

# Defence Forces Employment Support Scheme

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## Evaluation Report



An Roinn Cosanta  
Department of Defence



**etb**  
Boord Oideachais agus Oiliúna  
Atha Cliath agus Dhún Laoghaire  
*Dublin and Dún Laoghaire*  
Education and Training Board



*This course has brought me to a place of health, confidence and courage that I never would have achieved without it..... I am no longer daunted by the future that's coming... Instead I know I can face it head on with confidence, amazing friends and valuable skills.... It was a privilege to be on this course.*

Participant Testimonial



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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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A pilot Defence Forces Employment Support Scheme (DF ESS) involving 25 participants took place from 20<sup>th</sup> June to 26<sup>th</sup> August 2016. The DF ESS aimed to provide participants with the knowledge and skills to assist them to participate more fully in society, and enhance their capacity to pursue employment, work experience or further educational opportunities.

An Evaluation Group, comprising members of the Defence Forces, the Departments of Defence and Social Protection, the Baldoyle Training Centre of the DDLETB and the Ballymun Jobs Centre was convened to evaluate the scheme and make recommendations.

The Terms of Reference for the Evaluation Group were to:

- Define the criteria against which the achievement of the pilot objectives should be measured
- Consider the successes and challenges arising during the pilot and potential improvements
- Ensure the voice of all stakeholders is reflected in the report
- Prepare and submit a report to the Steering Group on the outcome of the Pilot.

This report sets out the findings of the Evaluation Group. In summary, the pilot can be considered a very good example of strategic collaboration between State agencies with the purpose of driving benefits to unemployed young people whereby:

- The Departments of Defence and Social Protection, the Defence Forces, the Baldoyle Training Centre of the DDLETB and the Ballymun Jobs Centre all collaborated efficiently and effectively in the design and delivery of this programme;
- The design of the programme was fit for purpose;

- The commitment among participants was exceptionally high as evidenced in that all 25 who started the programme, graduated (note that a 26<sup>th</sup> person did turn up on the first day but was unable for personal reasons to properly start);
- Participants' success in formal accredited learning modules was above the norm;
- Participants were largely successful in achieving the aspired physical training and conditioning outcomes with results being extremely positive;
- Personal development occurred across all aspects of the programme;
- The discipline and routine was valued by participants;
- The exit interviews were very beneficial for both participants and stakeholders as it enabled reflecting and learning for everyone;
- The late addition of one-to-one personal development baseline and feedback sessions were very worthwhile for both participants and stakeholders and contributed usefully to this evaluation;
- The subjective benefit to participants in terms of increased confidence and positivity levels as reflected in both the exit interviews and the one-to-one personal development sessions was significant;
- More creative approaches to recruitment (e.g. social media, testimonials) are necessary to support recruitment to any further iteration of the programme;
- The exit rate from the Live Register on foot of the programme is only equivalent to that of non-participants. However, the data is not reliable and further work needs to be done to address seasonality aspects of the data and to support regression testing;
- The costs arising were incurred largely by the Defence Forces and related to instructors' wages over the programme;
- All corporate stakeholders gained from the programme. In particular these benefits include longer term positive marketing value – the very positive feedback from participants and the media coverage has the potential to generate a dividend by way of future participants;
- Staff Development: All the staff involved developed their own skills, broadened their understanding of the potential for their programmes, enhanced their skills sets and experience and broadened their own learning and engagement techniques which will enable them to vary their future work input and individual perspectives.

The Group's main recommendation is that an employment support programme is mainstreamed. The areas that have been identified for further attention in section 4.3 of the evaluation should be progressed and resolved. Other recommendations include:

- For future iterations of the DF ESS an early review of the facilities in place to accommodate and support the candidates is essential to allow for upgrade if required;
- The Defence Installation at Gormanston Camp's relative remoteness enhanced the "breaking the mould" aspect of the programme – participants were well away from their comfort zone. Removing the participants from an urban environment was beneficial as it limited the potential for external distractions. Consideration will have to be given to any additional arrangements to be put in place if the programme is based in an urban location;
- The costs associated with the programme need to be defined with respective responsibilities clarified and assigned at an early stage. A specific budget for the DF ESS, approved by DPER if necessary, should be considered;
- Additional promotional material should be developed including video clips and social media marketing that could attract potential participants and contribute to course promotion. These could be included at the early invitation stages of the recruitment. An interagency approach should be adopted to maximise awareness of the programme;
- In marketing the programme, consideration should be given to involving previous participants to give personal testimonials. Video and voice recordings should be collated at points during the programme to contribute to marketing further iterations of the programme;
- Getting a good mix of characters must be considered important for future recruitment campaigns;
- The lead-in time from canvassing of potential candidates through selection, Garda vetting, medical certification to joining the DF ESS requires a significant period that needs to be built into the planning and recruitment process;

- The selection and preparation process of Instructors to be used in any future DF ESS programmes should be similar to that used for the pilot;
- Future programmes could consider whether block release of participants for cluster module training days might work better;
- Future programmes could consider removing the Using the Internet and Using Email and replacing them with City & Guilds Customer Service Level 1 (On Demand Exam) which would complement the Interpersonal Communication & Team-Working module;
- The type of clothing provided for participants should be reviewed;
- External professional input with regard to evaluating personal development should be integrated into the programme in order to drive out the full value for participants;
- Future iterations of the programme need to put in place competent staff (in DF, DSP and ETB) who are willing and able to support the participants in finding appropriate advice and guidance to sometimes significant social issues that might arise, often outside of normal hours;
- In order to provide meaningful comparative statistical analyses, relevant Live Register regression testing should be planned in advance of any future scheme iterations.

While we identified many benefits from the pilot DF ESS it is too early to evaluate Value for Money.



## POLICY CONTEXT

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### 1.1 WHITE PAPER ON DEFENCE

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The White Paper on Defence<sup>1</sup> (Department of Defence, 2015) stated the Government's commitment to a strengthened approach across the economy to social responsibility, recognising the benefits from targeted interventions which can have both a positive social impact while also contributing to economic recovery. The Defence Forces contribution to the generation of employment opportunities, or the taking of actions which assist individuals' capacities to gain employment, are among the most important of these measures.

In mapping out the future for Defence in the period ahead, the Government considered it important that the Defence Forces contribute to this broader societal objective. It is clear that the skills and capacities which individuals obtain from service in the Defence Forces are those which it would be beneficial to offer more widely. The Government, therefore, decided to put in place this new employment support scheme with the direct involvement of the Defence Forces.

The essential features of the scheme were to provide a training intervention over a number of months drawing on Defence Forces' skills, capacities and facilities. The scheme was aimed at a specific group in the 18-24 year old range who faced barriers to gaining employment. In particular, it offered individuals who might otherwise struggle to break out of cycles of unemployment the opportunity to participate in an employment skills focused development programme provided by the Defence Forces. In this regard, the scheme was designed to exert a positive influence on the participants with the specific aim of equipping them with life skills and other marketable and certifiable skills which will assist them both in their capacity to participate fully in society, as well as in their ability to enter the workforce or to pursue further education for that purpose.

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<sup>1</sup> Available at <http://www.defence.ie/WebSite.nsf/WP2015E>

The scheme involved interventions from a variety of competences and public sources built around and timed to ensure the successful completion of the programme by the individuals selected to participate. The Department of Social Protection worked with the Defence Forces to promote awareness of the scheme and enabled the retention of welfare entitlement for the duration of the programme. It was anticipated that successful participation in the scheme would give participants improved employment prospects including greater awareness of what it is like to have a career in the Defence Forces.

The pilot scheme was developed in consultation with key stakeholders – the Departments of Defence and Social Protection, the Defence Forces and the Baldoyle Training Centre of the Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Education and Training Board (DDLETB). The pilot, involving 25<sup>2</sup> participants, took place from 20<sup>th</sup> June to 26<sup>th</sup> August 2016. It encompassed a training programme of 10 weeks duration, consisting of 5 weeks of military-oriented training by the Defence Forces interspersed with 5 weeks of education-oriented training organised and delivered through the DDLETB's Baldoyle Training Centre.

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## 1.2 EU POLICY CONTEXT

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The pilot built on a number of international and national strategies that propose a systematic and concerted effort to tackle youth unemployment. An OECD Report in September 2013 on Ireland noted that we must do more to tackle youth unemployment and that activation policies are paramount<sup>3</sup> (OECD, 2013). It noted that Ireland has the highest share of young people on income support in the EU and that it is more than 3 times the OECD average. The integration of young workers back into the workforce would contribute towards the achievement of the Europe 2020 Strategy<sup>4</sup> (European Commission, 2010) with the objective of overcoming the economic crisis and creating the conditions for a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

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<sup>2</sup> 26 participants turned up for the DF ESS on Day 1 but 1 person immediately dropped out for personal reasons.

<sup>3</sup> Available at [http://www.keepeek.com/Digital-Asset-Management/oced/economics/oced-economic-outlook-volume-2013-issue-1/ireland\\_eco\\_outlook-v2013-1-22-en#page2](http://www.keepeek.com/Digital-Asset-Management/oced/economics/oced-economic-outlook-volume-2013-issue-1/ireland_eco_outlook-v2013-1-22-en#page2)

<sup>4</sup> Available at <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:2020:FIN:EN:PDF>

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### **1.3 PATHWAYS TO WORK/ YOUTH GUARANTEE**

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At a national level, the DF ESS pilot programme tied in with the Government's commitments under the Youth Guarantee, where the Government's primary strategy to tackle youth unemployment is to create the environment for a strong economic recovery by promoting competitiveness and productivity. Economic recovery will underpin jobs growth and the availability of productive employment for young people.

The Government recognises that, as the recovery takes hold, there is a need for additional measures to ensure that as many as possible of the jobs created are taken up by jobseekers and young jobseekers in particular. This is the rationale behind the Government's Pathways to Work Strategy<sup>5</sup> (Govt. of Ireland, 2016) and the Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan<sup>6</sup> (Dept. of Social Protection, 2014). The main plank of the Youth Guarantee is assistance to young people in finding and securing sustainable jobs. There is monthly engagement with all young jobseekers. For those who do not find employment, additional offers are provided for. Most such offers (over 70%) are in further education or training. Others are in community-based employment programmes such as CE, Gateway and Tus, as well as JobBridge, The National Internship Scheme or through the JobsPlus employment subsidy for private employment. Programmes like the DF ESS form part of the commitments outlined under the Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan.

