

BuildForce Independent Evaluation: Technical Annex



Produced by Skyblue Research May 2018

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Acknowledgement

The Skyblue team would like to thank the BuildForce Chair Angela Forbes, and Caroline Logan from delivery partner Ethos for all of their contributions, the BuildForce Steering Group, and above all to the Service Leavers and BuildForce Ambassadors, Champions and mentors for their engagement with this evaluation.

1 Scope

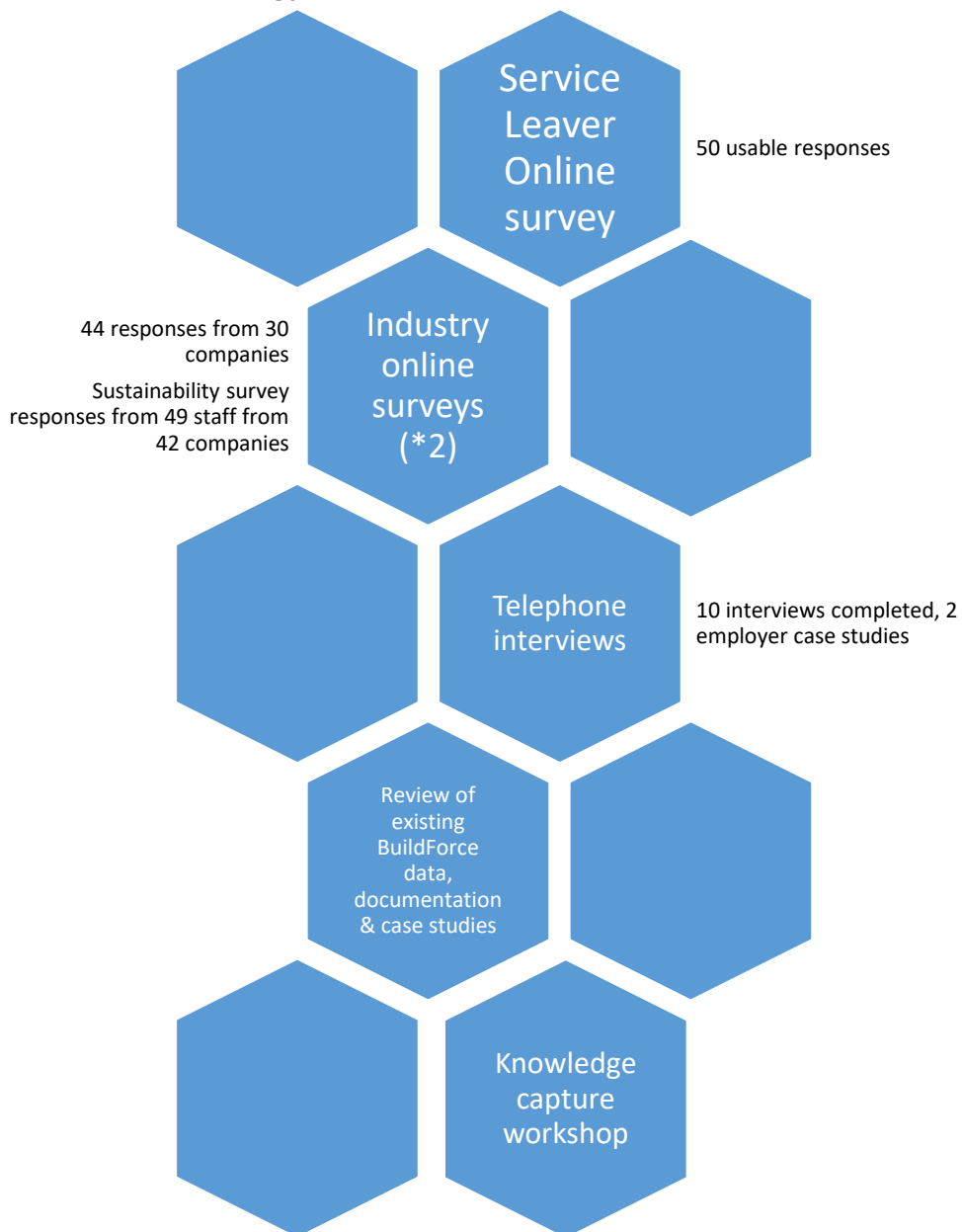
This document is one of three outputs from Skyblue’s evaluation, alongside the full report and executive summary. This report contains the detailed methodology, charts and tables from the research and links to the evaluation tools used.

The evaluation approach was designed with support from BuildForce and CITB’s evaluation team. This has informed our approach by focusing on

- Outcomes
- Learning
- Context – seeking to assess ‘what works, for whom and why’¹

¹ With thanks to Rachel Iredale for her advice, and from: <https://www.citb.co.uk/news-events/blogs/2018/the-importance-of-evaluating-citb-funding/>

2 Detailed Methodology



Sample sizes

The results obtained are representative of the total populations as follows:

Service Leavers:

60 responses from 601 Service Leavers invited to take part (plus or minus 12% at 95% confidence interval)

Firms:

Main survey 30 firms from 72 (plus or minus 14%) at 95% confidence interval).

Due to the online approach, the base size varies throughout, and a telephone approach is recommended to both boost response rates and create greater consistency.

Mailing details

All Service Leavers who have registered with BuildForce since July 2016, together with employees fulfilling Ambassador, Champion or Mentor roles within firms that have joined the BuildForce Alliance were invited to give their feedback. All contact with Service Leavers and employees was conducted through BuildForce and no personal data was shared.

Emails issued	Total sent	Bouncebacks
Service Leavers	601	1
Alliance members	245	18

Analysis:

Firstly Skyblue looked at the descriptive statistics of the data, going through each quantitative question in turn for the Service Leaver and two company surveys.

A set of cross tabulations were run using SPSS statistics.

Industry (firms and employee representatives)	Service Leavers and veterans
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. BuildForce role (mentor, champion or ambassador) vs all questions2. How challenging was it to find suitable placement opportunities vs all questions3. Prior to BuildForce did the company target Service Leavers vs all questions4. Has the company offered training to Service Leavers vs all questions5. Likelihood to recommend vs all questions6. Number of days contributed to BuildForce vs all questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Awareness of construction vs employment status2. Construction experience before during or after military service vs employment status3. Knowledge of construction careers vs employment status4. Rating of BF vs employment status5. Role in army (coded) vs employment status

All qualitative responses were coded.

Review of BuildForce Management information

Skyblue produced an analysis specification which was discussed with Ethos. Skyblue was able to analyse anonymised CRM data (to look at, for example, leaving rank). Additional work was carried out to analyse data for the 93 job starts, which included role and the company that provided the opportunity.

Skyblue also examined the Armed Forces Covenant to understand how many firms were signatories – and might be a further ‘market place’ to engage more companies. 22 of the BuildForce Alliance had signed and a total of 141 construction firms have signed the Armed Forces Covenant.

3 Primary Research Findings

This section of the report details the evidence gathered through the primary research undertaken from February to May 2018.

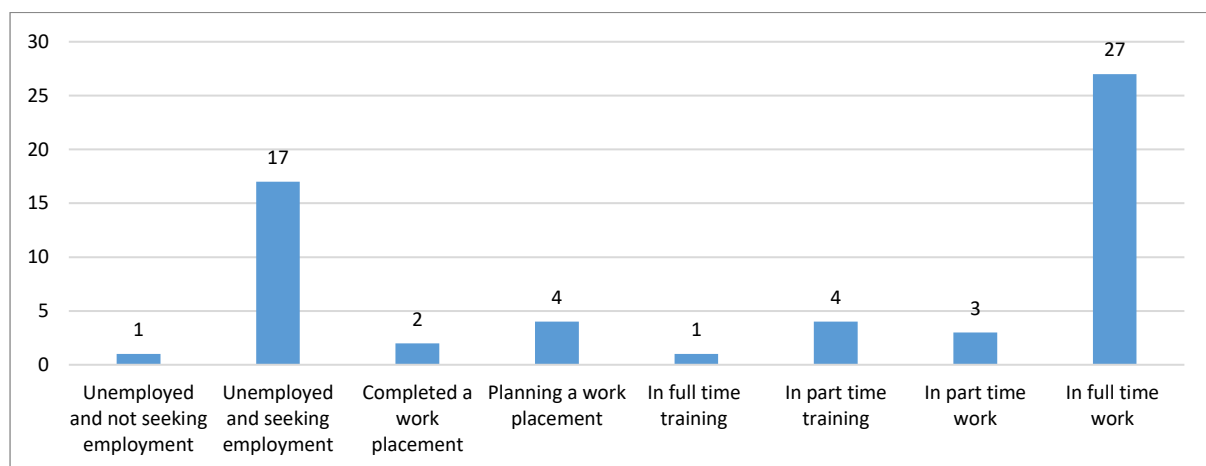
3.1 Service Leavers evidence

Sample profile (online responses)

- 50 service leavers provided usable data
- 37 from 38 who gave a response were male.
- Aged between 27 and 58, with an average age of 39
- 25 left the services in 2017 or 2018. Eight are still serving, with six leaving in 2018 and two in 2019. The earliest leaving date recorded was 2005

Current employment status

Figure 3.1 Current status



Service leavers, what is your current employment status? (Please tick all that apply) Base = 59

Please note that included in the full time work total are personnel who are registered but still serving. Analysis on full time employment in the main report excludes these respondents.

