The Defence Committee

The Defence Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration, and policy of the Ministry of Defence and its associated public bodies.

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Mr Mark Lancaster MP (Conservative, North East Milton Keynes)
Willie Rennie MP (Liberal Democrat, Dunfermline and West Fife)
Mr Desmond Swayne MP (Conservative, New Forest West)

Powers

The Committee is one of the departmental select committees, the powers of which are set out in House of Commons Standing Orders, principally in SO No 152. These are available on the Internet via www.parliament.uk.

Publications

The Reports and evidence of the Committee are published by The Stationery Office by Order of the House. All publications of the Committee (including press notices) are on the Internet at: www.parliament.uk/defcom

Committee staff

The current staff of the Committee are Mike Hennessy (Clerk), Eliot Wilson (Second Clerk), Ian Rogers (Audit Adviser), Lis McCracken (Inquiry Manager), Richard Dawson (Committee Assistant), Christine McGrane (Secretary) and Stewart McIlvenna (Senior Office Clerk).

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Summary

Recruiting and retaining the right number of well-trained personnel is vital for the continuing success of the United Kingdom’s Armed Forces. Yet recruitment and retention targets are not being met. The number of trained military personnel joining the trained strength is falling. The number of personnel leaving the Armed Forces before the end of their agreed term is also creeping upwards. We are particularly concerned about shortages in ‘pinchpoint’ trades which seriously threaten operational capability.

This is not a new phenomenon. The difference is that now our Armed Forces are operating at a higher tempo than ever before and their commitments outstrip the levels for which they are resourced. This has put Service personnel under extreme pressure and is contributing to increasing levels of voluntary outflow.

Failure to meet Harmony Guidelines, the impact of operational tempo and stretch have serious consequences for Armed Forces personnel and their families and can be a major factor in decisions to leave the Services early. Armed Forces personnel need greater stability and certainty about their work/life balance.

Ministers, officials and senior officers acknowledge these pressures and have introduced a number of measures both to attract more people to the Armed Forces and to ease the pressure on existing personnel. We welcome these initiatives, but note that the manning situation is not improving. We are concerned that the MoD has become used to declining numbers of Armed Forces personnel, and is not doing enough to redress manning shortfalls.

Our web forum has provided first-hand comments from Service personnel about the problems they face. We believe the MoD should develop better mechanisms for identifying and addressing these sorts of issues; an independent Armed Forces Federation might assist in this. We recommend that the MoD consider an independent Armed Forces Federation more constructively.

We conclude that there is no rapid solution to the problems of recruitment and retention. Many of the underlying causes of these difficulties result from limited resources. Service accommodation has been under-funded for an extended period of time. Better resourced outreach programmes would create bridges between military and civilian society. Like many parts of the Armed Forces, recruiting teams, welfare officers and training teams are under strength. Recruitment and retention in the Armed Forces will not be improved without a significant commitment of resources.

We have concerns that in its efforts to recruit more ethnic minorities to the Armed Forces, and in recruitment activities targeting pinchpoint trades, the MoD is acting without the information necessary to develop evidence-based policies. We recognise that the MoD faces real difficulties recruiting from certain ethnic minority communities, which can only be addressed within those communities, should they choose to do so.

Our Armed Forces are among the best in the world and their pay should reflect this. We note that the overall basic pay package does not appear to be a major cause of Armed
Forces personnel leaving the Services.

We conclude that the MoD is not responding with sufficient flexibility and imagination to some of the problems it encounters. Educational incentives could be used much more effectively as a recruiting incentive, and the MoD could aid retention by reviewing the inequalities of its retirement policies. The Armed Forces should encourage transfers between and within the Services, and smooth the inconsistencies in pay and conditions between the Services.
1 Introduction

Scope of the inquiry

1. In February 2008 we announced an inquiry into how the Armed Forces were responding to challenges in recruiting and retaining sufficient military personnel to fulfil the MoD’s objectives. In particular, the inquiry would:

- examine the factors which hamper recruitment to the Armed Forces, and identify what the MoD was doing to improve recruitment;
- examine the difficulties the Armed Forces had in retaining personnel, and identify what the MoD was doing to improve retention; and
- examine the recruitment and retention of reservists.

We were also concerned, in the context of recruitment and retention, to examine why ethnic minority personnel formed such a low proportion of the Armed Forces.

2. Our purpose in undertaking this inquiry was not to provide a comprehensive analysis of the broad and complex issues surrounding recruitment and retention, but rather to update the work already undertaken, with particular focus on looking forward to what improvements could be made.

Previous work by the Committee

3. The Defence Committee has had a long interest in recruitment and retention in the Armed Forces. Most recently, we considered recruitment and retention issues in our Report Ministry of Defence Annual Report and Accounts 2006–07.1 We concluded that:

- the MoD would not achieve manning balance in the Royal Navy/Royal Marines or the Army by the end of March 2008, and should set out how it planned to achieve manning balance in the future;
- the MoD should assess the success of the measures introduced to reduce the number of manning pinchpoints;
- the MoD should monitor the flow of voluntary departure from the Armed Forces, which showed signs of increasing;
- the MoD should identify how to improve Unit Tour Interval Guidelines for the RAF and investigate what impact its failure to meet Harmony Guidelines would have more generally on retention in the Armed Forces.

We also expressed concern at the MoD’s failure to achieve most of its diversity targets, particularly with regard to the recruitment of people from ethnic minorities.

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4. In our recent Report we also considered specific issues which impact on retention: Medical care for the Armed Forces; The work of Defence Estates, and Educating Service Children.

5. In 2005, our predecessors conducted an extensive inquiry into Duty of Care. The inquiry examined the responsibilities, structure and provision of duty of care in the Armed Forces, the recruitment process, and the structure of initial training.

6. In 2001, our predecessors focussed solely on recruitment and retention in its Report The Strategic Defence Review: Policy for People which considered issues relating to both recruitment and retention with particular reference to the relationship between the Armed Forces and civilian society, ethnic minorities, women, under manning and overstretch. The Report noted the scale of the problem that the MoD faced in recruiting personnel. It also considered specific issues which might contribute to the outflow of Armed Forces personnel: overstretch, pay, career development, accommodation, and the working environment.

**Previous work by other organisations**

7. A great deal of data about Armed Forces recruitment and retention is already in the public domain. The MoD publishes data and policies relating to recruitment and retention in performance reports, and the Defence Analytical Services Agency (DASA) provides regular statistics. A number of reports which consider recruitment and retention in the Armed Forces, or related issues, have been published in the last two years including:

- the NAO’s report Recruitment and Retention in the Armed Forces, which concluded that the number of Service personnel leaving the Forces was increasing and that, while a variety of factors influence someone’s decision to leave the Armed Forces; Separated Service, workload, and the impact on family were key factors. The report also noted that the Department’s recruiting performance had been mixed, but that it had a good understanding of why people joined the Forces.

- the NAO’s report Reserve Forces, which concluded that the Reserve Forces were vital to the operational capability of the Armed Forces, but that the MoD faced real challenges in recruiting and retaining the required number of Reservists.

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2 Defence Committee, Seventh Report of Session 2007–08, Medical care for the Armed Forces, HC 327 (hereafter HC (2007–08) 327)
5 Defence Committee, Third Report of Session 2004–05, Duty of Care, HC 63 (hereafter HC (2004–05) 63)
7 For example, Ministry of Defence, Annual Report and Accounts 2006–07, HC 697
8 For example, Ministry of Defence, UK Armed Forces Quarterly Manning Report, 1 April 2008
9 National Audit Office, Recruitment and Retention in the Armed Forces, Session 2005–06, October 2006, HC 1633 (hereafter NAO HC (2005–06) 1633)
• the Committee of Public Accounts report which *Recruitment and Retention in the Armed Forces*,\(^\text{11}\) examined the levels of commitment and stretch; measures to improve recruitment and retention; and social and educational diversity in the Armed Forces.

• In 2007 the MoD, responding to a recommendation by the NAO, commissioned RAND Europe to investigate how serving personnel viewed their pay and allowance package. The study concluded that while the basic pay and pension package was acceptable, it was also difficult to understand, that aspects of the package could drive unwanted behaviour, and that there was an overwhelming desire for less stretch and disruption to Service life.\(^\text{12}\)

### Conduct of the inquiry

8. We held four evidence sessions during the course of this inquiry. On 25 March 2008, we took evidence from: Professor Dandeker of Kings College, London; Professor Strachan of Oxford University; the Army Families Federation; the RAF Families Federation and SSAFA FH. On 1 April 2008, we took evidence from SaBRE; the Institute of Career Guidance; Armor Group; and Control Risk. On 22 April 2008, we took evidence from Chris Baker OBE, Director General Service Personnel Policy; Air Vice-Marshal Simon Bryant CBE, Chief of Staff Personnel and Air Secretary; Major General Andrew Gregory, Deputy Adjutant General and Director General Services Conditions (Army); Major General Simon Lalor TD, Assistant Chief of Defence Staff (Reserves and Cadets); Rear Admiral Charles Montgomery CBE, Naval Secretary, Chief of Staff (Personnel); and Vice Admiral Peter Wilkinson CVO, Deputy Chief of Defence Staff (Personnel). On 20 May 2008, we took evidence from Derek Twigg MP Under-Secretary of State for Defence and Minister for Veterans, Ministry of Defence and Vice Admiral Wilkinson.

9. We received written evidence from the MoD; welfare and support organisations; the Armed Forces Pay Review Body; the Equality and Human Rights Commission and others.\(^\text{13}\) We are grateful to all those who submitted evidence.

10. We undertook visits to the Armed Forces Recruitment Centre at St George’s Court, Holborn, London to learn more about the recruitment process, and to the Army Training Regiment Bassingbourn, Hertfordshire and HMS Raleigh, Plymouth to learn more about initial training. During these visits we spoke to recruitment officers from each of the Services, to recruits undergoing initial training, and to their trainers. We are grateful to all those who assisted us during our visits, or otherwise helped with our inquiry.

### Web forum

11. Alongside the written and oral evidence, we hosted a web forum on recruitment and retention in the Armed Forces. The forum ran between 2 April 2008 and 28 May 2008. The


\(^{13}\) For a list of published written evidence see p 99.
Recruiting and retaining Armed Forces personnel

web forum attracted 13,785 views (7,271 views in most popular thread), 184 posts and 226 registrations. We are grateful to all those who contributed. We have drawn on the experiences shared with us via the web-forum throughout this inquiry. A summary of the forum is provided in Annex B to our Report.¹⁴

12. We welcome the input of Service personnel to our inquiries—it helps us scrutinise the work of the MoD more effectively. However, we were concerned that MoD officials had sought to discourage groups associated with the MoD from publicising the forum; and some of our respondents felt that they were being discouraged from sharing their experiences with us. We put our concerns to the Minister who responded that:

I am, quite frankly, shocked to hear that. I condemn any such instruction that was taken out and I give you absolute assurance that, after we finish this session, I will ask for that to be investigated very promptly…We very much want to encourage our people to have this contact with you.⁵

13. The use of web fora provide us with an opportunity to hear the experiences of a wide range of current and former Service personnel and their families. We value this interaction. We welcome the Minister’s support for our ability to communicate freely with the Service community. However, this is the second time we have had concerns that the MoD has attempted to undermine a web forum that we have hosted. We look to the MoD to demonstrate its support for our interaction with the Service community by actively promoting web fora we set up for future inquiries.

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¹⁴ See p 89.
⁵ Q 333
2 Recruitment and Retention overview

Defence Planning Assumptions

14. The target number of military personnel in the Armed Forces is based on a forecast of the military force that will be required in the future. These forecasts are set out in the Defence Planning Assumptions. The last major review of Defence Planning Assumptions, and therefore of the structure and size of the Armed Forces, took place in 2004 in the White Paper, Delivering Security in a Changing World: Future Capabilities. That policy review, in conjunction with an analysis of the Armed Forces equipment programme, led the MoD to conclude that a smaller, lighter and more capable force would create better policy outcomes. It announced that:

- as a norm, and without creating overstretch, we should be able to mount: an enduring medium scale operation, simultaneously with an enduring small scale operation; and a one-off small scale intervention operation;

- we should be able to reconfigure our forces rapidly to carry out: the enduring medium scale operation and an enduring small scale operation simultaneously with a limited duration medium scale intervention operation; and

- given time to prepare, we should be capable of undertaking: a demanding one-off large scale operation while still maintaining a commitment to, a simple small scale peace support operation.

15. The Defence Intent for Reserves—based on the Defence Planning Assumptions—identified three key roles for Reserves:

- to provide additional military capability for large scale operations;

- to augment and reinforce Regular Forces on enduring operations that are small or medium scale where Defence Planning Assumptions have been exceeded; and

- to provide specialist capabilities not available in the Regular Forces as and when required for all types of operation.

16. Table 1 shows the Regular Forces personnel requirements, derived from the Defence Planning Assumptions, since 2004. Between 1 April 2004 and 1 April 2008, as a result of a series of managed restructuring and efficiency programmes, the required number of personnel has fallen across the Armed Forces by 8.23%. The Naval Service requirement has reduced by 6.35%, the Army requirement has reduced by 4.62%, and the RAF requirement, subject to the largest restructuring programme, has fallen by 17.4%.

18 Delivering Security in a Changing World: Future Capabilities, p 14
### Table 1: Regular military manpower requirement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Naval Service</th>
<th>Army</th>
<th>RAF</th>
<th>Total Regular Force Requirement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004–05</td>
<td>38,190</td>
<td>104,170</td>
<td>48,730</td>
<td>191,090</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005–06</td>
<td>36,830</td>
<td>101,800</td>
<td>47,290</td>
<td>185,920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006–07</td>
<td>36,800</td>
<td>101,800</td>
<td>45,020</td>
<td>183,620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007–08</td>
<td>36,260</td>
<td>101,800</td>
<td>41,210</td>
<td>179,270</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministry of Defence

* Reductions in numbers of Service personnel during this period are the result of managed restructuring and efficiency programmes.

### Table 2: Regular Reserve strength

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Naval Service</th>
<th>Army</th>
<th>RAF</th>
<th>Total Regular Reserves</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003–04</td>
<td>10,700</td>
<td>31,220</td>
<td>9,520</td>
<td>51,440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004–05</td>
<td>10,530</td>
<td>31,420</td>
<td>8,440</td>
<td>50,390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005–06</td>
<td>10,400</td>
<td>32,100</td>
<td>7,800</td>
<td>50,300</td>
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<tr>
<td>2006–07</td>
<td>9,600</td>
<td>33,800</td>
<td>7,300</td>
<td>50,700</td>
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</tbody>
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Source: Ministry of Defence

### Table 3: Volunteer Reserve Military manpower requirement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Naval Service</th>
<th>Army</th>
<th>RAF</th>
<th>Total Volunteer Reserve Requirement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003–04</td>
<td>3,820</td>
<td>30,270</td>
<td>2,220</td>
<td>36,310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004–05</td>
<td>3,740</td>
<td>30,270</td>
<td>2,215</td>
<td>36,225</td>
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<tr>
<td>2005–06</td>
<td>3,040</td>
<td>30,270</td>
<td>2,210</td>
<td>35,520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006–07</td>
<td>2,940</td>
<td>30,270</td>
<td>2,100</td>
<td>35,310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007–08</td>
<td>2,360</td>
<td>30,270</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>34,630</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministry of Defence

17. Reserve Forces are an integral part of the MoD’s capability plans and contribute significantly to operations at home and abroad. During the last 10 years, approximately 10% of all forces deployed on operations have been Reservists.20 After leaving Service life, former members of the Regular Armed Forces—the Regular Reserves—have a liability to be mobilised. Volunteer Reservists typically train in their spare time; in the evenings and weekends and at an annual two week training camp.21 All Reservists have a liability to be deployed alongside Regular Forces, although the MoD endeavours to mobilise only willing Reservists and to deploy Reservists no more than one year out of five.22 Regular Reserve strength and Volunteer Reserve requirements since 2004 are set out in Tables 2 and 3.

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20 Ev 108
21 NAO, HC (2005–06) 964, Executive Summary
22 Ev 108
Assessing recruitment and retention performance

18. The MoD assesses its performance relating to recruitment and retention against the 2004 Spending Review Public Service Agreement (PSA) Target 5, “to recruit, train, motivate and retain sufficient military personnel to provide the military capability necessary to meet the Government’s strategic objectives”. In 2006–07, the MoD assessed Target 5 as “on course with some risk”. The MoD recently said that the target was “likely only to be partially met” in 2007–08.

19. The MoD manages recruitment and retention against a regular turnover of personnel entering and leaving the Services. It achieves a more detailed assessment of performance against PSA Target 5 by collecting the following data (although performance is assessed solely against meeting the manning balance target):

- recruitment: the number of civilians joining the Armed Forces;
- gains to the trained strength: personnel who have completed Phase 2 training and have the necessary skills to join their chosen trade or specialisation on the front line;
- manning balance: a tolerance band of +1% to -2% of the trained strength requirement; and
- voluntary outflow rates: the number of personnel who choose to leave the Armed Forces before the end of their engagement.

