



Welfare Services Statistical Report

October 2014 – September 2015

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Welfare Services 2014-2015

From October 2014 to September 2015 Poppyscotland provided assistance to 1,429 individuals across a wide-range of our Welfare Services. We also reached many more people through the Armed Services Advice Project and our Welfare Centre in Inverness.

Key Facts summary

Tailored Support and Funding

- 1,248 individuals were provided tailored funding to help with a wide range of needs from home adaptations and household expenses to much needed respite breaks.
- Funding support to individuals has been in excess of £762,000.
- 906 individuals received an Immediate Needs Grant.
- The total Immediate Needs Grant expenditure this year was £543,920.
- 215 individuals and families benefited from a much needed Poppy Break.

Advice, Information and Support

- There were 605 users of the Inverness Welfare Centre.
- 540 individuals accessed the general information and guidance service.
- 65 individuals all with multiple needs, benefitted from the 1:1 specialist advice and support service.
- ASAP Advisers helped 2,468 individual members of the Armed Forces community over the year, supporting them with 10,694 issues.
- ASAP client financial gain recorded for the year was over £1,608,548.





Support to Organisations

- Poppyscotland provided grants totalling in excess of £1,020,000 to 17 organisations offering specialist services to the Armed Forces community.



Employment Services

- There have been a total of 181 beneficiaries of Poppyscotland's Employment Services.
- £155,000 was spent on assisting veterans with their employment needs.
- 105 veterans received ongoing one to one support through the Employ-Able service.
- 32 individuals received employment support grants totalling more than £47,000. Poppyscotland contributed £25,000 to this total the remainder was met by other ex-Service charities.
- 21 veterans attended a LifeWorks course.
- 23 veterans with criminal convictions have been assisted to take positive steps towards employment through the Apex disclosure service.



Services

Tailored support and funding

We supported 1,248 individuals through tailored support and funding. Our financial support to individuals totalled in excess of £762,000.

1. Funding to individuals

Poppyscotland provide direct financial assistance to veterans and their families through our Immediate Needs Grants Scheme.

We received 1,277 applications between October 2014 and September 2015 and awarded 906 grants.

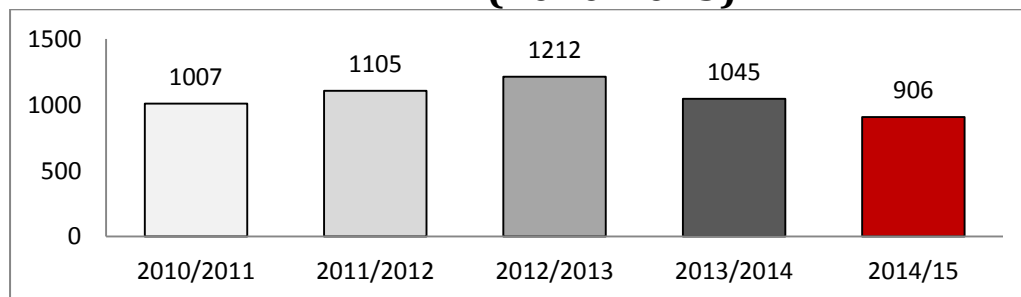
211 of the applicants not to have received an Immediate Needs Grant received assistance addressing financial difficulties through alternative means, such as debt advice from the Armed Services Advice Project. 160 applications for funding were refused for a variety of reasons such as eligibility, or because the applicants were considered not to be in financial need.

Grants at a glance

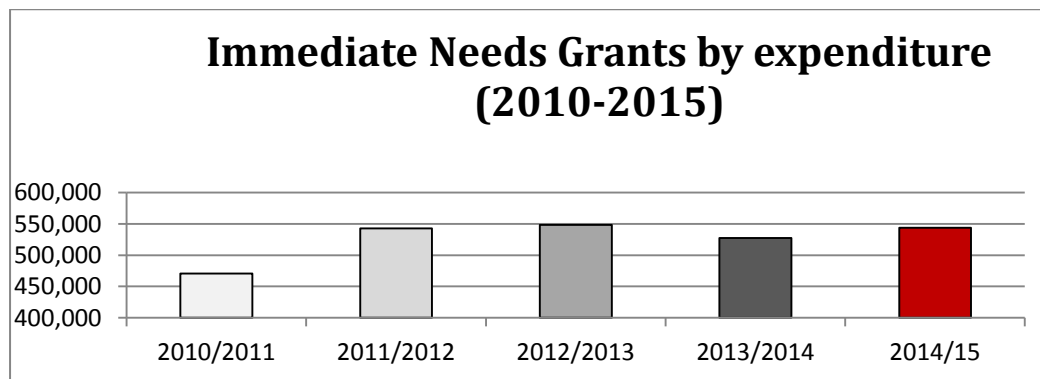
Year	Total number of grants awarded	Total Grants expenditure	Average cost per case
2012-2013	1212	£548,668	£453
2013-2014	1045	£527,593	£504
2014-2015	906	£543,920	£600

The total Immediate Needs Grants expenditure this year was £543,920.

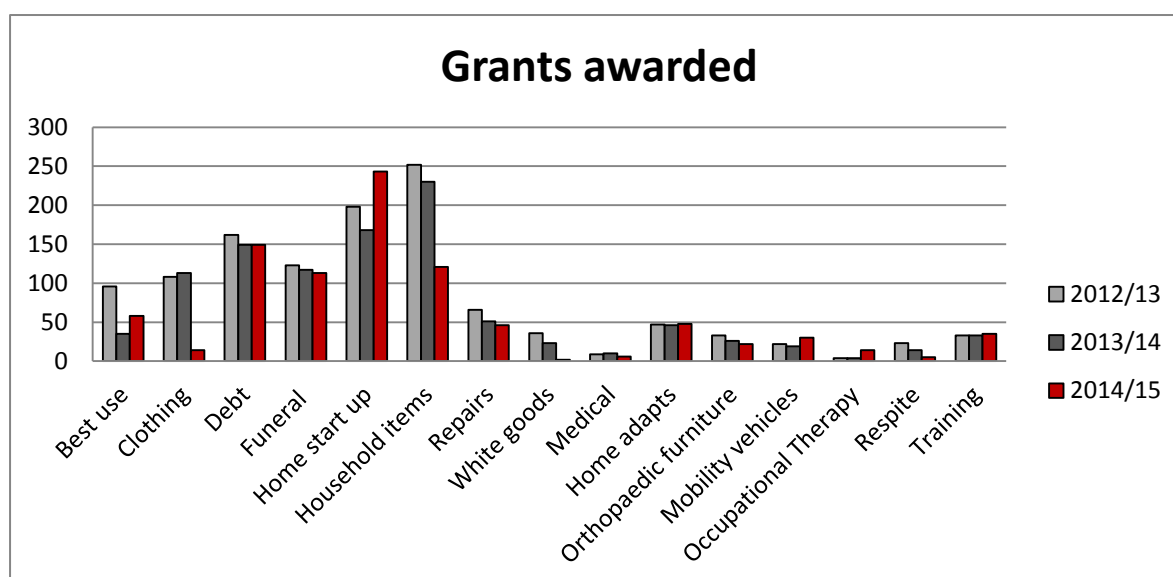
Immediate Needs Grants by award (2010-2015)



There has been a 13% decrease in the number of grants awarded this year. This is similar to the decrease seen in 2013/14. Such decreases could be linked to changes in practice, such as ongoing budgetary support being offered as an alternative to quick fix funding; and not receiving a significant number of requests from the Royal Caledonian Education Trust.



There has been a 19% increase in the average cost per case.



Grant purpose - Top 5

2012/13		2013/14		2014/15	
Grant Purpose	Number of requests	Grant Purpose	Number of requests	Grant Purpose	Number of requests
Household items	252	Household items	253	Home start-up	243
Home Start-up	198	Home Start-up	202	Debt	149
Debt	162	Debt	193	Household items	121
Funeral	123	Best use	120	Funeral	113
Clothing	108	Funeral	111	Best use	58

Grant purpose by expenditure – Top 5

2012-2013

Grant purpose	Approximate overall funds awarded	Average awarded per beneficiary
Household items	£103,648	£411
Home start-up	£98,177	£495
Debt	£93,700	£578
Funeral	£73,312	£551
Household repairs	£41,673	£631

2013-2014

Grant purpose	Approximate overall funds awarded	Average awarded per beneficiary
Household items	£101,973	£437
Home start-up	£90,444	£538
Debt	£81,655	£544
Funeral	£71,990	£615
Home adaptations	£49,048	£1,066

2014-2015

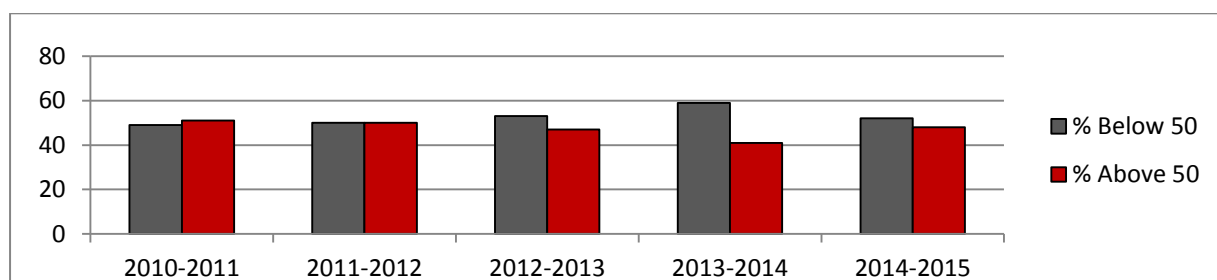
Grant purpose	Approximate overall funds awarded	Average awarded per beneficiary
Home start-up	£147,914	£608
Debt	£94,633	£653
Funeral	£86,934	£769
Home adaptations	£48,973	£1,020
Household items	£39,807	£329

Profile of Beneficiaries

The age profile of our beneficiaries needing financial assistance has changed over the last 5 years and there continues to be a larger percentage of beneficiaries under 50 years of age.



The profile of beneficiaries receiving grants (%)



The majority of grants were awarded to males who had served in the Army.

At the time of application 73% of beneficiaries had received no previous assistance from Poppyscotland.

Evidence from grant application forms suggests that in the majority of cases, applicants' outgoings exceeded their means. On average there is a £6 weekly deficit between household income and expenditure. This figure is 3 times the deficit recorded last year.



Although the weekly deficit number continues to rise, the level of debt disclosed by individuals in application forms continues to decrease.