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### **1.4 PUBLIC SECTOR INNOVATION/ REFORM PLAN**

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The DF ESS programme required a close collaboration between various arms of the public services, i.e. the military, the State-led education and training service and the civil service in order to achieve its objective. This collaboration builds on the 4 central tenets for civil service renewal<sup>7</sup> (DPER, 2014) which demands a more unified and integrated approach in order to advance strategic policy and operational interventions and to harness the skills, capacity and resources of various arms of public services to deliver a quality programme with positive outcomes for its young, unemployed citizens. The DF ESS pilot

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<sup>5</sup> Available at <http://www.welfare.ie/en/downloads/PathwaysToWork2016-2020.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Available at <https://www.welfare.ie/en/downloads/Youth-Guarantee-Implementation-Plan.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Available at <http://csvision.per.gov.ie/the-renewal-plan/>

used common governance structures across the diverse stakeholder group. This integrated evaluation is testament to the value of diverse inputs to achieving shared policy/service delivery goals.

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## **1.5 PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE DF ESS**

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The DF ESS aimed to provide participants with the knowledge and skills that will assist them to participate fully in society, and enhance their capacity to pursue employment, work experience or further educational opportunities. The main objectives of the programme were:

- To increase the personal development, motivation, self-esteem, social skills and confidence of the participant,
- To assist in the development of a path to greater economic independence for the participant,
- To equip the participant with life and other marketable skills that will prove their competence to prospective employers, or assist their journey into further education,
- To educate the participant on the importance of physical fitness and endurance, and to increase their personal level of fitness and endurance through a practical and suitable programme,
- To expose the participant to an environment which encourages personal development, team working, achievement and hard work,
- To improve the communication and interpersonal skills of the participant, and, in particular, their ability to communicate more effectively with prospective employers.

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## **1.6 METHODOLOGY FOR THE EVALUATION**

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An evaluation group, comprising members of the Defence Forces, the Department of Defence, the Department of Social Protection, Baldoyle Training Centre of the DDLETB and the Ballymun Jobs Centre, was convened. This group gathered and reviewed data and information to examine whether the objectives for the pilot had been met. Critically it included the voices of the participants collated in exit interviews. The group met on a

number of occasions from August – October 2016 to prepare an evaluation report which is submitted to the Programme Steering Group for consideration.

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## **1.7 DOCUMENT OVERVIEW**

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Chapter 2 of this evaluation report sets out the design and implementation of the pilot including the development of the programme content and its rationale and an overview of how the participants were recruited. Chapter 3 outlines the key results in formal, physical and informal training and development. Central to this was the personal development achieved by participants over the duration of the programme. The views and insights of the participants themselves are reflected here. Chapter 4 draws together the organisation's and participants' learning achieved and makes recommendations on how such a programme might be configured into the future if it is repeated.

## Chapter 2

# PROJECT OVERVIEW

## 2.1 TIMELINES, MILESTONES

The timelines were set early to ensure availability of both the military instructors of the Defence Forces and those contracted by BTC. The project encountered some delays on foot of a poor early response rate from interested participants. The Garda vetting and security clearance also took a longer period than anticipated which in turn lead to a delay in offering places to successful participants.

**Table 1: Timelines, Milestones**

Year	2015					2016					Notes				
	Se	O	No	De	Jan	Fe	Ma	Ap	Ma	Jun		Ju	Au	Sept	Oct
Design & Planning															
Review of Camp/Recommendations															
DFESS Announcement						X									19th Feb.2016
Presentations/Interviews															7 events convened for Client presentations & interviews
Initial participant selection															
Eligibility Checking															
Garda Vetting and Security Check															
Selection confirmation & invitation										X					Offers to participants made 9.6.2016
Planned commencement date										X					Delayed from 7.6.2016 to allow for vetting/security clearance
Pilot Programme															10 weeks to 26th August 2016
Exit Interviews												X			22/23rd June 2016
Graduation												X			26.8.2016
Review & Evaluation															
Follow up with Participants															1-2-1 meetings between participants and DSP Case Officers

## 2.2 DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROGRAMME

The scheme and the programme content were developed through detailed discussions involving the Defence Forces, the Department of Defence (DoD), Department of Social Protection (DSP) and in collaboration with Baldoyle Training Centre (BTC) which falls within the remit of Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Education and Training Board. The DF ESS was designed to consist of a 10-week training programme, consisting of 5 weeks of military-oriented training interspersed with 5 weeks of education-oriented training by BTC. The first 2 weeks of the programme were fully residential, while the remaining 8 weeks were residential Monday to Friday only.

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## 2.3 COURSE DEVELOPMENT

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The various constituent elements of the programme were developed between the DF and BTC to provide a mix of military-oriented training in a military camp setting to complement formal training programmes provided by the Education and Training Board. The formal training by BTC was provided in their training centre in Baldoyle with all other aspects of the programme being delivered from the Defence Installation at Gormanston Camp (hereafter called Gormanston Camp).

**Table 2: Description of a Typical Day**

<b>Parade</b>	<b>Mon to Fri</b>
Reveille	0700hrs
Check Parade	0725hrs
Breakfast	0730hrs
Daily Inspection	0815hrs
Start of Normal Training	0900hrs
Morning Tea Break	1030 – 1045hrs
Normal training hours	1045 – 1300 hrs
Lunch	1300hrs
Normal Training Hours	1400 - 1700hrs
Dinner	1700hrs
House Keeping / Normal Training	1800-2100hrs
Supper	2000hrs
Participant Personal Programme Time	2100 – 2300hrs
Participant Sleep Time	2300 – 0700hrs

The participants' training day was normally of 7 hours duration, with 15 minutes allowed for a morning break. There were 9 periods of instruction per day, each of 45 minutes duration, throughout the programme, and 5 on Saturday for the first 2-week period (first 2 weeks of the programme was residential), giving a total of 50 periods of instruction available per week for the first 2 weeks, and 45 thereafter. This equates to 37.50 hrs per week.

Personal time was allocated in the evening from 2100 hrs to 2300 hrs to enable participants to prepare for the following day's programme and address personal matters including cleaning of personal kit/sleeping quarters, study and other personal matters such as letter writing/messaging and communications with home and friends. Participants had

access to a dedicated common/games room with Wi-Fi, TV and a dry canteen during the evening.

Given the scale of learning and the new regime, sleep was identified as an integral and important element of the programme. Normal sleeping time was from 23.00 hrs to 07.00 hrs. During particular elements of the training programme, situations were created whereby the participants underwent some levels of incorporated sleep deprivation with the stated objective to accustom the students to such debilitating conditions.

In terms of accommodation, participant accommodation was provided for the duration of the DF ESS at Gormanston Camp, Co Meath with some off-site adventure activities and a residential stay in Bere Island, Co. Cork arranged during week 9. In recognising the residential aspect of the training, all meals were provided for participants while they were engaged on the programme. All transport required to support the programme activities was provided by the Defence Forces, as was the necessary clothing, footwear and other necessary equipment required by participants. Participants on the programme continued to receive their normal weekly welfare entitlement for the duration of the scheme and they also retained any other benefits associated with this payment. These arrangements were set out in an agreement signed between the Defence Forces and the participant, which also included agreed standards for a commitment to appropriate behaviour and the application of a disciplinary code as well as addressing issues of liability and insurance.

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## **2.4 THE STUDENT/INSTRUCTOR RELATIONSHIP**

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The relationship between the instructor staff and participants was at all times based on mutual respect, good leadership and the highest personal standards. The staff continually looked to develop the participant's self-respect with constructive criticism and forceful encouragement where necessary. All participants of whatever gender, sexual orientation, religion or ethnic origin were accorded fair and equal treatment.

At all times instructor staff participated fully in the rigours and hardship of training in order to inspire participants through enthusiasm, commitment and example. Training was



progressive, safe and sensibly achievable. The DF ESS staff were accountable for both the training and well-being of all participants, recognising their individual strengths and weaknesses. The task demanded total commitment and a sense of responsibility by the staff. In addition, staff were prepared, when required, to devote extra time to coaching or providing tuition to assist those participants in difficulty.

Instructor staff at all times conducted accurate and timely recording of all training activities associated with DF ESS Training. This included but was NOT exclusive to the maintenance of the following documents;

- a.** DF ESS Non-Commissioned Officers (NCO) Instructors Reports; Compiled weekly with entries replicated within the training diaries.
- b.** Training Diaries; At least one (1) diary entry per participant per week, reviewed by the Officer-in-Charge DF ESS (OIC DF ESS), Battalion Commander (Bn Comdr) and Department of Social Protection Liaison Officer (DSP LO).
- c.** Corrective Action Card; Corrective action was carried out to make the participant aware through professional engagement with the staff that a particular behaviour was undesired and therefore reduce the likelihood of that behaviour occurring again. The corrective action procedure was focused on achieving the group training objectives and was at all time fully documented. Each participant carried a corrective action card. When an instructor issued a corrective action, he reviewed the card to check if any other corrective actions had been issued that day. Such information allowed the instructor to assess what level of corrective action was required which was then recorded. The aim of the corrective action process was to correct mistakes, promote military discipline and to clarify the standards of behaviour expected.

DF ESS instructor staff endeavoured to ensure that positive participant behaviour was rewarded and encouraged where possible. The most effective method of rewarding positive behaviour was by giving positive feedback to the participant or the group. Positive feedback can take the form of praise and recognition of the conduct and was given as soon after the behaviour as possible.

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## 2.5. FORMAL LEARNING

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### 2.5.1 PREPARATION OF THE DF INSTRUCTORS

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Careful consideration was given to the voluntary nature of the participants' participation while also recognising that they were not military recruits, so the training delivered needed to be tailored to the civilian population. An agreed syllabus was signed off in October 2015 between the DF and BTC. The main constituent parts are set out below.

Significant training resources were invested by the DF by way of their own instructors. All the military instructor staff who were involved in the programme underwent a '*Pre Course Orientation Training*' course of 2 weeks duration prior to the commencement of the DF ESS programme. The course aim was to develop the instructional skill-set for both the Officers and NCOs who would be employed as instructor staff, or likely to be employed as future instructors on the ESS. Furthermore, the course was designed to provide the instructor staff with the requisite knowledge to deliver the DF ESS programme to the civilian participants. The course was divided into 11 tables of learning, delivered primarily in the classroom, through lecture, and group discussion over a 2 week period.

