

**Steve Howard - Clinical Data System Manager
Locala Community Partnerships**

Can you tell us about your Career Path so far?

In 1983 at the age of 18 I joined the Royal Air Force. I served for 22 years gaining many skills along the way.

My career was Aerospace Systems based in the Air Defence field. During the cold war this task was vital to protect the UK from air threats. I served in NATO for several years both in the UK and abroad, giving me direct experience of working with other nations military. I lived in Netherlands for 3 years, Belize for 6 months and Northern Ireland for 2 years.

Aside from my trade role I was also involved in expedition training, sport, and served on several committees promoting social welfare of service men and women.

I retired from the Forces in 2005. After my military service I joined The Health Informatics Service (THIS), and later joined Locala in 2011 as a Data System Manager.

In what ways are life and work different outside of the military?

For some military personnel, the transition to civilian life can be difficult, moving from a strongly team-based hierarchical structure into the unknown may be confusing. The Armed Forces is a highly structured organisation. Quite often servicemen seek employment in the Public sector after military service as it does provide a similar structure.

Some may need help with mental health/PTSD. Fortunately, I did not suffer in this way. It can be difficult to manage expectations. In the Forces orders are given and are expected to be carried out and not overly questioned. It's a paradigm shift in Civvy Street!

What kind of transferable skills do former members of the armed forces have that are beneficial to civilian roles?

During my 22 years of service, I gained many transferrable skills including IT, managerial skills and problem-solving experience.

How can employers and colleagues support members of the armed forces community with their transition to the civilian workplace?

Don't be too quick to judge, the Armed Forces has its own culture, language and ways of conducting business and so it may take time for ex-servicemen and women to adapt. Be supportive, understanding and patient, a listening ear and a friendly



that can work wonders. Service personnel are usually at their best under extreme pressure, they might surprise you how well they perform in times of adversity.

Locala is proud to be a signatory of the Armed Forces Covenant and are committed to supporting members of the armed forces community.

To view current vacancies within Locala, visit:
www.locala.org.uk/about-us/working-with-locala

