges and Universities and other key public sector stakeholders.

Methodology and Approach

The methodology for this project was structured in 6 work packages. These are summarised below:

Work package 1 – Carry out initial scoping work. This was to scope out the scale of the task, identify all of the key players and map out all of the information available and needing to be sourced.

Work package 2 – Carry out initial mapping work. This mapped out what was already on the SCQF, what was not on the SCQF but potentially could be (e.g. it might be on another UK Framework) or could potentially be credit rated. This analysis was completed for all forces based on the list of over 1200 qualifications provided by the MoD.

Work package 3 – Validation of the mapping and option appraisal. This involved checking out the content of the reports for completeness, exploring the options set out in the report and revisiting the challenges to produce a second version which was then shared with stakeholders and veterans via focus groups to ensure buy in to the priorities for recognition.

Work package 4 - Consultation on a Framework diagram which includes different types of potential recognition. This stage takes all of the work to date and produces a replica of the SCQF diagram for veterans from the infantry which would then be issued for response to a much wider range of stakeholders.

Work package 5 – The development of the diagram above included work with Awarding Bodies around the potential for further recognition on the SCQF along with work to informally “benchmark” or map those programmes which cannot be credit rated (either at this point in time or at all) and which have been identified as a priority. This provides indicators both for veterans and for institutions of the level of skills, experience and knowledge gained.

Work package 6 - Production of final report, diagram and action plan for further work. To provide a full report on the project undertaken, those consulted, the methodology used and the outcomes provided and to provide recommendations on any additional work.

Role of Steering Group

A Steering Group was established to help SCQF Partnership steer the project. It contained representation from Scottish Government, Scottish Funding Council, SCQFP, Skills Development Scotland, Scottish Universities and Colleges, Scottish Qualifications Authority and Careers Transition Partnership and latterly also 51st Infantry Brigade.

Their role was to help advise on, and monitor, progress of the project specifically:

1. To review, confirm and manage the project plan.
2. To offer organisational support for interviews and information requests.

3. To review the information received from the MoD and discuss how to prioritise.
4. To support the setting up of focus groups/stakeholders groups at key stages of the project.
5. To consider options for recognition of services experience and qualifications taking account of the different arrangements for inclusion on the SCQF, benchmarking and other forms of recognition.
6. To comment on interim and final reports along with action plans and recommendations.

The Steering group met four times throughout the life of the project.

Consultation with Veterans' Organisations and Forces Personnel

During the first three months of the project, we engaged with the key organisations that either directly support or can influence the support given to veterans. The purpose of this consultation was to ascertain their thoughts and experiences around support for veterans and suggested priority groups. In the latter part of the project we were also able to meet and discuss the detail of the work with the new Veterans Commissioner. The following organisations and individuals were consulted:

- Eric Fraser, outgoing Veterans Commissioner.
- Charlie Wallace, incoming Veteran' Commissioner.
- 27 Army Education Centre, including their Commanding Officer and Individual Employment Resettlement Officers.
- Veterans Scotland.
- Career Transition Partnership manager.
- Skills Development Scotland.
- Department of Work and Pensions Veterans Champions.
- Service leavers via two focus groups.
- Royal Navy Resettlement Information Officer.
- RAF Regional Resettlement Officer.
- Veterans Employment Service.
- SO2 Transitions 51st Infantry Brigade and Headquarters Scotland.
- Salutemyjob.

The majority of service leavers are from the Army with smaller numbers leaving from the Navy and Airforce. Those leaving from the Navy tend to be well supported with each person receiving an hour's consultation on a one to one basis as well as on-going support from the Navy re-settlement team and organisations such as CTP. Consequently, Navy veterans tend to have a clear idea of their future pathway once they leave.

Army veterans receive a tiered support package starting with the Regular Careers Management Officer who will explain learning credits and allowances, time off allowed and courses available. They will then be sent to the Individual Employment Resettlement Officer (IERO) at an Army Education Centre, 27 AEC for Scotland. The re-settlement team will then interview and give further information. Finally they are referred to CTP.