Average debt:

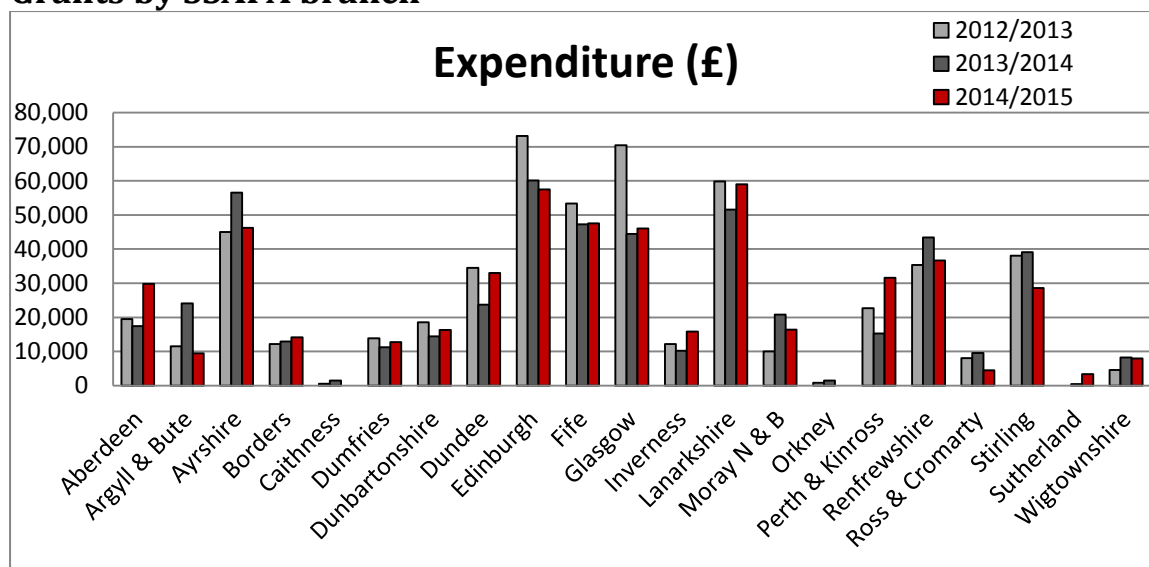


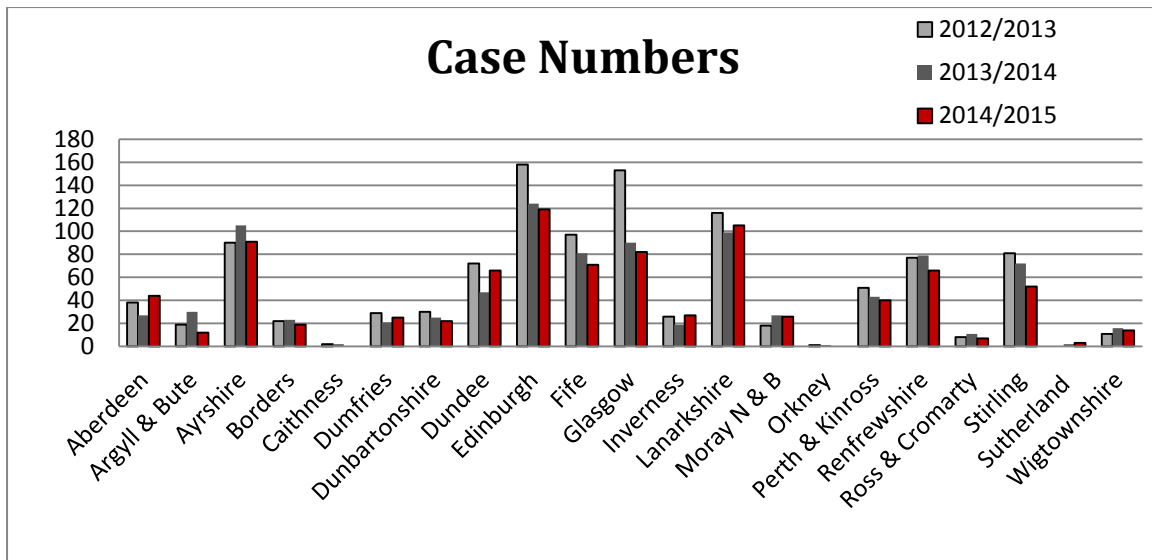
470 beneficiaries were recorded as being in debt, with a combined debt total in excess of £2.2 million.

SSAFA

This year 98% of grant applications were completed with the assistance of SSAFA who provide casework for members of the Armed Forces community requesting assistance from Military and other charities throughout Scotland.

Grants by SSAFA branch





2. Annuities



Although new annuity awards (annual grants) are no longer awarded by Poppyscotland, 112 individuals are still in receipt of this form of financial assistance. The grants are paid quarterly and amounts vary from £125 - £650 per quarter. Clients are still of course, able to apply for repeat support year-on-year if their circumstances necessitate their doing so.

The average annual grant recipient is over 70 years of age.

3. Poppy Breaks

Poppy Breaks are available to all members of the Armed Forces community, whether they are serving personnel, veterans or their families.

This year 215 members of the Armed Forces community benefitted from the Poppy Breaks service, a 10% increase from the 2013/14 figure.

71% of those who took a break were under 50 years of age.

75% of these breaks were taken at a holiday park.



Breaks were taken across the UK with Byng House, Southport and Craig Tara, Ayrshire as the top two destinations.

92% completed evaluation forms rated the Poppy Break experience as positive.

Advice, Information and Support Services

Poppyscotland's Advice, Information and Support Services help connect individuals in need with the services right for them, whether it is for financial solutions, employment help, housing, relationships, health and wellbeing or more.

1. Inverness Centre

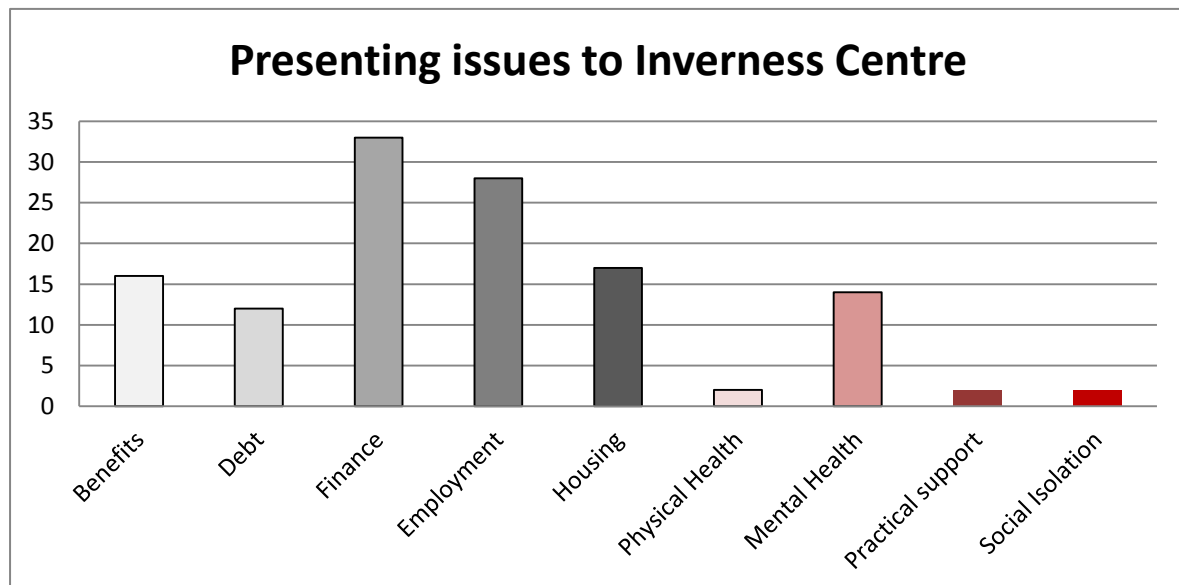
Our Inverness Centre offers advice, information and support on a range of topics for current and former members of the Armed Forces and their families living in the North of Scotland.

This year 605 individuals accessed the service.

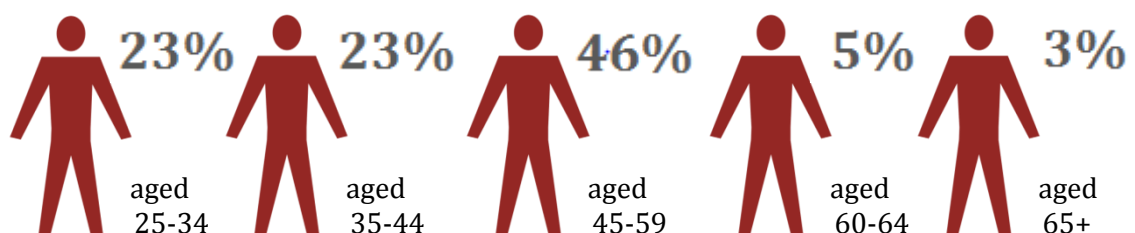
540 Individuals accessed the general information and guidance service.

65 individuals, all with multiple needs, benefitted from the 1:1 specialist advice and support services.

48% of beneficiaries presented with issues related to finance, benefits and debt. This is a small decrease from the 2013/14 figure.



Age profile of Inverness beneficiaries:



2. Armed Services Advice Project (ASAP)

The Armed Services Advice Project (ASAP) delivers information, advice and support to members of the Armed Forces community through a Scotland wide helpline and face to face casework in ten regions.

Advisers helped 2468 individual clients over the year, supporting them with 10694 new and repeat issues. This resulted in an average of

- 4.9 issues per client for face to face advice in the regions,
- 2 issues per client for the helpline.

41% of issues raised were about benefits, 15% concerned debts. Financial issues, including grant applications, accounted for 11% of issues raised.

Client financial gain recorded over the year was £1,608,548. A total of 501 clients benefited from a financial gain; the average financial gain per client was £3210.

For more data on ASAP activity from this period please see Appendix 1.

Support to other Organisations

Poppyscotland continues to work collaboratively with other organisations, providing funding so that members of the Armed Forces community can access the specialist services they need.

This year Poppyscotland awarded 17 grants to other organisations providing specialist advice, employment, mobility, respite, housing and mental health support. Our financial support to these organisations totalled in excess of £1.02M.

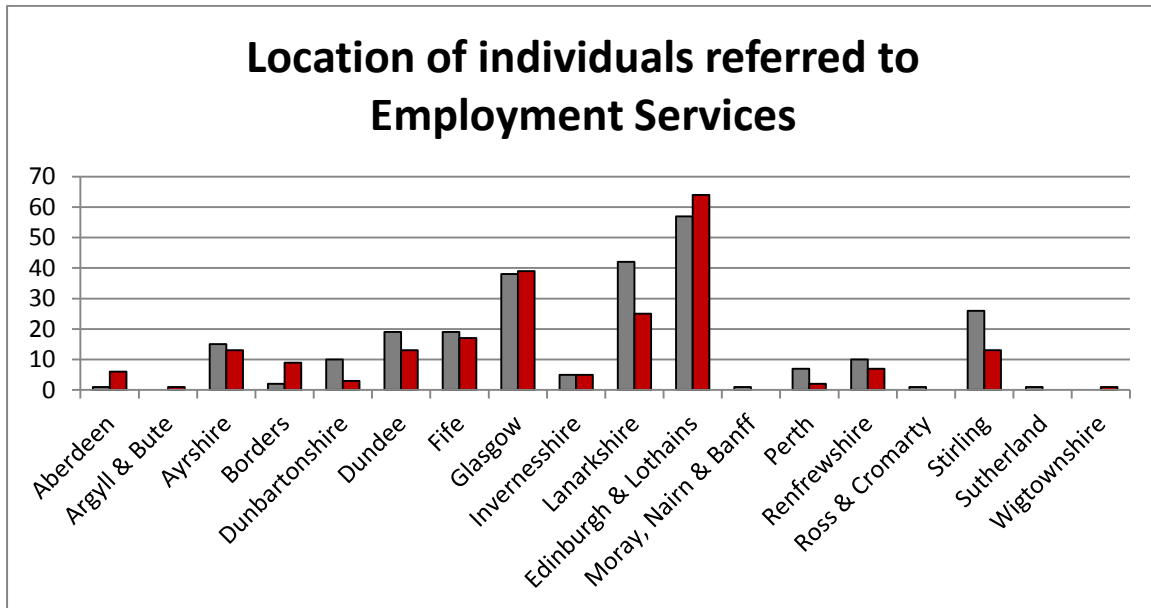
Area of support	Funding amount 2013-14	Funding amount 2014-15	Percentage 2013-14	Percentage 2014-15
Advice	£480K	£561K	65%	55%
Employment services	£103K	£265K	14%	26%
Mental health support	£97K	£122K	13%	12%
Housing	£35K	£71.5K	5%	7%
Mobility services	£2.5K	£4K	3%	< 1%
Respite	£1.5K	£4K	< 1%	< 1%

Organisations supported include: The Ripple Pond, Gardening Leave, Music in Hospitals, SSAFA, Kart Force, Sacro and the Regular Forces Employment Association.

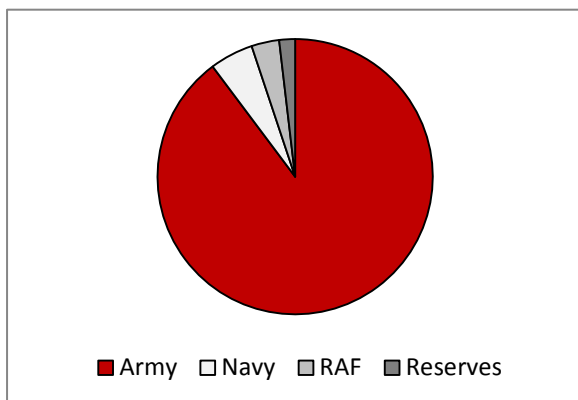
Employment Services

We supported 181 individuals through our employment services at an approximate cost of £155,000.