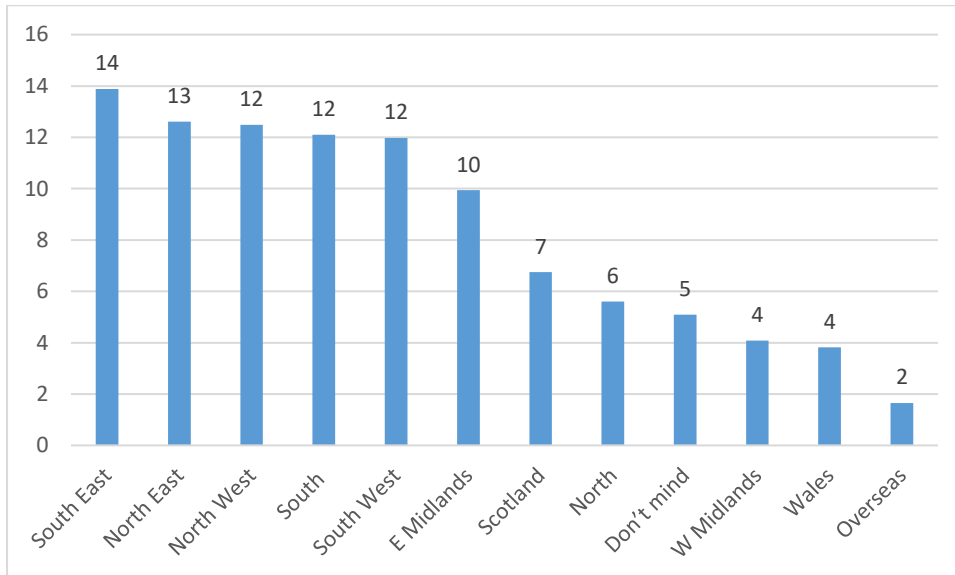
From the sample above there is 10 (20%) who are classified as 'privates'² and 39 (80%) in officer roles. Based on 49 responses. When this is compared to the wider sample held by BuildForce 122 (19%) in private roles and 525 (81%) in officer roles. Based on 647 responses.

² This classification includes: Private, Gunner, Bombardier, Fusilier, Guardsman and Sapper.

Geography

Service Leavers were asked where they would prefer to work. The results show a geographic spread, with the largest proportion wishing to work in the 'south east'.³

Figure 3.2 Areas where Service Leavers would work (%)



Base 785

Awareness of BuildForce

Coded responses show Service leavers heard about BuildForce primarily from:

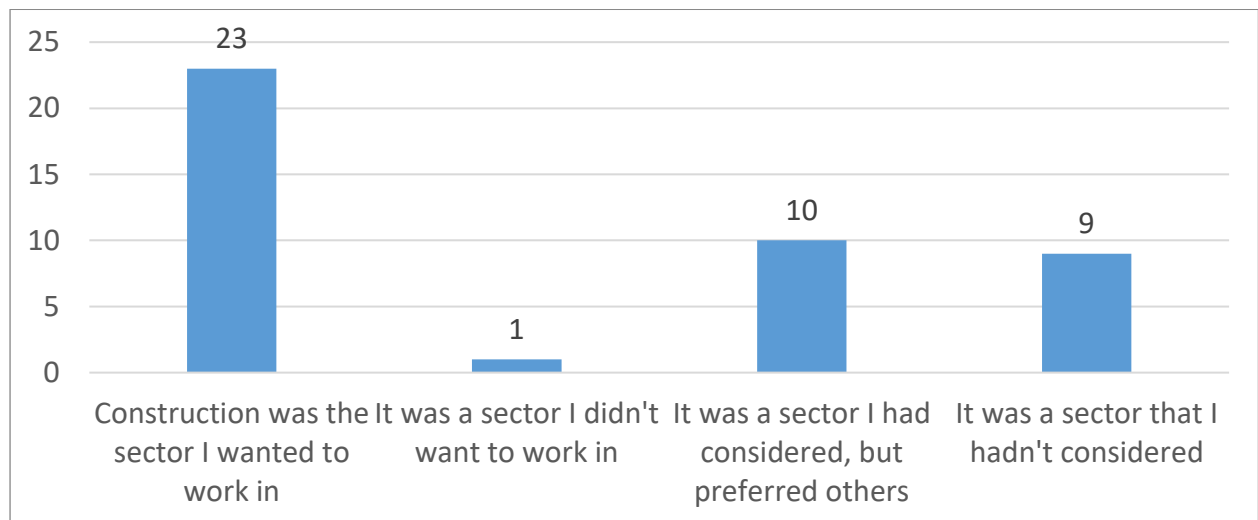
1. Resettlement support
2. Online, for example through social media
3. Networking events

Service Leavers said they got involved because they saw an opportunity, were requiring support, to network or out of curiosity having attended an event.

³ Classified as 'South, South East and South West'

Interest and awareness of Construction

Figure 3.3: Prior interest in construction



Prior to getting involved in BuildForce, how would you describe your perceptions of careers in the Construction sector? (Please tick one only) Base = 43

Figure 3.4: Did Service Leavers have a specific sector in mind before registering?

Prior to registering with BuildForce, did you have a specific job or industry in mind? Base = 46

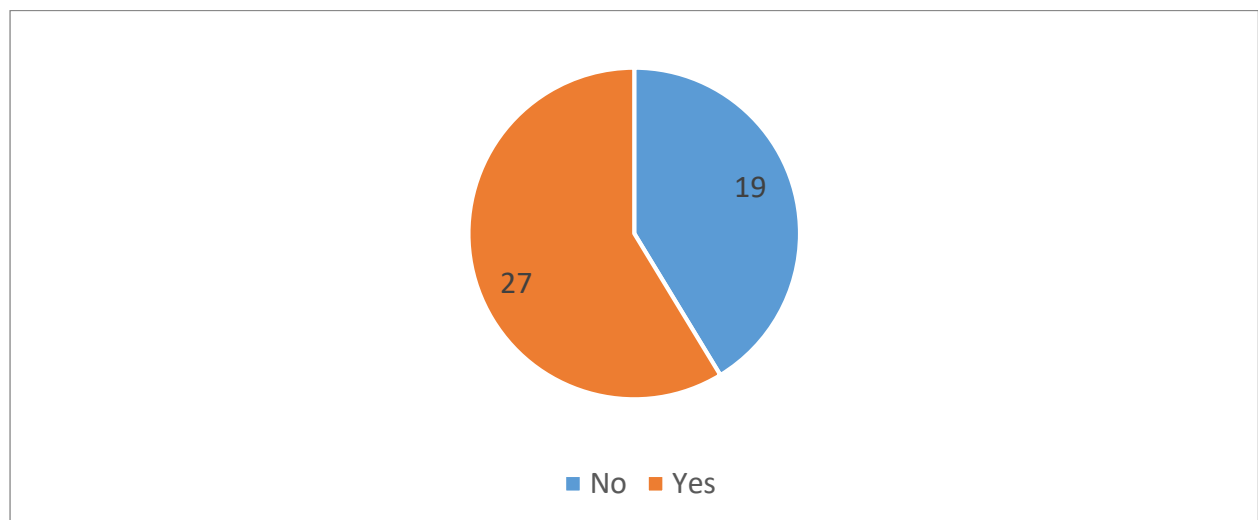


Figure 3.5: Prior perceptions of careers in the Construction sector?

Prior to getting involved in BuildForce, how would you describe your perceptions of careers in the Construction sector? (Please tick one only) Base = 43

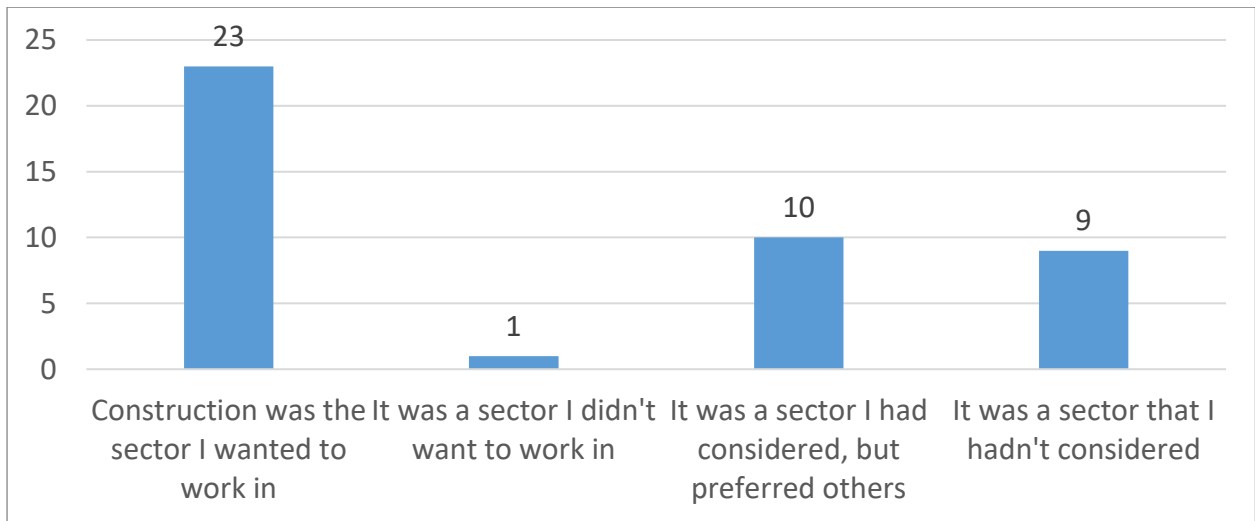


Figure 3.6: Prior knowledge of careers in the Construction sector?