We review information about each of these points below.

20. Data relating to the recruitment and retention of Volunteer Reservists does not contribute to the assessment of the MoD’s PSA Target 5 and is not presented alongside data about the Regular Forces in the MoD’s performance reports.

Recruitment targets

21. The MoD measures recruitment at the point at which a recruit begins initial training. All three Services recruit against targets and have been relatively successful in an increasingly challenging recruiting environment. Figures 1 and 2 summarises each Service’s performance against its target. The Naval Service (Royal Navy and Royal Marines) met, or came within 2% of its recruiting targets between 1 April 2002 and 1 April 2006. However, during 2006–07, recruitment fell 6% below target. The Army met or exceeded its recruitment targets in four out of the last six years, falling 4% below target in 2004–05 and 5% below target in 2005–06. Since 2001 the RAF has consistently failed to meet its recruitment targets, falling between 9% to 11% below target in four out of the last six years.

24 Spring Performance Report 2007–08, Target 5
25 Ibid
26 Ibid
22. In its *Recruitment and Retention in the Armed Forces* report, the NAO provides several examples of how cutbacks in recruiting activity or failure to meet recruitment targets can have long term consequences. A downturn in recruitment to the Army between 1992–1995 led to a serious shortfall in personnel in the Army’s Recovery Mechanic trade. The Army’s decision to reduce its marketing activity when there was considerable interest in enlisting in the Army was “one of the factors which has contributed to the current recruiting
problems in the Infantry”. Reducing recruitment activity also has serious consequences on experience levels in the Armed Forces; “reduced intake [between 1992–2003 and 1995–2006 has] created a gap in required experience profiles across the Royal Navy…the effects of which will be felt for around 20 years as personnel move through the rank structure”. We discuss the recruiting context, the current recruiting environment, and specific recruiting strategies in Part 3 of our Report.

**Gains to the trained strength**

23. The MoD defines gains to the trained strength as personnel who have successfully completed the necessary training to begin employment in their chosen trade or specialisation. On enlistment all recruits go through Phase 1 training, a 12 week course in basic military skills. Phase 2 training provides specialist training and can vary in length according to specialisation—lasting from a few weeks to over a year. The MoD sets targets for gains to the trained strength which are based on a detailed assessment of the number of trained recruits required by each Service each year. Figure 3 shows the MoD’s performance since 1 April 2005. The RAF exceeded its targets for both officers and other ranks in 2006. In 2007 results fell by 22% for officers and 19% for other ranks. The outturns predicted for 2008 show some signs of improvement but are still well below target. The outturn for the Naval Service is similarly inconsistent with a 21% variation in the officers cadre over the period and a 17% variation in the other ranks cadre. The Army consistently achieved a 90%–95% outturn for the officer cadre and a 83%–84% outturn for the other ranks cadre.

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28 Ibid, p 33, para 3.10
30 Ibid
31 NAO, HC (2005–06) 1633-I, p 9, para 1.4
24. Shortfalls in providing recruits to the front line can have serious consequences for the structure of the Forces as deficits progress through the rank structure.\textsuperscript{32} As noted above, the 2004 review led to a greatly reduced requirement for the RAF. As part of the management of this reduced requirement, the RAF closed some trades in 2004–05 leading to a delay in training for 2,000 recruits.\textsuperscript{33} We discuss training and trained intake into the Armed Forces further in Part 3 of our Report.

**Manning balance**

25. Manning balance provides an indication of the stretch the Armed Forces is experiencing. The MoD defines “manning balance” as “between -2% and +1%” of the military personnel requirement\textsuperscript{34} and measures manning balance against the military personnel requirement of the time. The 3% tolerance band allows the MoD a degree of flexibility to accommodate structural and organisational changes. The MoD’s performance since 2004 is shown in Figure 4 below.

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\textsuperscript{32} NAO, HC (2005–06) 1633–I, pp 33–34

\textsuperscript{33} *Ibid*, p 34, para 3.14

\textsuperscript{34} HC (2007-08) 697, p 19
Figure 4—Percentage of overall personnel requirement achieved by Service

Data source: Ministry of Defence

26. The Royal Navy has not been within manning balance since before 2003 and at the start of 2008 was 1.5% below manning balance. The Army has been outside manning balance since October 2006 and is currently 1.6% below manning balance. The RAF was last in manning balance in April 2006 and is currently 0.3% outside manning balance. In its Spring Performance Report, the MoD states that:

sustaining operational effort significantly beyond Defence Planning Assumptions levels and the challenge of implementing the changes in Service personnel numbers announced in the July 2004 White Paper is making recovery of Manning Balance extremely difficult. We therefore do not now expect the Royal Navy or Army to achieve manning balance by April 2008.

27. The NAO attributes the Armed Forces’ difficulties in achieving full manning to two factors. Firstly, it is not simply enough to have the right number of personnel, there must also be the correct balance of experience throughout the different trades and branches of the Armed Forces. Secondly, because the Armed Forces are only funded for a finite

36 Spring Performance Report 2007–08, Target 5
37 HC (2007–08) 697, p 19
38 Spring Performance Report 2007–08, Target 5
39 HC (2007-08) 697, p 19
40 Spring Performance Report 2007–08, Target 5
41 Ibid
number of recruits each year, they cannot easily recover previous shortfalls.\(^{42}\) We discuss the retention consequences of being below manning balance in Part 4 of our Report.

28. Data regarding the Manning Balance position of Volunteer Reservists does not contribute to the assessment of PSA Target 3 and is therefore not presented against a target in the MoD’s performance reports. Manning balance for the Reverse Forces is calculated as the difference between the trained strength and the trained strength requirement. Data from 2004–2007 for each of the three Services are shown in Table 4 below. After analysing more detailed data sets in 2006, the NAO cautioned that in some areas of the Territorial Army, for example the Infantry, Royal Logistic Corps, and Medical Services’, shortfalls in the trained strength requirement are even greater these averaged figures show.\(^ {43}\) The data reveals substantial shortfalls in the numbers of Volunteer Reservists and underscores the difficulties that the MoD may have in using Reservists to augment and reinforce Regular Forces during times of overstretch in the way envisioned by the Defence Intent for Reservists.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Naval Service</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>70%</td>
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<tr>
<td>RAF</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>66%</td>
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Source: Ministry of Defence

**Voluntary outflow**

29. Voluntary Outflow refers to the proportion of Service personnel who leave the Forces before the end of their agreed term. The MoD explains that a certain level of early exits is necessary to maintain promotion opportunities. However, it also notes that “it costs significantly more to recruit and train new personnel than it does to retain existing ones”.\(^ {44}\) The MoD does not set targets for voluntary outflow rates, but uses guidelines derived from historic data, reflecting a balanced personnel structure and Armed Forces’ the capacity to train replacements for those who leave.\(^ {45}\) The voluntary exit rates for each Service are shown in Figure 5 below.

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\(^{42}\) NAO, HC (2005–06) 1633-I, p 13, para 1.12
\(^{43}\) NAO, HC (2005–06) 964, p 29, para 4.4
\(^{44}\) HC (2007–08) 697, p 164, para 303
\(^{45}\) *ibid*
Recruiting and retaining Armed Forces personnel

Figure 5: Tri-service voluntary outflow rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Naval Service Officers</th>
<th>Naval Service Other Ranks</th>
<th>Army Officers</th>
<th>Army Other Ranks</th>
<th>RAF Officers</th>
<th>RAF Other Ranks</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>01-Apr-04</td>
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<td>01-Apr-05</td>
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<tr>
<td>01-Apr-06</td>
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<tr>
<td>01-Apr-07</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>01-Jan-08</td>
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</table>

Source: Ministry of Defence

30. Voluntary outflow rates have been relatively stable over the last few years, but as at 1 April 2007, all Services and ranks exceeded guidelines and Figure 5 shows an upward trend. The MoD states that the voluntary outflow rates are “reasonable” but that average voluntary outflow rates can mask higher outflow rates in certain specialisations and, can contribute to manning pinchpoints. We discuss some of the factors which may contribute to voluntary outflow rates in Part 4 of our Report.

Harmony Guidelines

31. Harmony Guidelines are designed to ensure harmony between competing aspects of Service personnel’s lives: operations, time recuperating after operations, personal and professional development, unit formation and time with families. The guidelines help the MoD manage the effect of operational tempo on Armed Forces personnel and their families. Professor Dandecker, of King’s College London, told us that:

the Harmony Guidelines have been well constructed because the evidence suggests that if you stay within them they [Service personnel] do not suffer; if you go beyond them there is a 20–50 per cent likelihood that they will suffer in terms of PTSD [Post Traumatic Stress Disorder].

32. Two measures of harmony are used: Unit Tour Intervals and Separated Service. Unit Tour Intervals measure the frequency of deployment. Separated Service measures absence.

46 Ministry of Defence, Annual Report and Accounts 2006–07, HC 697, p 164, para 303
48 HoL Deb, 4 Dec 2001, Column WA 122
49 Q 22
from normal place of duty or lack of freedom to enjoy leisure at the normal place of duty.\textsuperscript{50} Separated Service includes activities not captured by Unit Tour Intervals like pre-deployment training, exercises, public duties, recruitment activities, and other duties which result in personnel not sleeping in usual accommodation.\textsuperscript{51} The MoD began consistently reporting Unit Tour Intervals and Separated Service in 2006, although some data was collected before then.\textsuperscript{52} Each Service has different criteria for Harmony Guidelines, reflecting different operational requirements and practices.

\textit{Unit Tour Intervals}

33. As expected, given the nature of the Navy’s basing structure and its work patterns, the Royal Navy has met its targets since 2006. Unit Tour Intervals appear to have steadily worsened in the Army since 2006, with the Royal Logistic Corps, the Infantry, the Royal Artillery, the Royal Engineers, and the Royal Signals all falling below target, although the way the data is presented prior to the MoD’s \textit{Annual Report and Accounts} makes it difficult to fully assess the situation.\textsuperscript{53} Similarly, the RAF’s reporting of Unit Tour Intervals makes it difficult to identify clear trends.\textsuperscript{54} The Service guidelines for Unit Tour Intervals, and the MoD’s assessment of achievement against those guidelines are shown in Table 5.

\textit{Levels of Individual Separated Service}

34. The Royal Navy broadly meets targets for levels of Individual Separated Service with less than 1% of personnel exceed the targets for levels of Individual Separated Service.\textsuperscript{55} The Royal Navy is able to meet its targets through front line gapping.\textsuperscript{56} The Army has the highest level of Individual Separated Service, 13.4% of personnel exceeded guidelines as at 1 April 2007. At 1 April 2007 6.2% of RAF personnel exceeded guidelines, an increase of 1.6% on those exceeding guidelines during 2005–06.\textsuperscript{57} The Service guidelines for levels of Individual Separated Service, and the MoD’s assessment of achievement against those guidelines are shown in Table 6.

35. Professor Strachan, of Oxford University, cautioned us against placing too much weight on the MoD’s failure to meet Harmony Guidelines: “how do you meet Harmony Guidelines when you are sustaining two operations concurrently as well as other deployments?”\textsuperscript{58} He went on to say “do we think we are in a state of war, in which case Harmony Guidelines would seem to be less relevant, or do we think we are not in a state of war but in a state of peace, which underpins much of the expectation driven by Harmony

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{50} NAO, HC (2005–06) 1633-I, p 40
\bibitem{51} Ibid
\bibitem{54} Ibid
\bibitem{55} HC (2007–08) 697, p 118
\bibitem{56} NAO, HC (2005–06) 1633-I, p 22, para 2.16
\bibitem{57} HC (2007–08) 697, p 118
\bibitem{58} Q 21
\end{thebibliography}
Guidelines? In which case, of course, there are real issues to address". We discuss these issues, and the impact of Harmony Guidelines on retention further in Part 4 of our Report.
Table 5: Performance against Unit Tour Intervals (UTI) guidelines by service

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Naval Service</td>
<td>Fleet Units to spend maximum of 60% deployed in 36 months.</td>
<td>Reporting mechanism under development. Able Ratings averaged 169 days over 36 months.</td>
<td>Reporting mechanism under development, breeches judged to be isolated.</td>
<td>The RN broadly to met UTI guidelines, only the Submarine fleet breached UTI.</td>
<td>The RN broadly to met UTI.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army</td>
<td>24 month average interval between unit tours.</td>
<td>Average tour interval 23.3 months. Royal Armoured Corp 14 months, the Infantry and Royal Artillery 18 months.</td>
<td>Average tour interval improved. Infantry 21 months (Armoured Infantry most affected) and Royal Artillery 19 months.</td>
<td>Infantry 20.6 months; Royal Artillery 19 months; Royal Engineers 31 months; Royal Armoured Corp 24 months; Royal Signal 27.6 months; and Royal Logistic Corp 23.7 months.</td>
<td>Infantry 21 months, Royal Artillery 20.7 months, Royal Engineers 21.2 months, Royal Armoured Corp 28.6 months; Royal Signals 18.4 months; and Royal Logistic Corp 23.3 months.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAF</td>
<td>16 month average interval between Unit tours.</td>
<td>No data</td>
<td>Reporting mechanism under development, UTI breached by some Force Elements and specialist Cadres.</td>
<td>RAF Regiment 12 months.</td>
<td>RAF Regiment 10.5 months, Air Combat Support and Service Support Units breached UTI. Nimrod, Air transport, Air to Air refuelling units were heavily tasked.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministry of Defence

Table 6: Performance against Levels of Separated Service guidelines by Service since 2004

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<tr>
<td>Naval Service</td>
<td>In any 36 month period, no one to exceed 660 days Separated Service.</td>
<td>No data</td>
<td>Reporting mechanism under development, breeches judged to be isolated.</td>
<td>Fewer than 1% of Royal Navy personnel exceeding 660 days Separated Service.</td>
<td>Fewer than 1% of Royal Navy personnel exceeding 660 days Separated Service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army</td>
<td>In any 30 month period, no one to exceed 415 days Separated Service.</td>
<td>No data</td>
<td>Reporting mechanism under development.</td>
<td>14.5% of Army personnel exceeding 415 days of Separated Service.</td>
<td>13.4% of Army personnel exceeding 415 days of Separated Service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAF</td>
<td>In an 12 month period, not more than 2.5% of personnel to exceed 140 days Separated Service.</td>
<td>5.4% of RAF personnel exceeding 140 days of detached duty.</td>
<td>3.9% of RAF personnel exceeding 140 days of detached duty.</td>
<td>4.6% of RAF personnel exceeding 140 days of detached duty.</td>
<td>6.2% of RAF personnel exceeding 140 days of detached duty.</td>
</tr>
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Source: Ministry of Defence
Pinchpoint trades

36. Each Service has a number of trades which are substantially undermanned. These trades are classed as pinchpoints and represent serious manning shortfalls in the Armed Forces. The MoD defines pinchpoints as trades or areas of expertise where there is not enough trained strength to perform operational tasks without encroaching on the time provided between deployments for recuperation, training and leave. The MoD divides pinchpoints into two categories: Operational Pinchpoints—a shortfall in trained strength which has a detrimental impact on operational effectiveness; and Manpower Pinchpoints (or Critical Manning Groups)—trades facing structural manning issues and requiring recruitment and/or retention measures for resolution. Table 7 sets out numbers of pinchpoint trades since 2006. We are disappointed to note that between 2004 and 2008, the number of pinchpoint trades have increased across all Services. In the Army pinchpoint trades have increased by 15.4%, in the RAF by 63%, and in the Naval Service by 150% so that there are now 30 pinchpoint trades in the Army, 31 in the RAF and 25 in the Naval Service.

Table 7: Number of pinchpoint trades by Service

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Naval Service</td>
<td>10 pinchpoints</td>
<td>12 pinchpoints</td>
<td>12 pinchpoints</td>
<td>11 pinchpoints</td>
<td>25 pinchpoints (17 operational pinchpoints and 9 critical manning groups)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army</td>
<td>26 pinchpoints</td>
<td>25 pinchpoints</td>
<td>24 pinchpoints</td>
<td>27 pinchpoints</td>
<td>30 pinchpoints. (8 operational pinchpoints and 22 manning pinchpoints)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAF</td>
<td>19 pinchpoints</td>
<td>23 pinchpoints</td>
<td>21 pinchpoints</td>
<td>14 pinchpoints</td>
<td>31 pinchpoints, (15 operational pinchpoints, and 16 manning pinchpoints)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source Ministry of Defence; * data supplied as 'latest position' in November 2007

37. Pinchpoints present significant risks to operational capability. Rear Admiral Montgomery, Chief of Staff (Personnel), told us that “manning balance is not the issue which really keeps me awake at night. What keeps me awake at night is the…key pinchpoints where we are short”. Vice Admiral Wilkinson, Deputy Chief of Defence Staff (Personnel), told us that:

we are not talking here about big numbers, but, in a high operational tempo, about handfuls of people in some instances that are in key operational pinchpoints who have an impact on capability that is out of proportion to their numbers.