90% of those who applied or were referred to Poppyscotland's Employment Services were under the age of 50, with the majority of individuals being in their 30s. This is consistent with the ratio last year.



The majority of individuals referred to our employment services reside in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Lanarkshire. Referrals from Lanarkshire have reduced by 40%.



90% of referrals were made by or for individuals who served in the Army.

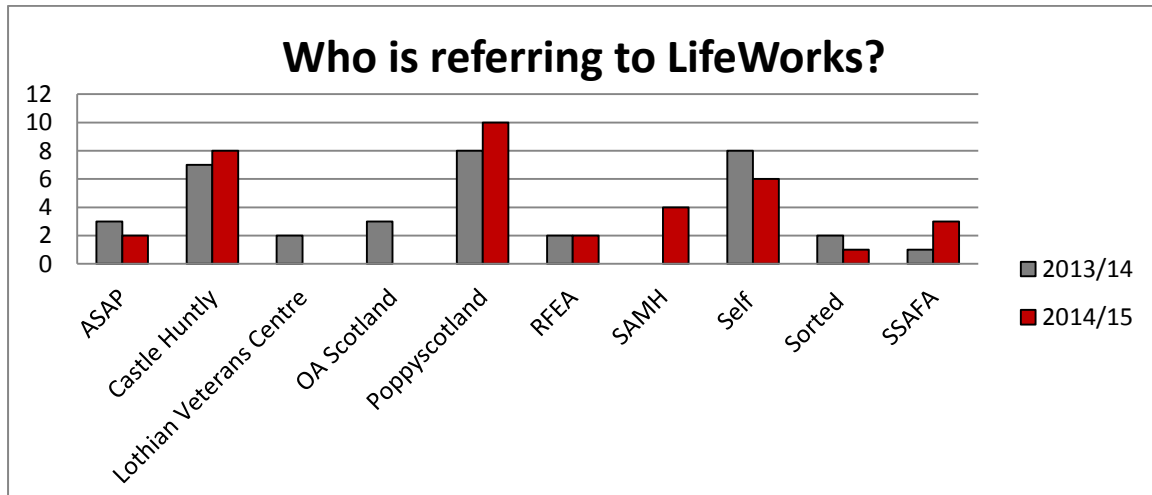
33% had previously accessed one of Poppyscotland's Welfare Services.

1. Lifeworks

LifeWorks, run in partnership with Royal British Legion Industries, is a vocational assessment and employability course that gives veterans, significantly struggling to get work, the support and confidence they need to help get the job they want.

21 individuals attended a LifeWorks course this year.

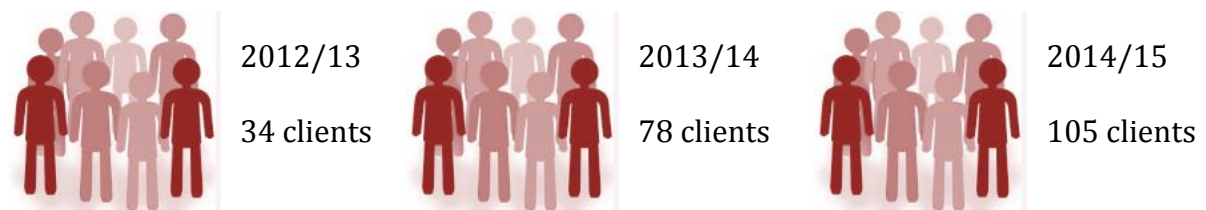
3 courses were held in Scotland.



2. Employ-Able

Employ-Able run in partnership with the Scottish Association for Mental Health, provides advice and support to assist veterans towards achieving vocational goals in paid work, education, training or volunteering.

The employ-Able service continues to grow with an additional 105 veterans being supported through the service in 2014/15.



Individuals accessing the service indicated they would like/require support in several areas with gaining employment, support with finances and mental health issues featuring highly.



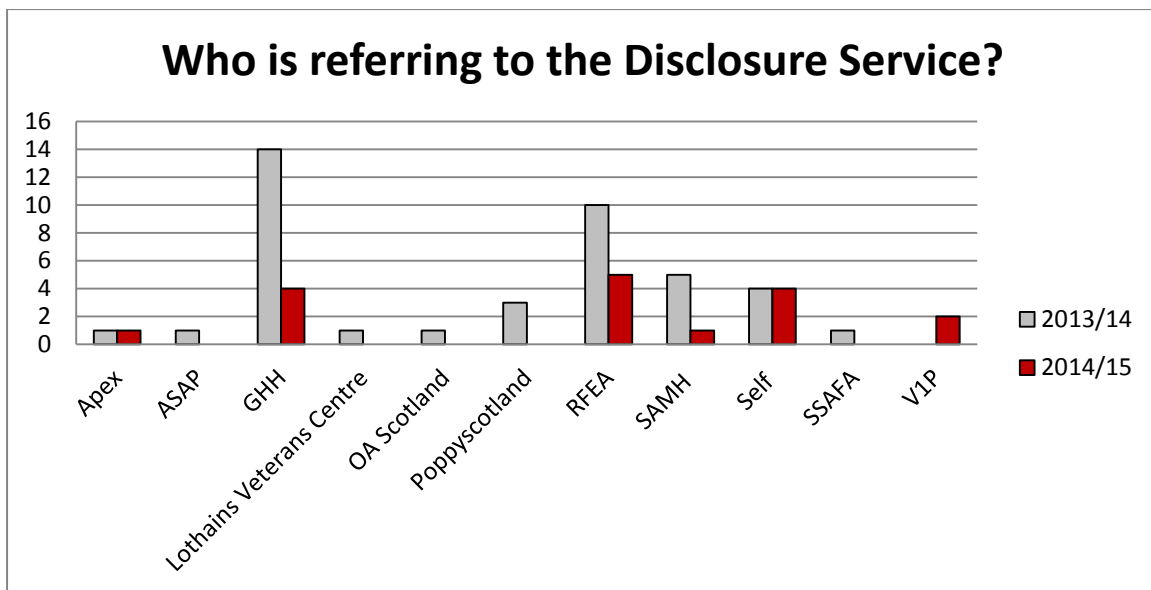
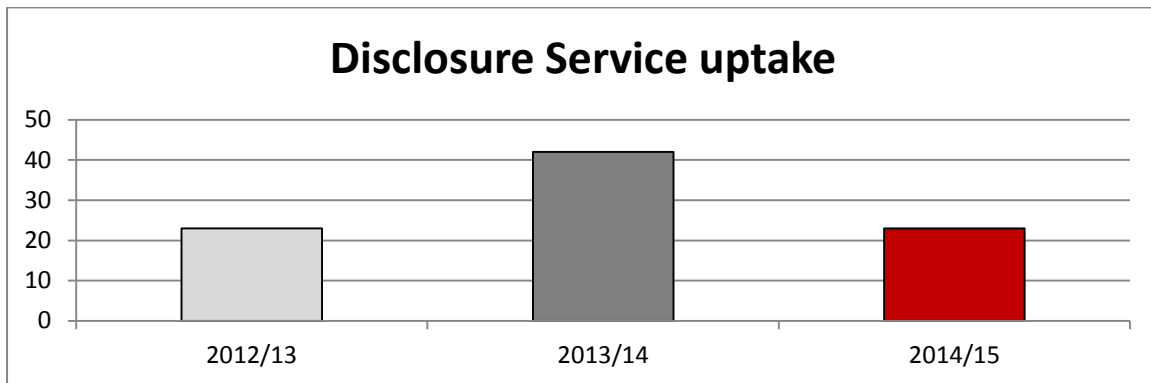
Over the course of the year Employ-Able advisers delivered 2173.5 hours of one-to-one support. This is a 35% increase.

For more data on Employ-Able activity from this period please see Appendix 2.

3. Criminal Conviction Disclosure Service

The Criminal Conviction Disclosure Service, run in partnership with offender rehabilitation charity Apex, aims to improve the employment prospects of veterans by offering advice and guidance on how and when to disclose information on past or current convictions to prospective employers.

23 individuals engaged with the Criminal Convictions Disclosure Service this year. This is a 45% reduction from last year.



90% of those referred to the Criminal Conviction Disclosure Service were under 50 years of age. 95% had served in the Army.

4. Employment Support Grant

Poppyscotland offers employment support grants; these are available to service leavers and veterans who are unemployed or in receipt of means tested employment benefits.

This year there were 56 applications made to the employment support grant service. This is a reduction of 43%.

32 individuals were awarded an employment support grant.

The 56 individuals that applied for an employment support grant through the Royal British Legion’s employment portal website ‘Civvy Street’ were veterans of varying status. Their reasons for leaving the Armed Forces were:

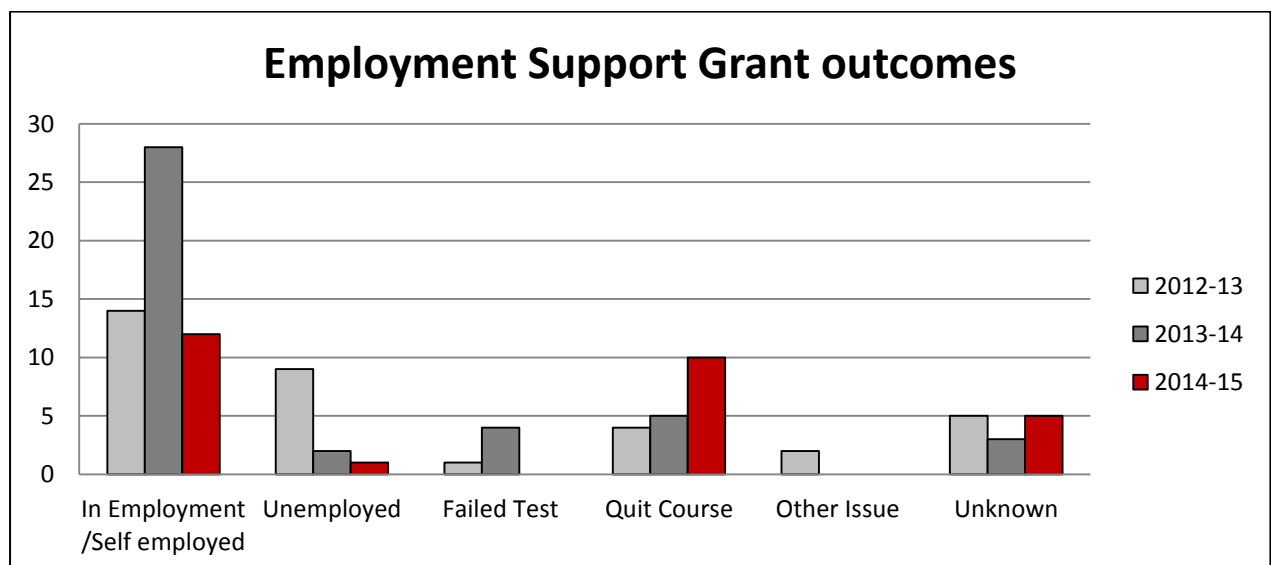
	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
End of Contract	28	28	11
Medical Discharge	15	18	10
Premature Voluntary Release	15	13	12
Redundancy	-	2	-
Other	30	37	23

Categories displayed above taken from www.civvystreet.org



Driving-related qualifications continue to be the most sought-after, by our client group.

Poppyscotland contributed £24,991 to employment support grants and sourced an additional £22,671 from other organisations for its employment support grant recipients.