**Table 3: Pre-Course Orientation for DF ESS Instructors**

Subject	Hrs	Remarks
Interpersonal Skills for Leaders	9.00	12 periods
Mentoring, Coaching and Assessment	9.75	13 periods to include outside programme time
The Training Institution and Work Practices	6.75	9 periods
Method of Instruction	3.75	To include outside programme time
Customer Focus and Managing Aggression	6.75	DSP
Effective Management	5.25	DSP
Training Administration and Guidance Documents	6.75	9 periods
The Instructor as a Leader	4.5	4 periods
Learning in Groups and Facilitation Techniques	6.75	9 periods
The Adult Learner	3.00	4 periods
Miscellaneous	3.75	4 periods
Total	66 hours	over 2 weeks

All 8 instructors were selected for the programme on the basis of their experience and having demonstrated a high level of knowledge in the areas of instruction and personnel management. The instructors were drawn from across the Defence Forces including:

- 2 x Gormanston Camp, Co. Meath.
- 2 x Defence Forces Training Centre, The Curragh.
- 1 x Air Corps, Baldonnel.
- 2 x 2 Brigade HQ, Cathal Brugha Barracks, Dublin.
- 1 x 1 Brigade, Collins Barracks, Cork.

### 2.5.2 CLASSROOM-BASED PARTICIPANT MODULES

**Table 4: DF-delivered Modules**

<b>MODULE</b>	<b>ASSESSMENT</b>
<b>Defence Forces certificate of participation and completion of programme from the Director of Training and Education Branch.</b>	Non-assessed
<b>Basic Medical Training certificate of successful completion of training.</b>	Defence Forces assessed
<b>A Manual Handling training certificate.</b>	Defence Forces assessed
<b>A HACCP certificate of successful completion of training</b>	Defence Forces School of Catering

The training provided in the Baldoyle Training Centre drew in contracted training providers Oiliúna who provided 166 hours of group training supported by staff of the centre. These elements of the course aimed to provide the participants with enhanced and certified skills for life which would support their transition into the workforce or further education and training.

**Table 5: BTC-delivered Modules**

<b>MODULE</b>	<b>ASSESSMENT</b>
<b>SOLAS Safe Pass</b>	SOLAS Safe Pass Card
<b>Word Processing Level 1</b>	City & Guilds ITQ 7574/01
<b>Using the Internet</b>	City & Guilds ITQ 7574/01
<b>Using Email</b>	City & Guilds ITQ 7574/01
<b>Interpersonal Communication &amp; Team-Working (Including Road Safety Awareness)</b>	Non-assessed
<b>Career Preparation &amp; Job Seeking Skills</b>	Non-assessed

The integration of these 2 aspects of formal training and the associated resource hours are set out at **Appendix A**.

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## 2.6 PHYSICAL TRAINING

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After the initial 2 weeks induction phase of DF ESS training during which the participant underwent a transition from civilian life to a more organised and structured military oriented environment, all participants entered into the personal development training phase with the primary focus during this period on personal development, physical fitness/training and education, teamwork, and confidence building. This period was the most physically intense and personally demanding period of the programme for each participant, culminating in a Confidence and Adventure Training Camp of 1 week's duration. Due cognisance was given to the fact that all participants were volunteers and of varying standards of physical fitness. Prior to the commencement of any group physical activity, their physical fitness ability was appropriately assessed and documented by the PTI staff. This formed the initial baseline and standard from which each participant was expected to improve upon their physical fitness.

Effectively interspersed throughout the DF ESS programme of training, the physical training aspect was split into 2 different sections; Physical Education and Physical Conditioning. Both the Training Objectives and Learning Outcomes respectively are outlined as follows:

**Table 6: Physical Training**

Training Objectives:	Learning Outcomes:
<b>Physical Education</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have developed their overall Physical Fitness (Stamina, Endurance, and Strength &amp; Flexibility),</li> <li>• Be capable of successfully participating in all assigned physical activities / training during the period of training,</li> <li>• Be capable of successfully passing all assigned physical training during the period of training.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the importance of sequential and progressive physical training as a means of attaining a suitable a standard of physical fitness and performance,</li> <li>• Understand that physical fitness is attained through personal endeavour, discipline and hard work,</li> <li>• Be physically prepared and fit to undergo all aspects of physical activities / training throughout the ESS.</li> </ul>
<b>Physical Conditioning</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To introduce the participants to conducting organised group runs and walks over a designated distance,</li> <li>• To progressively improve the participants endurance and ability, and to enhance his/her ability to conduct organised group runs and walks over designated distances,</li> <li>• To assist in the overall development of each participant’s physical fitness.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparing him/herself to undertake a walk over a designated distance and wearing the appropriate clothing as laid down,</li> <li>• Able to progressively increase the student’s physical fitness and motivation to complete the designated runs / walk,</li> <li>• Caring for his/her feet prior to, during and on completion of a run / walk.</li> </ul>

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## 2.7 CONFIDENCE & ADVENTURE TRAINING

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In order to add to fitness levels, but more importantly to contribute to increased levels of confidence and motivation, participants were introduced to adventure training and basic outdoor survival techniques. One important aspect of this training was the criticality of team working and the development of leadership skills. On successful completion of this aspect of training it was anticipated that the participants would be capable of basic survival in the outdoor environment along with confidence building and training in outdoor climatic conditions, with a basic working knowledge of outdoor camping drills and capable of preparing meals using the ration pack.

**Table 7: Confidence & Adventure Training**

LESSON	HOURS	REMARKS
Preparation for operating in outdoor weather conditions	1 x .75	Dress, Equipment, personal Admin
Field cooking using pack rations	1 x .75	Cook meal from pack ration
Construction of 'lean to' shelters from ponchos and other material / Construction of tent.	1 x .75	
Survival in an outdoor environment including: principles, dealing with cold, heat, exhaustion and dehydration.	1 x .75	
Introduction to Outdoor Camping Drills.	1 x .75	
Personal Administration during outdoor camping.	1 x .75	Plus OPT
Hill Walking / Basic Navigation	9 x .75	
Orienteering	4 x .75	
Rock Climbing / Abseiling	4 x .75	
Swimming	4 x .75	To include beginners lessons & water confidence training
Water Confidence Training	3 x .75	
Military Obstacle Course	3 x .75	DFTC
Kayaking / Canoeing	4 x .75	
Archery	3 x .75	
Clay Pigeon Shooting	3 x .75	
Confidence & Adventure Training Camp	45 x .75 (5 x days)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>66.00 Hrs</b>	

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## 2.8 RECRUITMENT DRIVE

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Taking into account the target audience, the military requirements and drawing on the manner in which clients are usually recruited to employment schemes, the selection criteria was determined in the first instance. These were that the participants must:

- a. be 18-24 years of age, on the Live Register and living in the relevant catchment area.
- b. have successfully completed and passed the required security vetting prior to entry into the programme.
- c. pass a selection interview led by DSP and the DF.
- d. be medically certified as fit to undergo the programme of training by their respective civilian medical practitioner prior to the commencement date of the DF ESS programme, and
- e. be willing to take part in the DF ESS programme.

Invitations to an information session on the programme were sent to over 2,000 young unemployed clients who were registered as unemployed in the Balbriggan, Drogheda, Coolock, Kilbarrack and Swords Intreo Offices. The invitations included information ‘flyers’ on the proposed programme (see **Appendix B**). On a phased basis over 6 weeks, these clients were invited to attend a group information session during which the purpose and design of the programme was presented and clients were welcome to seek additional information and indicate their interest. Attendance at the group information sessions was voluntary as it was recognised that the programme would not suit many clients for a range of reasons.

**Table 8: Invitations issued to participate in DF ESS**

<b>Intreo office</b>	<b>Number of Invitations to the Information Sessions Issued</b>	<b>No. of Attendants at the Information Sessions</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>BALBRIGGAN</b>	297	22	7%
<b>COOLOCK</b>	416	46	11%
<b>DROGHEDA</b>	533	47	9%
<b>KILBARRACK</b>	405	24	6%
<b>SWORDS</b>	422	34	8%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,073</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>8%</b>

4 presentation sessions were held followed by 7 sessions of interviews with potential recruits during March and April 2016. The presentation and Q&A to potential participants set out the selection process and referenced the gains to be made from engagement in the programme including the following:

- award of accredited awards or other certification;
- development of new life skills
- improvement in personal confidence.

These outcomes were seen as being stepping stones towards employment and/or further training, making clients more attractive to employers while also giving the participants a taste of military life if interested and the possibility of meeting with potential employers at the end of the programme.

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## **2.9 PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS**

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The participants finally selected for the programme were quite diverse in terms of experience, age, education and training. There was a good representation of women on the programme with 8 women and 17 men. The average age of the participants was 20 years and 6 months on commencement of the programme with approximately half of them aged 20 years or under. The oldest participant was 25 years old. All were single but 1 had a partner and a young child.

In terms of education levels already attained, 1 had a degree, 11 had completed the Leaving Certificate and a further 9 had completed the Leaving Cert. Applied. 4 participants were educated to Junior Certificate level only. 9 of the participants had no previous work experience and for the 16 who did, the work experience encompassed summer work only. Just 2 participants had provisional driving licences.



## RESULTS

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### 3.1 FORMAL LEARNING OUTCOMES

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All participants who undertook assessments successfully passed. Exemptions were awarded to participants who had previously achieved certification. A base of 25 participants was used when calculating the official pass rate.

**Table 9: Pass Rates**

ASSESSMENT	% PASSED	COMMENT
<b>SOLAS Safe Pass</b>	100%	All participants undertook assessment
<b>Word Processing</b>	92%	Balance 8% - 2 participants exempt
<b>Using the Internet</b>	96%	Balance 4% - 1 participant exempt.
<b>Using Email</b>	96%	Balance 4% - 1 participant exempt.
<b>Manual Handling Certs</b>	100%	
<b>HACCP</b>	100%	
<b>First Aid</b>	84%	21 passed. 2 others received a lesser qualification of being qualified in CPR. 2 participants received no qualification due to missing training through illness/injury

The results shown above reflect well on both the instructors and participants. In BTC the results achieved were approximately 12.5% above the 2015 annual Contracted Training pass rate for these training modules. In military-led formally-accredited modules the participants successfully passed all military assessments with 100% pass rate in all assessments except for First Aid as outlined above.

### 3.2 FORMAL PHYSICAL TRAINING OUTCOMES

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Participants were largely successful in achieving the aspired physical training and conditioning outcomes as shown in **Appendix C, Table 16**. Overall the results are overwhelmingly positive with minor aberrations. Of the less than positive results most participants scored less in only 1 area of their scores at the end of the programme. 2 participants scored less in 2 areas and only 1 participant scored less in 3 separate areas. It is worth noting that the participant who scored less in 3 separate areas improved their time in the 2km run by 2:52. The results indicate that the training objectives and learning

outcomes were delivered by the DF instructors and were met by the participants. Another indicator of the success of the 2 tables is evidenced through the feedback from the exit interviews. A number of participants outlined that they now partake in physical training in their own time and intend to maintain some level of physical training into the future.