60 NAO, HC (2005–06) 1633–I, p 13, para 1.4
61 Ev 92
63 Q 277
64 Q 278
38. The NAO highlighted the difficulties the MoD faces in reducing the number of pinchpoint trades:

Many of the pinchpoint trade groups comprise relatively few personnel. Such groups may be disproportionately affected by the loss of small numbers of people since the problems caused by under-manning will be quickly exacerbated and greater demands will be placed on those personnel who remain. In addition, it is difficult to replace quickly those who have left, due to the time taken to train them, the limits on the capacity for training places, and the need to gain ‘on the job training’. These factors in turn may then lead to further retention difficulties.\(^{65}\)

Pinchpoints are created through a combination of factors: failure to recruit adequate numbers of personnel; personnel leaving the Service before their agreed terms; and the affects of operational tempo on some trade groups. Modern warfare has led to an increased requirement for specialisations and manning strengths have not matched that growth in demand.\(^{66}\) We discuss some of the measures that the MoD is taking to address pinchpoints in Part 3 of our Report.

**Assessing Armed Forces responsiveness**

39. The MoD assesses its performance in relation to responsiveness against the 2004 Spending Review Public Service Agreement (PSA) Target 3, “to generate forces, which can be deployed, sustained and recovered at the scales of effort required to meet the government’s objectives”.\(^{67}\) In 2006–07 the MoD assessed Target 3 as being at “some risk”.\(^{68}\) The MoD assess that the Target “will not be met” in 2007–08, and explained that:

> The Armed Forces’ overriding priority is operational success (Target 1). They have been operating at or above the level of concurrent operations to which they are resourced and structured to deliver for seven of the last eight years, and for every year since 2002. In so doing they have consistently and reliably provided substantial forces at immediate readiness for those operations, deployed them to and sustained them in theatre, and recovered them to their home bases at the end of their tours. In such circumstances the Armed Forces cannot simultaneously be ready for the full range of potential contingent operations provided for in planning assumptions. Given the level of readiness achieved over the last three quarters, it is now not possible to meet this Target. The Armed Forces have nevertheless maintained essential standby capability, for example, for Non-combatant Evacuation Operations such as in Lebanon in July 2006.\(^{69}\)

The performance indicators relating to this Target are:

- to ensure that more than 73% of force elements show no serious or critical weakness against required peacetime readiness levels;

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\(^{65}\) NAO, HC (2005–06) 1633–I, p 13, para 1.17

\(^{66}\) Ibid, para 1.16

\(^{67}\) Spring Performance Report 2007–08, Target 3

\(^{68}\) Ministry of Defence, Annual Report and Accounts 2006–07, HC 697, p 16

\(^{69}\) Spring Performance Report 2007–08, Target 3
• to ensure that more than 71% of force elements report no serious or critical weaknesses against the ability to move from peacetime readiness to immediate readiness for deployment on operations; and

• to ensure that the assessed ability of the MoD physically to deploy its forces operations at what is likely to be the most demanding level, sustain them in theatre and thereafter recover them to their home bases.70

The MoD does not define what it means by critical or serious weakness.

**Peacetime readiness levels**

40. Peacetime readiness levels require that Armed Forces are ready to respond to events at the levels set out in the Planning Assumptions; from humanitarian support to war fighting.71 The Spring Performance Report notes that 98% of the Armed Forces reported no critical weaknesses against these criteria. However, between January to December 2007, 42% of force elements reported serious weaknesses against their peacetime readiness levels—15% below target.72 The MoD attributes this to the fact “that the Armed Forces have now been engaged at or above [Defence Planning Assumption] levels for long enough that peace time readiness levels dropped significantly”.73

**Ability to generate from peacetime readiness to immediate readiness**

41. Between January to December 2007, 43.5% of force elements reported serious weaknesses against the ability to generate from peacetime readiness to immediate readiness74—14.5% below target. The MoD’s attributes this to “the result of the pressure on the Armed Forces resulting from operations above Defence Planning Assumptions, particularly in the Land environment, and the constraints of conducting collective training over and above that required for current operations until commitments return to the levels within Defence Planning Assumptions”.75

**Ability to deploy, sustain and recover force elements**

42. The target measures the MoD’s ability to deploy, sustain and recover force elements at the most demanding level of the Defence Planning Assumptions (two medium scale and one small scale operation concurrently). The MoD assesses its performance as remaining consistent at 79% against a target of 85.2%.76

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70 Spring Performance Report 2007–08, Target 3
71 Ministry of Defence, Annual Report and Accounts 2006–07, HC 697, p 43, para 47
72 Spring Performance Report 2007–08, Target 3
73 Ministry of Defence, Annual Report and Accounts 2006–07, HC 697, p 43, para 47
74 Spring Performance Report 2007–08, Target 3
75 Ministry of Defence, Annual Report and Accounts 2006–07, HC 697, p 44, para 48
76 Spring Performance Report 2007–08, Target 3
43. In our Report on the *Ministry of Defence Annual Report and Accounts 2006–07* we expressed our deep concern that overall, Target 3 was unlikely to be met.\(^\text{77}\) In its response to our Report, the MoD told us that:

> readiness profiles provide a clear and relatively objective assessment of the impact of the pressure under which the Force Structure is operating. They are not a measure of the ability of the Armed Forces to sustain current operations, but a reflection of performance against the readiness profile we would expect to see if the Armed Forces were operating with routine concurrency levels. We expect them to start to improve as commitments start to reduce.\(^\text{78}\)

44. **We are concerned that, on the basis of the information presented about PSA Target 3, Armed Forces Responsiveness, the Armed Forces have limited ability to meet future, as yet unknown, obligations.** The Minister responded to our concerns by telling us that the Armed Forces "have been able to react to these changing situations, albeit we are asking an awful lot of them. We have got the leadership in place, we have got the programmes in place to improve...It is not that we are sitting here as ministers saying, 'Just get on with it'."\(^\text{79}\) The Minister told us that he did not accept the suggestion that the MoD was about to fail or could not meet its obligations.\(^\text{80}\) The *MoD has said that PSA Target 3 provides an assessment of the level of pressure experienced by the Armed Forces and does not reflect on their ability to sustain current operations. As the MoD cannot predict or control the exact nature and timing of future operational requirements, we believe that its failure to meet this target points to a potentially serious weakness in the future capability of the Armed Forces. Furthermore, we question the purpose of a target which, given recent operational tempo, the MoD has no chance of meeting.**

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77 HC (2006–07) 61, para 20
78 HC (2007–08) 468, p 3
79 Q 347
80 Q 345
3 Recruitment

A broad based approach

45. A strong and positive relationship between the Armed Forces and society is essential for healthy recruitment. Professor Strachan told us that the British Armed Forces had been held in high regard by the public, and that the public’s support had changed little over time.81 Professor Dandecker, said:

the dominant mood in the public is an enormous respect for the Armed Services, for their courage, for their resilience, and not least for their competence in being able to deal with things that are very demanding and take place in difficult circumstances and are often politically controversial operations…That having been said, those same opinion polls do show that some significant sections of the population find some aspects of the Armed Forces, some of their culture, some of their ways of doing things, anachronistic.82

46. The Armed Forces are distinct from civilian society, largely through operational necessity. As the Armed Forces must recruit from civilian society, they must find ways of bridging that divide. Creating an understanding of the military is particularly important for ‘gatekeepers’ of potential recruits, parents, guardians, teachers and community leaders.83 Recent research by the MoD found that 56% or parents or guardians would discourage their children or dependents from a career in the Army84 and 41% would discourage a career in the RAF, in part because of the United Kingdom’s involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan.85 The MoD acknowledge that events such as the Iraq war, recruit fatalities at Deepcut Barracks and allegations of mistreatment of prisoners have had a potentially negative effect on the reputation of the Armed Forces.86 Major General Gregory, Director General Services Conditions (Army), told us that “we find that a significant proportion of [our marketing budgets] must be spent on removing ill-informed perception and opinion”.87

47. Public understanding of the Armed Forces is not only important for recruitment, it also has implications for retention, as Dawn McCafferty, of the RAF Families Federation, highlighted when she told us that some Service families:

do not actually talk a great deal about the fact that their partner is deployed in Iraq…they do not feel able to be proud of what their partners are doing…there is certainly a sense that it is not something that they would go and shout about to their neighbours and, therefore, they are very isolated. If things do go wrong and the

81 Q 6
82 Q 7
83 Q 214 ff.
84 Ev 100
85 Ev 101
86 Ev 98
87 Q 221
partner is injured, they do not feel that in that network, that community, there is going to be a lot of understanding and sympathy for them because people just do not understand what they are going through.\textsuperscript{88}

The Army Families Federation told us that media coverage of current operational deployments was mostly negative, and that this added to the stresses experienced by Service personnel and their families.\textsuperscript{89} We note that the sometimes negative media coverage about the Armed Forces is detrimental to the public’s understanding of the military and places unnecessary pressure on Service personnel and their families.

\textbf{Engaging with the public}

48. The visibility of the Armed Forces’ in civilian society has reduced over recent years.\textsuperscript{90} Maintaining and increasing that visibility in the future will be important for long-term recruiting success. The MoD is trying to identify ways that the Armed Forces can engage more actively with the public. Quentin Davies MP, in conjunction with Bill Clark and Air Commodore Martin Sharp was commissioned by the Prime Minister to investigate how national recognition of the Armed Forces could be increased. Their report includes practical recommendations about how contact and understanding could be improved, how support between the military and wider society could be encouraged, and how the visibility of the Armed Forces might be increased.\textsuperscript{91}

49. The MoD told us that the Armed Forces already undertook a number of outreach activities, including performances by military bands and display teams at national celebrations and sporting events, and open days on ships, submarines and airbases.\textsuperscript{92} The MoD notes that the number of outreach activities it can undertake is limited by finances and resources.\textsuperscript{93} We discuss the role of school visits, Reserves and cadets below.

50. \textit{Any increase in contact between the Armed Forces and civilian society should be welcomed.} We hope that the MoD gives due consideration to the proposals contained in the report on National Recognition of our Armed Forces. Budgetary constraints and the level of stretch currently experienced by the Armed Forces limit the extent to which the Services can build and maintain links with civilian society. However, we consider that these activities are central to ensuring the future success of the Armed Forces. The MoD should afford them high priority and ensure that they are adequately resourced. It is also important that decision makers in civilian society, including Members of Parliament and Local Government representatives, have an understanding of the military. We recommend that the MoD encourages more contact between the military and such groups to ensure that decisions which affect our Armed Forces are evidence based.

\textsuperscript{88} Q 64  
\textsuperscript{89} Ev 139  
\textsuperscript{91} \textit{National Recognition of our Armed Forces}, May 2008  
\textsuperscript{92} Ev 95  
\textsuperscript{93} Q 218
Working with schools to raise awareness of the Armed Forces

51. The MoD says that the Armed Forces’ work in schools is designed to encourage good citizenship, raise awareness of the MoD and the Armed Forces amongst young people, provide positive information to influence future opinion formers and to enable recruiters access to the school environment.94 The Armed Forces go only to schools where they have been invited,95 and give presentations on human rights and humanitarian aid, lead problem solving and leadership development tasks, and encourage team work.96 The Naval Service undertook 4,000 school visits (not related to recruiting activity); the Army made 4,000 visits and the RAF made 450 visits.97 The Armed Forces visit more state schools than private schools, at the following ratios: Naval Service 10:1, Army 13:1, and RAF 9:1.98 The MoD also provides an online teaching resource ‘Defence Dynamics’.

52. We questioned officials about the geographical spread of the schools visited. Air Vice-Marshal (AVM) Simon Bryant, Chief of Staff Personnel, told us that “to a degree coverage will come down to footprint and resources”.100 We asked him whether that practice resulted in an uneven geographic coverage. He told us that:

I do accept that but again we are bound by how far we can spread our wings and where we get the best returns...we have done a significant amount of work on this to see where we get the best effect. We have found that by concentrating where there is already a significant footprint and therefore air power is better understood by the people there at least at a subliminal level. Because they see aircraft flying on a daily basis and it is not alien to them that is where we tend to get results.101

53. We asked officials whether consideration had been given to making school visits tri-Service as a way of extending coverage beyond the Service footprint. AVM Bryant, told us that tri-Service visits happened to a degree, for example “at school fetes we go en masse with all three Services”.102

54. We questioned officials whether the Armed Forces school visits programme was well co-ordinated. Chris Baker, Director General of Service Personnel Policy, told us that “we have been looking at the way in which we interact with schools, recognising some of the points about the unevenness of coverage and the issues that arise because the distinction between our recruiting and outreach activities at schools may not be as clear as it might be”.103 When we sought further details, the MoD told us that in 2006 a short review of activities in schools found that there was insufficient co-ordination, a lack of central

94 Ev 167
95 Ev 168
96 Ibid
97 Q 214; Q 226
98 Ev 168
99 Ev 169
100 Q 313
101 Q 314
102 Q 313
103 Q 233
management and little prioritising. The MoD asked for feedback from schools to identify how they could improve school visits. Responses included providing topical curriculum materials; good publicity; a central MoD education facility; longer term programmes; and greater co-ordination of activities, policy and strategies across the MoD. The MoD will consider these proposals shortly.

55. The MoD does not appear to have adequately considered the delivery of its school visits programme, in particular how the geographical spread of visits and individual Service visits fit into broader objectives of increasing awareness of the Armed Forces. We recommend that the MoD considers the relationship between the historic geographic footprint of the Services and the benefits of school visits. We are concerned that by concentrating on those areas which already have an understanding of an individual Service—particularly for the Royal Navy and the RAF—the full benefits of working with schools to raise awareness and create links between the Armed Forces and civilian society will not be achieved.

56. We are encouraged that in 2006 the MoD investigated how the content of its school visits programme could be improved and has identified a number of methods for achieving this. Outreach school visits and recruiting visits have different purposes and we agree with the MoD that it must keep them separate. We understand that the MoD is to undertake a detailed review of its schools programme. In its response to our Report, we expect the MoD to set out the terms of reference and timetable for that review. We consider that active, adventure based outreach programmes will be most successful.

57. We also discussed with Personnel officers how the MoD made contact with schools where it has had no previous links. We suggested that most MPs had excellent contacts with the schools in their constituencies, and that many would be happy to provide the Armed Forces with introductions. The MoD told us that it would work with Members of Parliament to gain introductions to schools that have not developed contacts with the Armed Forces. We see this as a positive development and we look forward to working with the MoD to put it into practice.

Cadets

58. The MoD sponsors and part funds four Cadet Forces: the Combined Cadet Forces, the Sea Cadet Corps, the Army Cadet Forces and the Air Training Corps. Each Force has its own constitution. The main aim of the Cadet Forces, as set out in the Armed Forces Overarching Personnel Strategy (AFOPS) is to “achieve the maximum awareness of the Armed Forces amongst all elements of the nation’s youth and their gatekeepers and to provide access for youth to high quality Cadet Forces.” The Cadet Forces are not part of the MoD’s active recruiting strategy but contribute to the Government’s youth agenda.

104 Ev 167
105 Ev 168
106 Qq 215–217
There are currently 130,000 cadets in the United Kingdom: last year there were 12,483 Sea Cadets; 44,604 Army Cadets; 29,981 Air Cadets; and 42,593 Combined Cadets. Membership has been comparatively stable over the last decade.\(^{109}\) The Cadet Forces are based in 3,000 locations throughout the United Kingdom, some in schools, the majority in the community.\(^{110}\) The size and geographical spread of the Cadet Forces gives them an important role in developing links between the civilian public and the Armed Services.

59. The MoD told us that of the 260 Cadet Forces based in schools, 200 were located in private schools, and 60 were located in state schools.\(^{111}\) It told us that it planned to increase the numbers of Cadets over the next decade and had entered into discussions with other Government departments about how this would be achieved:

> there is an aspiration to grow the cadet movement...but there is no defence policy as yet on where we might be in the size of that force on future. I emphasise as yet because this is very much a hot area. The government’s admiration of the cadet movement as part of its youth policy is very welcome and I suggest that we shall see greater interest in, and mature plans for, Cadet growth in the future.\(^{112}\)

The MoD also notes that new Cadet Forces would be based in schools and academies in disadvantaged areas, because this is where they would have the most impact.\(^{113}\)

60. We welcome the positive impact that the Cadet Forces can have on the lives of young people and we acknowledge the hard work of all those involved in making the Cadet Forces a success. We note that the MoD, in partnership with other Government Departments, is seeking to increase the number of Cadet Forces based in state schools. This is a welcome development which we feel will bring benefit to the young people concerned. It will also help to provide more opportunities for the public to engage with the Armed Forces. In its response to our Report, we expect the MoD to set out its plans and timetable for increasing the number of Cadet Forces based in state schools. We will monitor the MoD’s progress carefully.

