



What is the social impact resulting from the expenditure on cadets?

Autumn 2017 - Summary

In July 2016, on behalf of the Ministry of Defence (MOD), the Combined Cadet Force Association (CCFA) and CVQO commissioned the Institute for Social Innovation and Impact (ISII) at the University of Northampton (UoN) to undertake a four-year study designed to help understand the social impact of the spending on cadets and the Cadet Expansion Programme (CEP), as well as the benefits of the qualifications provided by CVQO. As there is no universally accepted definition of what social impact constitutes, the brief agreed with the project Commissioners, that underpins the project is: “using Government data and figures, and data gathered through original research, the project will measure and report on the economic and social benefits delivered by the Cadet Forces to individuals and society”.

The financial value of every aspect of social impact delivered by the four MOD-sponsored Cadet Forces (Sea Cadet Corps, Combined Cadet Force, Army Cadet Force and Air Training Corps) is not possible to quantify exactly (future reports will improve the reporting of financial benefit). However, the evidence gathered for the first interim report clearly demonstrates that the value of the social impact that Cadet Forces deliver is vastly greater than their annual cost. These benefits go across Government departments and are clearly relevant to Defence, Education, Social Services, HMRC and the Cabinet Office. Cadet Forces deliver impact that is directly relevant to the Prime Minister’s vision of a ‘shared society’ and clearly contributes to increasing social mobility and decreasing social disadvantage. Future research will seek to substantiate these early findings and explore the social impact of the CEP in state schools across the UK.

A summary of the key research findings to date:

- Cadet Forces are effective at **supporting encouraging and developing cadets who receive Free School Meals (FSM) to achieve their potential**. The potential impact saving to the UK of this is greater than twice the amount spent annually on Cadet Forces.
- A study carried out in Greater Manchester strongly indicates that young people that have been **excluded from school** and that join cadets are more likely to **improve their attendance and behaviour**. The savings to the education budget of these social impacts are potentially huge.
- The Cadet Forces have a significant impact on **making communities more inclusive**, it seems that cadet detachments enable people to overcome disadvantages in a way school does not.
- As the visible face of the Armed Forces in the community, the activities that cadets and Cadet Force Adult Volunteers (CFAVs) carry out as they deliver military values, results in **increased recognition and awareness of our Armed Forces** and improved respect for veterans.
- There is a very strong belief that CVQO courses have great value for CFAVs. The training offered is particularly useful for those CFAVs with few or no qualifications. The qualifications and awards that CFAVs have gained are estimated as providing the current cohort with **potential lifetime earnings increases of £15.58 million¹**. Additionally, CFAVs **gain significant personal and social benefits** from their volunteering.
- Serving soldiers that were cadets have: **higher self-efficacy**; are **four times more likely to be a SNCO or officer** than non-cadets; and **serve at least six years** longer than non-cadets on average. Many of those surveyed said being a cadet had 'positively' helped or been very useful to their Army career and reported that the main personality traits that had been developed by their experiences in the Army Cadet Force (ACF) or Combined Cadet Force (CCF) were **leadership and self-discipline**.
- The skills of **communication, confidence and leadership skills** delivered by all Cadet Forces underpin the social impact seen and are valued by cadets, parents, educational organisations, and employers.

¹This is based upon an analysis of 338 CFAVs who gained accredited qualifications of NVQ Level 2 or higher. This does not include the other 186,000 qualifications gained since 1965. See Section 4.4 in the Methodology Paper for more information.