Detailed physical fitness test results are included for information at [Appendix C](#).

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### **3.3 PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES**

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Enhancing personal development and self-knowledge was a central objective of the programme. These elements were put in place to help participants to succeed and to assist them to perform well or better in the future. A key aspect to this was the need to be future looking and planning in a way that was supportive. The personal development objectives were used to reflect on past experience, to consolidate existing strengths and to encourage and ‘stretch’ participants for their future.

The majority of participants referenced their personal development as a matter of some pride during their exit interviews.

Details of the personal development elements and their outcomes are included for information at [Appendix D](#).

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### **3.4 EXIT INTERVIEWS – THE PARTICIPANTS’ VOICE**

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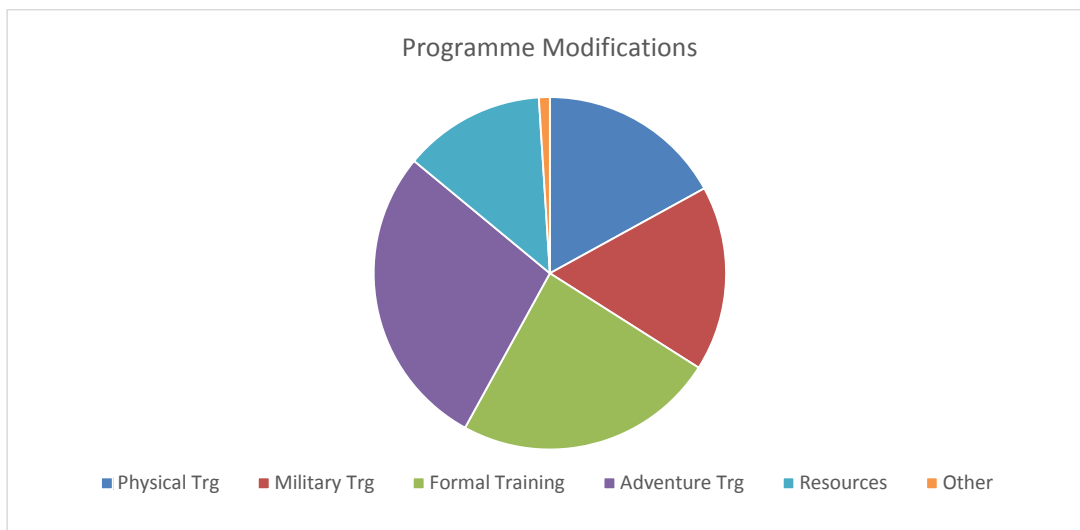
Participants agreed to exit interviews from which their feedback was collated and analysed. Using reoccurring themes, the interviewers identified 7 categories into which appropriate comments could be grouped. The interviews aimed to identify if the DF ESS programme content and format met participant expectations. Each interview sought to identify what elements participants enjoyed; furthermore what proved most beneficial. The interviews also aimed to determine the personal challenges participants faced throughout; taking account of progress made.

### 3.4.1 PROGRAMME CONTENT AND DURATION

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The programme content was challenged by asking participants if they would remove any module or aspect. 100% of participants agreed that they would not remove any element from the programme.

A total of 54 suggestions on how the programme could be modified, enhanced and improved were discussed.

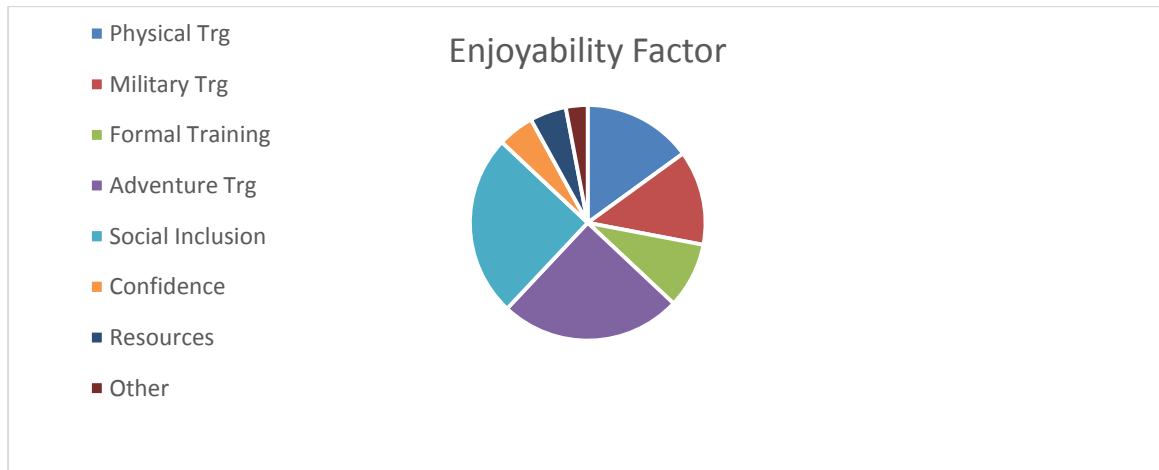


**Table 10: Participants’ Suggestions for Consideration**

<p><b>Physical Training Aspects:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional team sports. It was suggested this would assist with team building and could be introduced to the evening timetable.</li> <li>• Additional modification of PT to better cater for all levels, particularly the more physically fit participants.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Military Training:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional military inputs, general military history inputs.</li> <li>• Additional marching; suggested that additional marching could be undertaken in the evening. However this must be weighed against the opinions of those who stated that the 3 hours downtime in the evenings was important as part of the bonding process.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Formal Learning:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introducing higher levels of computer training; possibly in a multimedia setting.</li> <li>• Break-up of lectures with physical training. This mainly referred to first 2 weeks.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Adventure Training:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional adventure training. Some suggested these elements were not afforded enough time and felt rushed.</li> <li>• The amount of time spent travelling to venues to be considered.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants suggested wearing combats over tracksuit for the parade. The suggestion was made that participants should be provided with plain combats over DPMs.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Duration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 40% of participants stated that 10 weeks was sufficient. This response considered modifications suggested to the programme. Participants suggested additional training should take place in the evening.</li> <li>• 60% of participants stated that an additional 2 weeks should be added suggesting that downtime was an important factor in building relationships; adding approximately 2 weeks would enhance the overall programme.</li> </ul>

### 3.4.2 ENJOYABLE VS BENEFICIAL

While this data cannot be viewed as statistically reliable given the very low numbers involved, it is nonetheless clear that, among those who participated in the programme, the training and/or the social aspects of the programme were the most enjoyable aspects (87%).



Adventure training, incorporating overnight trips, orienteering, rock-climbing, helicopter rides, kayaking, rock-climbing and basic survival training, was the most enjoyable aspect of the programme. Physical training and military training followed as 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> in terms of levels of enjoyment. A quarter of the participants highlighted the importance for them of the sense of bonding as a team; with a sense of belonging. 5% of participants

acknowledged the quality of the accommodation facilities, in particular how the accommodation and recreational room facilitated the process of team-bonding.

5% recognised fears they had prior to commencement – referring to their fears of not fitting in. They enjoyed facing those fears and in the process establishing new friendships.



With regard to aspects of the programme the participants considered beneficial, those elements of the programme that added to levels of confidence were most often referenced by participants (36%). Participants pointed to a greater sense of knowledge and skills in order to tackle life head on and the tools and know-how to enable them do it. 21% of participants accepted that the physical training was of great benefit. They recognised how their levels of fitness had increased during the programme and spoke of their intention to use their new found fitness levels as a platform for the future. 15% of participants deemed the military training as beneficial; the routine and discipline encountered throughout the programme had increased motivational levels and given them a structure to work with. 13% acknowledged that the certificates achieved as part of formal learning would prove invaluable when looking for employment. A further 13% stated the residential aspect of the programme had afforded them the opportunity to face the fears of both living away from home and with strangers.

### **3.4.3 FEARS AND FRUSTRATIONS**

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All participants agreed that no aspect of the programme had a negative impact; moreover that in fact it had pushed them to recognise their fears and overcome them.

- The importance of support and encouragement attained from the NCOs while pushing participants to achieve was acknowledged. In particular for PT and marching.
- 3 participants acknowledged frustrations with personal injury which impacted on their ability to partake in certain physical training elements. Again the support of the NCOs was highlighted as part of their recovery process.
- 1 participant raised the possibility of having use of a gym during the programme in order to enable those who enter at higher fitness levels to others to maintain or increase their personal levels of fitness.
- Those apprehensive about living with strangers acknowledged how it opened them up to recognising how their mood and the mood of others could impact on the group.

### 3.4.4 WORTHWHILE

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There was a unanimous consensus from participants that the programme was worthwhile; furthermore all stated they would recommend the programme to others. Participants were invited to voluntarily provide written testimonials; 76% of participants partook and some of these are shown in **Table 11** below.

### 3.4.5 THE FUTURE

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The participants conveyed the feeling that the future looked bright. They acknowledged the course as a stepping stone to be used for self-advancement. With new improved CVs, accredited training with certificates achieved and the input of career guidance, participants felt their employment prospects were improved. Their new-found ability to confidently communicate would assist during interviews, dealing with new people and establishing connections.

### 3.4.6 CONTENT CHALLENGES

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A variety of challenges arose on a daily basis. However, the 2 most predominant challenges identified which impacted on the programme included:

- The content of the programme was deemed difficult to deliver in the short period of time allocated for all modules. A total of 22 days was allocated for the delivery of the BTC modules.
- The participants themselves had varying literacy levels and IT abilities which made it difficult for those at higher levels to gain significantly.