61. The MoD told us that it recognised that there was greater need for co-ordination across the Cadet Forces; and that, in particular, the fact that the Cadet Forces have different constitutions made sharing resources difficult. The MoD have identified that improvements are necessary in easing the administrative burden for the 26,000 adults who volunteer to run the Cadets, and to make sharing facilities easier.\(^{114}\) We also welcome the fact that the MoD recognises that it needs to make changes to the constitutions of individual Cadet Forces to enable them to work together more easily. We believe that these changes will benefit future growth in the Cadet Forces. However, we do not consider that these changes will be possible unless the Cadet Forces are funded appropriately and that that funding is equitable across the four Cadet Forces.

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\(^{109}\) Ev 169–170  
\(^{111}\) Q 247  
\(^{112}\) Q 235  
\(^{113}\) Q 247  
\(^{114}\) Qq 308–310; Ministry of Defence, Annual Report and Accounts 2006–07, HC 697, p 67, para 109
Reserves

62. Volunteer Reserves are based at approximately 400 locations across the UK. According to Future use of the UK’s Reserve Forces, part of the Volunteer Reserve’s function is to maintain links between both military and civilian communities through their training centres and personnel who overlap civilian and military society.115 Vice Admiral Wilkinson said that “we realise that for many parts of the country it is only via the Reserve Forces that the average citizen has any contact with the Armed Forces at all. I think there has been a slow realisation of the importance of that particular role for the Reserves”.116 We asked Major General Simon Lalor, Assistant Chief of Defence Staff, Reserves and Cadets, to what extent this aspiration would be determined by resources. He told us that the forthcoming review of the Reserve Force would:

bring...some science, so we might have some evidence of the cost and effect of this national footprint. In the past we have just accepted it as a good thing without really being able to analyse whether we are achieving effect and thus whether we should devote to it the same, less or more resources. That is a specific term of reference of the Reserves Review.117

We support the MoD’s proposals to do more to encourage links between military and civilian society through the Reserve Forces. We look forward to the publication of the MoD’s review of the Reserve Force and its findings about the Reserves role in developing the relationship between the Armed Forces and civilian society.

Recruiting environment

63. As set out in Part 2 of this Report, the MoD needs to achieve its recruitment targets in order to keep the Armed Forces supplied with manpower. While all three Services have been relatively successful in this, they are not meeting their recruitment targets consistently. The NAO concluded that the following factors made recruitment difficult for Armed Forces:

• recruitment is influenced by the performance of the economy and is easier in times of higher unemployment;

• an ageing population will mean a decline in numbers of individuals of working age over the long term;

• there will be an increasing proportion of ethnic minorities amongst the recruiting target age group because the ethnic minority population is growing faster than the United Kingdom’s population as a whole;

• the proportion of women within the United Kingdom workforce is predicted to reach 50% by 2030;

115 Ministry of Defence, The Future use of the UK Reserve Force, 2005
116 Q 240
117 Q 241
• increasing levels of obesity and resulting health problems will reduce the number of young people able to join the Services;

• young people are less interested in a career for life.118

If current trends continue as predicted, the recruiting environment in the future will be even more challenging for the MoD.

64. The MoD accepts that these are challenges which it must address.119 Vice Admiral Wilkinson told us that “we have to look across the whole community to find recruits for three Armed Services…but I think we are as proactive as we can be in trying to make all sections of the community aware of the opportunities that a career in the Armed Forces offers”.120 Mr Baker said that “I absolutely endorse that…We market our offer in line with contemporary commercial advice, identify different societal sectors and address the aspirations of each separately. We place the motivation of the individual increasingly at the centre of our offer”.121

65. We note that the MoD is recruiting in a challenging economic environment. It is not consistently meeting its recruitment targets and therefore sufficient numbers are not entering the Armed Forces. We acknowledge that the MoD is trying to respond to a changing recruiting environment, although we do not think that it is responding quickly enough. We believe that current recruiting shortfalls will be even greater in the future, unless the MoD increases its success rate in recruiting women and ethnic minorities. We are also concerned that the MoD has not demonstrated that it is responding to changes in society, such as an ageing population and a growing demand for more flexible careers. If it is to remain an attractive employer, it needs to do so.

66. We were told that a number of recent EU migrants to the United Kingdom had expressed an interest in enlisting in the British Armed Forces. In its response to our Report, we expect the MoD to provide us with an assessment of the impact that opening recruitment to EU migrants could have on the manning situation in the Armed Forces.

Recruiting diversity

67. The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) told us that it considered that a recruitment strategy which ensured fair recruitment and welcomed all was preferable to one which focussed solely on the issue of ethnic minority recruiting.122 We agree. The EHRC explained that it would “expect measures to improve the recruitment and retention of ethnic minority servicemen and women to figure prominently in the current and future equality priorities of the MoD and the individual Armed Forces, under the race and gender duties”.123
68. In its *Annual Report and Accounts 2006–07*, the MoD set out its performance against ethnic minority recruiting targets.\(^{124}\) Details are shown in Table 8 and 9 below:

### Table 8: Overall Service ethnic minority strength (including Commonwealth recruits)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2006–07</th>
<th>2005–06</th>
<th>2004–05</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Naval Service</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAF</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Data source: Ministry of Defence*

### Table 9: Armed Forces United Kingdom ethnic minority recruitment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Naval Service</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAF</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Data source: Ministry of Defence*

Despite failing to meet all of its targets, the MoD says that it is making progress and that ethnic minority representation in the Armed Forces has risen from a baseline of just over 1% in 1999, to 6% in January 2008.\(^{125}\) We *call on the MoD to acknowledge that the figures it cites for the increase in ethnic minority representation—1% in 1999 and 6% in January 2008—are based on different data sets and are not directly comparable.*

69. In our Report *Ministry of Defence Annual Report and Accounts 2006–07*, we expressed our disappointment at the MoD’s failure to achieve its ethnic minority recruiting targets. We also expressed concern that the 60% of total ethnic minority strength comes from ethnic minorities from outside the United Kingdom, namely Commonwealth countries.\(^{126}\) The MoD agreed that it needed to do more and assured us that its ethnic minority strategies were fully funded. It also pointed out that its policies were consistently well placed under the schemes ‘Opportunity now’ and ‘Race for Opportunity’.\(^{127}\)

70. We asked Professor Dandeker how he assessed the MoD’s performance in recruiting ethnic minorities. He said “it is not only that the Armed Services should be looking at their own culture and how they appear to populations…They also have to look at the attitudes and aspirations of those…looking for places of work…not every member of a

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125 HC (2007–08) 468, p 9
126 HC (2007–08) 61, pp 20–21, para 51
127 HC (2007–08) 468, p 13
minority ethnic community places the military…high up”. The EHRC notes that United Kingdom foreign policy; 2004 cuts to Armed Forces manpower requirements; and competition across the public services to meet PSA ethnic minority targets affect the MoD’s ability to recruit ethnic minority personnel.

71. Professor Dandecker told us that the MoD had made serious efforts to become a more appealing employer to recruits from ethnic minority backgrounds. He told us that while the MoD had undergone a major internal culture change, it had to “overcome points of resistance, and points of resistance come at middle management, not least amongst the NCOs”.

72. The MoD described some of the practical steps it had taken to meet the needs of ethnic minority personnel including the provision of food for religious requirements; and provisions to allow Service personnel to keep religious traditions—except when not compatible with operational or health and safety considerations—for example, neatly trimmed beards, yarmulke, and the hijab. The MoD has also appointed religious leaders from the Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh faiths to act as advisers on matters of religious requirements; as well as appointing civilian chaplains from those communities to enable all people to practice their faiths.

73. Despite these measures, and the MoD’s work with gatekeepers and ethnic minority communities to raise awareness of Armed Forces’ careers, the MoD is not meeting its targets. The RAF and the Naval Service, in particular, have failed their targets by a wide margin. The EHRC set out the factors which it considered contributed to these failures: the perception that harassment and discrimination remained within the Services; a lack of robust monitoring data which made it difficult for the MoD to identify and address specific problem areas; and the long-term nature of many of the MoD’s initiatives—such as working with ‘gatekeepers’—meaning that results would not be achieved quickly.

74. The EHRC expanded on the importance of data collection. It said that a more rigorous and sophisticated approach to the collection and analysis of data would lead to better informed decisions about the steps needed to improve ethnic minority recruitment. It provided specific examples of how the MoD’s data collection did not meet its expectations: data about racial groups was not collected consistently—sometimes 14 categories were used and sometimes three were used (‘ethnic minority’, ‘white’ and ‘unknown’); and 15% of staff were from an ‘unknown’ racial group, making meaningful analysis of the data impossible.

128 Q 35
129 Ev 149
130 Q 39
131 Ev 112
132 Ibid
133 See Ministry of Defence, Annual Report and Accounts 2006–07, HC 697, p 165, Tables 24-25
134 Ev 149
135 Ev 149–150
75. We asked the MoD whether it had improved the quality of the ethnic minority data collected. Vice Admiral Wilkinson said that “we are well aware that the veracity of the data is important, both for them [the EHRC] and for us. We are using their skills to help us improve wherever we can.”

76. We are concerned that there is evidence which suggests that there is a widespread culture of complacency at many levels across the Armed Services about the value of ensuring that the make-up of the Armed Forces reflect the United Kingdom’s ethnic diversity. An internal communications strategy is required to ensure that all personnel in the MoD understand the importance of diversity to the long term credibility and legitimacy of the Armed Services.

77. We recognise that improving ethnic minority recruiting is a major challenge and it will take some time to see the success of some of the MoD’s current recruiting strategies. However, we are concerned that the MoD is not collecting the data that is required, and without this data it cannot develop well informed, evidence based policies. The MoD told us that it was improving data collection wherever it could. We do not consider that this is an appropriate response to such an important issue. In its response to our Report, we expect the MoD to set out exactly how it has improved data collection and what assessment the Equality and Human Rights Commission has made of those improvements.

78. The EHRC also said that there was a “tendency for the Services to see themselves as monolithic thus relying on the same methods to deal with under-representation but not necessarily recognising their difference in terms of, for example, the types of work undertaken by each service and entry requirement”. We note the Equality and Human Rights Commission’s conclusion that recruiting strategies based on the individual characteristics of each Service may improve the MoD’s success in recruiting ethnic minorities to the Armed Forces. We recommend that the MoD work with the EHRC to identify such strategies.

**Recruiting campaigns and resources**

79. Tables 10, 11 and 12 set out overall spending on recruitment for each of the Services since 2004. The Naval Service increased its spending by 12.8% between 2004–2008; the Army increased its spending by 11.5% during that time; and the RAF’s spending increased by 14.8%.
Table 10 Naval Service spending on recruitment

<table>
<thead>
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<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manpower</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>16.26</td>
<td>16.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing and publicity</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10.25</td>
<td>12.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment offices</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other costs</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>32.25</td>
<td>34.76</td>
<td>32.91</td>
<td>35.16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministry of Defence

Table 11: Army spending on recruitment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manpower</td>
<td>32.21</td>
<td>35.50</td>
<td>37.59</td>
<td>38.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>15.95</td>
<td>21.35</td>
<td>23.25</td>
<td>26.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offices</td>
<td>6.77</td>
<td>6.60</td>
<td>5.38</td>
<td>5.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Marketing</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bursaries</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regimental Corps Army Recruiting Teams</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army Development and Selection Centres</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT Systems</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other costs</td>
<td>27.46</td>
<td>25.52</td>
<td>24.88</td>
<td>8.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>85.38</td>
<td>88.97</td>
<td>91.10</td>
<td>95.17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministry of Defence

Table 12: RAF spending on recruitment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manpower, Inspector of Recruiting</td>
<td>13.49</td>
<td>14.56</td>
<td>15.08</td>
<td>15.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manpower, Selection Centre</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>3.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manpower, College</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>3.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>9.37</td>
<td>7.57</td>
<td>10.64</td>
<td>12.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armed Forces Career Office running</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armed Forces Careers Office lease</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>0.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other costs</td>
<td>5.95</td>
<td>7.02</td>
<td>5.08</td>
<td>5.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>36.07</td>
<td>37.14</td>
<td>38.49</td>
<td>41.42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministry of Defence
80. The MoD has programmes to monitor the effectiveness of its marketing campaigns and recruitment spending\(^\text{138}\) but ultimately success is judged on the level of interests generated in Service careers.\(^\text{139}\) The RAF told us that in response to its most recent campaign, recruiting enquiries had increased by 35%, as had public awareness. Out of the available 37 trades, 19 had take up rates of 100%, 8 had take-up rates of between 90–99%, with 10 trades “undershooting” 90\(^\%\).\(^\text{140}\)

81. The Armed Forces use market research to inform recruitment campaigns.\(^\text{141}\) The Naval Service told us that in January 2006 it surveyed its key target audience of 15–24 year olds about their perceptions of the Royal Navy; 56% identified the Royal Navy with “a big grey ship becalmed on a dull grey sea” and that often the Royal Navy was seen as “nothing more than a carrier service for the other Armed Forces—carrying supplies to the Army and acting as landing platforms for the RAF”.\(^\text{142}\) The Royal Navy’s response was its *Life without Limits* campaign designed specifically to address these perceptions. The Army has a good understanding of why young people want to join the Army—lifestyle factors, such as travel, fitness, adventure, learning new skills, further education and leadership training—and it uses this information to shape its recruitment campaigns.\(^\text{143}\)

82. The Army has recently introduced Pathfinder, an interactive online test which divides respondents into categories based on answers to questions about attitudes to education, work and leisure time, family, future goals, career ambitions and steers potential recruits towards appropriate career options. The Army say that before the introduction of Pathfinder, its approach to potential recruits “was beginning to fail”.\(^\text{144}\)

83. The Armed Forces also target pinchpoint trades in their marketing strategies. The Naval Service ran campaigns highlighting Aircrew, Royal Marine and Submariner pinchpoint trades. The four month campaign targeting aircrew resulted in over 100 candidates, the six month campaign targeting Royal Marines resulted in a 50% increase in inquiries and the five month campaign targeting submariners resulted in “significant numbers of PDF downloads”.\(^\text{145}\) Despite the general success of the RAF’s recent marketing activity, only 50–60% of vacancies in pinchpoint trades were filled.\(^\text{146}\)

84. We commend the MoD on its recruitment campaigns and marketing strategies and we welcome the Armed Forces’ use of online resources to engage their target audiences. We also welcome the Armed Forces targeting individual pinchpoint trades as part of their marketing campaigns, but note that on the basis of available evidence, success has been limited. We recommend that the MoD develops a more systematic approach to recruiting to pinchpoint trades.

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\(^{138}\) Ev 95–98
\(^{139}\) Ev 97
\(^{140}\) Ibid
\(^{141}\) Ev 95–98; see also HC Deb, 25 June 2008, Col 306W.
\(^{142}\) Ev 98
\(^{143}\) Ev 99
\(^{144}\) Ev 101
\(^{145}\) Ev 98
\(^{146}\) Ibid
One Army Recruiting

85. The Army launched One Army Recruiting on 1 April 2007, integrating Regular and Territorial Army recruiting. It was intended to create a more coherent and effective recruiting process. The MoD’s memorandum sets out the main components of One Army Recruiting: putting applicants at the centre of the process; delegating responsibility for recruiting to the Regional Chain of Command; professional recruiting teams; and using technology to speed the processes and achieve broad coverage.

86. Major General Gregory told us that:

we have to make sure that as young people come to Army recruiting teams we can look at their personal circumstances and aspirations and see which part of the Armed Forces best suits their aspirations and abilities and then direct them towards that. That is the key thing. That is then supported by regimental initiatives at a lower level but co-ordinated within the regional Chain of Command and through the activities of recruiting groups. We try to make sure there is coherence between the high level piece, the Army piece and the regimental activities within the various regions.

He also told us that one year into the programme was too early to be able to share the detailed lessons learnt. ‘One Army Recruiting’, integrating Regular and Territorial Army recruiting, has been in operation for more than 12 months, and has been in development for several years. We are surprised that the Army was unable to share with us its initial lessons learned about this major change in its recruiting methodology. We expect the MoD to provide us with such an analysis in its response to our Report.

87. We asked SaBRE (Supporting Britain’s Reservists and Employers) what impact One Army Recruiting had on recruiting in the Territorial Army. Mr Corry told us that “we work quite closely with the reserve forces cadet associations...who traditionally had the role of specifically recruiting reservists. That was something they were particularly good at. They are waiting to see whether or not One Army Recruiting will produce results. Depending on those to whom you speak, anecdotally they are not all convinced yet”.

