

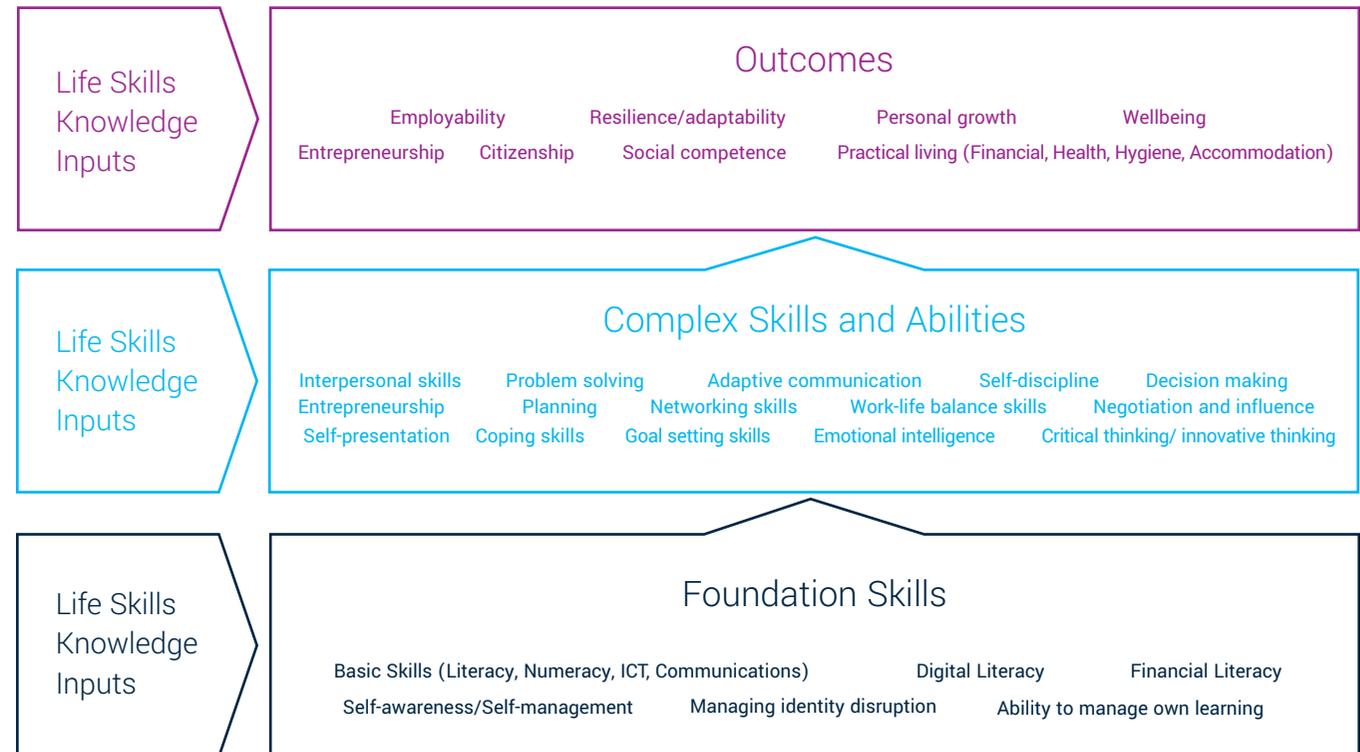
Whilst the majority of ex-Service personnel and their families make a successful transition into civilian life, some struggle. A 'lack of life skills' or 'lack of civilian skills' are phrases sometimes used to describe the limited awareness of the norms and practices understood by civilian society.

Forces in Mind Trust (FiMT) commissioned QinetiQ and Cranfield Management School to explore Life Skills in the Armed Forces Community (of both serving personnel and spouses/partners).

