

Why This Matters Now: Policy, Partners and What Comes Next

We took this to Parliament before we had all the answers. Here's why that was the right order to do it in.

Gemma Gardner — Founder, AURIS Institute™ · Public Research Briefing · July 2026

Everything in the first three pieces in this series — the problem, the evidence, the pilots — sits underneath a single question that goes beyond any one organisation or programme: if identity disruption after transition is real, measurable and currently unaddressed by the support systems built to help, what should change? We think that's a policy question as much as a personal one, which is why we took it to Parliament.

1. What We Submitted, and Why

In June 2026, we submitted *Identity in Occupational Transition: Evidence, Research and Future Directions for UK Policy* — a cross-party Parliamentary Evidence Review setting out an interdisciplinary review of occupational transition, identity psychology, behavioural science and our own original qualitative research, alongside a full appendices volume of supporting tables, figures and a 60-claim traceability register. Every substantive claim in that report is mapped to a specific, controlled piece of evidence, rated by strength, and flagged clearly wherever the evidence is limited rather than conclusive.

The report is deliberately not a pitch for AURIS specifically. Its governing principle is evidence first, interpretation second, recommendations third — and no section of it claims that Identity Performance Psychology or the AURIS approach is already validated. Independent academic review of the report is ongoing.

1.1 What the report distinguishes, and why that structure matters

The report is deliberately organised to keep five different kinds of content separate at every stage: established published evidence; our own emerging qualitative findings; our original conceptual contribution; recommendations for future research; and recommendations for policy and practice. This separation exists because the single most common way research-adjacent organisations lose policy credibility is by letting these categories blur — citing an established finding and an original hypothesis in the same breath, so a reader can no longer tell which is which. Keeping them structurally apart, chapter by chapter, is one of the more unglamorous but important pieces of evidence discipline behind this work.

2. The Cost of Getting This Wrong

Employment-focused transition support isn't wrong to exist — it addresses a real need. The argument isn't that it should be replaced. It's that treating employment as a complete proxy for successful transition misses a cost that shows up elsewhere: in wellbeing, in relationship stability, in long-term engagement with work

and community, in the population of people who look, on paper, successfully transitioned, while privately still not knowing who they are outside the role that used to define them.

That cost isn't unique to the military transition population, either. Research into the identities of spouses and partners of UK Armed Forces veterans found they, too, describe their own loss of personal identity and long-term impacts on self-esteem and confidence — a knock-on effect on families that transition policy rarely accounts for [1]. More broadly, UK employers report losing an average of over £30,000 per employee departure, against an annual staff turnover rate of around 34% — figures that describe a general UK workforce backdrop, not an AURIS-specific outcome, but one that makes identity-aware transition support a live economic question for any organisation managing people through major change, not only the armed forces.

The specific retention and cost figures referenced above (Oxford Economics, CIPD, Deloitte, Gartner) are cited in the Executive Business Strategy by organisation name only, without a primary source link. Before this line goes into anything public or press-facing, those figures should be traced to their original published source and cited directly, in line with our own evidence-repository standard.

3. What We're Asking For

Three things, in order of what we think matters most.

3.1 More research, not just more programmes

The interview evidence base needs to grow from 22 towards its full 108-participant target, and the sector-specific gaps we've been transparent about — policing identity research, in particular — need dedicated attention, not assumption-by-analogy from adjacent sectors.

3.2 Evaluation built in from the start, not bolted on afterwards

Any programme claiming to address identity in transition, ours included, should be expected to evaluate against implementation-science standards — acceptability, feasibility, fidelity, adoption and participant outcomes — not attendance figures or satisfaction scores alone.

3.3 Partnership over parallel effort

We're not asking organisations to abandon employment-focused transition support — we're asking whether identity-focused support can run alongside it, tested properly, funded appropriately, and evaluated honestly. That's the model our current pilot partners — Trafford Veterans CIC, Out in the Bay, and Red Rose Recovery — have already agreed to test with us, and it is the same model we intend to extend to further charity partners as the evidence base grows.

4. Who This Report Was Written For, and How to Read It

The Parliamentary Evidence Review was written for a cross-party, general parliamentary audience — MPs, peers, select committee staff and policy advisors who need to understand the shape of an issue quickly, without either being talked down to or being handed raw academic material with no interpretation

attached. That is a harder document to write than either a purely academic paper or a purely persuasive pitch, and it shaped several structural decisions worth naming.