88. A contribution to our web forum from someone involved in One Army Recruiting suggested that it had not been positive for Territorial Army recruitment:

From my own experiences I can say that national TA recruiting has almost ceased. I would say that this is due to a lack of knowledge of the national TA by regular army recruiters...For TA recruiters—it is just not feasible to expect someone who...is only a part-timer to be able to enlist regular soldiers, inform [them] about apprentice college, the different regiments and events. There is a place for the ‘one army concept’ but the recruiting world is not it. A TA soldier is a different kettle of fish to the

147 Ev 100
148 Ibid
149 Q 261
150 Q 317; see also Q 425.
151 Q 88
regular soldier. Mostly they are older, have different outlooks on life and will never be understood by the regular recruiter. Equally the TA soldier will not be able to correctly empathise with a potential regular recruit.

89. Some evidence we received suggests that One Army Recruiting has had a detrimental affect on Territorial Army recruiting. In its response to this Report, we expect the MoD to provide us with its assessment of the affects that One Army Recruiting has had on Territorial Army recruiting.

**Recruiting and schools**

90. The Army’s recruitment activity in schools takes place in partnership with career guidance co-ordinators. Kieran Gordon, from the Institute of Career Guidance Councillors, told us that in his experience the Armed Forces were well trained and had a high level of expertise.\(^\text{152}\) He also said that:

> the Army was more active and proactive than the other forces. Anecdotally, the Air Force and Navy tend to be more bespoke; they look for a particular skill level and attract people from specific areas of interest, whereas the Army tends to have a more comprehensive approach. Very often in major towns and cities the recruitment offices of the Armed Forces are cheek by jowl, so at that point there is no great differential. I am not sure whether it is due to resources or sheer weight of numbers of personnel. I do not say it is necessarily better or more effective but it is easier to make contact with the Army perhaps than the Royal Navy or Royal Air Force. But we have plenty of experience of working with those other Services and have also had some positive experiences with them. The Army however seems to be more evident.\(^\text{153}\)

Kieran Gordon also told us that there were now more opportunities for young people to get direct experience of the Armed Forces through work experience and enterprise programmes.\(^\text{154}\)

91. We asked the MoD how it ensured that they delivered a consistent performance between the three Services and across the United Kingdom. It told us that “the Armed Forces cannot guarantee consistency in respect of geographical coverage as some schools and Local Education Authorities are more supportive of the military than others. However, all three Service share best practice through normal communication at Armed Forces Careers Offices and at regular conferences”.\(^\text{155}\) The MoD also told us that it did not favour tri-Service recruiting in schools because, in its experience, the best recruiting results were achieved through separate visits presenting a clear choice of Service environment; and that because tri-Service school visits would involve more personnel in each visit, the number of visits which could be undertaken would necessarily be reduced.\(^\text{156}\)
92. We have concerns that the MoD may be missing opportunities though a lack of co-ordination of its recruitment activities in schools. We recommend that the MoD’s review of its school programme considers how recruiting visits could be better co-ordinated. We commend the Armed Forces on its work experience and enterprise programmes for young people interested in a career in the Armed Forces. We consider that first hand experience of Service life is a positive recruitment tool.

**Gap years**

93. This year the Australian Defence Force (ADF) launched a one year scheme for 700 school leavers—who might not wish to commit to a full term of Service—to experience life in the Forces. The ADF expect that some students will go on to enlist as Regulars or Reservists and intends to expand the scheme over time.\(^\text{157}\) Until 2007, the British Army ran a similar scheme for up to 80 potential officers, and until 2005, the Royal Marines ran a scheme for 3–4 limited commission recruits.\(^\text{158}\) The schemes were abandoned because of budgetary pressures,\(^\text{159}\) although the Army explained that the scheme gave them access to schools which “were lukewarm to encouraging careers in the Forces”, and created a positive experience amongst those who participated. Approximately one third of students completing the Army’s Gap year programme went on to enlist in the Regular Army or the Territorial Army.\(^\text{160}\) We consider that the MoD’s recent decisions to close Army and Royal Marine Gap year schemes is shortsighted. We note that the Australian Defence Force has responded to its recruiting shortfalls by launching a scheme for 700 school leavers, which it plans to expand in the future. We recommend that the MoD reconsiders its policy on Gap year schemes.

**Educational incentives**

94. In its response to our Report *Ministry of Defence Annual Report and Accounts 2006–07*, the MoD said that “overall, recruitment is broadly satisfactory. But the recruiting market is challenging. We face stiff competition from other employers, and more young people are now opting for further education”.\(^\text{161}\)

95. The MoD list the following educational opportunities—in addition to Phase 1, 2 and trade training:

- Residential courses: Army Foundation College, Harrogate, for 16–17 year olds and Welbeck, Loughborough, a two-year residential A level course.
- Sixth-Form scholarships ranging from £1,050 per year to £2,000.
- Degree Sponsorship (amounts depend on the course).

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\(^{158}\) Ev 191–2

\(^{159}\) HC Deb, 5 Feb 2007, Col 686W; HC Deb, 1 Feb, Col 220W

\(^{160}\) Ev 191–192

\(^{161}\) HC (2007–08) 468, pp 3–4
• The Army also offers Further Education Bursaries for a wide range of courses to anyone aged between 16–32. Potential recruits get £1,000 during their studies and £1,000 on completion of the first stage of Army training.162

96. Professor Strachan told the Committee that he felt that the Armed Forces were not responding to opportunities to encourage recruitment through educational incentives:

it is extraordinary that the growth of higher education in this country is seen as a threat to Armed Forces recruiting rather than an opportunity. That is something which I think has to be tackled...head on...somehow you have to get into the position where...middle England...sees it as a reasonable option to join the Armed Forces as to go into any other walk of life, and that is not the situation at the moment. If there were that shift two things would follow. First of all, I think the issue of ethnic recruiting would be less important, simply because many ambitious ethnic minorities target the professions as appropriate courses for their offspring to follow and do not see the Armed Forces within that spectrum, and, secondly, there would be an opportunity to maximise the...direct military presence on almost every single campus throughout the United Kingdom in terms of the OTCs, the naval units and the air squadrons.

…at the moment [education] is seen as dealing with officer recruitment, but if we are talking about highly qualified senior warrant officers, senior rates with levels of skill and specialisation in particular branches and particular technical skills, then we need to move away from that expectation...society has changed and we need to recognise that your WO2 in the Royal Logistic Corps may have a degree and not be an officer... I do not think the [Armed Forces] are addressing the issue realistically because they are still looking to recruit in the traditional pools rather than thinking how they adapt the Armed Forces to fit into where the pool of potential recruits now is.163

97. Professor Strachan told us that the MoD could do more to use educational incentives to draw people to the Armed Forces: we agree. The Armed Forces have a long tradition of using educational incentives to attract officers and medical staff, and we believe that this should be expanded to other ranks. We consider that the MoD could be more imaginative in developing recruitment opportunities based around education and should specifically recognise the need to adapt recruiting strategies to the recent growth in higher education.

Training

98. As we note in Part 2 of our Report, the MoD measures inflow to the Armed Forces at the point at which recruits complete initial training (Phase 1 and Phase 2). A proportion of recruits do not complete training. They leave for a variety of reasons: they may not be suited to Service life; they may sustain injuries; or they may fail to reach the required standard. The MoD recognises that the consequence of wastage "means it is proving harder to sustain our target for gains to the trained strength".164 Wastage also has a financial cost.

162 MoD website: www.mod.gov.uk
163 Qq 23–24
164 Ev 92
The NAO estimates that the average cost, across the Services, to recruit and provide Phase 1 training for one individual is approximately £92,000 for Officers and £25,000 for other ranks.165 In 2007–08, 24% of Royal Navy recruits; 45% of Royal Marines recruits; 38% of Army recruits; and 22% of RAF recruits did not complete Phase 2 training.

99. Our predecessor Committee found that some Phase 1 and Phase 2 trainers were frustrated by the lack of basic personal and social skills new recruits possessed.166 Levels of discipline were also lower, as were levels of physical fitness.167 The Army notes that young people tend to be less deferent to authority and have a greater awareness of their individual rights.168 Despite these challenges and the difficulties the Armed Forces face in attracting sufficient numbers of recruits, the MoD told us that recruitment selection standards have not been reduced and the quality of those joining remained high.169

100. We do not doubt that the quality of recruits leaving initial training. Christopher Beese, of ArmorGroup, a security company which employs Armed Forces personnel after they have left the Services, told us that “in our experience...[Armed Forces personnel] consistently improve; they are better today than they have ever been”.170 We also note that Armed Forces training, in particular remedial education programmes, provide recruits with basic literacy and numeracy skills and self-confidence where the education system has failed.171

101. We believe that initial training should ensure that as many recruits as possible succeed. High wastage rates during initial training suggest that there is a serious weakness in initial training programmes or that the recruitment process does not adequately predict those unsuitable for life in the Armed Forces. We note that there is a balance to be struck in ensuring that the pool of potential recruits is not unnecessarily limited and that resources are not wasted. However, we also believe that it is important that recruits who are unhappy are given opportunities to leave training. As our predecessor’s Report on Duty of Care noted, remaining in the physically and mentally demanding training environment against a recruit’s will, creates risks for his/her well being.172

102. As part of its efforts to improve wastage rates, the Army has introduced the Potential Soldier programme to confirm physical, mental, emotional and domestic readiness for the Army selection and training process.173 The Look at Life programmes in the Naval Service and the Army are also designed to give potential recruits a realistic idea of what life in the Services is like.174

165 NAO HC (2005–06) 1633-I, p 36, para 3.22
166 HC (2004–05) 63, para 46
167 Ibid, p 38, para 45; NAO HC (2005–06) 1633-I, p 52 Appendix Five
168 Ministry of Defence, Values and Standards of the British Army, Commanders Edition, para 2
169 HC (2007–08) 468
170 Q 205
171 Qq 270–271
172 HC (2004–05) 63, p 54, para 105
173 Ev 100–101
174 Ev 94, Ev 99
We asked the MoD how its wastage rates compared to those of our major allies. This data is set out in Table 13. The MoD cautioned that different methods of wastage calculation, selection processes, entry standards, the handling of injury during training, and back-classing policies affects exit rates and makes direct comparisons difficult. Nevertheless, in every category the United Kingdom experiences higher wastage rates than our major allies:

Table 13: Wastage rates from UK Phase 1 and 2 training and at the 12 month point in Canada, the USA and Australia

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<td>Army</td>
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<td>Air Force</td>
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<td>Air Force</td>
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Data Source: Ministry of Defence, Note: UK data is single Service sourced and has not been not validated by DASA

We are concerned at the high wastage rates in Phase 1 and 2 training and, in particular, by the increases in wastage rates since 2005. The Royal Marines’ wastage rates have been consistently close to 50% for the last 5 years, although we note that the standard required by the Royal Marines is very high. In its response to this Report we expect the MoD to tell us how many Royal Marine recruits who do not complete training enlist in other parts of the Armed Services. Both the Army and the RAF’s wastage rates are creeping upwards. In its response to our Report, we expect the MoD to set out the causes of such high wastage rates, the factors which have contributed to the pattern of increase in the last five years, and the reasons why our wastage rates appear to be so much higher than our major allies.
4 Retention

105. The number of personnel leaving the Forces before the end of their agreed term has been rising since 2004. There are a wide range of factors which cause members of our Armed Forces, both Regulars and Reserves to leave service prematurely. We consider the key retention challenges below.

Regular Forces’ retention challenges: conditions of service and welfare

Impact on family and personal life

106. In its report on Recruitment and Retention in the Armed Forces, the NAO concluded that the most common factors which persuade personnel to leave relate to the impact of Service life on family life, work life balance and the ability to plan ahead.176 In 2007 a survey found that 83% of Royal Navy and 94% of Royal Marine personnel intending to leave reported that the impact of Service life on their personal life had increased or strongly increased that intention to leave.177 For RAF personnel the negative impact on family and personal life was the second most common reason for leaving the Service. The impact of Army life on family and personal life was “the number one negative retention factor for officers and soldiers”, with married leavers twice as likely to cite quality of life issues as the reason for leaving the Army.178 A 2007 survey found that 54% of Royal Naval personnel, 41% of Royal Marine personnel, 41% of Army personnel and 59% of RAF personnel reported that operational commitment and stretch increased their intention to leave the Armed Forces.179 Approximately a third of personnel felt that operational tours were too frequent180 and that their workload was too high.181

107. We sought further information about the impact that Service life can have on family life and how this in turn affects retention. Dawn McCafferty told us that:

where the Harmony Guidelines are being breached routinely, it is the partners and spouses who are the ones who are saying, ‘Enough’s enough’. The individual very often, the Serviceman, is quite happy to deploy. He is enjoying it, he is putting his training to good use and he is getting a great deal of job satisfaction out of area, but the family are then faced with him coming home, unpacking his bags and …he is off again in another six months or so.182

108. The memorandum we received from the Army Families Federation included details about the consequences of increased levels of Separated Service and Unit Tour Intervals on

177 Ev 109, the Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey (AFCAS)
178 Ev 110–111, the Army Leavers 1 survey
179 2007 tri-Service Continuous Attitude Survey, Table 126, p 32
180 Ibid, Table 94, p 24
181 Ibid, Table 51 p 14
182 Q 65
Service personnel and their families. Single soldiers expressed concern about managing relationships during long absences, while families found it difficult to switch between single parenthood and a partnership. Both the Army and RAF Families Federations said that unpredictable hours of work, aggravated by stretch, made it difficult for spouses to work; that transport difficulties and extra childcare costs could make it difficult for families to manage their finances during operations; and that the costs of moving outstrip allowances which do not compensate for the difficulties of finding new accommodation, schools, dentists and doctors. The Federation also noted that “the nature of present operational deployments means that the soldier who leaves home is not always the same soldier who returns”.

109. Liz Sheldon of Soldiers, Sailors, Airman Families Association Forces Help (SSAFA FH) told us that

our statistics show that there has been a massive increase in marital breakdown, relationship problems and emotional issues that people are bringing to us, possibly exacerbated by operational tours, but that is not to get away from the fact that the constant sorts of stresses and pressures of Service life on families put those relationships under enormous stress.

110. Postings on our web forum provided direct examples of how increased levels of Separated Service, narrowing Unit Tour Intervals and stretch can affect personal and family lives:

People are getting sent away Out of Area last minute with a days notice in some cases. This can put a lot of pressure on a service person and their families…adequate time should be allowed to say good bye properly. As harsh as it seems, some men and women may not come back from war. They should be given sufficient time before deploying to spend quality time with their families and to mentally prepare themselves and organise themselves for the detachment ahead of them.

My husband is currently deployed again his third since 2005. In that time we have moved house 3 times and moved country twice. My husband has only managed 10 months off between tours, so our 4 children barely know him and he the same. I do not know where I am in our relationship sometimes wonder if we still have one.

111. The evidence we have received reinforces our conclusion that failure to meet Harmony Guidelines and the resulting pressure has serious consequences for retention in the Armed Forces. Given the demands placed on our Service personnel from the current level of operations, the Armed Forces are unlikely to achieve their Harmony Guideline targets in the near future. This continues to put Service personnel and their families under considerable strain.

112. The MoD told us that it was trying to reduce the pressures of Separated Service and Unit Tour Intervals in a number of ways, but that “mobility is an inevitable and necessary
part of Service life, because of our geographical spread and the requirement to post people to achieve career development and generate military capability.\textsuperscript{186}

113. The MoD is engaged in a number of activities to minimise the impact of mobility and increase stability. Royal Navy base porting policy has been developed to increase stability and the Navy had instigated ‘Project Fisher’ to develop a system that will enable ships to be deployed as long as necessary whilst still giving naval personnel sufficient time at home with families and the stability of knowing when and for how long they will be separated.\textsuperscript{187} The Army points to Super Garrisons as evidence of their recognition that family stability is important and say that the Super Garrison concept will eventually increase home ownership and allow for higher second incomes\textsuperscript{188} as Service partners are able to establish careers that are not disrupted by frequent moves. In the future the RAF will concentrate on fewer main operating bases.\textsuperscript{189} It will reduce the number of new ‘Out of Area’ posts, and it has established the Harmony Working Group to improve the management of deployment turnaround times.\textsuperscript{190}

114. In evidence to us, Professor Strachan questioned whether the measures that had been introduced had made a discernible difference in increasing the stability of Service personnel’s lives, or whether progress was being made quickly enough:

In some ways the regimental reorganisation has not yet delivered in terms of what it should have done or what it promised to do as far as bringing people back home is concerned. We have pressures in relation to operational tours actually to increase the length of tours in terms of getting greater expertise in theatre, particularly at senior command levels, which will only further undermine the Harmony Guidelines if you are going to meet operational requirements.\textsuperscript{191}

115. We strongly support Service personnel and their families in their calls to have greater stability. If the MoD is to succeed in its efforts to retain Service personnel, it must urgently seek ways to lessen the impact of stretch on Service personnel and their families. We have seen some evidence that the Services have recognised the importance of stability in the personal and family life of Service personnel, but this needs to be given greater priority. In particular, the MoD should examine how greater advance notice of postings and deployments could be given to Service personnel, so they and their families have more time to prepare. In its response to our Report we expect the Government to set out what measures it plans to introduce to create greater stability for Armed Forces personnel and the timetable for doing so, and in particular, how the development of Super Garrisons contributes to those plans.
Welfare provision

116. In the NAO’s 2006 survey of personnel leaving the Armed Forces, a lack of operational welfare support, unit based welfare support, and welfare support for families were cited by over a quarter of respondents as important or very important factors in their decision to leave. In 2007, 60% of Royal Naval personnel, 38% of Royal Marine personnel, 34% of Army personnel and 72% of RAF personnel were not sure or did not agree that they had easy access to a Welfare Officer. Dawn McCafferty told us that the welfare umbrella covered a wide spectrum, such as children’s education, support finding accommodation, moving house, and financial problems and that these issues could all contribute to reasons for leaving the Armed Forces.