**Table 11: Recurring Themes from Participants including Testimonials**

<b>Category Key concepts</b>	<b>Participants' comments</b>
<b><i>Physical Training Sports and daily activities undertaken to enhance physical fitness.</i></b>	<i>It has allowed me to grow as a person as well as improve my physical and mental fitness.</i>  <i>This course gave me all new interpersonal skills for the workplace and everyday life and also a new application for fitness.</i>
<b><i>Military Training Marching, discipline, routine/structure.</i></b>	<i>I really like this course because of the discipline, teamwork, friendship and PT. There is only going up from here.</i>

	<p><i>I have picked up many new skills and I have realised how good routine is and how important exercise is both mentally and physically.</i></p> <p><i>I have gained so much confidence, structure and stability in my life.</i></p> <p><i>The corporals and sergeants took great interest in everyone on the course.</i></p>
<p><b>Formal Training Delivered in classroom setting, certified learning.</b></p>	<p><i>This course offers loads of opportunities and certificates for job opportunities and education opportunities.</i></p> <p><i>I enjoyed the experience of the course, meeting new people and getting out of my comfort zone. Also learning new skills.</i></p> <p><i>The certs are a good asset to try and get a job.</i></p> <p><i>I really enjoyed this course. I enjoyed making new friends and learning new skills.</i></p>
<p><b>Adventure Training Survival skills (Includes overnight trips), location of training.</b></p>	<p><i>Everyone has been brilliant and I enjoyed all the trips.</i></p> <p><i>It was a great pilot course and was enjoyable on every tour.</i></p> <p><i>I'll never forget the friendships, teamwork, swimming, rock-climbing etc.</i></p>
<p><b>Social Inclusion Sense of belonging, interpersonal skills, communication skills.</b></p>	<p><i>This course has brought me to a place of health, confidence and courage that I never would have achieved without it.....</i></p> <p><i>I am truly grateful to have had the chance of being a part of such a great course, and had a great bunch of NCOs and people to live with for 10 weeks. Thank you for the amazing opportunity.</i></p>
<p><b>Confidence Overcoming fears, motivation levels</b></p>	<p><i>I learned quite a lot about myself that I never noticed before...</i></p> <p><i>It's a great way of building up confidence and discipline.</i></p> <p><i>I am a more confident and focused person after the skills 4 life course.....</i></p> <p><i>I am no longer daunted by the future that is coming... Instead I know I can face it head on with confidence, amazing friends and valuable skills.....The course helped me with my confidence by pushing me out of my comfort zones in both physical and mental sides of the course. All in all it was a great experience.</i></p> <p><i>I also gained more confidence and new friends.</i></p> <p><i>I enjoyed the course because I gained more. I have also met so many different people with different hobbies, cultures and goals. The course took me out of my comfort zone.... This helped me to grow. The experience is different to any other course. confidence..... I made loads of new friends and loads of new memories.</i></p>
<p><b>Appreciation Other All other themes that emerged that could not be classified in the first 7 categories.</b></p>	<p><i>This course has been an amazing experience that I hope will be available to so many more people.</i></p> <p><i>If it was to arise again next year I would recommend it to anyone. It would be a great opportunity for any person who applies. Everything we partook in was well thought out... all served a purpose.</i></p> <p><i>I feel privileged! If I said no to this I would have regretted it for the rest of my life. So many memories.</i></p>



*This course had been a great experience and a once in a lifetime chance.*

*It was a privilege to be on this course.*

*This course has helped me grow as a person both mentally and physically..... I would like to say thank you to everyone involved in the course and would highly recommend it to anyone. I believe that I have made friends for life from this course and am grateful to everyone involved for giving me the opportunity to take part.*

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### **3.5 TRANSITIONING ON COMPLETION OF THE PROGRAMME**

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25<sup>8</sup> participants who commenced the programme completed it. In DSP and BTC experience, this is, of itself, a very significant success factor. It is not usual for training programmes and reflects the commitment the participants made to the programme and the value they put on it.

In addition to the interviews held for the purpose of assessing the success or otherwise of the programme, DSP held separate exit interviews to establish participants' future goals and aspirations and what plans they had put in place to achieve these. This is in compliance with the activation model for jobseekers who are transitioning from any number of training or employment support programmes.

One-to-one interviews with a DSP Case Officer were arranged for the participants within 3 weeks of finishing the programme. These were followed by telephone conversations and calls to the participants approximately every fortnight to see how the participants were progressing with the job search. Participants were advised that their designated Case Officer in DSP would continue to track their progress, would contact them on a regular basis to offer support and guidance and would be available to them if they needed assistance.

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<sup>8</sup> A 26<sup>th</sup> participant started the course but immediately dropped off for personal reasons.

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### 3.6 INDEPENDENT VALIDATION OF PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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The views of the participants and the scheme providers were very positive. Whereas formal learning and physical training and conditioning can be externally validated, it is harder to externally validate the personal development achieved by participants over the programme. For this reason, the professional input of Ballymun Job Centre<sup>9</sup> (BJC) was engaged on a *pro bono* basis. The BJC was invited to contribute towards this programme due to its experience in evaluating the soft skill element or psychological capital developed as a result of training and education, career guidance or other interventions which aim to support the unemployed in building their employability. The BJC played a central role in the Ballymun Youth Guarantee (BYG) pilot during the period January – December 2014, particularly in relation to the design and delivery of a high support personalised guidance model. Career Guidance is a core part of the BJC support service. The goal of individual career guidance is to discover and develop educational, vocational, and employment potential, to equip individuals to have a clearer understanding of themselves and their potential for future career development, and to direct individuals towards training and employment opportunities in the environment that best fulfils their needs and aspirations. Their input was to provide professionally trained psychological services that could add to the aspects of personal development modules that were delivered through the programme. Their input was reviewed and approved by the Defence Forces Student Counsellor at the start of the process.

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<sup>9</sup> *The Ballymun Job Centre (BJC), established in 1986, is a community-based non-profit making organisation, which provides services to local unemployed people as a community response to a chronic unemployment situation. Since 1996 BJC manages the Local Employment Services Network (LESN - Contract with the Department of Social Protection). The BJC's objective is to assist local people to access employment, by providing an integrated approach to job placement through the establishment of a one stop shop for job seekers. The BJC, working in collaboration with others has developed and managed many different programmes and activities including mainstream labour market programmes, innovative career guidance programmes and client focused training most specifically for individuals living in the local area. Over the years the BJC has built relationships and worked closely with a wide range of public, private, European and community organisations. The BJC, has a strong history of developing innovative initiatives that aim to tackle unemployment by addressing the barriers and needs presented by the clients, many of whom encounter multiple barriers including low formal education, low basic skills, poor work histories/ long term unemployment, involvement in antisocial behaviour, addictions, criminal histories, disabilities, and mental health difficulties for example.*

### **3.6.1 OUTLINE OF THE PROCESS**

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The DF ESS programme sought to improve key employability factors. For the participant, improvements in psychological factors such as self-confidence, self-discipline and self-motivation can be difficult to measure. However, the use of reliable measures can give an indication as to whether these factors have been impacted by the intervention, in this case the DF ESS training programme. A questionnaire containing the below scales was used alongside an online career guidance tool to evaluate changes that occurred within the group as a whole, and to support the participants in their personal and career development.

4 BJC staff members trained in the use of psychometric assessments and with extensive experience in career guidance, administered the tools and provided feedback to participants, under the guidance of an Occupational Psychologist.

The staff from BJC used a number of tools to assess personal development over the programme. Initial assessments were made early in the programme that were repeated again on conclusion of the programme so that participants could see the changes over the 10 weeks.

#### **Stage 1: Baseline (29th June, 2016)**

The following were completed by all participants:

- Cantrils Ladder
- Adult State Hope Scale
- The Rosenberg Self-esteem Questionnaire
- EGUIDE Interest Explorer (29th June) and Personality Discovery Quiz (18th July) were also completed by all participants in a group setting under the supervision of a guidance practitioner trained in the use of the tools.

#### **Stage 2: End of course (22<sup>nd</sup> August, 2016)**

- Cantrils Ladder
- Adult State Hope Scale
- The Rosenberg Self-esteem Questionnaire

- Participants were also asked what key aspects of the course contributed to their perceived increase/decrease in hope and self-esteem (structured interview).
- Participants were provided with one-to-one feedback on their interest and personality (EGUIDE assessments) by trained practitioners.

Details of the tools used are outlined in **Appendix E**.

### **3.6.2 RESULTS OF THE INDEPENDENT VALIDATION OF PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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Post training course findings revealed a significant positive effect of the training programme on self-esteem, hopefulness and perceived distance travelled. Details of the measured effects are included in **Appendix E**.

During the feedback to the participants on conclusion of the programme, the participants also spoke about additional themes to the staff of BJC. The particular relevance of these comments are that they were given spontaneously and were reported to others who were not as heavily invested in delivering the programme – the participants might have been less keen to give their comments to those involved in direct delivery of the programme. The themes that arose from the feedback interviews with the participants were as follows:

**Confidence:** Across the board all of the participants felt more confident and had a sense of achievement from completing the programme. They had a better understanding of what the future holds. The things that contributed to this overall feeling of confidence are:

- Their Peers: developing new friendships, being part of a team;
- NCOs' Support: having a constant “push” and encouragement. People believing in them and the constructive criticism allowed them to learn from mistakes and make improvements;
- Environment: having a change of environment;
- Combating Fears: by completing challenges, doing activities such as rock climbing, abseiling etc.

**Better Health:** Increasing the level of fitness and learning to incorporate fitness into everyday life was/is extremely important and helped motivation:

- Physical exercise and having a daily routine;
- Discipline, routine and structure allowed the clients to focus on achieving the goals of the programme.

**Job prospects and future plans:** Overall, the participants are more focused on the future. They hope to apply the learning from the programme in to their future plans. The majority planned to continue to do their fitness training. They recognised that the certification achieved on the programme enhances job prospects and are a positive attribute on a CV.

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### 3.7 VIEWS OF THOSE WHO DID NOT ATTEND AND WHY

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While the programme was filled by willing volunteers, the group was keen to understand, directly from potential participants, what they saw as the barriers or challenges to their participation. While the Evaluation Group assumed that the residential nature or physical aspects of the programme would not be attractive to some, a deeper understanding was required to contribute to the evaluation.

In this context an email survey was undertaken during August 2016. 546 emails were issued to clients who had been invited to participate in the programme but declined. Regrettably only 22 responded (4%) with a further 64 emails bouncing back.

Details of the responses received are shown below.

**Table 12: Views of those who did not attend**

Question	Answer	%
<b>Why did you not apply for this course?</b>	The course content was not relevant to me	55
	Residential aspect was unappealing	20
	Location of course was too far from home	25
<b>How could we generate more interest in the course in the future?</b>	Redesign the leaflet to make it more appealing?	0
	Advertise through social media, e.g. Facebook, Twitter?	45
	Include a presentation of what to expect from the course?	55
<b>If we were to run this course next year would you be interested in attending?</b>	Yes	45
	No	55

Respondents were provided with space for free text to give their feedback. Although the response level was low, these comments give a flavour of the concerns that potential participants had in relation to the programme. Their comments included a lack of clarity on the commencement of the programme and the sense among some that it was a boot camp or military training by the back door.