Prior to getting involved in BuildForce, how would you describe your knowledge of careers in Construction? Base = 43

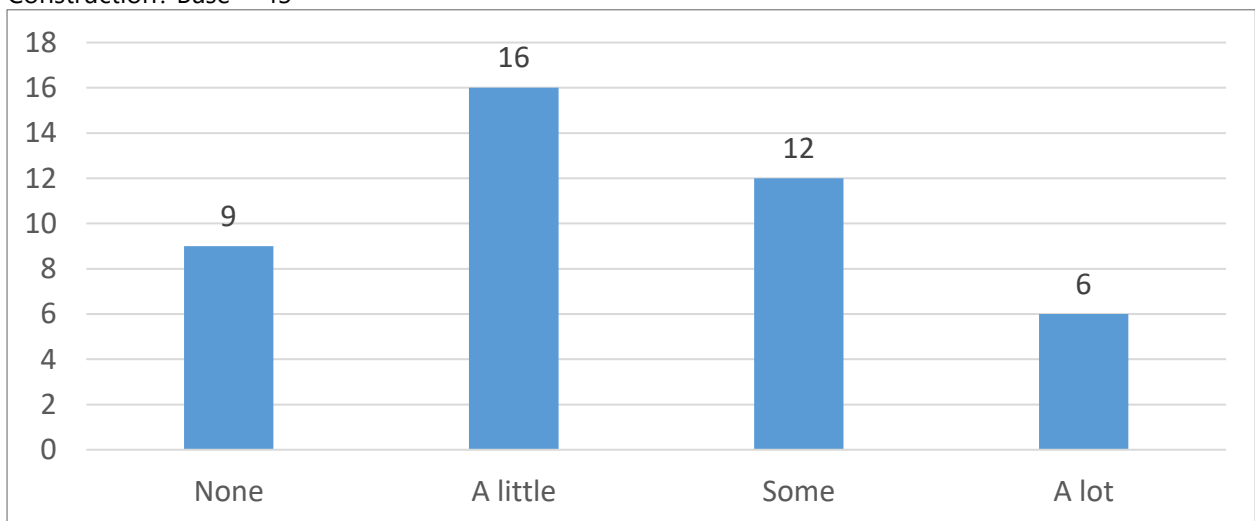


Figure 3.7: Previous construction experience

Have you worked in construction before, during or after military service? Base = 45

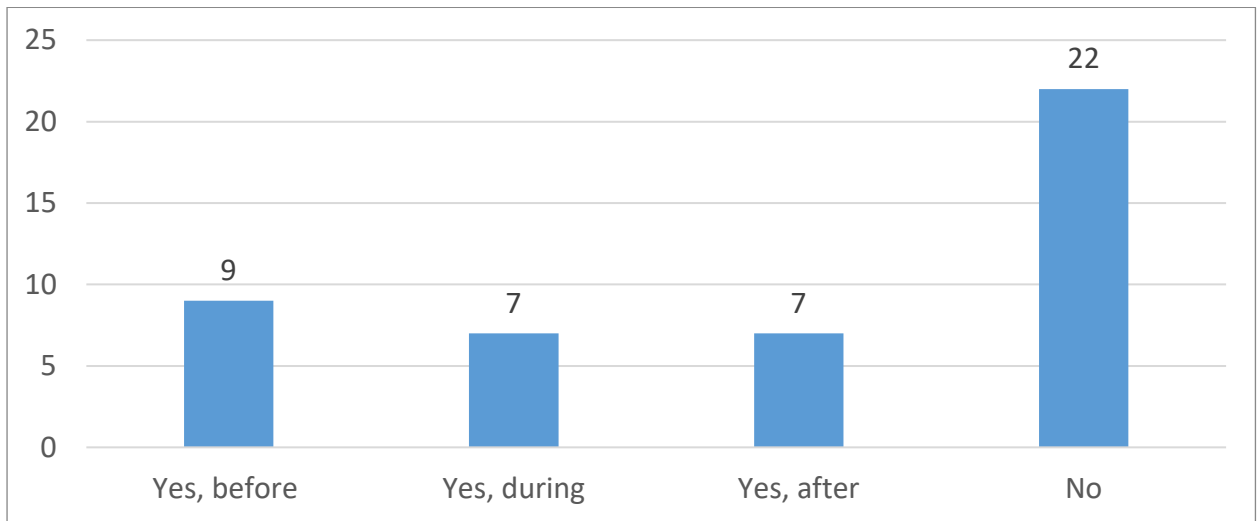
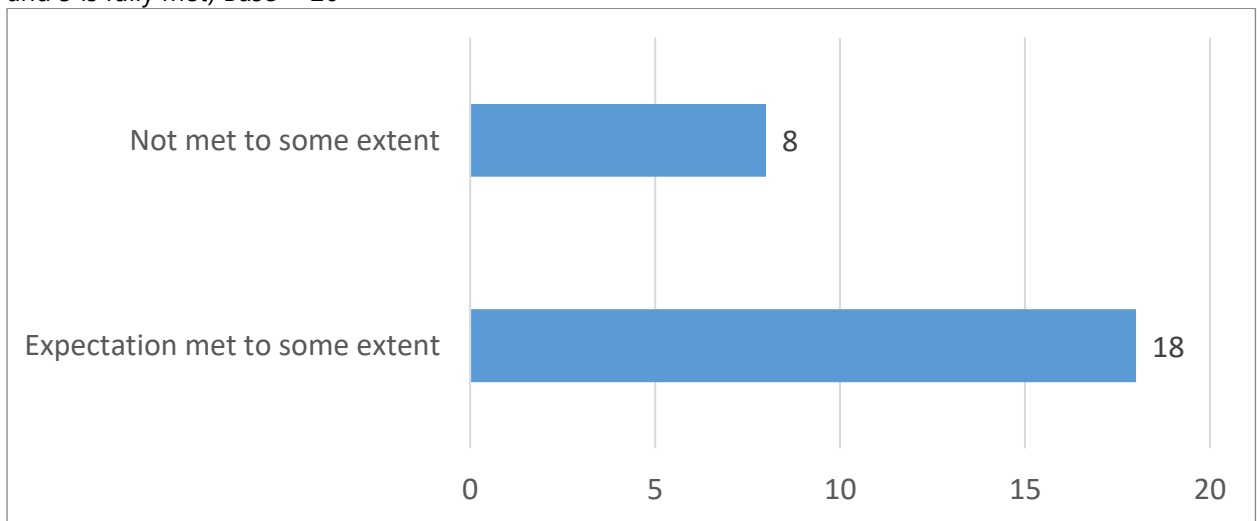


Figure 3.8: The extent to which expectations have been met

To what extent have your expectations been met so far? (On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is not met at all and 5 is fully met) Base = 26

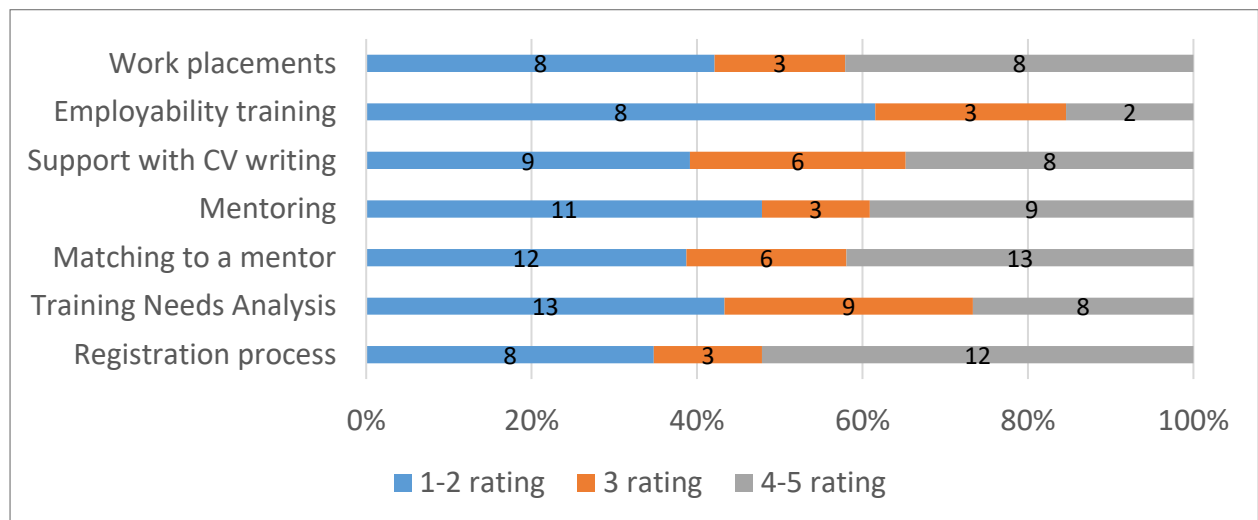


Why were your expectations met/ not met?