117. Many of the postings to our web forum explained that the welfare support offered by the MoD to Service personnel and their families did not meet their expectations:

The Armed Forces are without doubt overstretched, and no doubt fine people will continue to serve and do a first class job with whatever limited resources are afforded them. However I implore the committee to consider the cumulative effect … on not only serving personnel, but equally as importantly, on service families. Arguably a serviceperson will struggle to maintain focus on the task in hand when on operations, if phone calls home reveal concerns about the level of support the family is receiving in their absence. This can be anything from the inability to find a dentist for a child to problem with service families accommodation, but the effect these things can have is considerably amplified when serving away from the family.

With increasing Ops and Training for Ops our families are also being placed under strain. At present I can expect at least 5 of every 12 months away from the UK and have done this for some 10 years now. This is shortly likely to increase to 8 from 12. ... Currently I have been away from home 5 weeks and my wife has not even received a letter from my unit asking if all is well. While she…is independent that little bit of thought could go a long way.

118. We asked the RAF and Army Families Federations and SSAFA FH what could be done to improve the provision of welfare support. SSAFA FH told us that:

the MoD do not have the capacity really to handle many of the welfare issues that come to their door, and really what they need is to have a welfare support infrastructure which provides seamless support to families wherever they go and servicemen and which also embraces the wider family. We are getting many, many parents now contacting us because they just feel completely out of the loop and they are parents of many of the younger recruits that people are concerned about.

All the witnesses from these organisations agreed that more investment in welfare provision was required. Dawn McCafferty suggested that in particular, funding for service

192 NAO, HC (2005–06) 1633-II, pp 13—14
193 2007 tri-Service Continuous Attitude Survey, Table 212, p 54
194 Q 44
195 Q 46
community officers was needed, people on the ground who could talk to the families and serving personnel about what concerned them. She also identified the need to provide Relate relationship counselling to all military units. Julie McCarthy from the Army Families Federation suggested that the improvements would flow from unit welfare officers being funded and resourced adequately.

119. Liz Sheldon told us that the Welfare Service was stretched. This impacts on the level of support and advice available to Service personnel and their families. Dawn McCafferty told us:

welfare and community support for families gets squeezed out...we do feel that the resources need to go in to put back what they have already taken out. In the past you would have had several people working in an office, looking at postings for people, or assignments...basically having that human interface...before you actually pressed the button to say you are posted from A to B, there would be somebody...talking to the warrant officer or the sergeant to find out what the impact might be on that individual, asking questions such as 'has anything changed recently?' They do not have the manpower to do that now, so, more and more, people feel they are being posted and promoted by computer. They are not. There are still people there doing the work, but there are fewer of them hence it is very difficult for people to feel there is a human being actually managing their careers anymore

120. We also heard that differences between the provision of welfare in each Service, highlighted during joint operations, created discontent:

The issue is that at the moment we have got three Services which operate their personal welfare support differently. At the moment, this is accepted by MoD under the Armed Forces' personnel overarching strategy, for good reasons, I am sure, but it means that there is not a continuity, there is not a sort of streamlined approach to handling welfare issues and, when you have got people moving in and out of joint operations, back-filling between different units, it actually can bring an incredible hardship and an inconsistency sometimes in the way in which rules are applied.

Dawn McCafferty gave us an example of a member of the RAF who was deployed overseas, but serving in a joint unit where the Army was responsible for providing welfare support. The family “felt very isolated, very left out and...contacted us for help and advice...Actually, it was not that the Army were not providing [support] it is just that they
did it in a different way which was not necessarily conducive to what the RAF family felt they needed and were used to”. 203

121. The MoD acknowledges that more should be done to support Service personnel and their families, it has already improved the Operational Welfare package. 204 On 8 November 2007, it announced that “the first ever cross-Government Strategy for supporting Service personnel, their families and veterans will be published in the Spring”. 205 The Minister told us that “I think all things around, for instance, welfare support, including housing conditions, general support for families—all these things we are working on. I think that is where we have a number of issues at the moment”. 206 The MoD’s Service Personnel Strategy will be published on 17 July 2008.

122. The importance of first class welfare support for our Service personnel and their families cannot be overstated. They deserve nothing less. We commend organisations such as SSAFA FH and the Army, Naval and RAF Families Federations for the excellent work they do in this area. We acknowledge the recent improvements the MoD has made to the operational welfare package. However, it needs to do more. We are concerned that a reduction of Armed Forces Welfare Officers has had a detrimental affect on the quality of welfare support provided to Service personnel and their families.

123. We welcome the publication on 17 July 2008 of the Service Personnel Strategy. We plan to monitor its implementation and we will be seeking regular updates from the MoD on the progress being made and how the proposals in the strategy address the current shortcomings in the provision of welfare support.

Co-ordinating welfare support

124. Welfare support to veterans, Service personnel and their families is currently provided by the MoD and by approximately 120 Charities. The Confederation of British Service and Ex-Service Organisations (COBSEO) co-ordinates information, acts as a contact for external agencies, identifies issues of common concern and represents the needs of its member organisations at central and local government level. 207 Within the MoD there is a staff officer with responsibility for linking charitable activities to government priorities. Liz Sheldon of SSAFA FH told us that this “is an area which needs a lot of work”. 208

125. We asked the Minister whether, given the shortfalls in the provision of welfare to Service personnel and their families, enough was done to co-ordinate the work of the Armed Forces and their support organisations, and specifically whether the Service Personnel Strategy would address this issue. He told us that:

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203 Q 46
204 Ev 86
206 Q 337
207 www.cobseo.org.uk/cobseofrontpage.html
208 Q 50
I am not going to pre-empt what … [the strategy] will say at the moment but clearly it is going to be a very important paper in terms of defining where we are in terms of support, what we can do further and what is possible…[in terms of welfare provision]. Whether it was truly joined up, whether it was ensuring that gaps were being plugged, the honest answer to that is that it was not. If you look at the range of people who are involved, from the Ministry of Defence, the single Services, the regimental associations, the many ex-Service charities…I suspect they are in the hundreds, I asked the question of myself, ‘Why should there be anyone falling through the gaps, given that there are lots of resources around, whether it is within government or outside government? There are lots of people who want to do good. What can we do about this?’, so last year, along with the Chief of General Staff, we organised a welfare conference which brought all these bodies together to look at how we could improve that…COBSEO are doing a really good job in this line and they are working very well with the organisations, and I think it is a much more joined-up approach.

126. We acknowledge the important work undertaken by the voluntary sector to support current and former Service personnel and their families. However, we are concerned that more could be done to make its assistance more coherent. We welcome the MoD’s recent innovation of welfare conferences, but look to the MoD, in its response to this Report, to make a clear statement about its future plans to ensure there is a framework which provides a better focus for co-ordinating welfare support. We are particularly concerned that the boundaries between the welfare support provided by charities and that provided by the MoD has become blurred.

**Focus of welfare provision**

127. SSAFA FH was concerned that welfare currently focused on the demands of Command structure, rather than the needs of the individual. We put this concern to the Minister. He told us that:

> Clearly the Command has an absolute duty to ensure that welfare support is provided for the Service personnel; it is important that the structure is in place, and if it has meant that it is too much around what they specifically want and not enough around what families want I am not sure I go along with that. I think SSAFA themselves have been very much involved in welfare … As to whether that can be improved, I accept it probably can … we recognise this…Yes, there clearly is room for more improvement but whether it is in some way stymied because it is based on the Command structure, I would not necessarily accept that.”

128. Liz Sheldon told us that some people were resistant to seeking welfare support, particularly if it came from a uniformed source. She said that “we have a confidential support line which we provide under contract to the MoD and many of our contacts voice...

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209 Q 387
210 Q 388
211 Ev 141
212 Q 412
Recruiting and retaining Armed Forces personnel

their concerns about actually contacting the system direct…they just feel they have more confidence going into an external agency which is independent of the Chain of Command”.

129. We accept that the Command structure has an absolute duty to provide welfare support, but, at a time of high operational tempo, we are concerned that welfare support is not always being delivered in the way that personnel and their families require. The MoD recognises that welfare support can be improved. In its response to our Report, we call on the MoD to set out the specific improvements it plans to introduce, and how those changes will place the individual at the centre of welfare provision.

Housing

Standards of Service Housing

130. Many of the contributors to our web forum identified housing as a ‘retention negative’ factor:

Do something positive and quickly about soldiers' accommodation, not just the quarters but the single accommodation and messes as well … I wash and shave every single day in orange rusty water.

Defence Housing. Simply put is CRIMINAL.

131. We have recently examined the issue of housing in our Report The work of the Defence Estates and noted that accommodation was a significant factor in levels of retention. We found that the standard of some accommodation was appalling, although we welcomed the improvement and modernisation of some Single Living Accommodation. In its response to our Report, the MoD agreed that good quality housing was a fundamental part of the welfare package, but said that upgrading Service accommodation was “a very substantial task given that MoD manages some 71,000 family properties and 165,000 single bed-spaces worldwide and that MoD is reversing a legacy of decades of under-funding”.

The Government recognised that there was still much work to be done and said that “over the next 10 years we expect to spend more than £5 billion on accommodation”.

132. In a recent interview, General Dannatt, Chief of the General Staff said:

we have got some very good estates, we have got some mediocre and we have some appalling housing and accommodation. We know that. We can’t solve it overnight. My aim has always been to argue the case for additional money to go into the programme so that we can shorten the refurbishment programme and get to a higher standard for all quicker and to an extent that has started to happen over the

213 Q 42
214 HC (2006–07) 535
216 Ibid.
Recruiting and retaining Armed Forces personnel

last 18 months. More money is being put in. I would like to see even more money being put in and we can go faster. 217

133. We have already highlighted in our earlier Report the important role that accommodation plays in the ability of the Services to retain personnel. The MoD plans to spend some £5 billion on accommodation over the next ten years. Given the importance of accommodation to family welfare and retention, we expect the MoD to ensure that this work to improve accommodation is pushed forward as quickly as possible and, where possible, further resources are earmarked for upgrading accommodation. We note that Super Garrisons provide the MoD with an opportunity to deliver high quality Service accommodation.

134. In our inquiry into The work of Defence Estates we found that the contractorisation of maintenance had created some confusion about whose responsibility it was to ensure that things were repaired or replaced. In particular, we were concerned that the absence of a local estates manager responsible for sorting out problems had led to confusion. In our Report we considered that “if the problems we encountered are representative of the situation across the MoD’s built estate, then it is a serious failure of policy. It is exacerbated by an alarming lack of recognition at senior levels that these problems are more than minor difficulties”. 218

135. The Government’s response to our Report stated that:

MoD considers that the problems reported to the Committee are neither a fair reflection of the overall position nor a reflection of a serious policy failure. Repair levels, quality and customer satisfaction for the Housing Prime Contract have improved significantly over the past 12 months.

The MoD does not agree that the power to resolve maintenance issues has been removed from Defence Estates. That organisation provides a housing service in Great Britain that includes maintenance and...Defence Estates retains full command & control and direction over that contractor’s activities...Moreover, we provide a freephone Helpdesk—which is in operation 24 hours a day, 7 days a week—to assist occupants in resolving their repair issues; and this is supplemented by face-to-face contact between our housing and maintenance representatives at regional and local levels.

We do accept that some of those involved in providing the housing service below the Area Housing Manager level have felt disempowered by the changes to the way in which business is now conducted. Consequently, Defence Estates has recently given greater financial and commercial delegations to its local housing staff, so empowering them to resolve local issues more quickly. These issues are fully recognised by senior managers within the organisation and Defence Estates continues to work to engender a culture in which individuals at all levels take responsibility for the service that they provide. 219

218 HC (2006–07) 535, p 28, para 85
219 HC (2007–08) 109, pp 11–12
136. Submissions to our web forum—and our own discussions with serving personnel—suggest that the MoD is wrong in its assessments of customer satisfaction levels. We received numerous complaints about difficulties in finding accommodation, the quality of the maintenance service and the lack of customer focus. For example:

Previously my married quarters...had the boiler condemned while I was on Ops, none of the unit personnel cared and DE [Defence Estate] had insufficient funds to make this urgent. It was a week before my wife had hot water to wash...The excuse was lack of money to call the boiler people on a special call. It is this...that puts additional pressure on individuals from the family point of view to leave the service.

It took 15 years to change our old carpets. When they finally booked to change the carpets they did not turn up after we had come home early from our holiday. We had a plumber 'fix' a problem in our water tank. The next evening water was leaking from the tank and dripping down a light bulb. The emergency plumber then went to the wrong house and turned around and went home despite having our contact number; we had to phone and ask where the plumber was. This is typical of the service we get. Everyone blames everyone else.

Availability of quarters seems to be worsening last year. We had difficulty in obtaining our quarter and only secured it a month before we moved, many families are finding themselves in this situation and this aggravates the whole moving process and creates more unwanted stress. Also add in the factor of trying to secure your children a school place without an address.

I am currently living in Service Family Accommodation. I will be leaving this soon due to relocation of jobs. Yes my request for SFA at my new place of work has been processed well...but nothing is simple anymore. I will move several days before I can hand over the house, why? Because they are too busy, they will only carry out handovers on Tuesdays in my area. [I informed] them my new position commences on the Tuesday to be told “well that’s not my fault...we are not here to work around you.” So if they are not there to provide a service to the Serving family, then who do they work for?

137. We put these concerns about the poor quality of repairs and the length of time taken to make them to the Minister. He said that:

if repairs are not done on time it is not acceptable, full stop. There have been problems, as you rightly point out, but we are continuing to improve the responsiveness and ensure that these repairs get done. There will always be cases. What we need to make sure is that we learn from any of those to make sure that we put the solution in place first time. I think you will find that our response times now are significantly improved, so at a ministerial level I can assure you—and I ask some very serious and searching questions and I get the regular monthly reports about repairs that we continually want to drive up the responsiveness for them.
138. We were very disappointed that the Government response to our Report on *The work of Defence Estates* failed to acknowledge the serious shortcomings in the administration and maintenance of Service accommodation. It is now one year since we published our Report, and we are still receiving evidence that the standard of maintenance repairs and level of customer service falls well below the expectations of Service personnel and their families. We note that the Under-Secretary of State for Defence finds this unacceptable. So do we. We recommend that the MoD seeks advice from Local Government Housing Associations about how Defence Estates can move towards a customer-centred approach and we plan to monitor the MoD’s progress in doing so.

**Support for Service personnel to own their own homes**

139. The difficulties that Service personnel experience buying their own homes can be an important factor in their decision to leave the Armed Forces. 69% of Royal Naval personnel, 82% of Royal Marine personnel, 80% of Army personnel and 82% of RAF personnel felt that frequent moves made it difficult for them to own their own home.\(^{221}\) The Army Families Federation told us that:

> home ownership is the aspiration of the vast majority but turbulence, separation, low second income and lack of certainty about future mobility all make purchasing a house difficult to achieve...One of the reasons families are turned down for Shared Equity Home Ownership Schemes are high debt levels. Some families suffer negative credit ratings from high mobility and from living in MoD accommodation with a high number of previous occupants.\(^ {222}\)

140. The MoD announced, on 19 March 2008, a £20 million pilot scheme to assist Service personnel in achieving their home ownership aspirations: “in the coming months we will work with commercial providers and public bodies to identify the most suitable approach, which is likely to be based on shared equity or rent to buy arrangements and will involve an element of MoD investment”.\(^ {223}\) In addition to this announcement, MoD point to the recently uplifted Commitment Bonus of up to £15,000, the Government’s Key Worker Living Programme and Long-Service Advance of Pay Scheme as measures to help Armed Forces personnel achieve home ownership.\(^ {224}\) We also expect that the MoD’s future plans for a more stable basing will help Service personnel to achieve home ownership.