5.1 Why the evidence sits before the recommendations, not after

It would have been simpler, and arguably more persuasive in the short term, to lead with recommendations and use the evidence to support them. We did the opposite deliberately. Evidence first, interpretation second, recommendations third means a reader can independently assess whether the evidence justifies what follows, rather than being asked to trust the recommendations and work backwards. For a report asking policymakers to take an emerging, partly-unproven research area seriously, that ordering is not a stylistic choice — it is the entire credibility strategy.

5.2 What independent review means at this stage, and what it doesn't yet mean

Independent academic review of the report, led by an external reviewer, is genuinely ongoing rather than complete. That distinction matters and we repeat it deliberately rather than letting "under review" quietly imply "reviewed." Until that process concludes, we describe the report as our own, careful synthesis of the published evidence and our original research — not as an independently validated document — and we would rather a reader notice that caveat than assume more authority has been conferred on the report than currently has been.

5. The Broader Case: Why Employers, Not Just Government, Should Care

Although the Parliamentary Evidence Review is framed around UK policy, the underlying argument does not stop at the boundary of government responsibility. Any employer managing people through major occupational transition — not only the armed forces, but blue-light services, the NHS, and large private-sector employers going through restructuring or redundancy programmes — faces some version of the same structural gap: transition support built around practical logistics, with identity treated as someone else's problem, if it is treated as a problem at all.

This is where the case connects most directly back to why AURIS exists as a commercial organisation as well as a research programme. Corporate research-and-development partnerships are one of five planned revenue lines feeding the wider AURIS Identity System, alongside funded charity programmes, individual membership, private coaching and facilitator licensing. Each of those revenue lines is deliberately structured to feed the same underlying evidence base — funded charity programmes generate the pilot evidence that de-risks a future corporate partnership; a growing, evidence-informed membership base demonstrates real-world engagement at scale; and any future corporate offer would itself be built on, and evaluated against, the same implementation-science standards described in the previous piece in this series, not offered as a separate, less rigorous product for a paying audience.

6. What Success Looks Like From Here

It is worth being explicit about what a good outcome from this policy engagement actually looks like, because "AURIS becomes government-endorsed" is not it — that would be a considerably stronger claim than the current evidence, or the deliberately modest framing of the Parliamentary Evidence Review itself,

could support. A good outcome looks like: identity being taken seriously as a genuine, additional transition outcome worth measuring, alongside employment, in future government and charity-sector evaluation frameworks; the specific evidence gaps named in this series — police-sector identity research chief among them — attracting dedicated academic attention rather than continuing to be filled by analogy from adjacent sectors; and our own pilot evaluations being judged, and if necessary challenged, on the same implementation-science standards we are asking everyone else in this space to be judged on.

7. A Direct Word to Anyone Reading This Series in Full

If you have read all four pieces in this series, you now have a genuinely complete picture of how this organisation thinks: why we believe identity, not employment, is the variable existing transition support misses; exactly what our evidence base does and doesn't yet support, gaps named rather than hidden; how our live pilots are testing four specific, tracked questions rather than simply delivering a service; and why we think the answer to those questions matters enough to have taken to Parliament before we had all of them. That is, deliberately, a slower and more exposed way to build something than simply launching a polished product and letting the evidence catch up afterwards. We think it is also the only honest way to build something meant to help people at one of the most disorienting points in their lives.

8. Where This Goes Next

Independent academic review of our Parliamentary submission is ongoing. Our interview coding continues toward its full sample. Our pilots are being evaluated to implementation-science standards, with findings published — good or inconclusive — alongside the partners who ran them.

If you're a commissioner, researcher, journalist, or organisation working with a population going through major occupational or life transition, and any of the open questions in this series sound like ones you're also trying to answer, we'd genuinely like to hear from you. This research programme gets stronger with more rigorous scrutiny, not less of it.

References

- [1] Spikol, E., McGlinchey, E., Fear, N., Armour, C., & Gribble, R. (2024). Who am I? A qualitative exploration of the identities of spouses/partners of UK Armed Forces Veterans. *Journal of Military, Veteran and Family Health*.
<https://doi.org/10.3138/jmvfh-2023-0068>