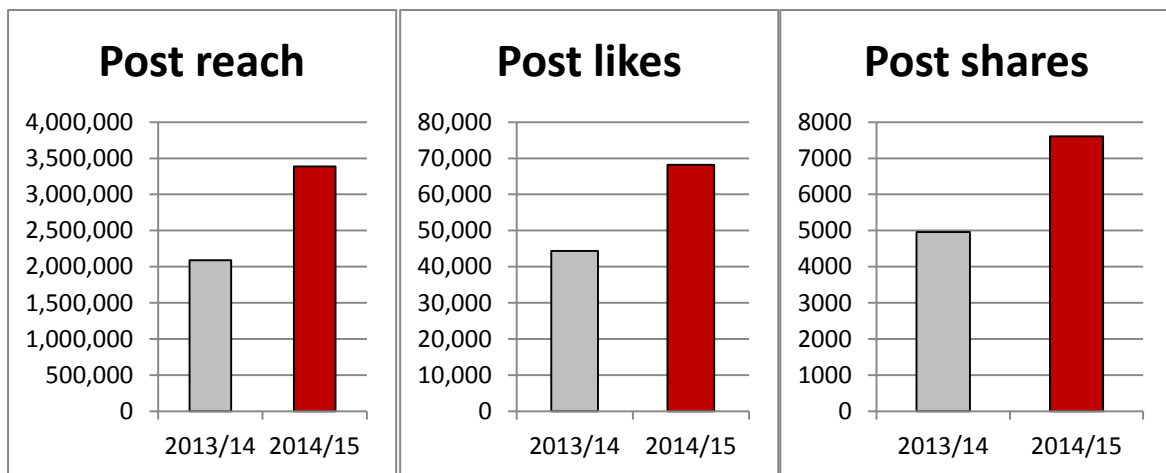
43% of those awarded an Employment Support Grant are now in employment.

Communication

1. Social Media

Facebook

We have increased our presence on Facebook. Welfare-related content accounted for 120 posts on the Poppyscotland page this year. Posts have had a combined reach of 3,387,521. Post reach is the number of people who have seen a post.



Posts with the largest reach included housing and mobility posts over Poppy Appeal 2014, the promotion of the NHS led 'Breathing Space Day' and posts relating to the Insult to Injury campaign.

Our most popular image was various shots from the 'reaching out' selection. This was used for a variety of posts from generic welfare messages to highlighting mental health employment support and an event looking at criminal justice system issues.

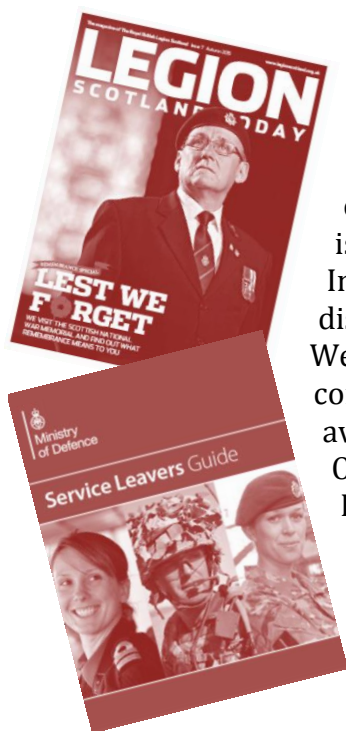
The 'reaching out' image also featured on our top 5 images 2013/14.



Twitter

This year we have continued to look for opportunities to tweet interesting facts and figures relating to our services and to link with relevant partners. We have increased the number of jointly-prepared posts promoting other organisations.

2. Newsletters, Magazines and Publications



In December A Poppyscotland supplement to the Royal British Legion report 'A UK Household Survey of the ex-Service community 2014' was published. Findings from the study, which is the most detailed analysis of the size and needs of the ex-Service community in Scotland to ever be carried out, also identified an ageing population and concerns over social isolation.

In April we released research into the employment support needs of disabled and vulnerable veterans.

We continue to utilise e-bulletins as an efficient and eco friendly way to communicate to stake holder groups. E-bulletins to SSAFA have had on average a 73% open rate, far greater than the 22% industry average.

Our welfare services continue to feature in each edition of the Poppyscotland Newsletter and Legion Scotland magazine.

Our Inverness Welfare Centre also received additional coverage in local media around the centre's second birthday. We also continue to have a presence on several partner websites and documents such as the MOD Service Leavers Guide.

3. Events – Joining Forces Conference

A conference entitled Joining Forces: Preventing, Protecting and Prospering, was held in March. This one-day event brought together key organisations to better equip them to identify vulnerable veterans in the criminal justice system, gain an understanding of the unique nature of military life and the issues that veterans and their families can face in civilian life, such as securing employment and suitable housing, dealing with finances, coping with health issues or isolation. There were 120 registered (including speakers and workshop facilitators) and 110 participated on the day. Evaluation forms indicated that 100% of attendees felt the topics covered throughout the day were relevant to them or their area of work. 86% rated the conference content as good or very good.

4. Information Stand Pilot

Over the summer, Poppyscotland piloted 5 independent information stands across the country. The purpose of this was to identify if information stands are an effective method of letting people know about the various services Poppyscotland provide. The pilot reinforced the view that few people, inclusive of donors, know exactly what it is that Poppyscotland does. This did not however, prevent people from wanting to support the charity. Although members of the public actively approached stands to donate funds, there were few enquiries about our services.

The presence of manned stands at organised events nevertheless proved successful in terms of connecting with partner organisations, as well as past, current and potential beneficiaries. We plan to increase our attendance at such events over 2015/16.



Annual Report
1 October 2014 – 30 September 2015



Key Achievements

The Armed Services Advice Project (ASAP) delivers information, advice and support to members of the Armed Forces Community through a Scotland wide helpline and face to face casework in nine regions. The service is made possible by the funding partnership, led by Poppyscotland, with whom we work closely to develop the service and ensure that it continues to meet the needs of the clients we support.

This report covers the second year of a three year funding cycle.

Key statistics for the period 1 October 2014 - 30 September 2015

- Advisers helped 2468 individual clients over the year, supporting them with 10694 new and repeat issues. This resulted in an average of
 - 4.9 issues per client for face to face advice in the regions,
 - 2 issues per client for the helpline.

- The split of clients across the Services showed:



- The majority of ASAP clients are ex-serving (66%), and a further 16% are dependents or carers of ex-serving personnel. Serving personnel make up 7% of the client group, and dependents or carers of serving the remaining 11%. The proportion of ex-serving clients has reduced from 71% last year, and the proportion of dependents or carers of serving personnel increased from 5%, in part due to the development of the Argyll and Bute area which is now supporting families of serving personnel at Faslane.
- 41% of issues raised were about benefits, 15% concerned debts. Financial issues, including grant applications, accounted for 11% of issues raised, housing 8% and employment 7%.
- Clients may gain financially as a result of the advice and support they have received, for example through receiving benefits to which they are entitled, debt written off or rescheduled, or charitable grants received. Client financial gain recorded over the year was £1,608,548. A total of 501 clients benefited from a financial gain; the average financial gain per client was £3210.

From the start of the service on 1 July 2010 to 30 September 2015, ASAP advisers have supported a total of 7763 individual clients with 35,284 new and repeat issues. The client financial gain since the start of ASAP is £5,650,026.



Region	October – December 2014	January – March 2015	April – June 2015	July – September 2015
Citizens Advice Direct National Helpline	116	143	129	120
Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire	42	49	48	43
Argyll and Bute	23	28	27	25
Edinburgh and Lothians	88	113	95	83
Falkirk	67	72	65	61
Fife	70	68	67	77
Inverness, Moray and Nairn	83	91	95	84
Lanarkshire	118	104	93	99
Renfrewshire	41	46	56	53
Stirlingshire and Clackmannanshire	42	52	44	49
Tayside	91	65	82	84
Total	781	831	801	778

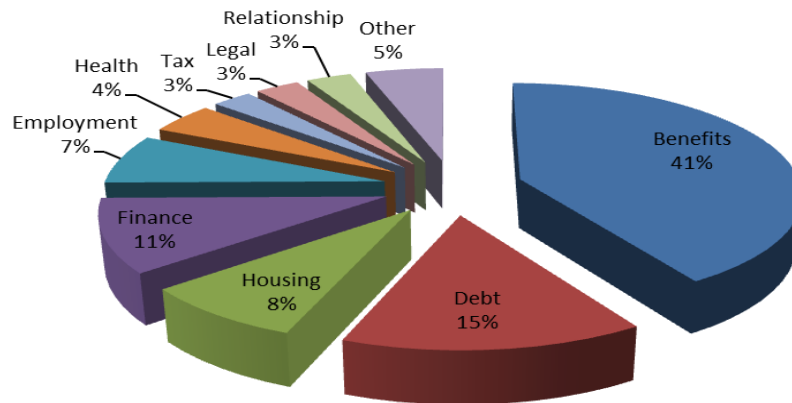
Notes:

- The ASAP service in the Falkirk area is jointly funded by Falkirk Council and the ASAP funding partnership.
- The figures are for the number of people seen in each quarter, counting each person once no matter times how many times they are seen in the quarter.
- As our clients have complex support needs advisers tend to see them for multiple appointments which can be spread out over many months. This means that a client may be seen in more than one quarter. If this is the case, they will be counted in each quarter.

Advice needs of ASAP clients

Figure 1: Types of issues raised

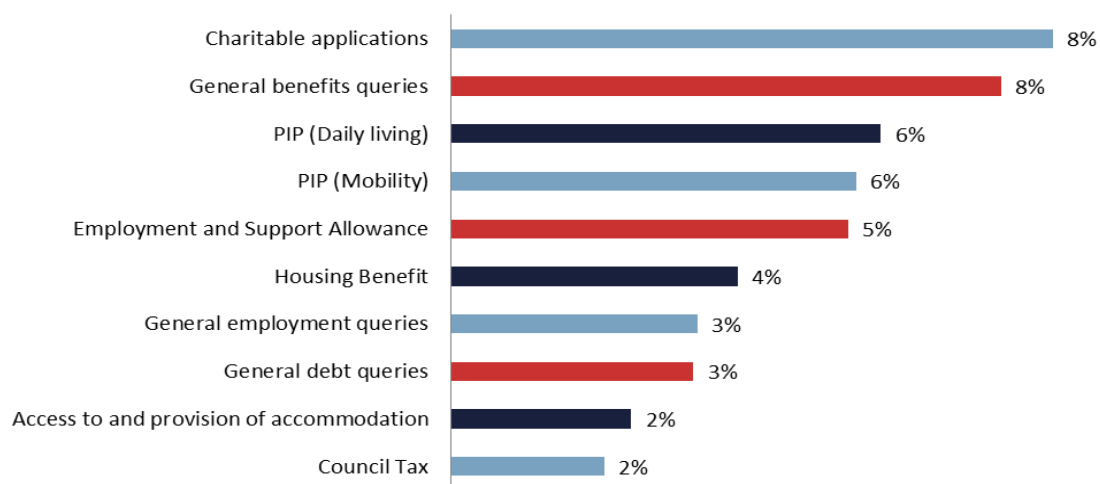
There were a total of 10,652 new and repeat issues raised over the year:



The decline in the proportion of queries relating to benefits seen over the last three years has reversed, and ASAP clients continue to raise a greater proportion of benefits queries than general bureau clients (41% for ASAP compared with 37% for CAB clients in 2014/15), indicating a higher level of need in this area. The downward trend in debt queries has continued, and ASAP clients seek advice on proportionately fewer debt related issues than general bureau clients (15% for ASAP clients compared with 24% for CAB clients in 2014/15). The proportion of finance queries remains at 11%, with charitable applications becoming the top issue that our clients are advised on. This is an indication both of the level of need demonstrated by our clients and the close working with other organisations, particularly SSAFA, which are able to meet that need.

Figure 2: Top 10 advice issues

The table below shows the top ten advice issues as a percentage of all new and repeat issues raised over the year.



These are broadly similar to the top ten in the previous year, demonstrating that our clients are seeking support on benefits linked to ill-health, housing and employment and other housing related topics.