141. While we recognise the great value in welfare terms of the close-knit community that Service provided accommodation ensures, we support the MoD’s recent initiatives to help members of the Armed Forces achieve home ownership. We consider that moves towards more stable basing of Armed Forces personnel will provide the MoD with more opportunities to develop new home ownership initiatives. It is vital that the MoD begin work on developing new initiatives now, that it works in partnership with

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\(^{221}\) 2007 tri-Service Continuous Attitude Survey, Table 164, p 42
\(^{222}\) Ev 138
\(^{223}\) HC Deb, 19 Mar 2008, 66WS
\(^{224}\) HC Deb, 19 Mar 2008, 66WS; Ev 180
the social housing sector, and that the resources to ensure their success are committed early.

**Pay and allowances**

142. Competitive pay rates are an important part of attracting recruits with the appropriate skills, abilities and attitudes and retaining those personnel over time. Recommendations about Armed Forces pay (up to and including the rank of Brigadier, Commodore and Air Commodore) are made by the independent Armed Forces Pay Review Body (AFPRB). In making recommendations the AFPRB is required to take account of recruitment, retention and motivation of personnel, and pay comparisons with civilians; in addition to Government policies, its inflation target and departmental affordability. It also considers issues like manning, working hours and leave. The AFPRB receives written and oral submissions and visits overseas and operational units.225

143. As of 1 April 2007:226

- other ranks salary in initial training begins at £13,013, rising to between £16,227 and £27,559 in Pay Range 1 (OR 2–3: Able Rating, Marine, Lance Corporal, Private, Aircraftman and Junior Technician);
- other ranks salaries in Pay Range 5 (Other Ranks–9: Warrant Officer I) start at £36,812 rising to £44,588;
- officer University Cadet Entrants earn £11,719 in their first year of studying rising to £16,492 in their fourth year;
- officers salaries start at £14,852 (Officer–1: Sub-Lieutenant, Lieutenant, Flying Officer) rising to £31,188;
- officers at Commodore, Brigadier and Air Commodore ranks earn up to £96,288;
- bespoke pay scales operate for specialist staff like Chaplains and Officers Commissioned From the Ranks (OCFR); and
- specialist pay and compensatory allowances exist for skilled trades like flying (additional daily allowances range from £4.62 to £57.22 depending on rank, trade and experience), diving (additional daily allowances range from £4.05 to £31.21 depending on rank, trade and experience), and submariners (additional daily allowances range from £2.31 to £25.43 depending on rank, trade and experience).227

144. These salaries include the 'X-factor', introduced in 1970 in recognition of the disadvantages of service life, such as: danger; turbulence; separation; hours of work; restrictions on leave and access to trade union membership; impact of the job; and social aspects of the job. The rate of the X-factor is reviewed every 5 years by the AFPRB. In 2008

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225 Ev 84
226 HoC Deb, 10 May 2007, Col 18WS
the AFPRB recommended that the X-factor be increased by 1% to 14% of base salary.\textsuperscript{228} This percentage is included in the salary range examples set out above.

145. The AFPRB told us that Armed Forces’ pay was broadly comparable with other young people and graduates in civilian employment. Its focus in recent years has been to improve the salaries of the most Junior Ranks (who were awarded pay rises of 9.4% in 2007),\textsuperscript{229} and to increase new entrants’ pay.\textsuperscript{230} Its detailed assessments were that ‘Other Ranks’ starting pay was comparable with average civilian starting salaries up to the age of 21. Between ages 22–29 comparability varied, and was behind civilians for Privates/Lance Corporals (and equivalents) but ahead for Corporals. It said that because of the rapid progression available to officers, their pay, while below graduates entering civilian employment, was comparable with the public sector.\textsuperscript{231}

146. RAND Europe was commissioned by the MoD to identify the views of serving personnel of the pay and allowance package provided by the MoD. The study of 162 personnel in 27 focus groups concluded in 2007 that that the current basic pay package and pension scheme were satisfactory.\textsuperscript{232} The RAF Families Federation told us that it did not sense that financial issues were a strongly negative retention factor, except where the cost of house purchase is concerned.\textsuperscript{233} However, in 2007, 45% of Royal Naval personnel, 64% of Royal Marine personnel, 46% of Army personnel and 40% of RAF personnel said that their salary levels increased their intention to leave.\textsuperscript{234}

147. Some of the contributors to our web forum cited their remuneration package as a positive aspect of being in the Services, and that remuneration in the Armed Forces was not simply a question of salary:

All the benefits...to the services shouldn’t need mentioning but we seem to forget about these when we look at our adequate—barely!—wage packets. Work out the costs of gym memberships, meals, accommodation, med&Dent, uniforms, MMA, School Allowance ad infinitum!! then add them on to your net rate!!

The positives are being paid 7 days a week, paid time off for AT; when you can get it, cheap accommodation (sometimes there are holes though); no medical bills and a pension if you live long enough to collect it.

148. General Dannatt, Chief of the General Staff, said recently that:

I am pleased that we had above inflation pay rises over the last couple of years. I think this year’s pay rise reflected an increase in the X-factor, the additional bit of money that servicemen are paid and I think it was appropriate to do that. I think we need to keep service pay constantly under review and I would like to see it going up

\textsuperscript{228} Ev 86
\textsuperscript{229} Ministry of Defence, Annual Report and Accounts 2006–07, HC 697, p 105, para 184
\textsuperscript{230} Ev 85
\textsuperscript{231} Ev 85
\textsuperscript{232} RAND Europe, Motivations and Attitudes of New Recruits Regarding Remuneration Issues, 2007, p vii
\textsuperscript{233} Ev 82
\textsuperscript{234} 2007 tri-Service Continuous Attitude Survey, Table 133, p 34
Recruiting and retaining Armed Forces personnel above inflation for the next couple of years. If you compare a traffic warden and a police constable on overtime I think you will find that an individual serviceman gets paid quite a lot less.\textsuperscript{235}

149. We found General Dannatt’s comparison of the Armed Forces personnel pay with traffic wardens and police constables unhelpful. Pay is only one component of Service personnel’s remuneration package which makes such comparisons far from straightforward. It is vital that remuneration remains competitive and does not deter people from considering a career in the Armed Forces or from remaining in the Services. Our Armed Forces are among the best in the world and their pay should reflect this. We note that the overall basic pay package does not appear to be a major cause of Armed Forces personnel leaving the Services.

**Allowances**

150. Allowances comprise an important part of the remuneration package and cover many aspects of Service life. The AFPRB’s 2008 report lists the following compensatory allowances: longer separation allowance, unpleasant work allowance, Northern Ireland resident’s supplement, London recruitment and retention allowance, experimental test allowance, experimental diving allowance.\textsuperscript{236} In addition, the MoD’s website lists provisions for subsistence; overseas postings; travel; clothing; lodging; children’s education allowance; relocation allowance; council tax refund; long service advance pay; domestic assistance; and Service risk insurance.\textsuperscript{237} The MoD’s commissioned study of Service personnel’s attitude to remuneration reported that nearly all focus groups described the current pay and allowance package, particularly allowances, as complex, difficult to understand and determine eligibility and entitlement.\textsuperscript{238}

151. We questioned the Minister about these difficulties. He told us that “we have just introduced a ready-reckoner which I think 26,000 Service people have accessed…you can go through a series of screens telling you what allowances you will be entitled to, depending on what you are doing at a particular time…We can always do more on that”.\textsuperscript{239} We pressed the MoD further about whether the ready-reckoner responded to a breakdown between policy and administration or whether it responded to the fact that the allowance system was too complex. Vice Admiral Wilkinson said that “all these [questions] are covered annually in what used to be the Single Service Attitude Surveys and we are now awaiting the results of the first Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey”.\textsuperscript{240} The Minister’s response was more helpful:

> it is not a case of ‘everything is fine’. It has not been raised with us as being a major issue. It clearly is an issue…knowing what you are entitled to…we want to try and improve that recognition, but, as a number of Service people have said to me, they

\textsuperscript{235} Ministry of Defence Press Release, Chief of the General Staff discusses Armed Forces issues, 5 June 2008
\textsuperscript{236} Armed Forces’ Pay Review Body, Thirty-Seventh Report, 2008, Cm 7315, p 67
\textsuperscript{237} www.mod.uk
\textsuperscript{238} RAND Europe, Motivations and Attitudes of New Recruits Regarding Remuneration Issues, 2007, p 47
\textsuperscript{239} Q 398
\textsuperscript{240} Q 400
tend to be pretty good at finding out what allowances they should be entitled to. That is not being complacent because some people will have problems and...the ready-reckoner is one way of improving that.\textsuperscript{241}

\textbf{152. We note that the MoD has acknowledged that some Service personnel have had trouble understanding their allowances and has introduced a ‘ready-reckoner’ to help personnel determine their eligibility and entitlement to allowances. In its response to our Report, we expect the MoD to set out its analysis of the difficulties that personnel may have in understanding the allowance package, the causes of those difficulties, and the extent to which the ready-reckoner resolves the difficulties.}

\textit{Financial Retention Initiatives}

153. In an attempt to improve retention levels in those pinchpoint trades which have an impact on operational capability, the MoD introduced Financial Retention Initiatives (FRIs). Tri-Service or large FRIs are agreed by the Secretary of State for Defence, approved by HM Treasury and endorsed by the Armed Forces Pay Review Body. Since 2005, the Services have had delegated authority to spend up to £2 million on lower value single Service schemes, authorised by Service Principal Personnel Officers. The MoD told us that FRIs were considered a highly effective method of stemming outflow by guaranteeing return service from personnel, which allowed time to address the underlying causes of manning short-fall.\textsuperscript{242} Five FRIs (both tri-Service and Single Service schemes) have ended, of which, four trades have had some form of FRIs renewed (Aircrew, Submariners, RAF Fire-fighters, RAF Regiment (gunners)). The MoD has time limits and exit strategies for each FRI.\textsuperscript{243} The 12 tri-Service FRIs currently in operation (from April 2008) are shown in Table 14.\textsuperscript{244}
### Table 14: Financial Retention Incentives (FRIs) available from April 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incentive</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Take up rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aircrew FRI Career Senior Officer</td>
<td>£50,000 for 5 years return service</td>
<td>RAF 106% RN 98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aircrew FRI Senior Office Pilots</td>
<td>Additional £50,000</td>
<td>RAF 81% RN 59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infantry FRI</td>
<td>£4,500 for 2 years return service</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Marines' FRI</td>
<td>£10,000 (including commitment bonus for 3 years)</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurses' FRI</td>
<td>£20,000 for 3 years</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Forces' FRI</td>
<td>£50,000 for 5 years</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submariner Categories A2</td>
<td>£25,000 for 4 years return service</td>
<td>Introduced April 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submariner Categories B2 (extended)</td>
<td>£20,000 for 4 years return service</td>
<td>90% between 2003–07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Artillery FRI</td>
<td>£4,500 for 3 years return service</td>
<td>Introduced April 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REME Vehicle Mechanics FRI</td>
<td>£7,000 for 3 years</td>
<td>Introduced April 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAF Fire fighters FRI</td>
<td>£9,000 (including £3,000 commitment bonus)</td>
<td>Introduced April 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAF Regiment FRI</td>
<td>£10,000 (including £3,000 commitment bonus)</td>
<td>Introduced April 2008</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministry of Defence (Ev 53–4)

154. In its *Recruitment and Retention in the Armed Forces* report, the NAO cautioned that FRIs can only offer a short term solution and that unless the underlying issues are addressed, when they are removed, problems will return. FRIs may also be being paid to people who have no intention of leaving the Armed Forces. The AFPRB have called on the MoD to “urgently assess the cost effectiveness of FRIs including robust cost benefit analysis which estimates the additional numbers retained rather than looking at absolute numbers who benefit”. It also notes that FRIs are now paid to large groups across the Armed Forces which may cause potential pay structure problems. Both the NAO and the AFPRB have concerns that FRIs could be divisive amongst colleagues not working in pinchpoint trades. We asked the MoD about its future plans for FRIs. The MoD told us

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245 NAO HC (2005–06) 1633-I, p 26, para 2.30
246 Ev 86
247 Ibid
248 NAO HC (2005–06) 1633-I, p 26; Ev 86
that “FRIs are designed to be targeted, time-limited, discrete measures to address short-term critical manning shortages.”

155. We note that the MoD uses Financial Retention Incentives as a temporary emergency measure to maintain operational capability. Take-up rates have been mixed: FRIs for aircrew, special forces and submariners have had high take-up rates, while FRIs for nurses, the Royal Marines and the Infantry have not been so successful. We note that there are more Financial Retention Incentives operating in 2008 than there were in 2007. This is a reflection of the worsening manning situation in pinchpoint trades.

156. We share the Armed Forces Pay Review Body’s concern that Financial Retention Incentives may not prove to be cost effective over the long term. We understand the necessity of these measures, but we have concerns that Financial Retention Incentives may divert investment away from addressing the underlying causes of worsening retention. In its response to our Report, we expect the MoD to provide a breakdown of the total cost of each Financial Retention Incentive and the numbers of Armed Forces personnel who have been retained. We also expect the Government to set out its assessment of how Financial Retention Incentives will impact on pay scales over time, particularly for those trades which have been in receipt of successive, large Financial Retention Incentives, such as submariners who can receive up to £25,000 and aircrew who can receive up to £100,000. As pinch point trades often involve small numbers the manning situation in those trades can change rapidly. We expect the MoD to keep FRIs under constant review to ensure that money is not spent unnecessarily.

**Joint Personnel Administration**

157. The Joint Personnel Administration system (JPA) was introduced across each Service during 2006–07, because the “cost, risk and hindrance to business change from continuing with antiquated IT platforms had become unsustainable”. In addition to “providing a single authoritative and integrated set of reliable, accurate and up to date personnel information”, JPA allows Service personnel to submit expense claims without having to complete paper forms. The MoD say that “work is continuing to ensure that the new culture and working practices are embedded, and that the right training and communications are in place to help all personnel learn how to use JPA effectively according to their requirement and responsibilities, and get the best from it”. The MoD told us that it continues “to look at all aspects of the training of personnel in connection with Joint Personnel Administration to ensure that this is fit for purpose. This will focus on the provision of training and processes, primarily...to ascertain whether all users are appropriately trained and sufficiently aware to exploit the full potential of Joint Personnel Administration”.

249 Ev 178
251 Ibid
252 Ev 188
158. In our Report *Ministry of Defence’s Annual Report and Accounts 2006–07* we expressed concern about the reported problems that Service personnel experienced using JPA. The MoD agreed that staff and personnel throughout the Services were "coming to terms with how JPA impacts on their individual roles" and told us that:

> in some areas the JPA processes themselves are proving difficult to utilise reliably and accurately, with consequential impacts on payroll accuracy...there remain a number of areas where further improvements are required. JPA is now a stable product that provides an excellent foundation for further optimisation and modernisation of the administrative support arrangements for members of the Armed Forces.\(^{254}\)

159. As part of the MoD’s efficiency targets set in the Comprehensive Spending Review 2004, the MoD agreed to reduce the number of military posts in administrative and support roles by 5,000 by 31 March 2008.\(^{255}\) The RAF Families Federation told us that the introduction of JPA had removed many clerks from the front-line. Dawn McCafferty expanded on this point: "I have certainly heard evidence of serving personnel not now claiming the allowances that they are entitled to because either they do not know how to do it because the training package was delivered on the system with very limited actual proper training for people to use it, or they are frightened about being audited on it and making genuine mistakes and getting caught out for being dishonest because the system is so complicated".\(^{256}\) Liz Sheldon told us that SSAFA FH’s confidential helpline “experienced a large number of calls...all related to JPA...because, at first, people just did not know where to turn”.\(^{257}\) In its memorandum, the MoD stated that customer satisfaction levels had improved following additional training for enquiry centre staff.\(^{258}\)

160. Many contributors to our web-forum told us that JPA was difficult to use:

> JPA is just the most appalling way of running personal admin. It is difficult to use, is certainly not intuitive and if you have a problem with it the "specialists" have no clue. Bring back people on camp to talk to...Just trying to get a fair return on personal expenditure is a battle...to such an extent that many guys just don’t bother. I guess that it is one way to save money by making the system too difficult to use. JPA is just appalling!

> The introduction of [JPA] has seen the reduction of RAF clerical staff, coupled with the introduction of a call centre based in Glasgow, who do not understand the military in any shape or form and are unable to answer many of our questions. Furthermore the system has off loaded much of the administrative burden onto the individual or line manager who have no specialist training in this area. We must

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253 HC (2007–08) 61, para 104
254 HC (2007–08) 468, pp 30–31
255 Ministry of Defense, Annual Report and Accounts 2006–07, HC 697, p 85, para 144
256 Q 74
257 Q 77
258 Ev 188
...to work out what you can or can not do...

JPA has resulted in confusion and personnel not being paid correctly. Divers spend a significant time on detached duty which requires a claim to be submitted which is a time consuming process and due to the high numbers submitted by each individual results in an audit—yet more time wasted. Individuals no longer bother submitting claims for lunch etc as the system is just too difficult which is somewhat depressing ...

...I had inadequate training on JPA and was thrown in the deep end with JPA responsibilities and minimum manning... JPAC were not at all helpful as they too did not know what they were doing.