**Table 13: Comments from others who did not participate**

*This is not for everyone. This looks like more of a boot camp for naughty teenagers than fun activities to learn life skills. I would most definitely not be interested nor is anyone I've spoken to about this.*

*If I am ever invited to do this course again I will do it 100%.*

*Give people an exact date of when the course starts, instead of getting people to apply for the course while not knowing when it starts. It can cause complications.*

*This is conscription by another name. The defence forces are not in existence to help the current minister cook the books, by transferring the unemployed into a barracks for 2 months. I am insulted by receiving this correspondence and shall be contacting my local public representatives and the media regarding this. We need real jobs, and the state has some audacity by attempting to insult our brave troops by reducing them to nothing better than nursery nurses by their intransigence.*

*The reason why I didn't go on this course because I was qualified in a lot of modules they were offering.*

*Personally this wasn't for me I would be more interested in getting out there, getting interviews and getting a job. I know most people would feel the same. Unless you're interested in the army type of thing this is a useless filler. Just saying....*

## EVALUATING SUCCESS

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### 4.1 PARTICIPANTS' STATUS AT PROGRAMME END

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On 14<sup>th</sup> November 2016, 10 weeks after the participants graduated, their progressions were checked. The results showed that 9 had left the Live Register (LR):

- 3 were in fulltime employment;
- A further 3 participants were in full time courses of study and being supported under the Back to Work or Education Programme;
- 2 participants were in full-time training with the Education Training Board;
- 1 participant was in full-time training with the National Learning Network.

This equates to a 36% rate of exit from the LR on foot of the programme. In addition, 1 was undertaking a part-time training programme and 3 others were supported with DSP approval for a training support grant to fund quick access to short-term training or related interventions.

In considering how this exit rate should be viewed, the exit rate of jobseekers over the same period needs to be considered. The exit rate from the Live Register on foot of the programme appears to be only equivalent to that of non-participants. However, the data is not reliable and further work needs to be done to address seasonality aspects of the data and to support regression testing. Particularly for the pilot, therefore, a number of issues prevented the production of meaningful comparative statistical analyses:

- The number of clients on the programme was small. Therefore any testing cannot be relied on because of the small data set.
- Analyses based on the September Live Register would not account for seasonal effects. Specifically, the academic year usually ends in May and recommences in the month of September. Therefore, the Live Register over the summer months is inflated by education sector workers and other seasonal workers who are not at work over the summer month. In addition, young jobseekers in particular may

have a higher probability of exiting the Live Register to attend full-time education in September relative to other months.

- Finally, any analysis performed now is limited to a descriptive account of the relative performance of the jobseekers in the programme versus similar jobseekers on the Live Register at the time. The disadvantage of this approach is that it is not possible to draw any conclusions in respect of the causal relationship between undertaking the programme and Live Register outcomes. To do so would require undertaking a regression based analysis utilising a counterfactual impact evaluation design that would avoid the summer months.



## 4.2 COSTS AND INVESTMENT OF EFFORTS

The main costs involved arose for the Defence Forces and related to the investment in instructors' wages for the 10-week programme, the food, accommodation, transport and clothing of the participants. For the Baldoyle Training Centre, the instructors' costs were most significant. The costs relating to weekly welfare entitlements (€29,358, not shown in the below table) transferred to be paid by the Training Centre as weekly training allowances, which is the usual arrangement for training programmes.

**Table 14: Programme Costs**

<u>Defence Forces Costs</u>	
Instructor Salaries	€123,712
Rations	€7,953
Clothing/Equipment - Military	€6,058
Duties (Ord Sgt/Duty Medic/Duty Cook)	€2,332
Provision of Internet	€6,705
Specialist Clothing	€5,740
Entertainment Tour	€762
Transport	€13,450
End of Course Function	€1,361
Total Operating Costs	€168,074
Investment Costs	€32,217
<b>Total DF Costs</b>	<b>€200,291</b>
<u>Baldoyle Training Centre Costs</u>	
Contractor Training Tutor & Certification Costs	€56,165
<b>Total BTC Costs</b>	<b>€56,165</b>
<u>Ballymun Job Centre Costs</u>	
Provision of Professional Services	€2,660
<b>Total BJC Costs</b>	<b>€2,660</b>
<b>Total Pilot Costs</b>	<b>€259,116</b>
<p><b>Defence Forces:</b> 62% of total Defence Forces costs related to the salary costs of instructors who were dedicated to the programme over 10 weeks. The 2nd highest element of DF costs related to transport expenses arising from transferring participants to and from their training modules and other activities and cultural events.</p> <p><b>DSP:</b> Clients transferred from welfare payments to training allowances paid by BTC for the duration. Absorbed costs included 2 days training for DF instructors, post and communications with participants. Existing resources comprising an estimated 0.2 WTE HEO were drawn on to support and deliver the programme.</p> <p><b>BTC:</b> Existing resources were drawn on to support and deliver the programme. The costs above include external contracted training and certification.</p> <p><b>BJC:</b> Administration and feedback to participants of e-guide &amp; questionnaires including preparation, office support and report writing.</p>	

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## 4.3 KEY LEARNINGS FROM THE PILOT

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### 4.3.1 PLANNING

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As this was a pilot with no template against which to plan and replicate, the early design of the programme took time to enable all the stakeholders to develop the programme. Considerable attention needs to be given at an early stage to identifying if there is a need to upgrade facilities in the military facility where participants are being accommodated. An early review of the facilities in place to accommodate and support the candidates is essential to allow for upgrade if required.

The rural nature of Gormanston Camp proved ideal in respect of this pilot. However, this location then required transport resources to be available for movement of candidates to Baldoyle Training Centre and posed some challenges for candidates travelling to and from home. Its relative remoteness enhanced the “breaking the mould” aspect of the programme – participants were well away from their comfort zone. The location for any future course needs careful consideration.

The costs associated with the programme need to be defined with respective responsibilities clarified and assigned at an early stage. A specific budget for the DF ESS, approved by DPER if necessary, should be considered.

### 4.3.2 RECRUITMENT

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A lot of time and effort was invested in recruiting for the programme. Issues that arose and some recommendations to improve this are set out below:

- **Programme Promotion:** Promoting the course and generating interest proved difficult; additional promotional material should be developed including video clips and social media marketing that could attract potential participants and contribute to course promotion. These could be included at the early invitation stages of the recruitment. An interagency approach should be adopted to maximise awareness of the programme.
- **Garda Vetting/Security Clearance:** The process of selection required both Garda Vetting (GV) and Security Clearance (SC). For this reason the presentation given

to participants focused in the first instance on this requirement. This could have been perceived as negative messaging for potential participants and should be re-examined. Consideration needs to be given to the time taken for GV and SC.

- **Group Mix:** Getting a good mix of characters is important. The participants' needs varied significantly in terms of education, emotional well-being, levels of fitness and this mix worked well in the pilot. This is an important aspect of the programme and must be considered for further recruitment campaigns.

The lead-in time, from canvassing of potential candidates through selection, Garda vetting, medical certification to joining the DF ESS, requires a significant period that needs to be built into the planning and recruitment process.

However, because of the complex selection process, participants and their families had a keen sense of being 'selected' or having been 'chosen' which added to their sense of appreciation and willingness to invest their efforts in the programme.

#### **4.3.3 RESIDENTIAL PROGRAMME**

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While the residential nature of the programme was off-putting for some potential participants, this was one of the very successful aspects of the programme. In order to reduce any risk of cabin-fever during their only residential weekend, a number of cultural visits were arranged which allowed the participants to mix with each other in a more relaxed environment. It also gave the instructors the opportunity to see the participants outside the military environment. The extent to which participants had a structured timetable in a disciplined environment was appreciated and added to the potential for bonding and building a sense of camaraderie amongst the group while also presenting challenges that the participants had to deal with in terms of lack of personal space and having to consider the needs of others in the group. Removing the participants from an urban environment was also beneficial as it limited the potential for external distractions. Consideration will have to be given to any additional arrangements to be put in place if the programme is based in an urban location.

#### **4.3.4 PROGRAMME CONTENT**

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The feedback from both instructor staff and candidates was overwhelmingly positive. The preparation of all instructors was central along with a carefully managed selection process followed up by a specific training course that included valuable input from personnel of the DSP. It is strongly recommended that this selection and preparation of instructors be used in any future DF ESS programmes.

The contracted trainer who delivered the training in BTC pointed to the tight time frames to deliver the modules within 22 days and also the timetabling whereby the formal training was interspersed with military-based training. Future programmes could consider whether block release of participants for cluster module training days might work better.

The varying abilities of students naturally had an impact on programme delivery. To reduce the impact on future programmes, the BTC would consider the delivery of IT modules in a multimedia setting, utilising a variety of software packages and assessments in order to enable individualised learning that suits personal levels of ability, speed and pace. This would assist in maintaining motivation and active engagement throughout the learning modules.

Future programmes could consider removing Using the Internet and Using Email as these modules were less challenging to the participants. Consideration could be given to replacing them with City & Guilds Customer Service Level 1 (On Demand Exam) which would complement the Interpersonal Communication & Team-Working module.

#### **4.3.5 CLOTHING**

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The provision by the Defence Forces of participants' clothing should be reviewed. The tracksuit issued was not favoured by participants and caused some minor dissatisfaction during the programme. Consideration could be given to reviewing the type of clothing provided for participants.

#### 4.3.6 PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT

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The course had as a central objective the aim of assisting personal development and learning. While modules had been integrated into the programme, no provision was made in the initial programme design for independent evaluation of these aspects of the programme and for the one-to-one conversations with the participants drawing on the psychological tools. The independent evaluation was very beneficial as was the personalised feedback to participants which was appreciated and valued by them. It created a space to build self- reflection and self-awareness and this reflection drives out additional value. It is recommended that this external personal development professional input is integrated to the programme in order to drive out the full value for participants.

#### 4.3.7 COURSE DURATION

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Many of the participants suggested that the programme should have a longer duration. This may be because they didn't want it to end and that the group would have to separate. The Instructors did not make a recommendation on this other than to refer to the fact that the programme was tight. However, at this stage there is no evidence to show that a longer duration would add to the success of the programme.

#### 4.3.8 INTERAGENCY WORKING AND SUPPORT

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The working relations between DSP, DOD, DF and Baldoyle Training Centre at all levels proved very positive. It was based on clear, shared objectives, explicit responsibilities and a willingness to work closely and in collaboration with each other.