Who we have worked with

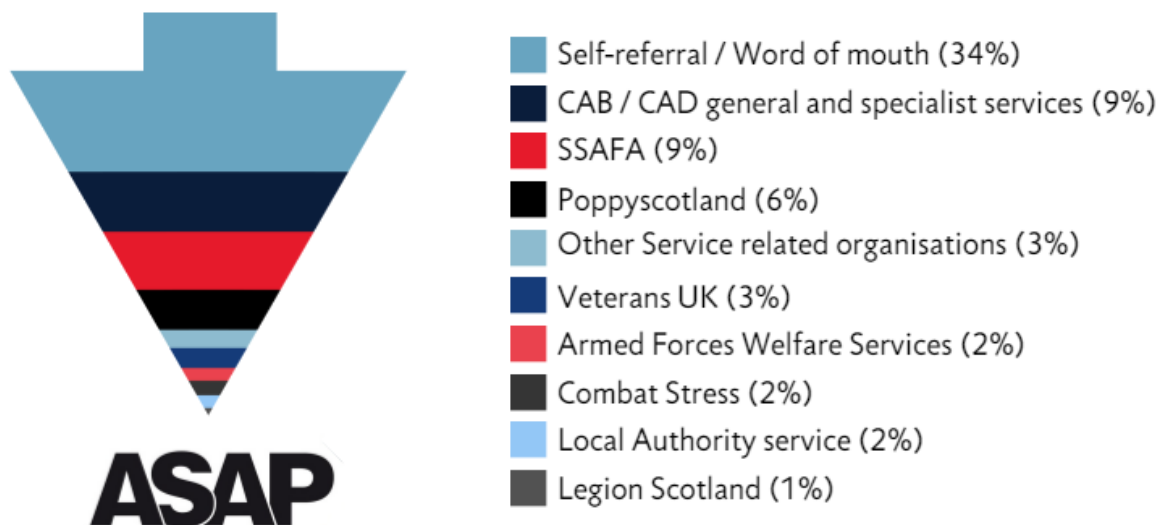
ASAP is an integral part of the support network for the Armed Forces community in Scotland. Our strength lies in our ability to work with a wide range of organisations to support our clients, whether Service related, statutory or voluntary, bridging the gap between the Service experience of our clients and the civilian world.

In the last year we have continued to work with a number of partner organisations at a national level, including Police Scotland to support the Veterans Referral Scheme through continued promotion of this within Police Scotland. We have also built links with new partners, most notably the Royal Voluntary Service through the provision of training to their staff and volunteers by ASAP, Poppyscotland and Legion Scotland to raise awareness of the support needs of older veterans and how to access the specific support available to them.

At a local level our advisers work with a wide range of organisations, doing training and presentations, attending events and providing joint support for clients.

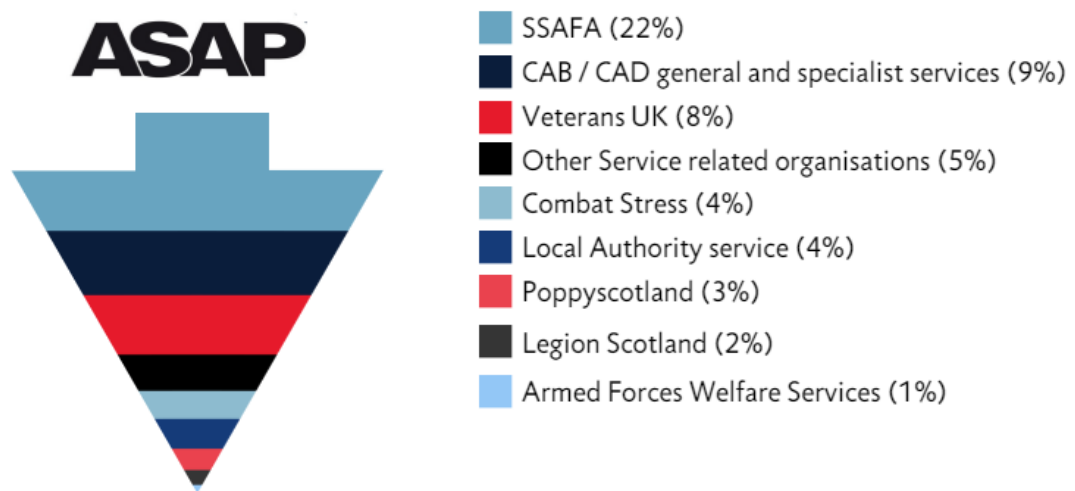
The links with other organisations that advisers utilise to support their clients are recorded as referrals into and out of ASAP. These are not routinely recorded for every client, so the data below indicates the range of organisations we work with rather than representing the complete picture.

Figure 3: Most common referrals into ASAP



Bureaux offer a wide range of specialist services which can link into ASAP, including money advice, specialist benefits advice, tribunal representation and the recently launched Pension Wise service. We work particularly closely with the bureaux debt services.

Figure 4: Most frequent referrals out of ASAP



As part of the support they provide for clients, ASAP advisers help their client access support from other organisations to support individual clients. Those in financial need may be referred to SSAFA, with the ASAP adviser and SSAFA caseworker often working together to support mutual clients. As well as the organisations listed above, ASAP clients have been supported in accessing legal advice, social workers, Relationship Scotland, NHS services and many more.

What we've done for clients

Statistics only tell part of the story, especially when dealing with vulnerable clients who have complex advice needs. The following case examples demonstrate the range of support we have provided over the last year.

ASAP advisers in the regions provide in-depth support with complex cases.

An Army veteran was referred to his local bureau by the ASAP helpline for assistance with a benefits renewal. As he is almost entirely wheelchair bound following an industrial injury, the ASAP adviser visited him at home. He also suffers from PTSD related to his service. Due to his medical conditions, the client had been through benefits assessments and appeals in the past, and did not feel strong enough mentally to go through another application process. ASAP provided a range of support to the client:

- The ASAP welfare rights adviser supported the client through a benefits appeal, resulting in an award without another gruelling medical assessment. The client expressed his appreciation and relief at the outcome, as he is now financially better off but, more importantly, he will not have to submit medical certificates or be expected to undertake work related activity. He felt he would be expected to do things he felt unable to do and risk being sanctioned so without the support and significant involvement of the ASAP worker he would not have made the claim.
- The ASAP adviser helped the client to apply to the Scottish Welfare Fund for a Community Care Grant through the local council, to replace carpeting which had been damaged by increased wheelchair use with hard flooring. The client is delighted with the new flooring and relieved to know there are funding sources other than the service charities. When the occupational therapist visited to assess the flooring they also identified the need for a wet room and electric wheelchair, which were paid for by the local council, so the client didn't need to find funding for these from other sources.
- A referral to the bureau Pension Wise adviser resulted in the client feeling more aware of, and in control of, his future.
- ASAP continues to assist the client with a possible consumer issue with his wheelchair.

The ASAP helpline provides support to individuals and to other organisations working with members of the Armed Forces community. In this example, they were able to empower the client by providing her with information to enable her to take the action she felt was most appropriate herself.

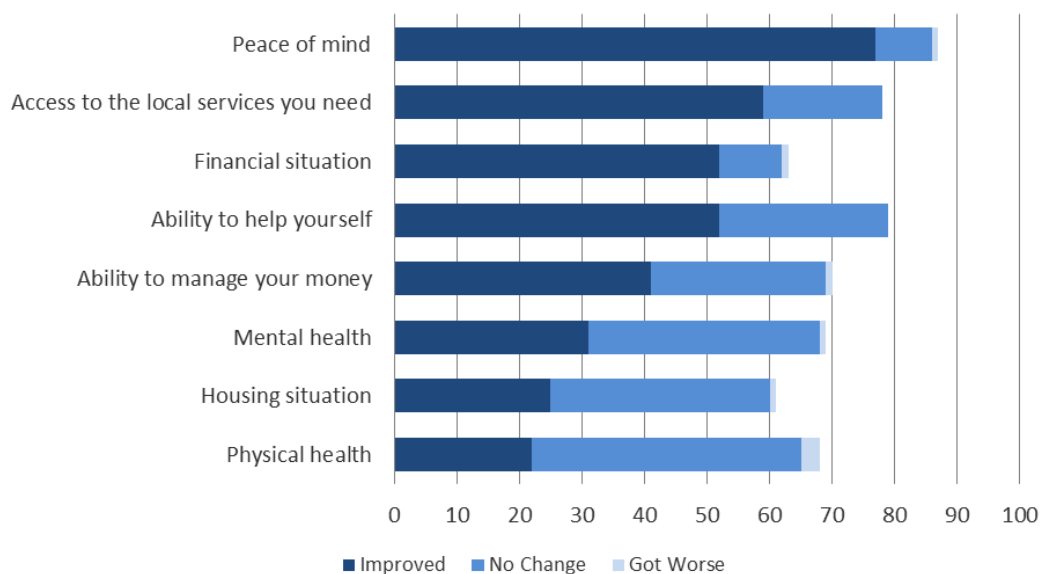
This client contacted the helpline as she was concerned about the mental health of her husband, who had been involved in a helicopter crash while serving in the Navy. He has been receiving help from his GP and prescribed medication, but she does not feel that medication alone is sufficient and is disappointed that the GP is not doing more to secure further help for her husband.

The helpline adviser explained that if she is unhappy with the course of action recommended by the GP then she can request a second opinion, and if she is unhappy with the NHS there is a specific bureau service which can help her make a complaint. As the client would rather seek further help for her husband before going down this route the adviser gave her information and contact details for the specialist organisations which can provide support.

ASAP advisers have the facility to record the type of work they undertake for clients. This is done by the ASAP helpline and some of the bureau, however not every activity undertaken is recorded. The sample of activities we have shows that advisers carry out a range of activities on behalf of clients, including requesting and giving them information, and dealing with third parties on their behalf. They will draft letters for clients, prepare case papers and represent clients at tribunals and other hearings, complete forms and housing applications and even assist clients in meeting NHS staff.

The helpline carries out a slightly different range of activities. This year, 55% of their work involved giving information to clients, and 18% dealing with other organisations on behalf of their clients. Providing second tier support to both bureau and other organisations accounted for 22% of their work.

In June this year we started to ask our clients what they thought about the service we provided, and the impact it had on their lives. So far 92 clients have responded, and their response has been overwhelmingly positive, with 84% rating the service as very good, 11% as good and 5% as OK. The chart below shows the outcomes we have achieved for our clients:



The comments our clients make demonstrate the value of the service we provide to them:

“I would like to say that from my first meeting with the adviser at CAB he has been brilliant with me and has taken a great deal of time with me, helping and advising me of my rights and form filling, which I would never have managed as some days my state of mind was all over the place, but the adviser stuck by me and helped me no end. Thanks to the adviser I have received what I am entitled to, he is also still helping me with my combat stress and has put me in touch with professional people. I have been assessed with PTSD, thanks to the adviser I will be getting the help I need.”

“When I found out about SSAFA they were so nice and treated me with kindness respect, and were most helpful. I got money for flooring as I had bare floors. Also the Poppy service gave me money for new glasses. The Princes Royal Trust gave me help as well. When they told me about the help I cried I can't thank them enough.”

“This is an excellent service. Their knowledge and ability to take / sort problems away is very re-assuring. Certainly helped me be a bit more confident of the future.”

How we've promoted ASAP

We are always keen to reach out to potential clients in as many ways as possible. Much of this is achieved through partnership working, but a significant proportion of our clients contact us directly. We therefore aim to use a wide range of marketing and communication methods to ensure that as many people as possible hear about our service. This includes stalls at local events to engage with the local population, especially Armed Forces Day events; websites; social media and working with the local press. At a national level we attend events and conferences to raise the profile of ASAP with organisations working with specific groups of people, such as via the Independent Living Conference or the Homelessness Action Annual Conference.

ASAP celebrated our fifth anniversary this year with the publication of *'What a difference: the ground breaking work of ASAP 2010 – 2015'*. It can be found on the CAS website <http://www.cas.org.uk/publications/what-difference-groundbreaking-work-asap-2010-2015>

In addition, we held an event in early November, to mark our fifth anniversary and to launch the above report, attended by many ASAP advisers, funders, stakeholders and the First Minister.

Training our advisers

ASAP advisers are dealing with a particularly vulnerable client group, which means that they need a specialist skill set in addition to detailed knowledge of matters relating to the Armed Forces. All advisers have access to the specialist bureau courses, for example in employment and welfare rights. New advisers have attended Scotland's Mental Health First Aid. Regular training days are arranged for advisers with speakers from a range of organisations to foster new partnerships and ensure they are aware of the range of services available.