- Good levels of support (12)
- Not done as expected (12)
- Poor levels of support (11)
- I have a job now (4)

Figure 3.9: Rating of aspects of BuildForce support received

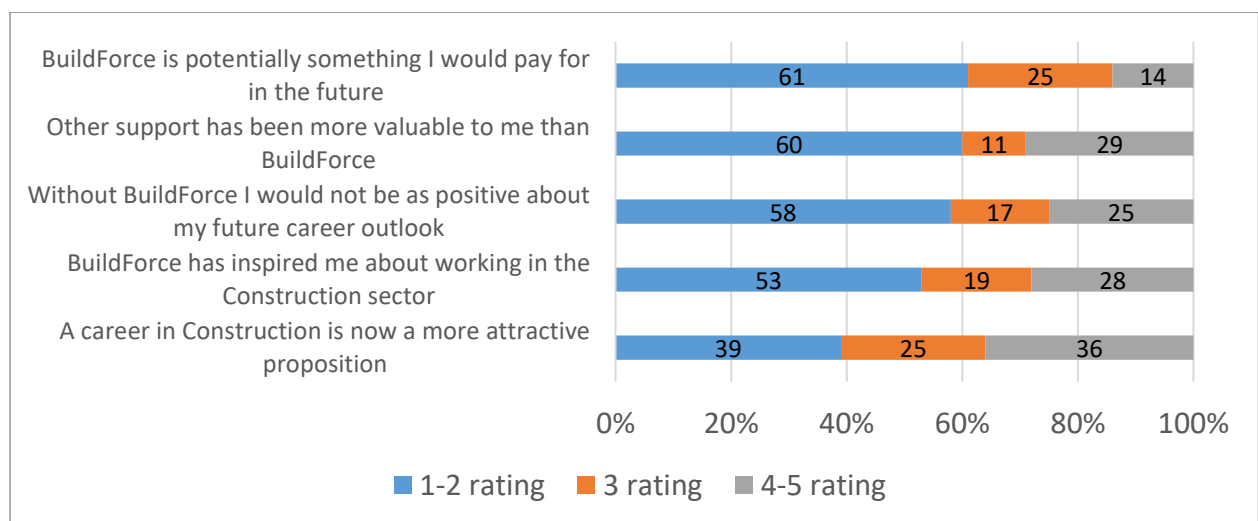
For each type of support please say how satisfied you have been (On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is very dissatisfied and 5 is very satisfied) Base = 36



Outcomes Achieved

Figure 3.10: Outcome statements

Please state the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements (On a scale of 1-5 where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree).



3.2 Evidence from Industry Ambassadors, Champions and Mentors

In total, 44 employees from 30 BuildForce Alliance members responded

Baseline

Figure 3.11: Prior targeting of Service Leavers

Prior to BuildForce did your employer purposely target Service Leavers / Veterans to help them recruit for job vacancies in the business? Base = 31

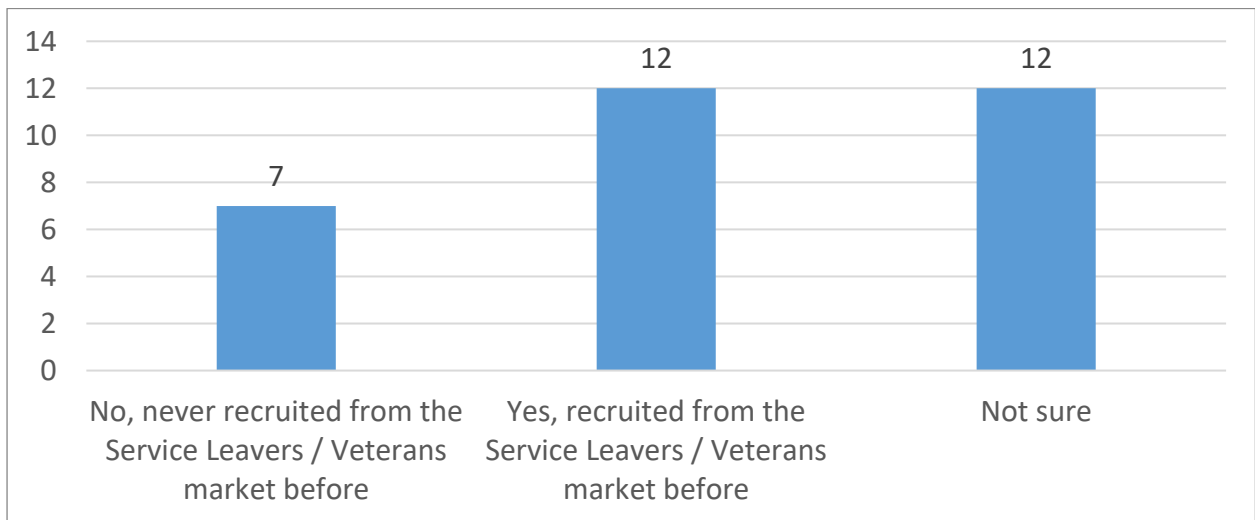
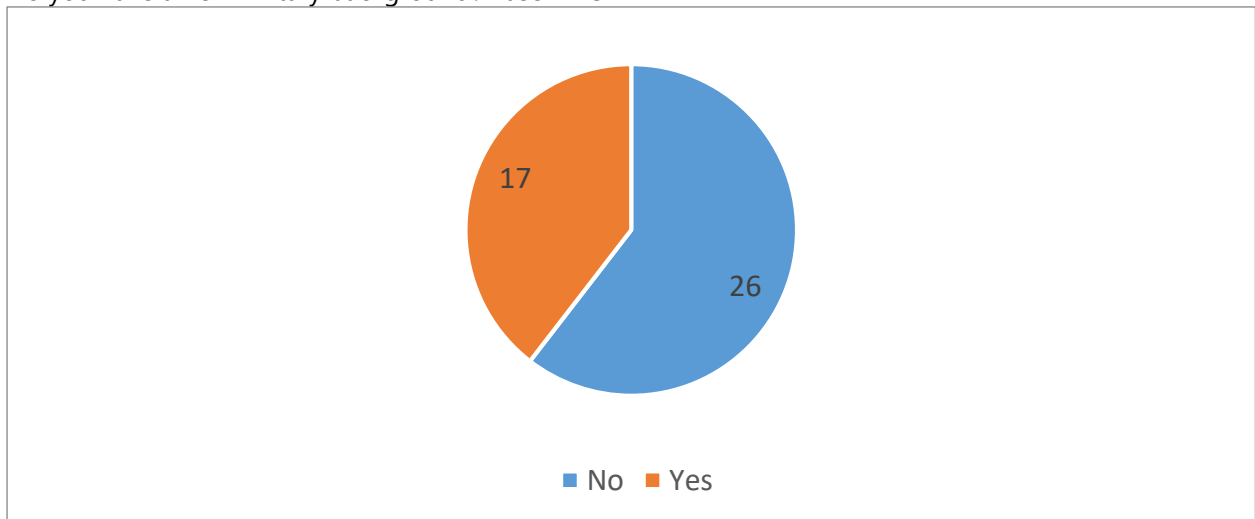


Figure 3.12: Whether BuildForce Ambassadors, Champions and Mentors have a Military background

Do you have an ex-military background? Base = 43



Motivations

Companies had heard about BuildForce from:

1. Social media
2. Colleagues
3. CTP
4. CIOB
5. Lendlease
6. Events.

Coded responses show employees got involved as a result of; personal connection, liking the idea, wanting to help or they were ex-servicemen who had been helped themselves by BuildForce.

Use of time in BuildForce role

Ambassadors

Out of the 11 who answered, this ranged from under 1 day to over 10 days, the modal (most common) response was <1 day.

Champions

Out of the 12 who answered, this ranged from under 1 day to 5 days, the modal response was >1 day.

Mentors

Out of the 29 people who answered, this ranged from under 1 day to over 10 days, the modal response was 1 day.