Early indications had been that the Early Service Leavers¹, especially those who do not complete basic training were the most vulnerable, but on consultation with the above

¹ Early Service Leavers are defined by the MOD in JSP 534 as personnel who are discharged compulsorily from the trained strength or untrained strength and lose entitlement to resettlement provision or are discharged at their own request from the trained or untrained strength, having completed less than 4 years' service.

contacts, it was evident that a number felt this group were still close to the education system and therefore would have a better understanding of their skills and qualifications. The number of early service leavers each year is also not that high – around 2,300 across the UK out of a total of 14,000 leavers and a small number of those would settle in Scotland. New Army recruits all undertake an apprenticeship and know which area they will move into once they arrive for initial training. These are recognised across the UK but are structured differently in Scotland to the rest of the UK and it can therefore be difficult to compare these.

Some participants felt that those wounded, injured or sick were also a priority. However, once again these are very small numbers in Scotland but we have agreed that this is an area we could look at in more detail during 2019-20 now that funding has been agreed.

It was generally felt that those who serve in ‘non-trade professions’² within the army are far more likely to benefit from the mapping of core military qualifications³ than those who serve in trade professions who are more cognisant of their equivalent civilian qualifications. It was also felt that those who had been in service for 12 years or more were furthest away from the education system and would need most support.

Common to all discussions was the recognition that:

- There is little understanding of the worth of the qualification that service leavers and veterans hold.
- There is a language barrier that prevents the service leaver easily communicating the qualifications and skills that they may have to a potential employer.

Qualifications were discussed and participants felt that qualifications awarded by bodies such as Institute of Leadership and Management, City and Guilds and Chartered Management Institute were deemed to be of more value than other qualifications. This may be because they are more widely recognised.

Generally veterans are seeking employment when they leave the armed forces. Some do go on to further learning but are more likely to study vocational qualifications than academic courses. Some veterans were interested in Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and the question was raised in both focus groups (see below).

Consultation with Veterans via Focus Groups

Focus groups were set up in Rosyth and Faslane in order to consult veterans on the project. At an estimate, the focus groups were attended by 14-16 armed forces personnel on each occasion. This included service leavers from the army, the navy and the RAF. Both focus groups followed the same format, with questions centring on veterans’ knowledge of their qualifications and skills gained (or not gained) while serving.

There was some confusion among attendees of the Rosyth focus group around the qualifications available to service personnel and how to find out about them. There was also concern around certain roles being undervalued in terms of qualifications gained given the skill and expertise involved, such as marine engineers. Attendees enquired about the

² Defined as those serving in the Royal Marines (Royal Navy), Infantry, Royal Artillery and Royal Armoured Corps (Army), RAF Regiment (RAF) and possibly Special Forces.

³ Common to all Command Leadership and Management qualifications accredited to City and Guilds and Institute of Leadership and Management.

transferability of skills and qualifications gained while in service, particularly in the contexts of CV writing and attending job interviews.

The benefits of soft skills gained while in service were discussed in both sessions, particularly in the Faslane focus group. Attendees spoke about having gained more skills than qualifications during their time serving, therefore the translation of these skills was crucial. There was concern among older veterans that qualifications gained towards the start of their service may now be outdated.

It was noted that skills and qualifications gained in some roles across the three forces were more easily translatable in the commercial world than others, such as engineers versus medics. The infantry was singled out in both sessions as a group with inadequate qualifications given their non-trade specialist role, therefore there is work to be done on identifying and highlighting key skills such as leadership.

There was interest among both groups to learn more about pathways to further study. One participant said it would be good to have a system where service leavers could identify relevant courses depending on the qualifications they require when entering the commercial world. There was also interest from both groups around the intentions and outcomes of the project.