The residential nature of the programme required a greater onus of responsibility for the participants that other training programmes would not require.

A member of staff from the BTC and DSP each took on an additional support role to the clients spontaneously to provide a listening ear when the participants found the programme or other aspects of their lives difficult to manage. **This now needs to be built into the course preparation.** The participants had the mobile numbers of these staff who did on occasion have to take weekend phone calls or provide additional out-of-hours support. These staff were also available to other family members. Over the course of the

programme this included requiring support for some significant social issues outside of normal hours. These issues were real and any other iteration of the programme needs to put in place competent staff who are willing and able to support the clients in finding appropriate advice and guidance.

#### **4.3.9 MARKETING THE PROGRAMME**

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An amount of social media and other media coverage was generated over the programme. The graduation event reached an audience of 50,000 on Facebook with some 12,000 video views, 81 shares and over 6,000 audience interactions. This reflects the additional potential audience that could be accessed for any further campaigns and reflects an interest in the activities that the Defence Forces are involved in.

In marketing the programme, consideration should be given to involving previous participants to give personal testimonials. Video and voice recordings should be collated at points during the programme to contribute to further iterations of the programme.

#### **4.3.10 OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS**

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- The responsibilities and arrangements (including costs), to manage situations where participants are unwell or sick should be clarified between the parties in advance of any further iteration of the programme.
- The Defence Forces should identify their potential capacity for further iteration of this programme in order to support advance business planning by the other stakeholders.
- A key contributing strength in the pilot was the personal attributes of the instructors and other staff involved. It is important that the selection of relevant staff is recognised as central to the success of the programme.
- LR regression testing needs to be planned in advance of future DF ESS iterations.

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## APPENDIX A: OVERVIEW OF SUBJECTS

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**Table 15: List of Subjects**

<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>HOURS</b>	<b>REMARKS</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	10.50	DF
<b>Manual Handling</b>	3.00	DF
<b>Basic Foot Drill</b>	12.00	DF
<b>Hygiene &amp; Sanitation</b>	5.25	DF
<b>Confidence &amp; Adventure Training</b>	66.00	DF
<b>Basic Medical Training; First Aid Response (FAR)</b>	20.25	DF
<b>Physical Education</b>	15.00	DF
<b>Physical Conditioning</b>	18.50	DF
<b>Citizenship Course – Irish Culture/Visits</b>	21.00	DF
<b>Personal Organisation, Lifestyle and Well Being.</b>	4.50	DF
<b>HACCP</b>	29.25	DF
<b>Word Processing</b>	25.00	DDLETB
<b>Using the Internet</b>	20.00	DDLETB
<b>Using E-Mail</b>	20.00	DDLETB
<b>SOLAS/SAFEPASS</b>	7.00	DDLETB
<b>Rules of the Road &amp; Road Safety</b>	10.00	DDLETB
<b>CV Preparation &amp; Job Seeking Skills</b>	49.00	DDLETB
<b>Interpersonal Communication &amp; Team-Working</b>	35.00	DDLETB
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	52.25	DF
<b>Total</b>	<b>423.50</b>	





# SKILLS FOR LIFE

## EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT SCHEME

**'Helping You Reach Your Potential'**

**A PILOT INITIATIVE COORDINATED BY:**



**Óglaigh  
na hÉireann**  
DEFENCE FORCES IRELAND



**etb**

Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúnaí  
Atha Cliath agus Dún Laoghaire  
*Dublin and Dún Laoghaire  
Education and Training Board*



**An Roinn Cosanta**  
Department of Defence



**An Roinn Coimirce Sóisialaí**

**Department of Social Protection**

[www.welfare.ie](http://www.welfare.ie)



### What does the programme involve?

The Employment Support Scheme is a pilot initiative coordinated by the Defence Forces (DF), Department of Social Protection (DSP), Department of Defence (DoD) and Dublin and Dun Laoghaire Education and Training Board (DDLETB) Training Centre Baldoyle. It is designed to provide you with skills for life; skills which will assist you to enter the workforce or to pursue further education.

The scheme takes place over 10 weeks. The first 2 weeks of the programme will be fully residential. The remaining 8 weeks will be residential Monday to Friday only. Participants will be selected from the North Dublin area and they will be accommodated in Gormanston Camp, County Meath. Participants will retain their weekly Social Welfare payment for the duration of the scheme. Accommodation and catering will be provided by the Defence Forces.

#### How will taking part help me?

On successful completion of the scheme you will possess:

- Practical skills and qualifications which will enhance employment and further education opportunities.
- Increased levels of physical fitness and motivation.
- Increased confidence when communicating with employers.
- Enhanced social and team work skills.
- An increased sense of self-confidence, self-discipline, self-motivation and self-worth.

Participants that successfully complete the full programme will receive the following awards:

- HACCP (Hazard Analysis & Critical Control Point) certificate—The Defence Forces School of Catering.
- Word Processing - City & Guilds Level 1—DDLETB Training Centre Baldoyle.
- Using the Internet - City & Guilds Level 1—DDLETB Training Centre Baldoyle.
- Using E-Mail - City & Guilds Level 1—DDLETB Training Centre Baldoyle.
- SOLAS Safe Pass—DDLETB Training Centre Baldoyle.
- Basic Medical Training Certificate.
- Manual Handling Training Certificate.
- Certificate of Participation and Reference from the Defence Forces and Department of Social Protection.

#### How do I take part?

The Employment Support Scheme is open to jobseekers between the ages of 18 and 24. Participants will be selected by the Department of Social Protection in conjunction with the Defence Forces.

### Where can I get more information?

All queries will be addressed by The Inúeo Centre, Gallens Mill, Mill Street, Balbriggan, Co. Dublin.

**INTERESTED?... REGISTER TODAY BY EMAILING: [ESS@WELFARE.IE](mailto:ESS@WELFARE.IE)**

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## APPENDIX C: PHYSICAL FITNESS TEST RESULTS

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**Table 16: Physical Fitness**

- **2km Run**

- 21 participants improved their times by an average of 1:38secs  
The biggest improvement was by 5:17.
- Only 2 participants did not fully complete due to injuries.
- 2 participants' times were slightly over their initial recording by 0:13secs and 0:17secs respectively.

- **Weight**

- 18 participants lost an average of 3.1kg each.  
The highest loss was 8kg.
- 3 participants' weights remained constant.
- 3 participants gained weights of 3kg, 1kg and 1kg respectively. These were a mix of 2 very lean participants and 1 participant who was already of a high standard of fitness before coming on the programme.
- 1 participant was not weighed.

- **Local Muscular Endurance (LME).**

- All LME tests were conducted for a period of 30 seconds with an approximate break of 2 minutes between each exercise.

- **Push ups**

- 19 participants improved their scores by an average of 6.6 push-ups.  
The biggest improvement was 15.
- 2 participants did not fully complete due to injuries.
- 1 participant's score remained constant.
- 3 participants' scores were slightly lower than their initial recording by 4, 4 and 3 push-ups respectively.

- **Jump Jacks**

- 23 participants improved their scores by an average of 10.4 jump jacks.  
The biggest improvement was 19.
- 2 participants did not fully complete due to injuries.

- **Squats**

- 22 participants improved their scores by an average of 4.9 squats.  
The biggest improvement was 13.
- 2 participants did not fully complete due to injuries.
- 1 participant's score was slightly lower than their initial recording by 7 squats.

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- **Shuttle Runs**<sup>10</sup>

- 16 participants improved their scores by an average of 1.1 shuttle runs. The biggest improvement was 2.
- 2 participants did not fully complete due to injuries.
- 7 participants' scores remained constant.

- **Sit Ups**

- 16 participants improved their scores by an average of 5.9 sit-ups. The biggest improvement was 12.
- 2 participants did not fully complete due to injuries.
- 1 participant's score remained constant.
- 6 participants' scores were slightly lower than their initial recording by 14, 9, 8, 8, 4 and 1 sit-ups respectively.

- **Step-ups**

- 22 participants improved their scores by an average of 6.6 step-ups. The biggest improvement was 16.
  - 2 participants did not fully complete due to injuries.
  - 1 participant's score was slightly lower than their initial recording by 1 step-up.
- 

<sup>10</sup> It must be noted that due to the short duration of the time coupled with the type of exercise it is difficult to get drastic changes in this test.

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## APPENDIX D: PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT ELEMENTS AND OUTCOMES

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**Table 17: Personal Development**

MODULE	COMMENT
<b>Career Preparation &amp; Job Seeking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Participants received 1:1 coaching to assist them in identifying career paths. 92% of participants spoke of knowing what career path they would like to follow.</li> <li>● 100% of participants agreed that their CV was of a much higher standard.</li> <li>● 100% participants generated LinkedIn profiles and created email accounts. All participants agreed that social media profiles would assist them in gaining employment.</li> <li>● Participants received an input on how to utilise social media and employment websites when researching employment options input on how to maximise results.</li> <li>● They received advice on the DSP supports available to them and potential employers.</li> <li>● Almost a quarter of them (6) referenced their intention to apply for the DF with a further 20% of participants intending to apply for the Irish Fire Services Resource.</li> </ul>
<b>Interpersonal Communication &amp; Team-Working</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 92% of participants undertook to develop and deliver a presentation to the class. This was a huge personal achievement for most of them with nearly two thirds of them stating they had conquered a fear of public speaking.</li> <li>● Participants worked in groups throughout the programme, regularly appointing group members to provide feedback.</li> <li>● They worked collaboratively to develop a graduation speech to be given by 2 of them on behalf of the group.</li> <li>● Feedback from Contracted Trainer highlighted the personal progress many of the participants had made over the duration of the programme. Their willingness to actively engage had increased their ability to effectively communicate.</li> </ul>

The military training aspects of the programme also gave rise to significant scope for personal development, i.e. through both formal training methods and through other less formal means. To supplement formal training, participants developed in a variety of ways and to differing degrees:

- **Structure and teamwork** - similar to the structure in the Defence Forces the participants were grouped into Sections of 8 and 9 people. This gave the participants a sense of structure and also ensured that they became used to operating in teams and learning that everyone has a role to play in the team.