Effectiveness and support

Figure 3.13: Self-assessed effectiveness in BuildForce role

How effectively do you feel you have fulfilled your role? (% of those who said quite or very effectively)
ambassador base = 14, champion base = 13, mentor base = 29

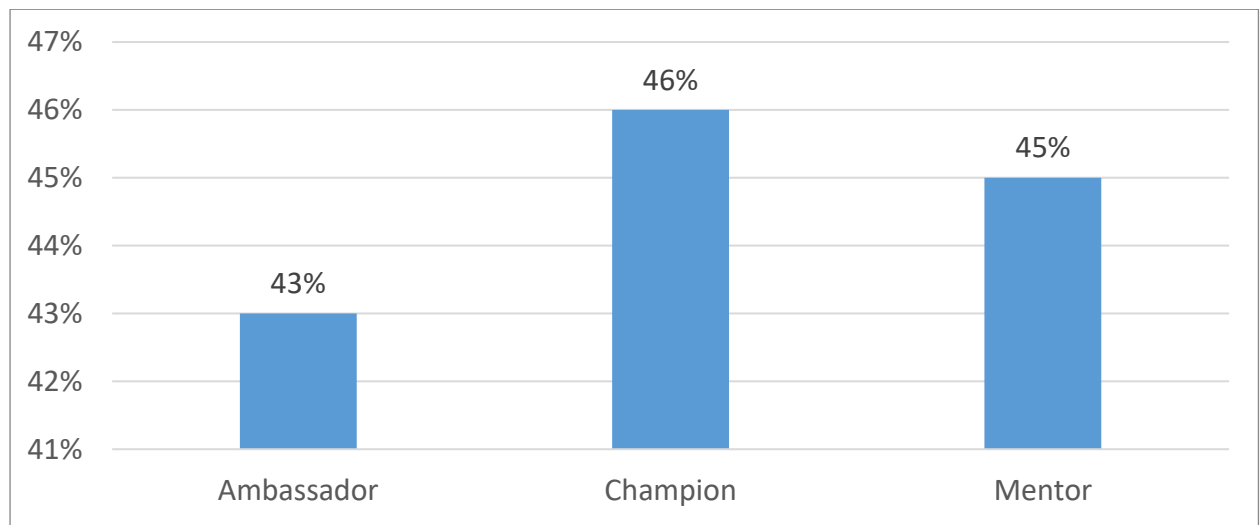


Figure 3.14: Requested support from BuildForce?

Have you asked BuildForce for further support to fulfil this/these roles? Base = 39

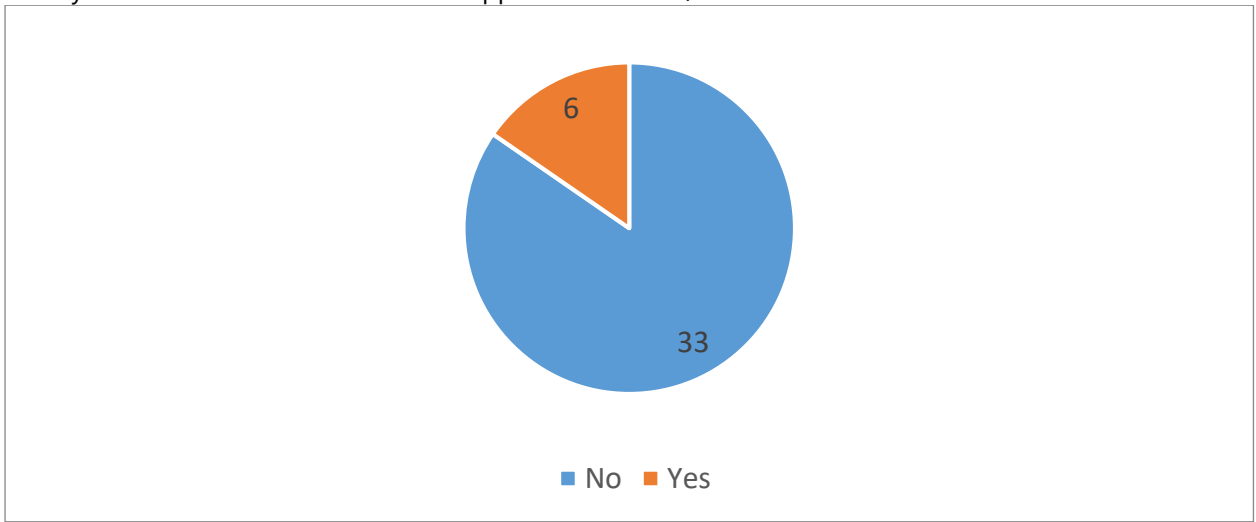


Figure 3.15: Aspects of role that could have been fulfilled with further input from BuildForce

Is there any part of your role that you felt could have been fulfilled more effectively with further guidance, support or training from BuildForce Team? Base = 38

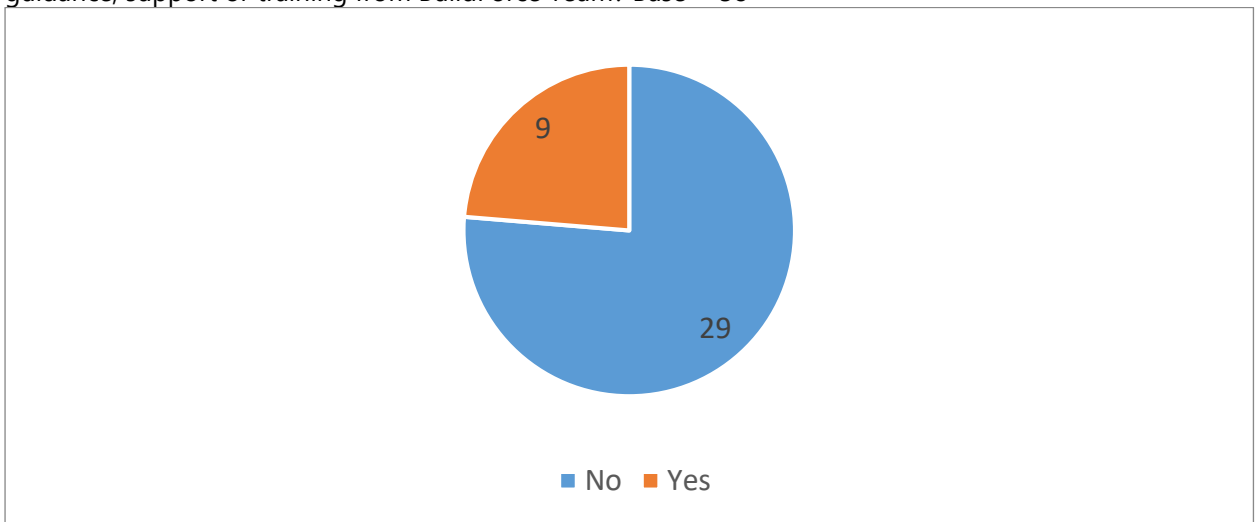
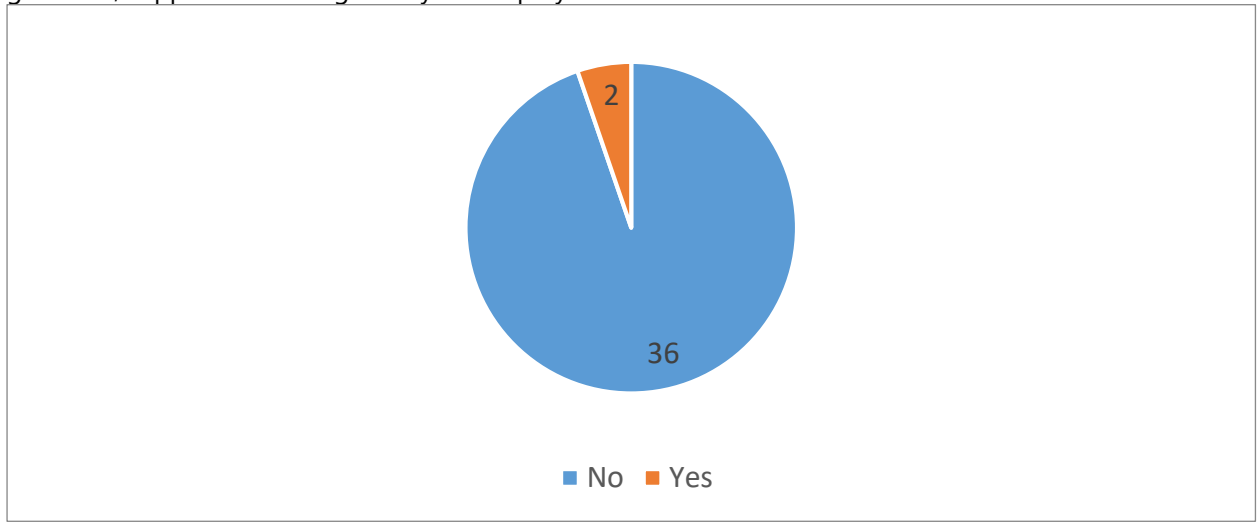