Conclusion

The benefit of ASAP is seen most clearly through the comments made by our clients.

"The adviser has been a great support, in both coming to my home and attending appointments with me. I am so glad I got to know him cos without his help and support I would have been worse off than I am today. I do hope you keep funding this project cos there are many people like me that need this resource."

We are proud to have completed five years of support to the Armed Forces community. The challenge ahead is to continue to meet the need of the most vulnerable members of that community, reaching out to them through increased partnerships and local working. We will continue to do this through our helpline 0808 800 1007 and face to face advice in our ten regions, providing advice, support and information where it is needed most.

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23rd November 2015

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Employ-Able Annual Report October 2014-15



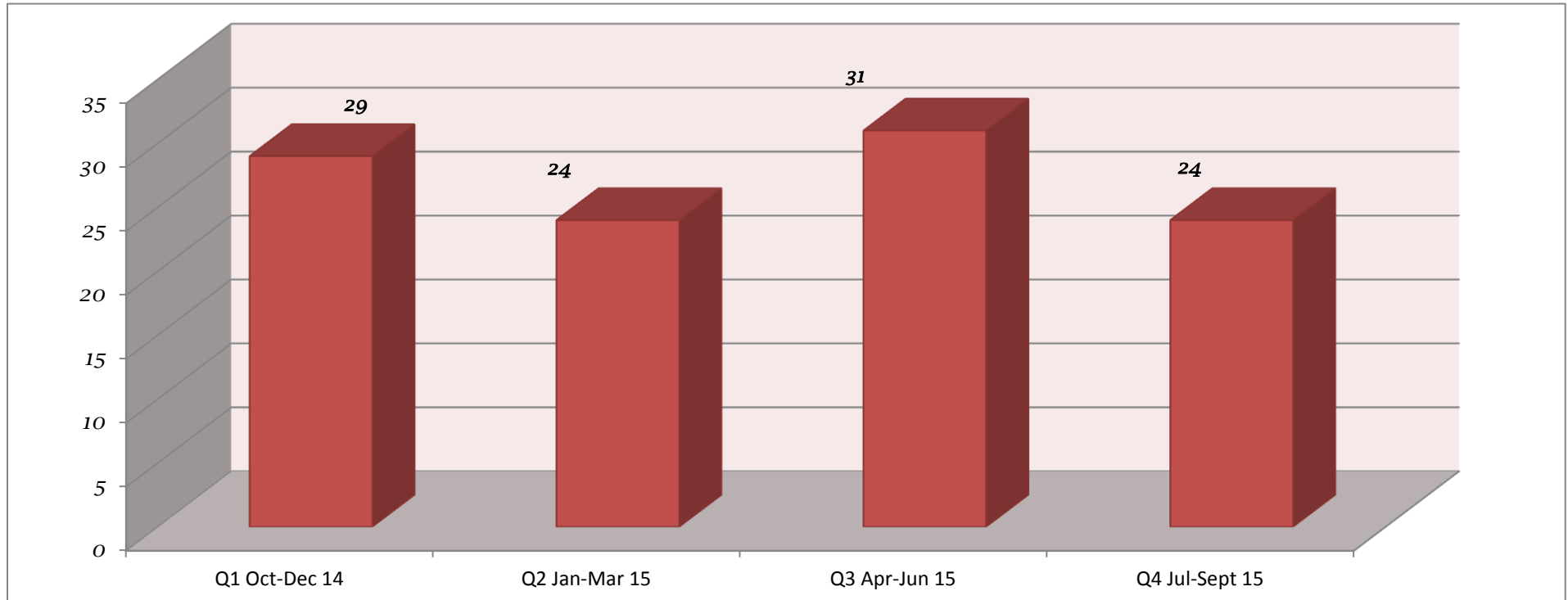
Employ-Able is a programme specifically tailored to veterans needs. Through one-to-one discussion with a dedicated advisor, clients identify their employment goals by considering what they have achieved to date and assessing their current and potential skill base. This process occurs in tandem with tackling other potential barriers that prevent them from achieving sustainable employment.

Employ-Able clients present with a range of outstanding issues, from money management, relationship breakdown and substance misuse. When someone chooses to enrol with the Employ-Able programme, that person, along with their advisor creates an action plan. It is important to note that the advisor works with the client supporting them towards a vocational goal regardless of a diagnosed mental health condition. Employment advisors provide clients with a number of support elements such as coaching, CV development and interview training. On successful completion of gaining a voluntary or permanent job role, educational or training opportunity, their advisor will provide in work support.

A key point of the service is that the client's preferences are central to all action taken. The client decides whether or not potential employers need to know about her/his mental illness and whether or not the employment advisor will talk to employer/s on his or her behalf. The client also decides which jobs to apply for and how much he or she wants to work with advice and guidance from their personal employment advisor. Advisors work to address all barriers preventing the veteran's achieving vocational goals.

The information collated for this report is based on the last financial year 1st October 2014 until 30th September 2015. There will be comparisons to year 2 (1st October 2013 until 30th September 2014).

Number of referrals from Oct 2014 – Sept 2015



The total number of referrals this year was 108. This has increased since year 3 when we received **77** referrals in the same period. We received over 20 referrals each quarter this year. This number can be made up of re-referrals (clients that have disengaged previously and returned when they feel ready to focus on a vocational goal) and new clients. The increase in referrals this year may be due to strengthened relationships with referral sources.

Referral source

Referral source	2013- 2014	2014 - 2015
Self	12	21
Combat Stress	1	3
Armed Services Advice Project	7	2
Job Centre Plus	5	2
Regular Forces Employment Association	3	1
Veterans 1st Point	13	36
SSAFA	10	6
Lifeworks Team	1	2
Routes to Work	10	8
Social Work	0	1
SVR/SVHA	2	3
Triage	1	4
Thistle	3	0
SAMH	2	0
Poppyscotland	2	12
Sorted	1	0
Working Links	0	1
Community Renewal	0	1
Careers Transition Partnership	0	1
Business Gateway	1	0
Case Management Services	0	1
Veterans Scotland	0	1
Total	77	108

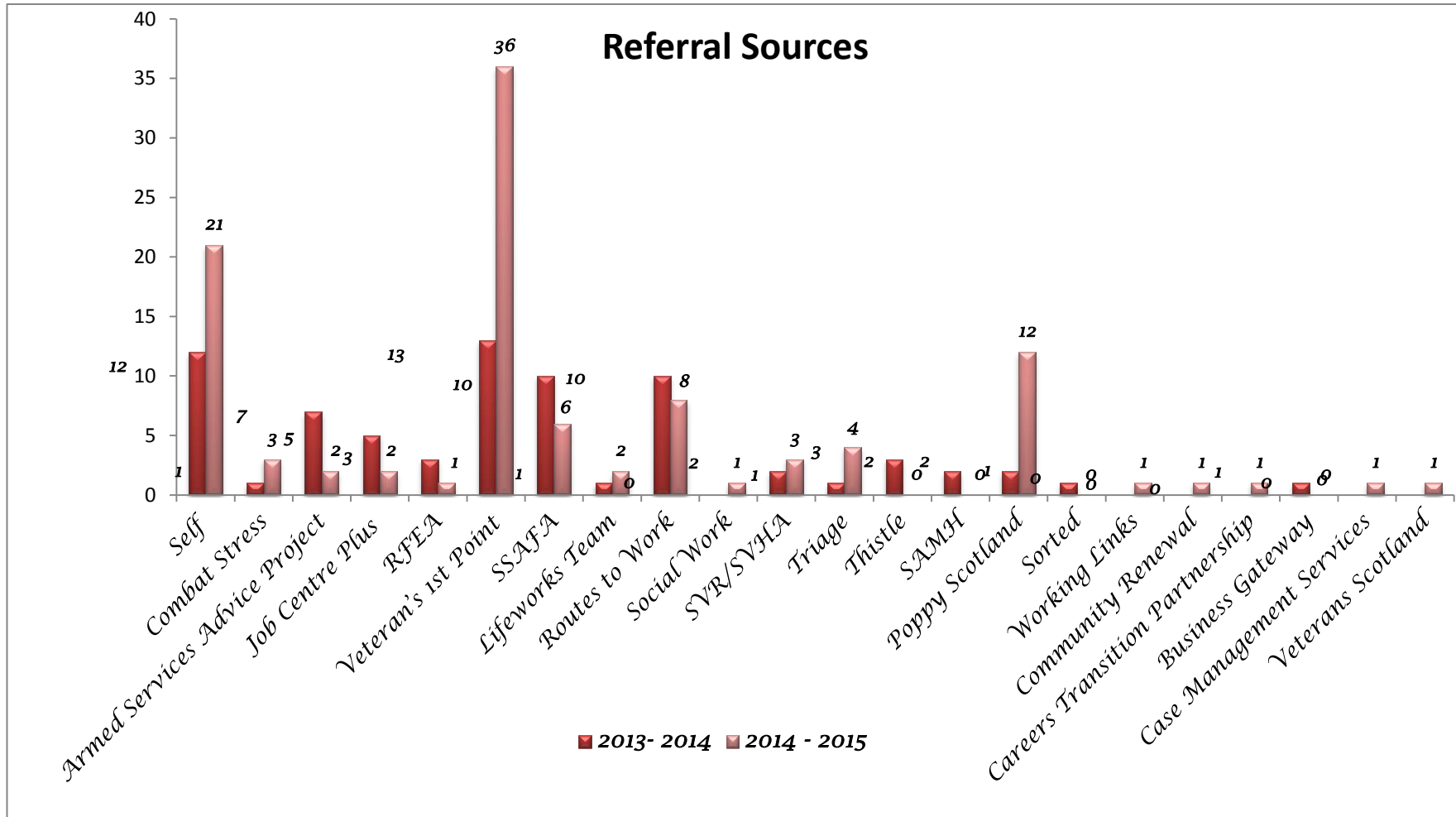
Overall there has been a 29% increase in referrals from last year

Advisors stated that the reason for the increase of referrals was "Word of mouth, a couple of my guys have said they heard about the service from their friend. Also with VIP, the relationship is getting stronger."