- **Social skills** – the participants were residential (Mon to Fri) for the duration of the programme and as such they were forced into interacting with each other. Most participants cited the improvement in their social skills, not just while on the programme, but also at home at the weekends and that this was noted by friends and family.
- **Leadership and Responsibility** – participants were given low level leadership roles both in the accommodation and within the sections. In their sections a participant point-of-contact was appointed on the days they were in Gormanston Camp and part of this role was to liaise with the others in their section and bring any issues to the attention of the instructor staff.
- **Routine** – the training environment was built around routine. All participants bought into the routine from the beginning and a large portion of them cited this as a benefit in their exit interviews.
- **Discipline** – this was instilled through the agreed standard operating procedures and the outlining of exactly what is expected of each participant from Day 1. The basic foot drill (marching) element of the programme also helped to instil discipline.
- **Motivation** – this was encouraged through mentoring and engagement. At all stages the DF instructor staff outlined that it was vital for the participants to be more motivated.
- **Presentation and Demeanour** – this was mainly achieved through inspections, mentoring and encouragement. It was outlined to the participants from the beginning that it was vital to recognise that how they portray themselves will impact greatly on how others treat them.
- **Confidence** – this was a cornerstone of the programme which was built upon by the other life skills outlined above. All these factors outlined above helped to build self-esteem and confidence. Again, many participants cited the increase in their confidence levels and their ability to better project themselves at the end of the programme.

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## APPENDIX E: PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT TOOLS

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### *EGUIDE Career Guidance Tools*

EGUIDE is a web based career guidance tool consisting of a number of career guidance assessments, which form part of the EGUIDE Quality Framework for guiding disadvantaged job seekers (BJC, 2007). The EGUIDE tool aims to assist participants to become more aware of their interests, their preferred behavioural style in the workplace and their specific aptitudes. For the purposes of the DF ESS programme participants completed the EGUIDE interest and personality assessments:

- **Interest Explorer:** Identification of areas of interest (Task and Environment) which fall into 6 career areas: Realistic, Investigative, Social, Enterprising, Conventional, Artistic
- **Personality Discovery Quiz:** Identification of behavioural preferences in the workplace - based on the Big Five Personality Factors Model - Openness, Conscientious, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Negative emotions

### *Personality Discovery Quiz.*

The Interest Explorer is based on John Holland's (1973) theory of career choice. This tool reports one's interest or likes for a variety of work related and hobby related tasks. Interests are categorised into 6 career categories (Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, Conventional) with higher scores indicating higher levels of interests. This tool can be used to support the development of a realistic career plan. Low scores across all career categories can suggest low motivation for the world of work, a lack of occupational knowledge and/or a lack of self-knowledge. High scores across all categories can indicate a lack of decision making ability and a lack of self-knowledge. This tool should be used as part of a guidance process as feedback and discussion are important in maximising the benefits of the tool for the client.

The Personality Discovery Quiz is based on the Big Five Personality Factors model and reports one's preferred behavioural style in the workplace. Preferences or tendencies across 5 personality factors of Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness and Neuroticism (Emotional stability) are indicated and are discussed within the context of person-environment fit. Results from this tool complement results from the Interest Explorer, enabling a more in-depth analysis and discussion of the preferred tasks and environment, and contributing towards the development of a realistic, individualised, career plan.

The DF ESS course participants completed the EGUIDE interest and personality assessments within the first 3 weeks of the programme.

### *Cantrils Ladder*

Cantril's Self Anchoring Ladder (Cantril, 1965) is a 10 point scale used in this instance to measure perceived 'distance travelled' towards employability/career goals. This ladder was used at 2 time points with participants, once at the beginning of the course, and again upon completion of the course (as outlined below). The top of the ladder represents the best possible situation for an individual and the bottom of the ladder represents the worst possible situation. It can help participants to reflect on their achievements to date and provides a simple way of thinking about distance travelled in relation to achieving their career plan. It can also be used to gather quantitative data on the distance travelled by a group of participants engaging in a process with pre and post scores compared. This adjusted version of the scale has been used as part of the eMERGE (Mount Street Employment Initiative, BJC 2010) and EEPIC (BJC, 2016) projects so that the focus is on career goals and the best and worst possible situation for the individual in relation to their career.

### *Hope scale: Adult State Hope Scale*

Hope is defined as the perceived capability to derive pathways to desired goals, and motivate oneself via agency thinking to use those pathways (Snyder, 2002). Within this



study we have used the 6-item self-report subscale of the Adult State Hope Scale (Snyder et al., 1996) which assesses goal directed thinking with 2 subscales.

- a) agency: motivation for pursuing goals
- b) pathways: ability to identify the means to achieving those goals.

Hopefulness within this study has been used as an indicator of motivation for the future. It is described by Snyder et. al. (1991) as “a positive motivational state that is based on an interactively derived sense of successful (a) agency (goal-directed energy) and (b) pathways (planning to meet goals).” (p. 287).

### ***The Rosenberg: Self-esteem questionnaire***

Self-esteem is described as a favourable or unfavourable attitude toward the self (Rosenberg, 1965). The Rosenberg Self-esteem questionnaire (Rosenberg, 1965) is a 10-item scale that measures global self-worth by measuring both positive and negative feelings about the self. The higher the score, the greater the level of self-esteem.

### **Personal Development Assessment Findings**

Post training course findings revealed a significant effect of the intervention (training programme) on self-esteem, hopefulness and perceived distance travelled (**Table 18**). The t-test analysis demonstrated that the group differed significantly at Time 2 (post training) on the self-esteem variable ( $t(24) = -5.136, p < .001$ ), the hopefulness variable ( $t(22) = -3.986, p < .001$ ) and perceived distance travelled ( $t(23) = -9.139, p < .001$ ) variable.

These findings indicate that there is a statistically significant difference between participants' mean scores on all 3 variables signifying increased levels of self-esteem and hopefulness. Scores on Cantril's ladder indicate that all participants perceived distance travelled, or progression towards their career goals.

On completion of the course, participants showed increases in self-esteem and hopefulness with mean scores increasing from 16.32 to 20.32, and from 32.09 to 37.09 respectively. Total scores on the self-esteem measure range from 0 – 30 with high scores



representing higher levels of self-esteem. Similarly, total hope scale scores range from 6 to 48 with high scores representing high hope (Snyder et al, 1996). In addition participants' mean scores on the perceived distance travelled measure, Cantril's Ladder, increased from 3.67 to 6.54. Total scores on this measure range from 1-10.

**Table 18: Mean scores on questionnaire measures at pre and post assessment**

	Pre training Mean (SD)	Post training Mean (SD)	Paired t-test Pre-post	
			t	d.f.
Self-esteem	16.32 (5.18)	20.32 (4.03)	-5.136	24
Hopefulness	32.09 (5.72)	37.09 (6.70)	-3.986	22
Distance travelled	3.67 (1.926)	6.54 (2.085)	-9.139	23

Analysis was conducted using SPSS software (IBM SPSS Statistics version 22)

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## APPENDIX F: TEXT OF GRADUATION SPEECH

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*10 weeks ago there was 25 strangers in a room - 25 people who came here to Gormanston Camp with their own goals and expectations.*

*10 weeks ago those 25 people embarked on a unique journey that has pushed their boundaries and tested their limits in ways they never would have experienced if they had not signed up for this course many months ago.*

*Those very same 25 people stand here before you now.*

*Together we have challenged fears, together we have tackled obstacles. Together we have made it here, we have made it to the end of this journey.*

*On the behalf of the platoon we wish to welcome everybody here today, right down to the people who organised this programme, Baldoyle ETB, Oiliuna and the Irish Defence Forces and those who supported us throughout, our families, friends and NCOs.*

*This course has been a wonderful and challenging experience that has helped each one of us grow in our own ways. It has encouraged us to step out of our comfort zones and explore a part of ourselves that we never knew existed*

*Some of us struggled with the lack of personal space, or the physical training, the survival exercises, the computer skills and the communication skills. Even being separated from your family, your daughter, your parents, your siblings.*

*Some of us came face to face with our deepest fears and with the encouragement of the platoon managed to overcome them.*

*We have travelled to the far side of the country and back.*

*We have jumped from heights and slept out under the stars.*

*We lived together, challenged and encouraged each other. We have all progressed in some way.*

*We have all succeeded in something.*

*We have all achieved a goal.*

*Gormanston Camp became our home away from home. A place we came to associate with good times and friendship. Blood, Sweat and tears, this quiet camp has seen it all and yet every week every one of us returned.*

*We all walked in through those gates. Today, we will leave those gates.*

*We may look back with a sad smile or a triumphant gaze but we will all face forward with determination and purpose and we will carry all we have learned here with us into the world. We will continue knowing that despite going our separate ways will always have that support. We will*

*always have each other as friends. An ear to listen to or a hand to help us back up. We are all just a message away.*

*We hope that our experiences, our success here, will be available to others to achieve. We want to see others feel what we have here, feel that exhilaration of a platoon finally getting the step right, the feeling of completing that run or circuit, the feeling of knowing you have done what you have set out to do.*

*We would like to thank everyone who made this course a possibility. Who put so much time and effort into this opportunity.*

*We want to commend the Irish Defence Forces for feeding, clothing, sheltering and training us. We want to thank ETB and Oiluna for giving us the platform to upgrade our skills and for helping us further progress with their support. We thank all of our instructors that had been drafted in from all over the country to educate us in their respective fields.*

*Also, despite most likely being the bane of their existence, being the bunch of messers that we were, we have a lot to thank our NCOs for. If they hadn't had their reserves of endless patience, their knowledge and their willingness to give us their time this course and our progression as individuals would not have happened.*

*We hope that you have experienced a positive time with us as we have had with you.*

*As for us, our platoon, I hope we will retain our unique connections. While facing our trials here we have bonded in ways I doubt any of us thought possible. We have become more than individuals. We have become a unit. We have become a family. We may be a family like no other but we are siblings all the same.*

*As strangers we started a journey and as a Family we have finally made it to the end.*

*We did it. We reached that top step together.*

*So my brothers and sisters, I bid the farewell for now and I await the day we all are reunited.*

*Watch it there lads, Ar sodar<sup>11</sup>*

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<sup>11</sup> 'Ar sodar' is a military command literally meaning 'on the trot'

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## APPENDIX G: DF ESS EVALUATION GROUP MEMBERSHIP

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**Members of the DF ESS Evaluation Group were:**

Siobhan Lawlor	Dept of Social Protection (Chair)
Paul Connick	Dept of Defence (Joint Secretary)
Declan Nugent	Dept of Social Protection (Joint Secretary)
Alan Crowley	Defence Forces
Stephanie Lawless	Dept of Social Protection
Patricia Cassells	DDLETB Baldoyle Training Centre
Sharon Fields	DDLETB Baldoyle Training Centre
Julie McCaffrey	Ballymun Jobs Centre
Martina Keogh	Ballymun Jobs Centre