Figure 3.16: Aspects of role that could have been fulfilled with further input from company

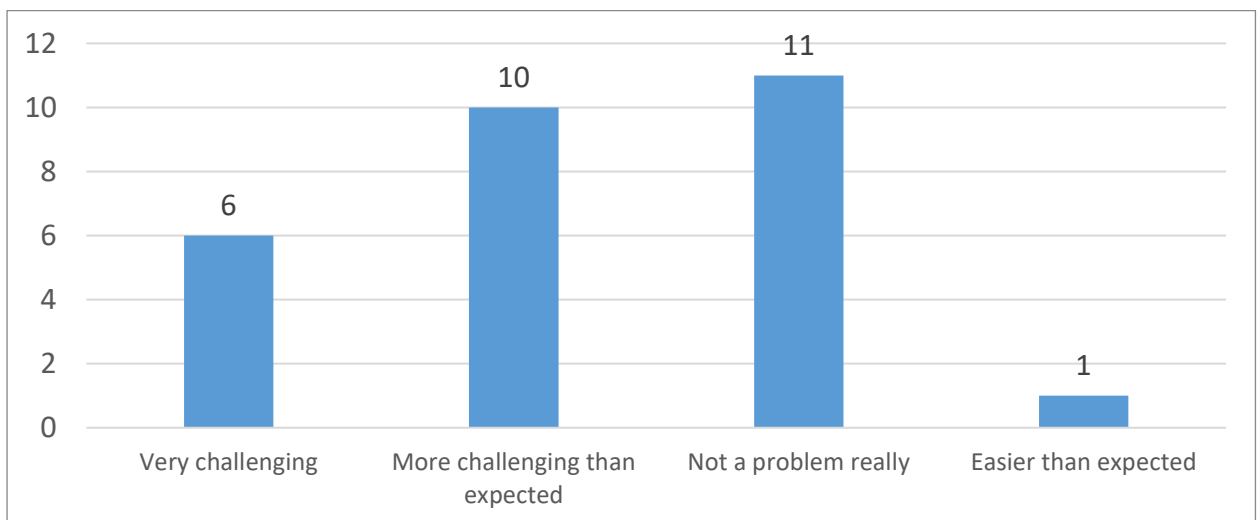
Is there any part of your role that you felt could have been fulfilled more effectively with further guidance, support or training from your employer? Base = 38



Placing and supporting Service Leavers.

Figure 3.17: Degree of challenge to identify sufficient, relevant job or work experience opportunities

How challenging was it for you to identify sufficient, relevant job or work experience opportunities for Service Leavers / Veterans in your business? Base = 28



Outcomes for Ambassadors and Mentors

Figure 3.18: Employee outcomes

Please tell us if you believe you have gained any of the benefits in the following table for the role/s fulfilled. Base = 11 Ambassadors, 8 Champions and 23 Mentors

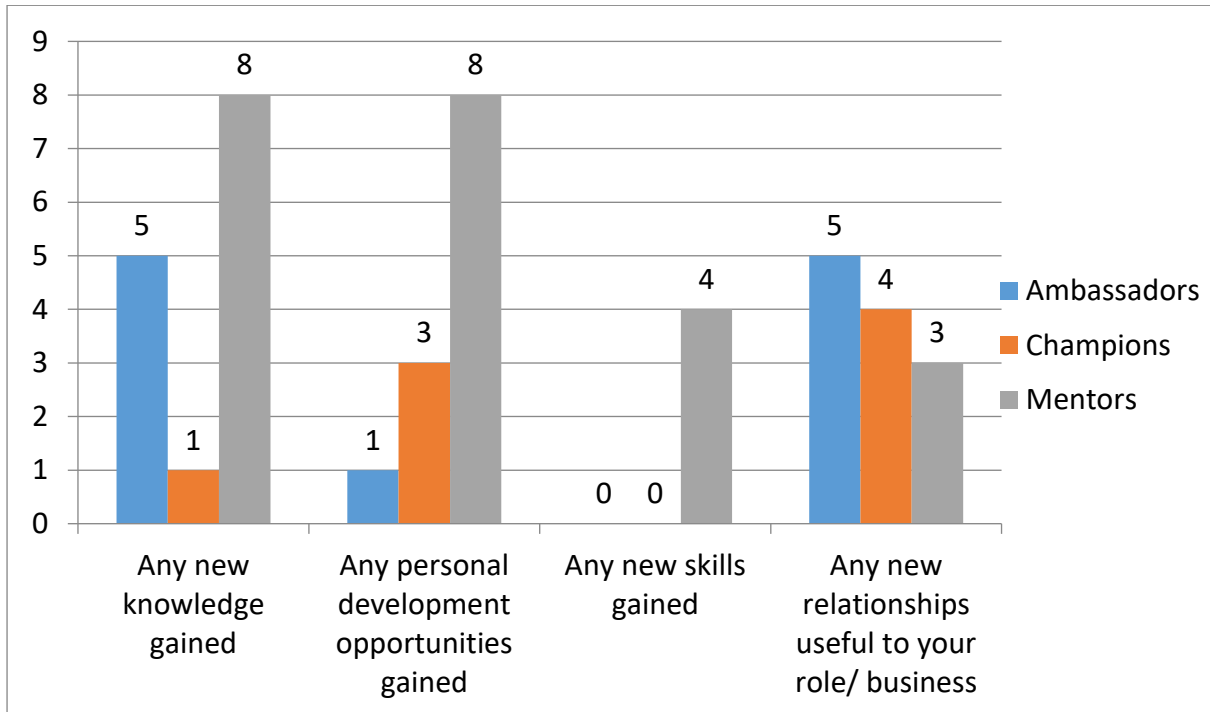


Figure 3.19: Outcomes

As a result of your employer's involvement with BuildForce have any of the following outcomes occurred already, or perhaps may yet still happen in time?

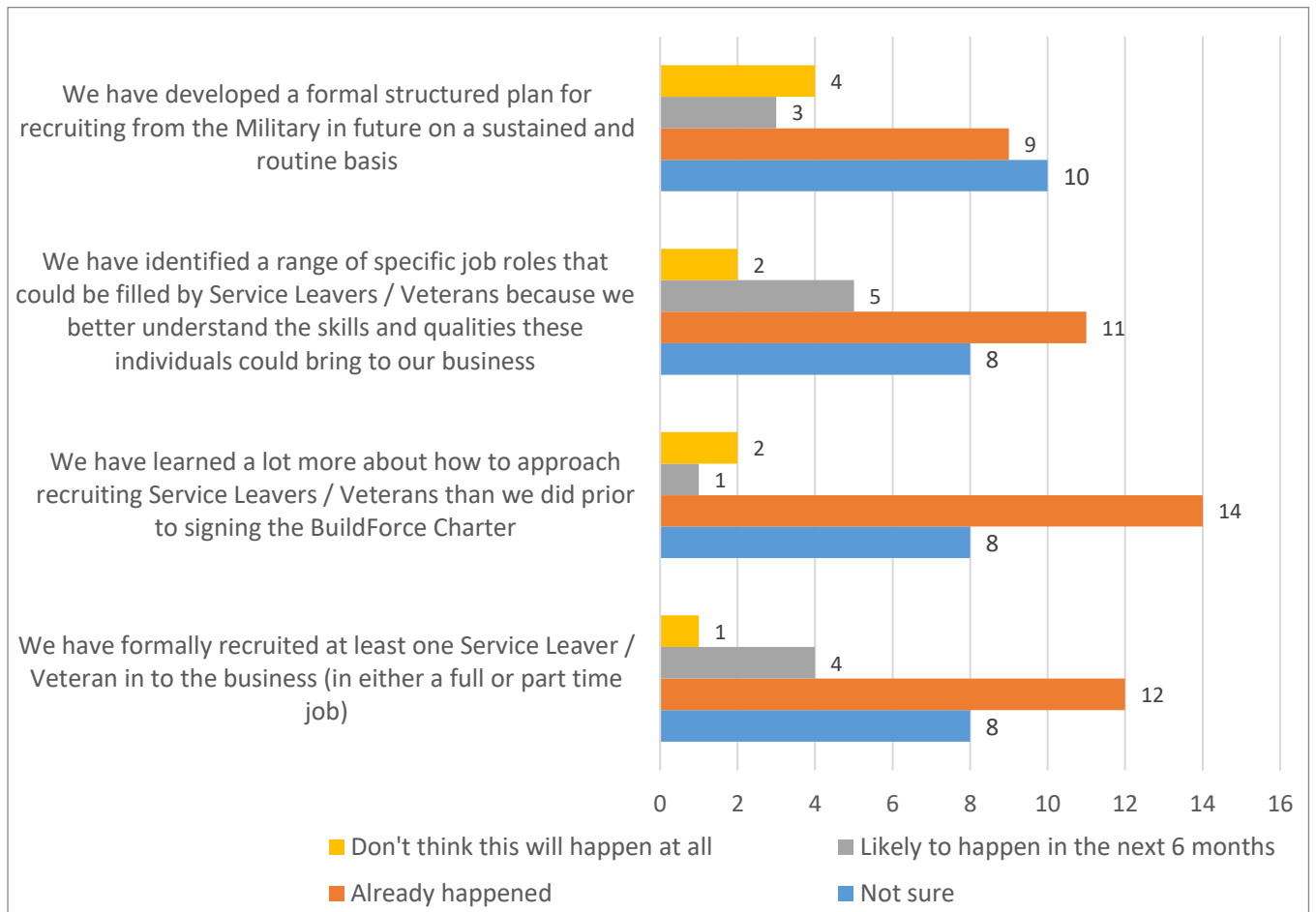


Figure 3.20: Outcomes for construction firms (2)

To what extent do you agree with these statements?