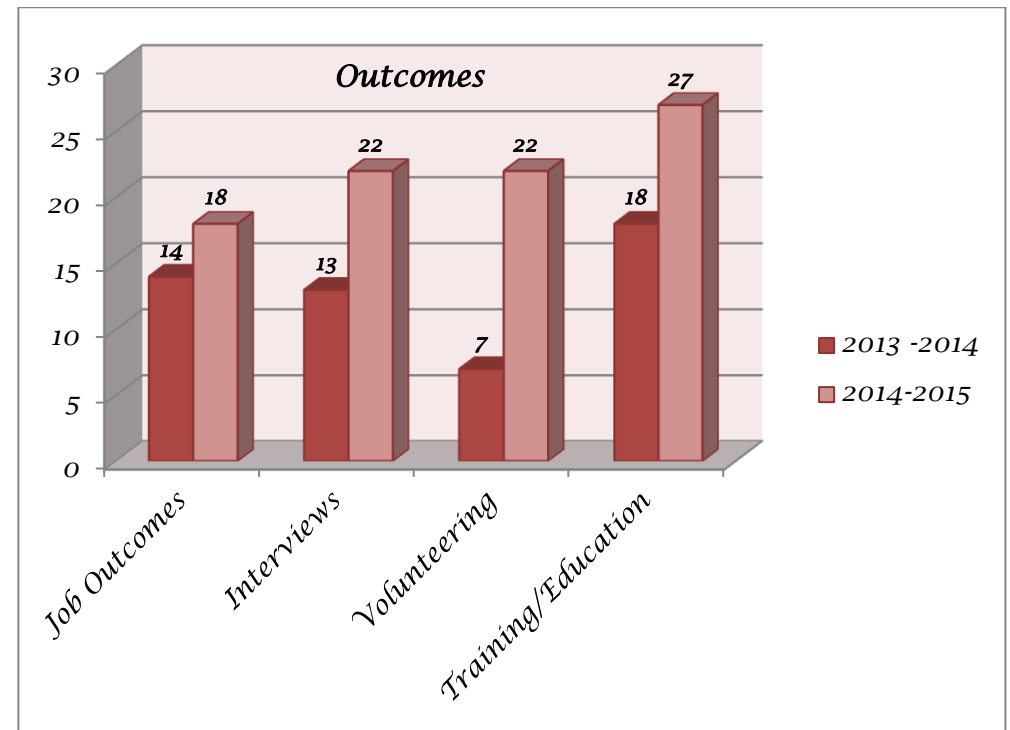
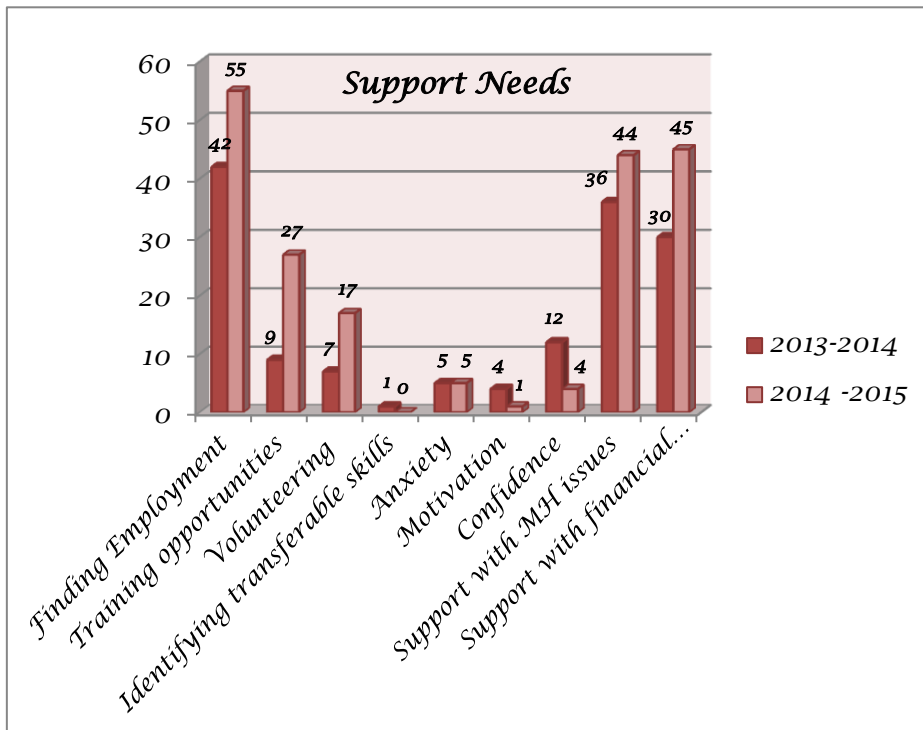
60% of referral sources came from; Veterans 1st Point, Self-referral and Poppyscotland.

From the previous year, there has been an increase of 6 new referral sources accounting for 5% of overall referrals.

Trends indicate the highest number of referrals came from Edinburgh, Lanarkshire and Glasgow, accounting for 60% of referrals to the service.

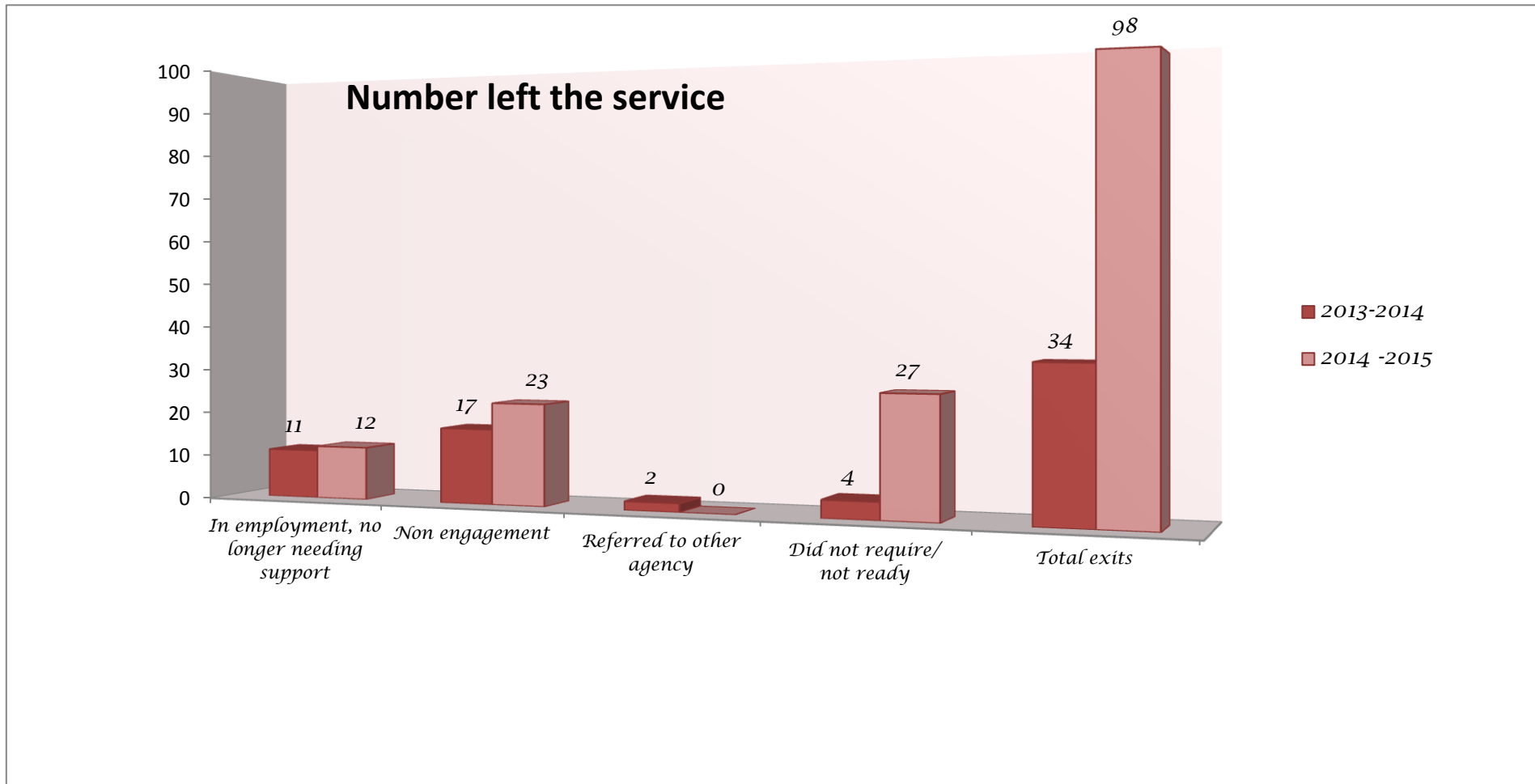


Veterans 1st Point continues to be our highest referral source. They are expanding throughout Scotland and we look to build on this relationship. A visit has been scheduled to Tayside Veterans 1st Point in November. Following this, self referrals have increased by 75% from various sources, with the denominator being word of mouth. We will work to build relationships with referral sources similar to the relationship we have with veterans 1st point. This will be a focus for the coming year.

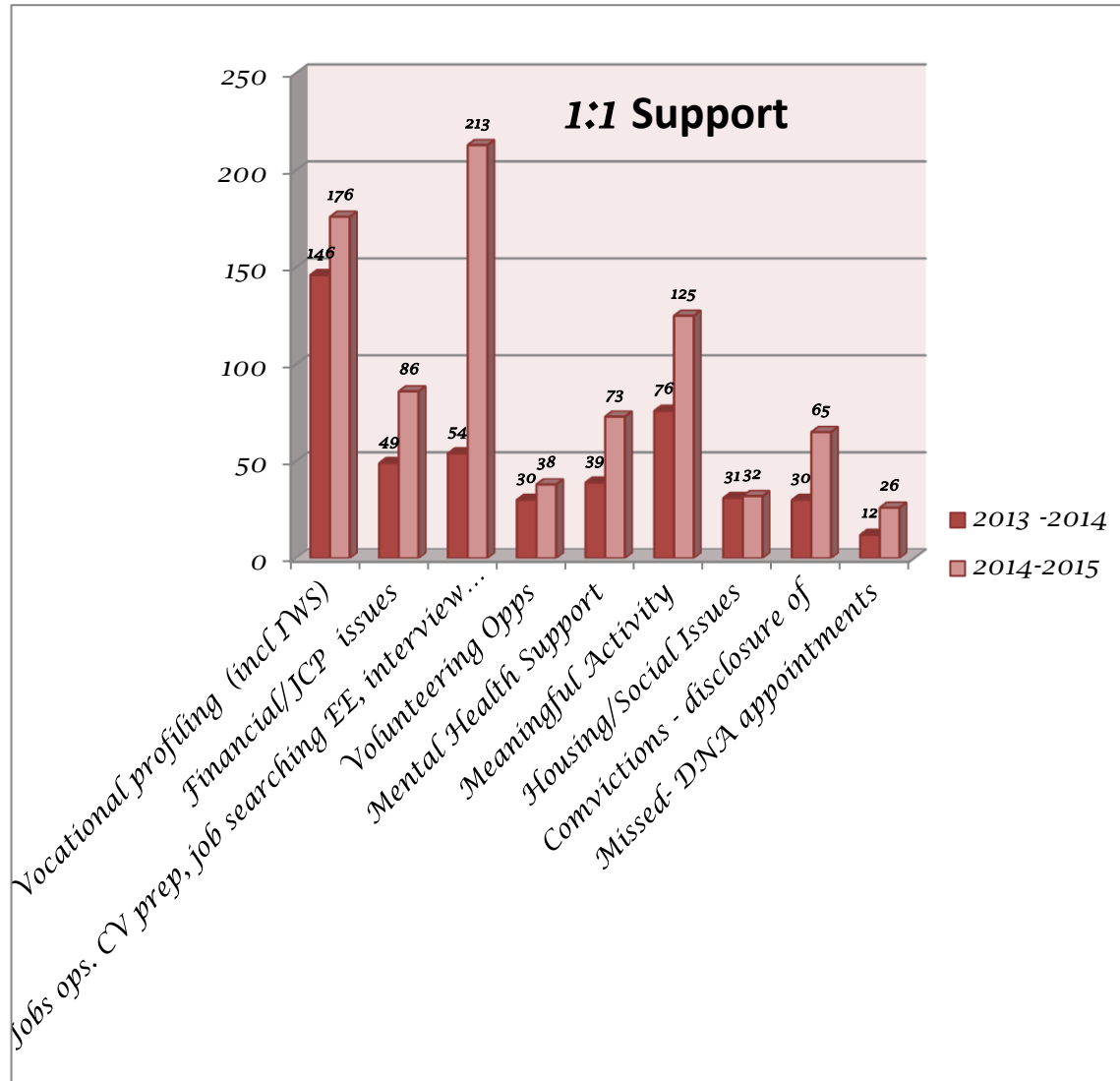


The tables above demonstrate the support needs of Employ-Able clients and the actual outcomes achieved. We can see an increase in individuals whose key aim is to find employment but, Employ-Able clients commonly present with multiple barriers which prevent them from achieving this goal within a short period of time. Clients attitudes can be very focused on employment initially but as trust develops with their Advisor and underlying issues like convictions, addictions and other health issues are disclosed this can have a significant delaying factor on a satisfactory job outcome .

We can see above that figures for outcomes in all areas have increased. This is expected due to the increase in referrals to Employ Able. 16% of clients have moved into work, 25% into training and education, 20% into volunteering and 20% have secured interviews. Therefore 81% of clients are moving towards vocational goals, the other 19% of clients will be focusing on breaking down barriers before they are ready to consider any type of goal. For certain clients this can take much longer.