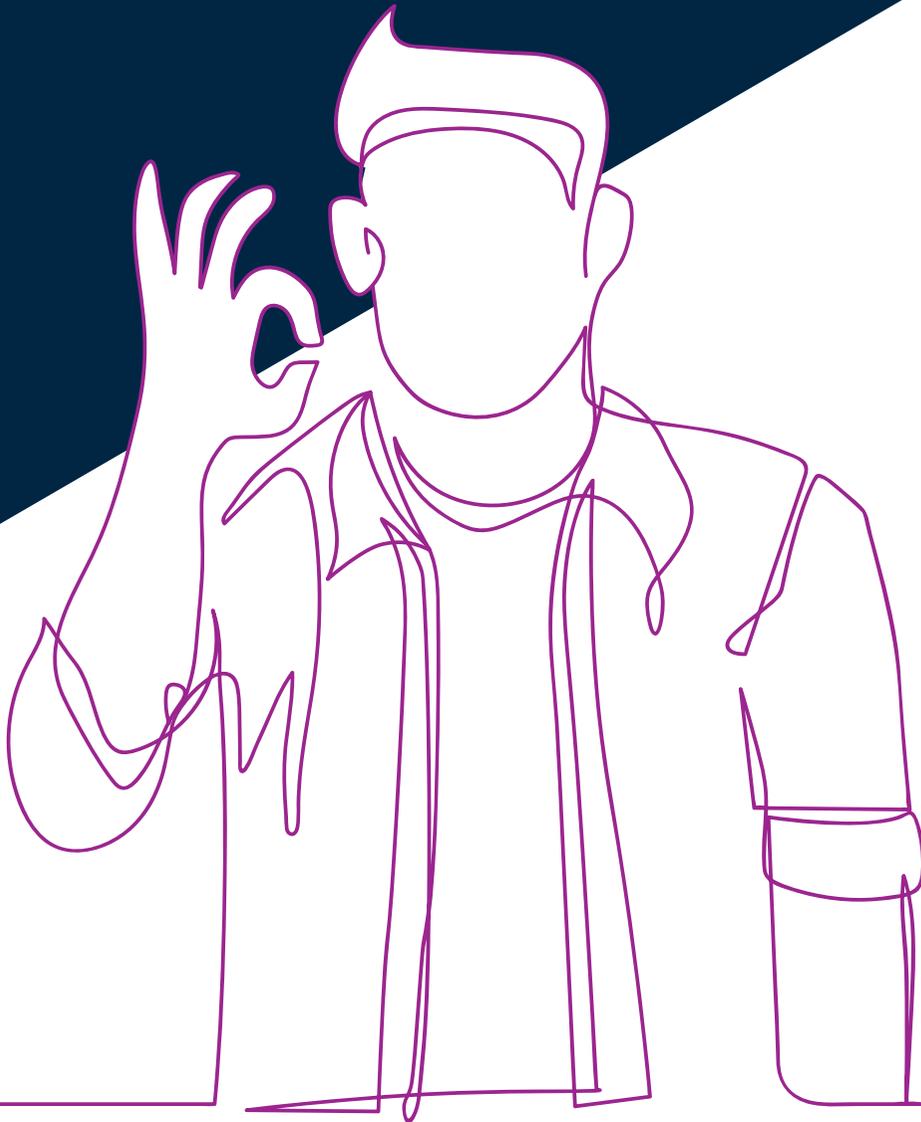
## Improving Life Skills in the UK Armed Forces

**Defining Life Skills: "Those skills that lead to the positive behaviours that underpin successful personal, social, work and civic outcomes" (Robinson et al., 2014<sup>1</sup>).**

The research proposes that the following Life Skills framework is used which includes three levels: foundation skills; complex skills and abilities; and outcomes. Foundation skills are the building blocks for more complex skills and abilities while outcomes are those aspects that demonstrate successful and effective functioning in society.



<sup>1</sup> Robinson, D., Bowyer, S., Miller, L., Rickard, C., & McNamara, H. (2014). TIN 2.041 Life Skills. Defence Human Capability Science and Technology Centre (UC-DHCSTC\_I2\_T\_T2\_041/003).



Life Skills might best be described as a low-prevalence problem that has high impact amongst the small community that are most affected.

Those most affected by poor Life Skills tend to be lower in rank and younger in age, who have not had the chance to develop their skills, or who had poor Life Skills on joining. Individuals are more likely to be affected by poor Life Skills if they are without a trade; serving in the Army; struggling with mental health issues; and are non-UK citizens.

The reason Life Skills pose a problem for some was largely attributed to the Armed Forces lifestyle: the impact of mobility (resulting in a lack of continuity of education); and not having to do things for themselves (leading to a lack of opportunity to hone certain skills).

Greater Life Skills support is needed in the following areas.

- Serving personnel: applying for jobs and digital/IT skills.
- Spouses/partners: assistance with self-confidence.
- Both: mental wellbeing, help with the emotional/psychological adjustment to civilian life and financial literacy.

Financial literacy is a key Life Skill for transition and one that is not fully developed at the point of leaving.

87.2%

Of serving personnel and...

82.4%

of spouses/partners (N=42) perceived themselves to have good Life Skills.

66.0%

of serving personnel said they had received Life Skills support from the Armed Forces,

92.2%

(N=47) of spouses/partners said they had not

51%

of serving personnel and...

70.6%

(N=36) of spouses/partners said they did not know how to access Life Skills support should they need it