Consultation with MOD

Scottish Government helpfully contacted the MoD on our behalf to introduce the SCQF Partnership and to explain the nature of the work. Aileen Ponton, Chief Executive of the SCQF Partnership presented to the MoD Defence Accreditation Forum in April 2018. As an action from that first meeting the MoD co-ordinated each of the armed forces information in relation to qualifications currently on offer across the services. This initial meeting also included the Defence Awarding Organisation and an additional meeting with them was also set up and is reported on further down in this section. SCQFP was invited back to attend the next meeting of the Forum on 25 October 2018 and shared the interim scoping report with that group in advance of the meeting to support further dialogue on next steps. MOD was also represented at the focus group on 23 October.

In addition to this Mr Brown, the then Cabinet Secretary for the Economy, Jobs and Fair Work, wrote to the MoD outlining the Scottish Government support for this work and its place within a wide range of actions intended to support resettlement of veterans in Scotland. In July 2018 a response was sent from Mr Ellwood MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State and Minister for Defence People and Veterans to Mr Dey MSP, the new Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans expressing MoD support for this work.

Consultation with Institutions and Representative Organisations

A number of institutions were consulted in the course of the project to gain their views and experiences. These were FE and HEIs who were currently working or engaging with veterans in some way as well as SQA as Scotland's main awarding body and the representative organisation for colleges – College Development Network.

Colleges are finding that veterans often undertake a wide range of training within the armed forces but this is not always recognised and therefore veterans are not aware of what they have achieved. Some colleges are recruiting skilled veterans into lecturing roles and there is a definite consensus that it would be helpful to make better use of regional labour market information to ensure that veterans are directed into areas where there are available jobs

and that they understand the jobs that are more widely available particularly in areas of skills shortages.

In terms of skills demand, colleges are finding that veterans with an engineering background are very popular and there are openings in areas such as rail and telecommunications. Nursing and healthcare skills are also in great demand.

Generally, veterans with specialist skills tend to have more success obtaining employment once they leave the forces. It was felt that Infantry tend to have the most challenges in obtaining employment as they don't have specialist skills but do often have excellent leadership skills and a wide range of other skills which they find difficult to translate into a language civilian employers would understand.

Feedback indicated that it is important that veterans are given the right skills to succeed in civilian life and are not just steered towards off the shelf courses. Colleges need to think about the skill areas that are required and support veterans in their career plan so they leave college with something they can use. It would be helpful if colleges worked directly with local transitions officers and if this kind of work was reflected in their regional outcome agreements.

In relation to those supporting veterans before they leave the armed forces, a thorough understanding of labour market intelligence is needed in order to direct veterans to areas of Scotland where jobs in their chosen field exist so they have more chance of securing employment.

Whilst it was agreed that older veterans in the area of infantry were a priority, it was highlighted that younger early service leavers were also important and could be potentially difficult to engage from a college perspective.

The two HEIs who were consulted with indicated not just strong support for the project but shared their current work in this area. They also recognised two priority groups as early leavers and those with longer service but no trade. They also stressed the need to come up with a generic solution or support indicating that individual mapping of qualifications would be far too time consuming and too costly.

Finally they also both stressed the need for good careers information and guidance (CIAG) at all stages – from the MoD prior to leaving, from CTP and other veteran support organisations and from educational institutions who provide support via programmes of learning, to maximise potential. Those two – Glasgow Caledonian University and Edinburgh Napier University – along with SFC then hosted an event for all Colleges and Universities in January 2019 at which the work of this project was shared. One of the outcomes of that event was to establish a network of Veteran Champions across all institutions and this will provide a very helpful route for us to share this report, the actual outputs of the work and the plans for 2019-20. The underlying theme presented by the HE and FE institutions, was:-

“Provision of educational support to Veterans (and families) to ensure they were able to maximise their potential, irrespective of rank, branch, cap badge or length of service. In other words use the intrinsic value of HM Forces personnel to maximum effect and to ensure they are able to obtain the very best employment outcomes. This is for the benefit of the economy and society as a whole”.