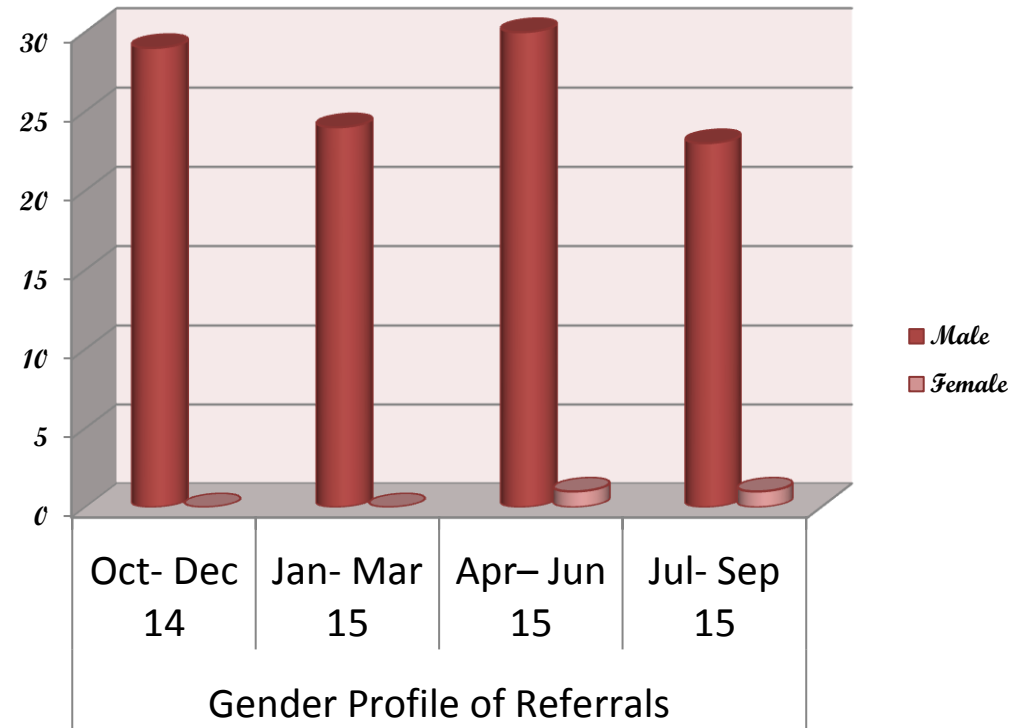
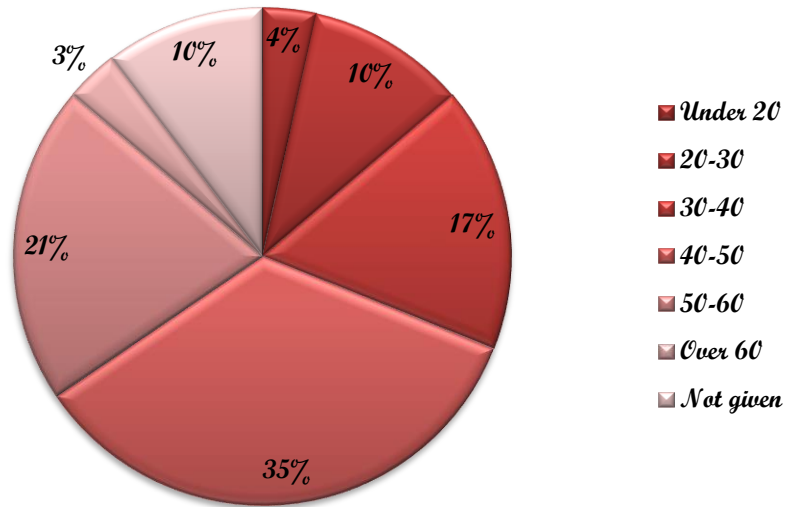


Exits have increased as we endeavor to identify at an early stage those clients who have no real vocational goal. We also use an exit process for clients that continually do not attend appointments, always ensuring that the client is aware they can return to Employ Able at any time when they are ready to commit to the programme.



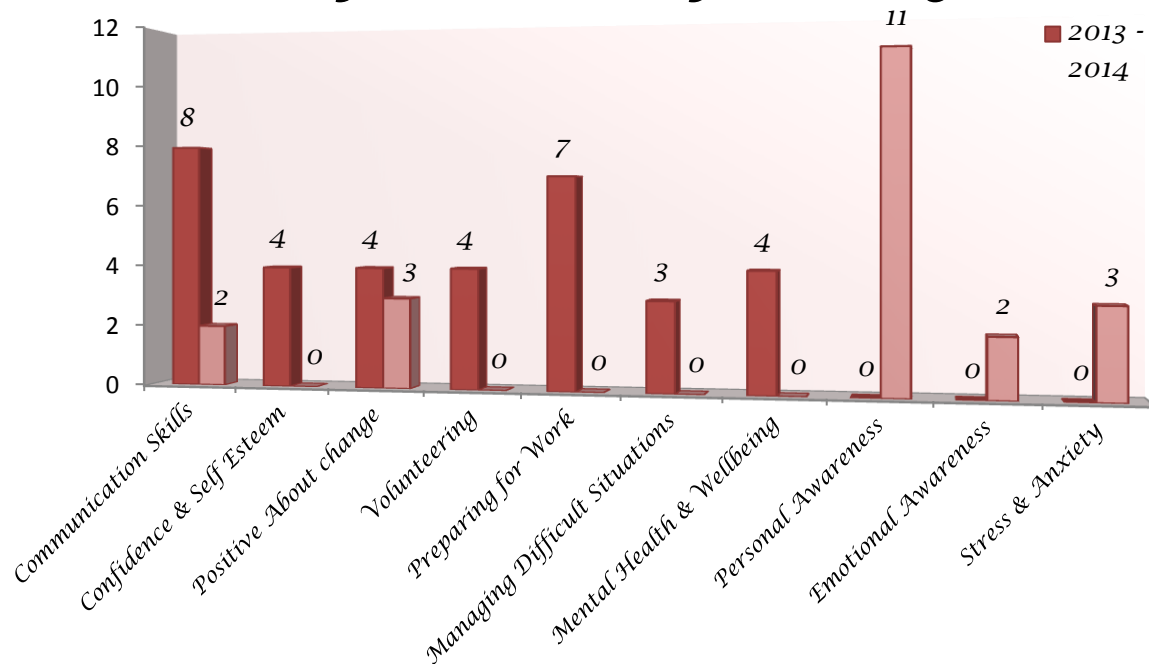
There has been a significant increase in the overall support required for participants in line with the rise in referrals. We work to establish connections with other support organisations in each geographical area and signpost or provide a handover to these as required. We have a strong relationship with ASAP who provide useful advice on benefits, debt, housing issues and other matters.

Age Profile of Referrals Oct 14-Sep 15



The average client age is between 40 – 50 and 40+ makes up 59% of our referrals. Our aim for the future would be to identify referral sources and build connections in order to identify younger veterans and aim to provide as much support to them as we currently do the over 40 generation. Therefore we can address barriers earlier and help veterans to sustain vocational goals in civilian life.

Groupwork - Tools for Living



This graph refers to individuals that have taken part in our 'Tools for Living' modules (TFL). Group work will be a focus for us in the year ahead and ideally we would like to have all clients benefiting from group work alongside one to one appointments. We feel this will help clients to break down perceived barriers that prevent them from achieving their end goals and help to address social isolation.

Positive about Change;

- Be aware of the different types of change
- Understand ways you can successfully manage change

Communication Skills

- Understand that there are different types of communication
- Be familiar with approaches to improve your verbal communication skills

Personal Awareness

- Reflected on your roles, Responsibilities and relationships
- Review what's important to you

Emotional Awareness

- Be aware of what emotions are & how they affect you
- How your emotions can affect other people

Confidence & Self Esteem

- Look at ways of moving from unhelpful to helpful thinking
- Understand the impact of self-esteem and how this can vary

Stress & Anxiety

- Have discussed ways of preparing for and overcoming stressors
- Have reflected on when you are anxious

Managing Difficult Situations

- have looked at different conflict management styles
- be introduced to an effective conflict management approach

Volunteering

- Recognise the benefits of volunteering
- What volunteering options are available locally and how to access these

Preparing for Work

- Explored employment opportunities which match your personality, interests and skills
- Develop a personal career plan, using SMART goals

Mental Health & Wellbeing

- Explored 5 key ways of maintaining your own wellbeing
- Have reflected on your own mental wellbeing

Life after Employ-Able

Aidan Stephen

Aidan joined Employ Able in August 2013:

“I found out about Poppyscotland and Employ-Able when I attended a drop-in session at Veterans First Point. Here I met Jenna, an Employ-Able adviser, and I started taking part in the project. It was a real breakthrough. Up to that point I hadn’t seen any way out of my situation. I had received a further diagnosis of PTSD and it was clear I would struggle working. Jenna suggested I find something I enjoyed doing and we went back to my youth and art.

“Employ-Able has made a huge difference because it has given me support and a second chance. I also feel that I owe it to myself and those who haven’t questioned my condition to make a go of it. It’s been 15 years living with and understanding the limitations of my condition but now I have vitality and a purpose. I still have bad days but many good days. It’s exciting and I can smile again. I’ve submitted my portfolio to Edinburgh College of Art and I hope to study and then work as an illustrator. If I don’t get in I will keep trying because art gives me a purpose and I want to make Poppyscotland and its supporters proud.”

Following up with Aidan Stephen in November 2015 he said he is:

“In week seven at Art College and it's amazing, the hours are long though and my depression is back but I'm coping well, I've set up with the disability services and they are a good support. Hope to see you around at some point and thank you again for all your help! Best Aidan”

Advisor will meet Aidan for an informal chat before Christmas to ensure that he is coping with his mental health and to find out if he requires further support.



Client Feedback...

Alan McKay, 48, North Lanarkshire

- *If it wasn't for Employ Able I'd be stuck in a bad situation*
- *Employ Able has helped me turn my life around*
- *Before Employ Able I had no self-belief*
- *My advisor has stood with me and given me strength*

"I had an unfulfilling job that was damaging my mental health. I now have a rewarding job helping others which has given me back my dignity and self-respect."

Veteran, 42, Renfrewshire

- *If it wasn't for Employ Able I'd be in the same situation as last year*
- *Employ Able has helped me to move on and get job ready*
- *Before Employ Able life was bad, I was left myself, isolated*
- *My advisor has been helpful, approachable and helped to change my life*

"I have now reached my goal although it's had highs and lows and the road hasn't been easy but knowing I have someone there helped me stay on track. My Advisor has supported me for a year now and I feel settled in my job and home life. I am working now, my relationships are better with family and neighbours, and I have a partner now, so things are better but I still have work to do on myself however this is a work in progress."

An advisors perspective...

Robert Watt

When I first met Robert he was a very anxious person and in his own words tried to 'push me away and put me off him' during his first appointment by telling me things about his life that he thought would shock me.

He had very low confidence and self-esteem and found it very difficult to meet new people. Improving Robert's confidence and self-esteem is the first thing that we worked on. Robert is attending Tools for Living and although he was very anxious during the first workshop he pushed himself to come and now contributes and felt confident enough to share his own experiences with the other guys. He also said that the unit 'Positive about Change' had come at the perfect time in his life and he now has a plan, written down, for change. He appears happier, more assertive and positive about his future. He felt he actually had a purpose for the first time in years and it was this sense of purpose that he needs to bring to his day to day life.

Next steps are applying for a college course Animal Science and Behaviour. This is a realistic and achievable goal and the difference in Robert's mood and motivation between now and when he first came onto the programme is huge.

Focus next year...

1. More group work 'Tools for Living' sessions. Look to ensure that we take all advice on board from veterans to make this work for them.
2. Observations on staff – staff one-to-ones with clients will be observed in order to give feedback to advisors and ensure the best possible service to all clients.
3. Newsletter – issued monthly which will capture statistics and case study's for the month and issued to referrers to maintain relationships.
4. Continue to market the service in order to generate more referrals.
5. Develop on relationships with Scottish Veteran's Residences.
6. Continue to focus on vocational goals with clients and work on any barriers preventing them from moving forward.
7. Work to establish a method for advisors when dealing with clients that have unrealistic expectations.
8. Build a relationship with RFEA for clients that have worked on barriers and are now job ready.
9. Ensure we are having follow up conversations after marketing; following up with current referral sources.
10. Establish social activities that could tie in with 'Tools for Living' sessions.
11. Continue to build on our current signposting list which we feel comfortable referring veterans to for support.