




Skills for Life **Defence Forces Employment** **Support Scheme**

Presentation to ESF Programme Monitoring Committee
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Department of Defence



Background

- 2015 Defence White Paper Initiative (see section 4.10)
 - The skills and capabilities that individuals obtain from service in Defence Forces have wider benefits
 - Important that the Defence Forces contributes to wider societal objective of generating employment opportunities
 - High level vision of Scheme set out in White Paper
 - Targeted at unemployed 18-24 year olds from disadvantaged backgrounds
 - Programme to incorporate certifiable skills
 - Dept Social Protection to promote awareness of the Scheme



Planning

☛ Scheme and programme content:

- Developed through detailed discussions involving Dept of Defence, Defence Forces, Dept of Social Protection, and in collaboration with the Dublin & Dun Laoghaire Education & Training Board
- Ballymun Jobs Centre provided “start-state” and “end-state” personal development assessments



Objectives of Scheme

- 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 improve the communication and interpersonal skills of the participant, and in particular their ability to communicate more effectively with prospective employers



Underlying Principles, Requirements

- Department of Social Protection to put in place arrangements to identify suitable participants having regard to the objectives of the Scheme.
- Participants have to be medically certified as healthy and physically able to take part in outdoor activities. Security clearance is also required.
- Participation in the Scheme is voluntary and only participants who make an informed decision to volunteer for the Scheme and the associated training programme to be engaged.
- Participants retain Social Protection benefits for the duration of the Scheme. Participants do not receive any payment from the Department of Defence.



Training Programme

- Encompasses 10 weeks duration, consisting of 5 weeks of military-oriented training by the Defence Forces interspersed with 5 weeks of education-oriented training by the local Education & Training Board
- The first 2 weeks of the programme are fully residential. The remaining 8 weeks residential Monday to Friday only.
- Training day is normally 7 hours duration with 9 45-minute periods of instruction.
- Participant accommodation is provided with some off-site adventure activities and a residential stay at Bere Island. Meals, clothing and necessary footwear provided.
- Participants and instructors voluntarily sign a standard agreement committing to standards of behaviour, discipline, etc.



Training Programme (contd.)

- Participants are exposed to an environment which encourages personal development, achievement and hard work. Aim is that they should be able to:
 - Display social and team skills.
 - Display other skills that increase their employability and prove their competence to prospective employers, leading to the likelihood of obtaining sustained employment or successfully entering further education for this purpose.
 - Demonstrate an increased sense of self-confidence, self-discipline, self-motivation and self-worth.
 - Demonstrate an increased level of physical fitness, physical fitness education and motivation.
 - Communicate more confidently with potential employers.



Classroom-Based Modules

Defence Forces-delivered

- Basic Medical Training Certificate
- Manual Handling Certificate
- HACCP Certificate (Hazard Analysis & Critical Control Point - Food Safety & Hygiene)

Education & Training Board-delivered

- Solas Safe Pass
- Word Processing, City & Guilds
- Using the Internet, City & Guilds
- Using Email, City & Guilds
- Interpersonal Communications & Team-working
- Career Preparation & Job-seeking Skills



Physical Training, Cultural, etc.

Physical Activities:

- Marching drills, physical fitness & conditioning and confidence & adventure training, basic outdoors survival techniques
- **Objectives:**
 - To contribute to increased levels of self-confidence and motivation
 - To practice team-working and develop leadership skills

Cultural/ Other Visits

- Áras an Úachtaráin, Leinster House
- Naval Base, Air Corps
- Jobs Fair in RDS



Pilot Programme

- ✔ ESS pilot ran from 20th June 2016 to 26th August 2016 based in Gormanston Camp, Co. Meath – 25 participants.
- ✔ **Successful completion by all participants**
- ✔ **Participants' status (at end-Feb 2017):**
 - 6 in employment
 - 6 in further education supported by DSP's Back to Work or Education Programme
 - While 13 still in receipt of jobseekers' payments, 8 were undergoing further training programmes for long-term unemployed
- ✔ **Other Benefits**
 - Measured improvements in physical fitness (DF PTIs)
 - Measured improvements in personal development (BJC psychologists)
- ✔ **Positive feedback from all sources**



Pilot Programme Costs

- The main costs involved arose for the Defence Forces and related to the investment in instructors' and other support staff wages for the 10-week programme and the food, accommodation, transport and clothing of the participants.
- For DDL ETB, the instructors' costs were most significant.
- Total pilot programme cost was €225,332 made up of
 - €166,257 DF costs,
 - €56,165 DDL ETB costs and
 - €2,660 Ballymun Jobs Club costs (for personal development assessments).



Pilot Programme: Participant Comments

- ☛ *"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 has allowed me to grow as a person as well as improve my physical and mental fitness."*
- ☛ *"I really like this course because of the discipline, teamwork, friendship and PT. There is only going up from here."*
- ☛ *"The certificates are a good asset to try and get a job."*
- ☛ *"This course offers loads of opportunities and certificates for job opportunities and education opportunities."*



Next steps

3-year rollout plan

- 2 programmes per year
- Up to 30 participants per programme

2017

- Sarsfield Barracks, Limerick - 22nd May to 28th July
- McKee Barracks, Dublin - late-autumn start (date tbc)