(Jim Castle: GCU Veterans and Armed Forces Champion; & HE:FE VC Network)

Consultation with Other Key Stakeholders Including Awarding Organisations

A meeting was held with the Defence Awarding Organisation (DAO) in June 2018. This awarding body has been set up by the MoD specifically to support the awarding of relevant qualifications for the armed forces. However this only includes those qualifications which are on the RQF and are regulated by Ofqual and does not include any qualifications being placed on the SCQF. We discussed a range of options which could be considered further including the DAO becoming a Credit Rating Body in its own right (approved by the SCQFP) or the DAO submitting a range of qualifications to an existing Credit Rating Body for inclusion on the SCQF, or finally DAO becoming a regulated awarding body in Scotland where they would submit their qualifications to SQA Accreditation who would then credit rate them onto the SCQF as well as regulate them. We also discussed some of the likely changes in relation to training being based at Faslane and how that might create a driver for recognition on the SCQF. We still feel that a role for DAO in Scotland should be pursued and we have flagged this to the MoD and Scottish Government. We have also referred to this as a real potential for further progress to be made in our response to the UK Strategy for Veterans. In March 2019 we had some further discussions with the MoD around how they could support the DAO to move forward with one of the three options and we hope that this can be progressed within the next phase of the project.

There has also been initial discussion regarding the opportunity for City and Guilds, an existing SCQFP Approved Credit Rating Body, to add to their suite of SCQF credit rated programmes by formally credit rating any relevant qualifications presently offered to the armed forces which are not currently on the SCQF. City and Guilds has been a credit rating body for a number of years and has a suite of qualifications on the SCQF which they currently offer for the Scottish market. They have an established process of credit rating and are currently subject to an annual monitoring process by the SCQFP through our established Quality Assurance Model. They have agreed to offer their support once priority areas have been agreed.

Very recently we have also made contact with Pearson as many of those qualifications for infantry are awarded by Pearson (BTEC/EDEXCEL). Pearson does have qualifications on the SCQF, but none of those identified in the army spreadsheet.

Focus Groups for Stakeholders

In addition to the focus groups held with veterans themselves we held two focus groups on 23 October 2018. We had around 20 delegates in each of two groups and these included all of the main education and training stakeholders in Scotland, the MoD, representatives from various armed forces, and Directors from the SCQF Partnership Board. (A full list of attendees is attached as Annex 1) These groups were provided with the interim report, which included data on qualifications, and a set of questions well in advance of the meeting and these were then considered and discussed in some detail within each group. This was an extremely useful exercise as it brought together both stakeholders, institutions and armed forces organisations to discuss each of the issues flagged from different viewpoints. However what became very clear was that there was a strong shared view of the issues and also a strong shared commitment to trying to tackle these. The outputs from these focus groups along with those from the Veterans groups then formed our findings.

Mapping Work

The Ministry of Defence were able to share their qualifications matrix with us which encompasses all qualifications delivered across all areas of the three armed forces.

We took the matrix and colour coded each qualification the summary of which is shown in Figure 1 below, with Figures 2 and 3 going into more detail. By far, the majority of qualifications were available through the army and were broken down by cap badge. A small number of qualifications were difficult to pinpoint, for instance because they had similar-sounding titles to existing qualifications but different credit point values. These were included in the data via the 'Unsure' column.

In total across the three armed forces, 38% of qualifications were already credit rated on the RQF whereas only 7% were on the SCQF. A significant number of qualifications (34%) were credit rated on neither framework. Around 21% of qualifications were available through universities and colleges with a large number of these qualifications emanating from the RAF. A small number of qualifications were credit rated on both the RQF and the SCQF, which is why the overall percentages total more than 100% in Figure 1.