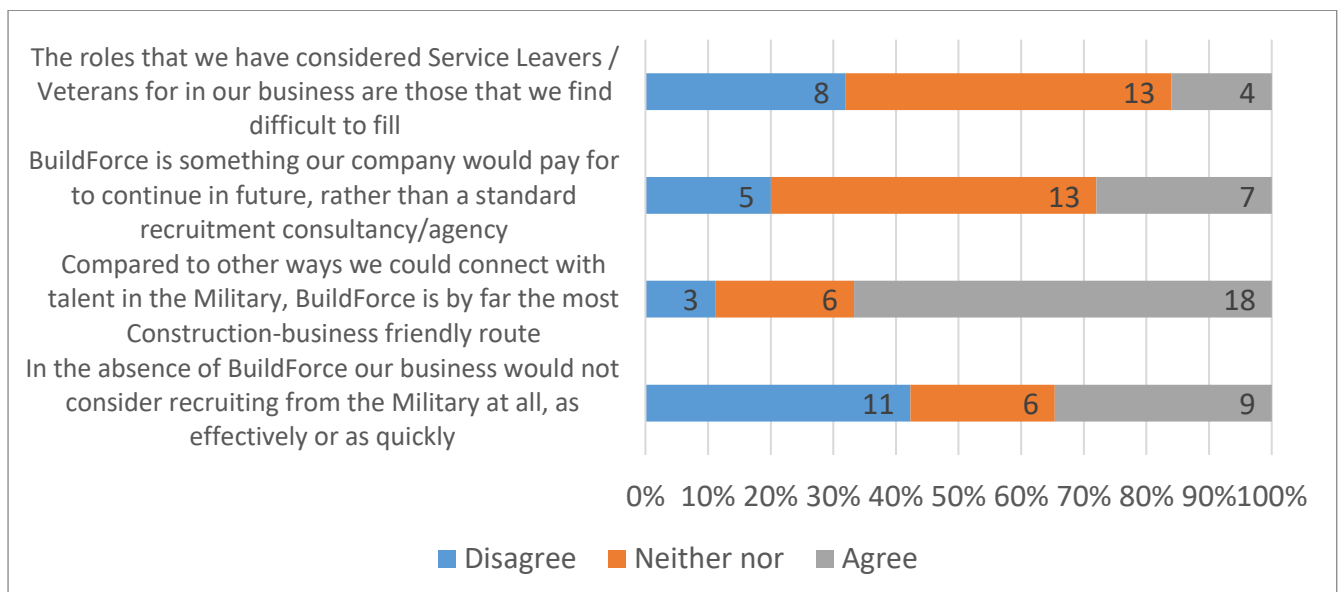
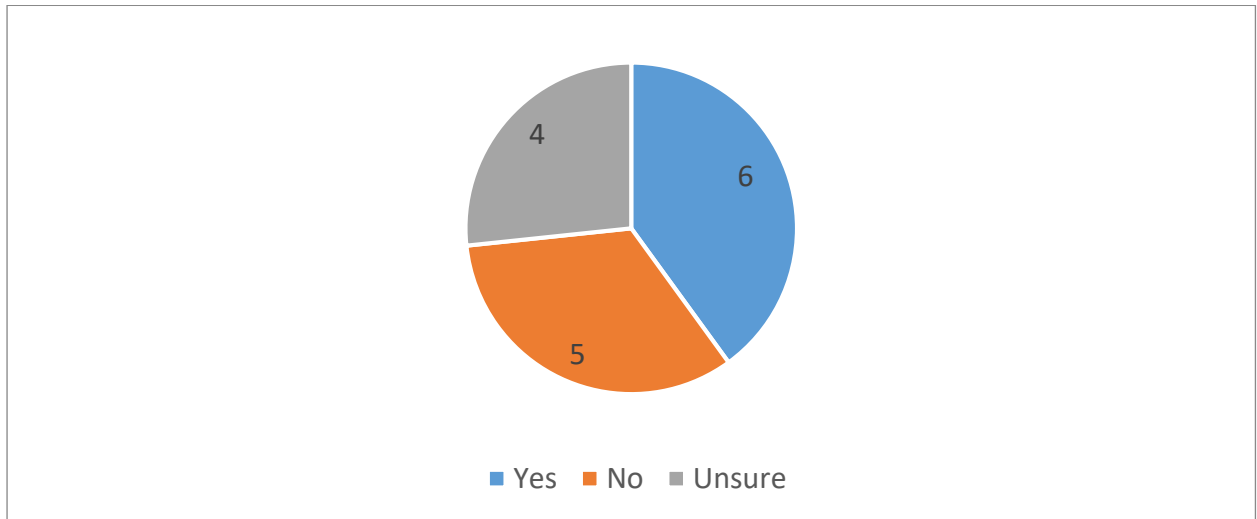


Figure 3.21: Training offered to Service Leavers

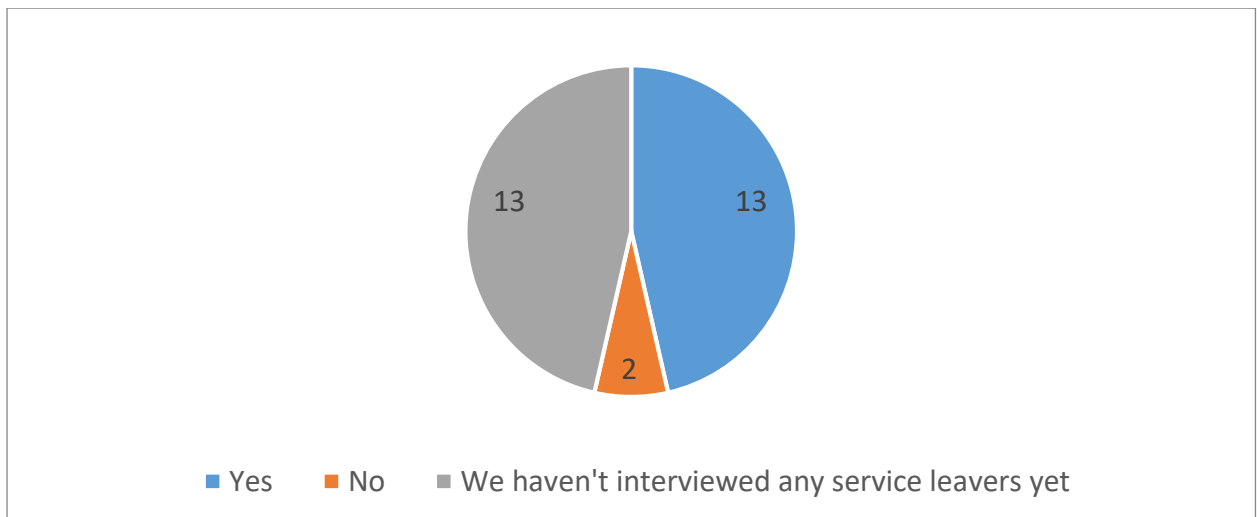
Has the company offered construction training to service leavers? Base = 15



Service Leaver attributes and qualities

Figure 3.22: Whether Service Leaver interviewees had any particular skills, qualities or attributes that made them stand out

If your business interviewed any Service Leavers / Veterans for jobs as a result of BuildForce involvement, were there any particular qualities, skills or attributes that you noticed were especially attractive compared to alternative applicants for the same job role? Base = 28



Qualifications level

Service Leavers and employer representatives were asked to give their highest qualification level. Of the 55 who provided a response, 32 (58%) were educated to degree level or above.

Level 2	1
Level 3	5
Level 4	6
Level 5	11
Level 6	19
Level 7	12
level 8	1

3.3 Sustainability Survey

As a separate, additional process, companies were asked their views on the future sustainability of BuildForce through an online survey. The questions were informed by the initial findings and knowledge capture workshop. 49 responses from 42 companies were received. Here we include the open responses, as there was insufficient time for coding.

Why is / is it not important that BuildForce continues to connect Service Leavers to construction firms?

Service Leavers will find their way into the job market using other means

We like the concept but it's not a critical recruitment option for us.

Service leavers have great transferable skills but struggle to translate these to employers.