Figure 1

	Total Qualifications	On RQF	On SCQF	Neither	Unsure	University
Army	540	218	42	205	41	73
RAF	360	109	19	90	19	140
Navy	335	139	25	126	26	45
Overall	1235	466	86	421	86	258
		38%	7%	34%	7%	21%

We broke these numbers down in more detail in Figures 2 and 3 below. Figure 2 further breaks down the overall percentages outlined in Figure 1. For instance, of the total number of qualifications available across the three armed forces, 18% were army qualifications credit rated onto the RQF but only 3% were army qualifications credit rated onto the SCQF. 17% were unrecognised army qualifications, compared to only 10% navy qualifications and 7% RAF qualifications.

Figure 2

	Total Qualifications	On RQF	On SCQF	Neither	Unsure	University
Breakdown of overall percentages	Army	18%	3%	17%	3%	6%
	RAF	9%	2%	7%	2%	11%
	Navy	11%	2%	10%	2%	4%

Figure 3 breaks down the qualifications with respect to armed forces type. For instance, of the total number of army qualifications shown on the matrix, 40% were credit rated on the RQF compared to only 8% on the SCQF. This RQF army number was marginally less than the total number of navy qualifications credit rated on the RQF (41%). However, there were marginally fewer navy qualifications credit rated on the SCQF – 7% compared to 8% army qualifications.

Figure 3 is a better indicator of the volume of RAF qualifications available through universities and colleges, with 39% of the total number of RAF qualifications available in such a manner. This was more than the number of RAF qualifications credit rated on the RQF (30%) and significantly more than on the SCQF (5%).

Figure 3

	Total Qualifications	On RQF	On SCQF	Neither	Unsure	University
Breakdown of individual armed forces type	Army	40%	8%	38%	8%	14%
	RAF	30%	5%	25%	5%	39%
	Navy	41%	7%	38%	8%	13%

The matrix has been cross checked by SCQF colleagues and will be sent back to the MOD for their comments and thoughts.

Priorities

The task of mapping all veterans' qualifications is a long term project. There have been various attempts to take this forward but none have fully succeeded due to the sheer scale of the project and work involved. This smaller project was therefore designed to identify priority groups amongst veterans with the aim of building on this work in the future subject to future funding.

As highlighted earlier, initial thoughts and some discussions had indicated that early service leavers, i.e. those with less than 4 years' service, were the main priority. This group tends to be young people who have few formal qualifications and have not stayed in the service long enough to gain a trade.

However, whilst this group is deemed to be of high priority, it was felt a greater priority are those with over 12 years' experience and in particular, non-trade veterans. This group tends to be furthest away from the education system and unsure of the value of any skills or qualifications they may have gained whilst in the armed forces. Those under the infantry cap badge within the army were highlighted in particular.

Looking at infantry qualifications in more detail, there are 16 qualifications recognised on the RQF but none recognised on the SCQF. There are also 8 qualifications officially not on either framework but they are BTEC qualifications and it does seem as if they were on the English Framework at one time although they cannot be found in the register currently. However, this could just be a nomenclature issue.

Almost all of the infantry qualifications on the army matrix are awarded by Edexcel or BTEC which are managed by Pearson Education. Pearson currently has a number of qualifications on the SCQF but these are all regulated through SQA Accreditation. Further discussion therefore with Pearson in the first instance to see if they would be willing to have more of their qualifications regulated by SQA or credit rated dependent on the qualification, would be useful.

If this was not possible then a benchmarking exercise of these qualifications could take place but the preferred option would be for programmes to be recognised on the SCQF.

Given the feedback at the focus groups which have been held to date, it was clear that all veterans found it difficult to understand how their skills and qualifications could be translated in Scotland. CTP also found aspects of this challenging as they too have worked primarily with the RQF and rely on the Qualifications Can Cross Boundaries leaflet to explain equivalencies. It was agreed therefore that it would be useful to run some training with CTP staff on the SCQF and provide materials that would provide them with clearer, more detailed information.

Returning to the early service leavers, given the limited number of qualifications they will have gained in the armed forces it would be more helpful to offer information which helps them understand the skills they have gained whilst in service and how they might translate these skills into a language understood by both themselves and civilian employers. The SCQFP already has a range of useful materials which could be adapted.