Without the support of BuildForce service leaders would have no one credible to turn to. The MoD clearly do not appear to have those skills

it helps service leavers find work after leaving the military and their skills, training and competencies are of value to the construction industry

We have a skills shortage and these initiatives are invaluable to the industry. This helps CITB meet their criteria

industry crisis in recruiting good people

Because there are hardly any other organisations out there doing what they do. Service Leavers are a perfect fit for the construction industry and BuildForce provide an invaluable service of supporting and linking those service leavers to jobs in the industry.

This is an invaluable service for the Service Leavers. For us as an organisation we have not recruited anyone via BuildForce but I have mentored Service Leavers and everyone has found a job. I don't believe that would be possible without BuildForce.

Such a labour shortage and shortage of the younger generation who want to work

The levels of skills needed in the Construction Industry will never be reached unless we continue to approach avenues such as ex service personnel

I think it's very important knowing the shortfall of the industry and the skills the Forces have, however, BuildForce need to ensure that service leavers follow up their email submissions. I am quite upset by the amount of emails BuildForce have sent to me with persons, I have responded only to get nothing back from the service leaver.

Very important as the construction industry is under manned.

This initiative is critical to addressing urgent industry needs now. Also providing exceptional calibre individuals

Service leavers have an excellent work ethic and their deployment into construction should be encouraged

A number of roles may never be advertised as the company may require a quick turnaround so when we receive CVs we can ask around to see if any new opportunities are coming available

There is a skill and manpower shortage and we need these people as much as they need the construction industry

I think it is a good organisation helping service leavers.

The construction industry is not the first or most obvious choice for the service leaver, BuildForce acting and a conduit to engage with and support service leavers specifically into construction is a huge advantage to the industry.

Seen the difference it has made to individuals

MOD recruitment and placement is much more difficult than it seems, it's very time intensive, everyone is looking, but not many really want to pay the true cost of recruitment. Someone needs to service the leavers.

As an ex service man myself, and now a professional in construction sector, I recognise the value build force brings not only to my organisation but the industry as a whole, it is a unique organisation that fills a necessary gap in the market, with more drive and vision it could become something very very special.

The military continue to develop people with skills highly applicable to the construction industry and the industry continues to be short of well-trained people with a right first time, innovative and productivity mindset.

To give them the help and support

I think it's a vital resource that's being underused in the construction industry. the skill set they can offer is not being exploited enough in order to maximise the opportunities available

BuildForce are specialist and they deal solely with service leavers, most do other things as well

With the current skills shortages in the industry, the ability to recruit from the military into construction to benefit from the transferrable skills is essential.

What would be missed most by your firm if BuildForce were unable to continue or sustain its current levels of service delivery?

It should be what would the Government miss, not ourselves. BuildForce are an important additional link to the jobs market.

It is important for the future of the construction industry to attract and retain well skilled and trained employees.

Nothing, but it would be a shame as it's a great idea

The ability to offer support to service leavers in a relevant and structured manner.

I am a one-man-band providing mentoring on behalf of BuildForce so on a personal level I would be sad to see any decline in service delivery

contact and introduction to military leavers

Employing good service leavers

ability to offer work experience, mentoring and potential employment

Access to a wealth of experienced and highly qualified service leavers.

unable to find ex-service people for employment to transfer their skills to the construction industry

Easy transition between services and construction careers

Nothing at the moment as we have not had any positive contacts with anyone even though we have responded and offered numerous times

The quality of candidates

The ability to easily access services leavers

Employment of Service leavers. This initiative is absolutely fantastic.

Rapid access to service leavers whilst not having to pay exorbitant recruiter fees for no value.

BuildForce should become the go to portal for transition into the Construction Industry as there isn't one and it is needed. My organisation could and should be able to refer in and receive referrals out.

The right person for the roles

Pool of labour and a system to contact service leavers

The linkage from leaving the military and identifying a career in construction.

Link with service leavers lost

We are not currently utilising BuildForce effectively, the current loss would be minimal, it's the future value we need to protect.

The ability to find people with a unique, valuable skill set, coupled with a service leaver's mindset.

The link to help ex-military back into work

Raising awareness of the possibility of utilising service leavers in the construction industry. The more awareness that's raised the better.

Our ability to use their services to help ex skilled military into employment

The chance of being able to help service leavers. The fact we are there and helping those who served the country into employment is great for the company.

The focus for one organisation to help recruit the best of the service leavers into our industry

The opportunity to engage and network direct with the talent pool of Service Leavers and Veterans looking towards second careers in the construction industry as they become available to the market.

4 Additional Information on sustainability


A sustainability paper (2017) was produced which set out five potential models for BuildForce.⁴ It concluded that while the LIBOR funded model offered the best single opportunity for sustainable funding, a 'hybrid model' was the most likely scenario and that 'it is inconceivable that BuildForce will not be working / collaborating with CITB at any stage'.

The LIBOR bid was unsuccessful. Since that time, announcements have been made that the Army is planning to expand their headcount, and other challenges, such as youth and long term unemployment are seen to be reducing. The skills gaps and shortages within the Construction sector persist, and are expected to worsen following Brexit in March 2019?

The Steering Group confirmed in 2018 that there was a strong, shared desire to continue. The following potential funding options were discussed, summarised in the table below:

Funding Option	Advantages	Disadvantages
CITB Structured Fund	Significant, long term funding route aligned to needs of industry	Funder led priorities, rather than driven by BuildForce. Priorities selected for funding may not match BuildForce
Other synergistic funders; for example The Royal British Legion, CIOB, RICS, Armed Forces Covenant	Synergy with BuildForce and existing connections in place	Not a short term opportunity
Local / regional funding	Scope to build a stronger regional model	Regional funding pots will reduce following BREXIT. Resource to court and secure multiple, localised / devolved funds that may not be aligned to BuildForce's core purpose. Additional administration required to manage and report to multiple funders.
Employer owned	Has worked in other contexts; and could form part of the solution	Vulnerable to changing senior personnel and priorities

Questions of sustainability are inherently linked to 'strategic intent'; where and how does BuildForce wish to focus their resources from 2018 onwards?

	
Multiple funders	Single funder
Stand-alone entity	Linked / connected entity
UK wide	Specific locations
Any sustainable construction job	Hard to fill vacancies
Enabler	Deliverer
All ranks	Exclusive
Focussed	Larger
Tailored	Generic
Industry-led	Social focus

⁴ Dated July 2017. The options considered were: 1) LIBOR Funded Model, 2) Team Army Model 3) Working with CITB Model, 4) VETS model and 5) Other Models

The Steering Group discussed USPs and sustainability at length in the knowledge capture workshop.

"People seem more impressed that it's a real construction initiative and not just run by administrators – the fact it is real industry people is the biggest compliment we get."

"If what we plan to do works it's brilliant, they'll have a meaningful conversation about whether they want to get into construction, then they'll be plugged into a mentor in a region they want to go to in their specialism and from there you can support them into a job."

"I strongly disagree that BuildForce should be focussing on officers; we need to widen our attractiveness to a broader spectrum of ranks."

"Honesty – I think Service Leavers like that we are honest with them, we don't tell them it's going to be easy. We're not head hunters or a recruitment agency."

The conclusion to the workshop was:

"There's something more about a complex funding model. It might be having a delivery model, it might be that employers commit certain things. My gut instinct is that there is not going to be one single solution. It's about blending different things to make it work."

Sustainability Options

A range of sustainability options were discussed, including the following CITB funding routes:

Funding route	Comments
1. Through CITB Levy	£150 million was paid to 16,000 employers in 2017 ⁵ .
2. Employer owned and supported	If you got all of the major constructors together and all of the major contributors – authorities, private builders, there's more than enough to sit down and agree. Membership model – for example, that used by the Construction Youth Trust. Fundraising events take a lot of work, but can be effective.
3. Skills and training grants ⁶	Grants from £1500 available
4. Innovation funding	This is for employers that want to lead a new area of innovation – it could be a new technique
5. Structured Fund	"In the past, we would look at wider sector issues and ask you to pitch your ideas against that. We have moved away from that model now, we went through an open process, and market what we think are the problems based on research. " 15 week bidding process. ⁷

⁵ <https://www.cctraining.uk.com/citb-levy-changes/>

⁶ https://www.citb.co.uk/documents/funding/funding%20scheme%202018/st_application_english_version.pdf

⁷ The commissioning timetable can be found here: <https://www.citb.co.uk/funding/types-of-funding/structured-fund/>

5 Evaluation Materials

The links below take the reader to the online surveys developed for this evaluation.

Service Leaver survey

<http://Skyblue.BuildForce-Service-Leaver-Survey-2018.sgizmo.com/s3/>

Industry survey

<http://Skyblue.BuildForce-Alliance-Member-Survey-2018.sgizmo.com/s3/>

Sustainability survey

<https://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/4377743/COPY-BuildForce-Company-Follow-up-survey>

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Disclaimer: The information in this technical report is presented in good faith and is thought to be accurate at time of publication (31st May 2018). However, the authors cannot accept any responsibility for errors or omissions.