Findings and Suggested Recommendations

Our findings and recommendations were endorsed by all of the Focus Groups we established, by the Steering Group and were shared with MoD.

1. *Key role of MoD as an employer*

It is clear that the MoD has a central role to play in any next steps. As the employer they provide the relevant training, they prepare people for exit and liaise with CTP and they have set up an awarding organisation. However all of this work is linked into the English qualification system either via Ofqual and the RQF or via English Universities. Whilst this is understandable to some extent given the focus of the MoD and the numbers involved it is definitely something which requires further detailed consideration by the MoD in terms of their relationship with the SCQF and the Scottish education system as it is currently not fully supporting those who are Scottish or who wish to settle in Scotland

2. *Importance of good CIAG prior to, during, and after exit*

Linked to the above the interviews with veterans and with supporting organisations stresses the need for really good Careers Information and Guidance (CIAG). Recommendations related to CIAG also came from the Veterans Commissioner's report and Skills Development Scotland is leading on this. However there is more that the SCQFP could do in terms of providing some related information on the SCQF, customised for veterans, to CTP and others. In addition and as identified above there may also be a role for the MoD to look at how advice and guidance relating to the Scottish system is provided prior to exit for those planning to resettle in Scotland

3. *Individuals need a better understanding of what they have in terms of qualifications and how that relates to skills they can demonstrate*

Veterans indicated that they often find it difficult to relate the skills they have picked up and assessment undertaken with actual qualifications. Whilst CTP already undertake some excellent work in this area, there is a need to ensure that those exiting the services have a very clear understanding of what qualifications and training they have completed. There is also a need to think how to best ensure that those leaving to resettle in Scotland have an understanding of how what they have links to, or benchmarks against the SCQF and how to "sell" those skills and qualifications to employers

4. *We need to identify and action some quick wins as soon as possible*

Whilst it was clear from the outset that this was a large and complex task there is a need to identify some quick wins and take action on these. We recognise that some

further actions may require additional and potentially extensive discussions with MoD, awarding organisations and others but to be able to identify some real tangible outputs is important to the ongoing work with veterans and this work is on-going

5. ***Mapping existing qualifications is really important to any outcome which leads to a “contextualised SCQF diagram”***

Through the mapping work already completed we have identified what qualifications are on the SCQF (a very small number), what qualifications are on the RQF and what qualifications appear at the moment to be non-recognised. There were some anomalies with this which led to the matrices being re-checked by each force. This, along with decisions on priority sectors/groups will allow us to then pick up discussions with awarding organisations on how specific qualifications could be credit rated onto the SCQF or mapped against it

6. ***Importance of communication with employers and institutions***

All of those consulted stressed the importance of good communication of this project not just at the end but now as it is working through these issues so we need to ensure that we have a clear and networked communication strategy. We need to consider with SDS how this information could be communicated to employers and we also need to consider whether there is a need for some form of briefing for admissions staff in universities and colleges

Outcomes of the Project

Whilst the number of outcomes of the project may seem quite small the main focus for the first 9 months was in scoping out the scale of the sectors, understanding the qualifications being used, making the right connections within the MoD, Scottish Government, with the Commissioner and with representatives of stakeholders and service personnel across Scotland. Whilst this has been time-consuming it has provided us with a very solid base to continue from. In addition, and just as importantly, it has provided us with the opportunity to bring together a wide range of people with a shared purpose who may not otherwise have met. We would like in particular to thank our Steering Group members for all of the advice and support provided to date and they have committed to continuing with us during 2019-20. It is worth noting at this point that between October 2015 and February 2019 around 3815 veterans chose to settle in Scotland. Once you add to that the families that come with them you can see why trying to improve education and employment chances for this group will also improve how we, as a country, support fair work and economic prosperity.

Some specific activities which have been completed within the first year of this project are as follows:

- The production of both a comprehensive scoping report and this final report which brings together all of the consultation and key stages of the work so far as well as recommendations for work going forward. We hope this will be of interest to many organisations across Scotland who are involved in supporting veterans.
- A multi-purpose leaflet the first of which is aimed at infantry personnel showing relevant qualifications. This would provide a strong set of guidance not just for veterans but also for employers and educational institutions. It will also then provide us with a template which we can use with appropriate tailoring for other service groups.
- A workshop for CTP staff in Scotland was delivered in March which ensured that staff there had a really good understanding of the qualifications landscape in Scotland as well as the rest of the UK, had materials which they could use with veterans and also

provided SCQFP with feedback and suggestions around where further guidance and/or support could be useful.

- From the CTP workshop, a webinar is now being developed for CTP UK staff which will be housed on the CTP website.
- A dedicated page for veterans on the SCQF website.
- A series of conversations started with the main awarding bodies responsible for the majority of the qualifications in the priority areas. These will be further developed to see if more of these qualifications can be credit rated onto the SCQF.

Next Steps for 2019-20

Now that we have all of our baseline information and have made all of the main contacts we see this next year as really building on that and widening the scope of what we have done to date. We have still to have some of those discussions and really consider the priorities. We also want to make sure that we continue to support all three recommendations from the Commissioner's report – 8, 14 and 15 – and we see our work as a way of weaving some of those strands together. Through working with our Steering Group and key partners and stakeholders we have identified some of the key activities as being to:

- Publish the report and circulate it to all colleges, universities and other key stakeholders.
- Undertake some further work on mapping more qualifications to the SCQF identifying at least 2 other priority groups.
- Develop some additional tailored guidance and support materials for veterans and for CTP.
- Develop some job/skills templates which set out the skills and experience as well as training for particular roles within each service and then benchmark these to an SCQF level. We understand from discussions with CTP and with services personnel that this would be extremely useful.
- Take our priority list of qualifications to relevant awarding bodies to discuss how these could be recognised on the SCQF.
- Continue dialogue with MoD and with the Veterans Commissioner
- Continue to liaise with other stakeholders who have the lead on the other related recommendations.

Annex 1

Listed below are the individuals who attended one of two focus groups held at the SCQF Partnership offices on 23 October 2018:

Morning

Aileen Ponton – SCQF Partnership
Julie Cavanagh – SCQF Partnership
Sheila Dunn – SCQF Partnership
Adam Ferguson – SCQF Partnership
Barry Henderson – SCQF Consultant
Alastair Logan – 27 Army Education Centre
Anna Thomson – Scottish Funding Council
Claire Donaghey – Glasgow Clyde College
Gillian Lacey – Scottish Government
Iain Hawker – Fife College
Jody Friels – Royal Navy Faslane
Karen Lynch – Ministry of Defence
Karen Murray – SDS
Karyn Woolcock – UWS
Laura Cox – S02 Transition
Mike O'Donnell – SDS
Nick Cutland – CGLI/ILM
Pauline Sutton – Newbattle Abbey College
Rich Wright – 29 Army Education Centre
Rob Wallen – SCQF Partnership Board
Scott Gray – Scottish Government
Stephanie McKendry – Strathclyde University

Afternoon

Aileen Ponton – SCQF Partnership
Julie Cavanagh – SCQF Partnership
Sheila Dunn – SCQF Partnership
Adam Ferguson – SCQF Partnership
Barry Henderson – SCQF Consultant
Alistair Ferrier – SDS
Alistair Fyfe – SQA Accreditation
Brian Wallace – DWP Champion
Calum MacLean – SDS
Claire Williamson – GTCS
Elaine Middleton – CTP
Holly Derrick – CTP
John Adams – GTCS
John Lewis – SQA
Karen McArthur – Sacro
Kenny Warren – Scottish Government
Laura Christie – NES Scotland
Liz Scott – Edinburgh Napier University
Lorna Davis – SQA Accreditation
Sandy Murray – CDN
Steven McGeever – Open University