161. The Joint Personnel Administration system offers potential efficiency and business benefits. However, we are concerned that Service personnel are not receiving the money that they are entitled to because JPA is difficult to use. The number of military administrative and support posts have been cut as part of an efficiency programme and as a result, Service personnel are not getting the help which they require and should be entitled to. We consider that these difficulties stem from poor planning and ineffective training. In its response to our report, we expect the MoD to set out what action it plans to take to address what is, in our view, a totally unacceptable state of affairs.

162. The Joint Personnel Administration call centre is the frontline for Service personnel who have questions about their pay, allowances and career. As such, it is critical that the advisers staffing it are thoroughly trained and properly equipped to perform their roles. However, the feedback we have received suggests that they are not. We welcome the Government’s recent indication that additional training for call centre staff has improved levels of customer satisfaction. In its response to our Report we expect the MoD to provide us with an update on levels of customer satisfaction.

Regular Forces retention challenges: organisational and structural issues

Single Service parity

163. The single Services each have their own individual terms and conditions of service, which have evolved over time and respond to the individual requirements of each Service. In preparation for the introduction of JPA, a new pay scale, ’Pay 2000’, was introduced to improve compatibility between different Service terms and conditions.259 Many pay bands have been aligned, although some major differences remain. The increase in joint operations have highlighted discrepancies and can be a source of irritation to Service personnel. Respondents to our web forum told us that:

Pay 2000 has narrowed the pay gap between trades to the extent that the technical trades feel undervalued and unsurprisingly are leaving... There is disparity between the services in similar jobs in respect of rank, pay and promotion time. Why, for example, is a high pay band RAF Flight Sergeant on the same pay scale as an Army
or RN WO2 yet the WO2 gets an OR8 pension and the Flight Sergeant on an OR7 pension? It is my experience that the Flight Sergeant has equal or more responsibility than the WO2. The opportunity to introduce the WO2 rank to the RAF was the ideal opportunity to remove the Chief Tech rank.

A key factor in my decision to leave is the way that engineers and technicians, key to a technology driven force such as the Royal Air Force, have been undervalued since the introduction of the Pay 2000 scheme. The current scheme singularly disadvantages RAF technicians in comparison to the speedy promotion afforded to Army and Navy colleagues by virtue of their artificer and promotion schemes; and fails to financially recognise the length and complexity of training undergone, in addition to the level of responsibility undertaken relating primarily to those carrying out or supervising aircraft engineering tasks.

164. We asked the Minister about this discontent. He told us that:

there are obviously a number of differences in pay, particularly amongst the Services and also within the Services...I think the Armed Forces Pay Review Board will need to examine some of these things...Some of them we will probably be able to deal with, but at this stage I would not like to give the Committee an absolute assurance that we are going to solve the whole problem overnight. There are, I accept, differences and there is unhappiness amongst some people about this.260

165. Vice Admiral Wilkinson told us that:

our discussions with the pay review body...will certainly feature as my colleagues and I begin to discuss next year's pay round, how we can continue to tidy up and remove these irritants that you have spotted, certainly that emerged from Pay 2000...We are well aware as we fight and live and work far more together than we ever did actually that, if we wish people to concentrate on achieving operational success, then we do not want them to be distracted by whether the sergeant, the petty officer or the flight sergeant sitting next to them is getting more or less pay than they are.261

166. The differences in terms and conditions which exist amongst the Services are a cause of discontent. Whilst we acknowledge that it is important for each Service to have the flexibility to respond to its unique circumstances, in an era of increasing joint operations the MoD must give serious consideration to how different terms and conditions in the three Services could be better aligned. We recommend that both the MoD and the Armed Forces Pay Review Body should urgently consider how this could be best achieved.

Retirement age

167. The MoD considers that the Armed Forces require an age profile focused on youth and physical fitness. Some 655 Regular and Reservist personnel in the Armed Forces are
Recruiting and retaining Armed Forces personnel

Currently over 55, although there are different regulations relating to retirement age in the Armed Forces. The Royal Navy’s policy is to keep under review Officers on Full Term Commissions and Other Ranks on Second Open Engagements to assess the viability of increasing one or both to a retirement age of 55. The Army’s compulsory retirement age has been increased to 60, and officers are expected to retire between the ages of 55–60—depending when they complete 34 years of Service, but there is some flexibility to extend service beyond this point. As of January 2008, soldiers may enlist for a term of 12 years, a term of 24 years (for particular roles) or 30 years, and in rare circumstances engagement can be extended up to 65 years of age. The RAF argues that increasing the retirement age would not alleviate manning pinchpoints because short falls are mainly found at the entry level, and that "continuance beyond the retirement age is offered on a case by case basis".

168. We asked the Minister whether he felt that these different regulations were part of a ‘joined-up’ personnel strategy. He said that "obviously, there is a degree of autonomy that single Services have in terms of their manning and recruitment…There are a number of areas which need to be taken into account in terms of establishing a distinct policy saying, ‘yes, you will be allowed to continue until you are 65 or 60’. I do not think it is an exact science.”

169. Respondents to our web forum highlighted the fact that, for officers in particular, this lack of flexibility can result in early outflow from the Armed Forces:

At 41, my employment opportunities [as a civilian] in terms of wages, benefits and recognition of my qualifications/experience are far greater than if I remain in service. The prospect of promotion, even with outstanding appraisals, are viewed as unlikely by myself and the majority of my peers (my particular trade of Eng Tech M has a large pool of manpower feeding into, with one other trade, a relatively small pool of Flt Sgts). Anyone but a fool would gamble the small chance of promotion and subsequent offer of extension of service to age 55, against not attaining Flt Sgt rank and being forced to start a new career at age 48.

170. The Armed Forces require an age profile which is focused on youth and physical fitness. However, the MoD must be careful that its retirement policies do not lead to experienced Service personnel leaving before they are due to go. Experienced personnel are a valuable resource and the MoD’s policies should reflect this. We are concerned that the differences between the retirement policies in each of the three Services creates a disjointed system and causes inequalities.

171. During our evidence session with the Service Personnel Officers, we also explored how the differing retirement ages between Services can put some, notably the Royal Marines, at a disadvantage when considering inter-Service promotion. We understand that the Services were given exemption from the European Employment directives 2006 on grounds of combat effectiveness. We call upon the MoD to explain how that differences

262 Ev 177
263 Ev 178
264 Q 380
265 Qq 381–382
in retirement policies can be justified on grounds of combat effectiveness and how differences in retirement policies fit with the MoD Unified Diversity Strategy mission statement and the Royal Navy Diversity and Equality Policy Statements.

Transfers

172. Transferring to another trade or Service provides a route for personnel who are unhappy in their current job to remain in the Services. The MoD considers each application on the basis of educational, aptitudinal, medical or Service requirements and the manning levels of the ‘inward’ and ‘outward’ trades. The different terms and conditions of each Service require personnel to resign from one Service before they join another.

173. In the 12 months to 31 March 2008:

- Naval Service: there were 39 transfers out of the Naval Service and 52 inward transfers. 35 transferred from RN to RM and 11 transferred from RM to RN. 287 internal moves took place, 60 were rejected.
- Army: there were 550 successful transfers, 426 were rejected, 511 were withdrawn. A small number of officers transferred.
- RAF: approximately 50–60 other ranks transfer out per year, with a similar amount of inward transfers. A small number of officers transferred.

174. A number of respondents to our web forum reported that in practice, transfers were difficult to achieve:

Switching between Services and trades is very bureaucratic and is ultimately up to someone who doesn’t know you and the numbers have always got to tally, if your source branch is struggling for manpower the chances of a switch will be very slim.

It is theoretically very easy to switch between cap-badges, assuming one meets the criteria—one just completes their transfer paperwork...and then waits...for a very long time indeed, in some cases. Units have a nasty habit of ‘losing’ paperwork on an almost industrial scale. Transfer between services is a great deal harder, but to be fair, it doesn’t happen that often. One has to resign then rejoin, again assuming that you meet the criteria. I—for one—would stay in happily to my 55 year point if the RAF could offer me anything like an interesting and valued job, but there is simply no way to find out if such jobs even exist.

If someone from the military is effective in one trade and through either Service or personal circumstances that trade is no longer viable for that soldier then they should be allowed to switch trades...people who enjoy serving the colours should be encouraged to stay in at all costs. Too many who want to stay in are being disillusioned by petty rules and leave.

Flexibility to switch between trades and branches would appeal to me, and others I suspect. However, it should not be accompanied by a change in pension rights as is
currently the case. Those serving on the ‘old’ pension are currently forced onto the ‘new’ (less beneficial) agreement, thus rendering any branch change or years accumulated useless.

175. We raised this issue with the Minister, who told us that he:

was quite surprised that this point came up…I do not think we clocked it, to be quite honest, as being a major problem…We have no problem with it in principle, we are happy to support it, but it has got to be based on operational needs and also their ability to do the job they are asking to transfer to, and, of course, whether we have a particular issue in their grade in that particular part of the service”.267 “Hand on heart, can I say it is working as well as it can? No, I cannot. I…can go away and do some more work on that to see whether we can actually bottom out and maximise that.”268

176. We pressed the MoD on whether maximising opportunities for transferring could have a role in increasing retention, particularly in the pinpoint trades. Vice Admiral Wilkinson said that

there is often, in my experience, a feeling that the grass is greener on the other side and, therefore, a lot of people, both officers and other ranks, do look during their time in the Service at another branch or another trade or career to see if that would be of interest. I am not saying that that is where some of these numbers come from, but certainly, as you know, the recruiting process will do its best to match people’s talents, skills and abilities to the right trade or branch. It may well be they get that right and actually some of these transfers are a little more than wishful thinking.269

177. Transfers between Services can help encourage personnel to remain in the Armed Forces. However, the number of transfers has to date been low. We consider that this is a mechanism which could be examined further as a possible way of encouraging retention. We welcome the Minister’s commitment to look at how the transfer system could be improved and we expect the MoD’s response to our Report to set out details of how those improvements will be achieved.

**Efficiency and Change programmes**

178. A discernible theme which emerged on our web forum was the extent to which morale has been undermined by the high level of operational tempo, stretch and the pace of change in the Armed Forces:

The cumulative effect of too much organisational and administrative change occurring in too short a timescale. Numerous ‘leaning’ initiatives being forced onto the Services (through manpower capping and budgetary restraints) that do not take into account the cumulative effect upon the people at the ‘coal face’.  

267 Q 374
268 Q 375
269 Q 378
Outsourcing key military roles to civil servants and commercial companies. Although both bring their own benefits, these are dwarfed by the problems in working culture, quality of output and delivery of service.

No organisational change, government review or new initiative can disguise the need for real and large scale investment at station, ship and battalion level. It is important that personnel are able to see tangible investment—procurement projects and consultancy fees are of no interest to the serving soldier, sailor, airman.

The pride I have always felt in wearing the uniform and knowing that I am giving 100% in supporting the people on the frontline is slowly wearing thin. I am employed in an organisation with insufficient funding and lack of manpower, where the military are in the minority and we are viewed as civilians in uniform.

179. The MoD’s Annual Report and Accounts 2006–07 says that the “Department has comprehensive efficiency and change programmes that extend right across the organisation and affect every employee”.270 The MoD’s Defence Programme is charged with improving efficiency and maximising investment in front-line operational capability. As part of the 2004 Comprehensive Spending Review, the MoD’s Efficiency Programme is expected to deliver efficiency gains of at least £2.8bn.271 The relationship between the different work-streams is set out in Table 15 below.

Table 15: Relationship between change and efficiency programmes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Defence Change programme</th>
<th>Efficiency programme</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Defence Change programme</td>
<td>Joint Defence Change Programme and Force Capability Changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defence Training Review Transformation</td>
<td>Defence Logistics Transformation Forces structure change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK Military Flying Training System</td>
<td>Whole Fleet Management Manpower reductions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Management System</td>
<td>Defence Information Infrastructure Equipment procurement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defence Intelligence Modernisation programme</td>
<td>Estates Modernisation Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint Helicopter Command Rationalisation</td>
<td>People Programme Lyons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German Basing</td>
<td>Joint Personnel Administration Finance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fleet transformation</td>
<td>Defence Health Change Programme Commodity procurement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defence recruitment and Individual Training Management</td>
<td>Defence e-Commerce</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Defence Travel Modernisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Command HQ Collocations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministry of Defence

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270 Ministry of Defence, Annual Report and Accounts 2006–07, HC 697, p 84, para 141
271 Ibid, p 84–5
180. In addition to the current high operational tempo, the Armed Forces face pressures which arise from the various efficiency and change programmes such as the Defence Change Programme and Force Capability Changes. We do not doubt the calibre of personnel in the Armed Forces and their commitment to maintaining the highest standards, but a combination of demands has created an exceptional burden. We accept the necessity of the change and efficiency programmes, but the MoD cannot neglect the resulting impact on Service personnel. We believe that the MoD must do more to manage the pressure on Service personnel.

**Volunteer Reserve Forces retention challenges**

181. As discussed in Part 2 of our Report above, the actual number in the Reserve Forces falls short of requirements. Volunteer Forces are also subject to high turnover rates. Volunteer Reservists experience different challenges to those experienced by Regular personnel—families and their civilian employment usually take precedence over their commitment to the Reserve Force. The MoD accepts that it could do more to help Reservists respond to these pressures. On 1 April 2008, the MoD announced a review into the configuration, structure and location of Reservists, as well as considering Reservists training and equipment.

**Supporting Volunteer Reservists**

182. The NAO’s study of the Reserve Forces found that around half of the Volunteer Reservists planning to resign within the year cited personal or family pressure as reasons for leaving. In 2007, 61% of TA personnel who left, cited work or family commitments. We asked SSAFA FH and the Army and RAF Families Federation about the support Volunteer Reservists and their families received. Julie McCarthy noted that the wide geographical spread of many Reservists units made it difficult to provide welfare support in the same ways that it was provided to Regular Forces. Dawn McCafferty emphasised that:

> they are a uniquely difficult group to reach and you have to assume that the partners and the families do not actually understand anything about the military lifestyle because they have not chosen to volunteer at the weekends...but they are just carrying on with their normal lives. It is only when their partner is deployed or there is an issue where they need support, suddenly they do not know who to turn to...it is facilitating information to them, a welfare package that they can tap into when they need it, but also respecting the fact that they do not necessarily want it forced down their throats.”

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272 NAO, HC (2005–06) 964, p 2, para 20
273 Ibid, p 37, para 4.13
274 HC Deb, 19 Mar 2008, Col 64WS
275 NAO, HC (2005–06) 964, p 35, Figure 14
276 2007 Continuous Attitude Survey (Territorial Army), Q 71, p 30
277 Q 58
278 Ibid
183. The NAO concluded that the MoD needed to improve the levels and quality of communication between Reservists in theatre, between theatre and home units and with the families of Reservists.\(^{279}\) Tim Corry, Campaign Director for SaBRE, told us that improvements to communication could be made at Unit level:

I know that there are variations in how much people do…but certainly commanding officers…are able to make sure that families are included in broad communications about what reserves are doing and for them to feel included, particularly in the very difficult periods when reservists are away on deployment and perhaps are mobilised for 11 months with their training and then come back, to make sure that families are kept in the picture as to precisely what is happening to their spouses.\(^{280}\)

184. The MoD recognises that Reservists should be offered the same level of support as is offered to Regular personnel.\(^{281}\) However, in 2007 61% of TA personnel felt that they had been poorly informed about their eligibility to use the Army Welfare Service and 53% felt they had been poorly informed about the Welfare Services the Army provided.\(^{282}\) The NAO found that:

the Army is providing resources for additional welfare officers. There are also instances where units have helped families of deploying Reservists to firm their own informal support networks. However, problems remain for the families of Reserves who serve in specialist units or from the Regular Reserves, who are more widely geographically spread, are more isolated and do not have such ready access to welfare support. More can be done to link them with local Volunteer Reserve or Regular Units.\(^{283}\)

185. **Reservists are vital to our Armed Forces and deserve a high level of support. However, in several areas the level of support needs to be improved substantially. We find it unacceptable that the MoD has not developed a welfare package that responds to the unique circumstances of Volunteer and Regular Reservists. We recommend that this should be addressed as a matter of urgency.**

186. We also have concerns about the level of post-deployment support received by Reservists. The NAO asked Reservists about their experiences of the transition from military to civilian life—some described the transition as “difficult” or “abrupt”.\(^{284}\) Tim Corry told us that “when a regular comes back from deployment or mobilisation generally speaking he has his peer group around him and he can decompress, or whatever the expression is, whereas the reservist goes back to his civilian community”.\(^{285}\)

187. Research undertaken in 2006 by Kings College, London, funded by the MoD, found that Territorial Army (TA) members had less post-deployment medical support than

\(^{279}\) NAO, HC (2005–06) 964, p 37, para 4.16

\(^{280}\) Q 104

\(^{281}\) NAO, HC (2005–06) 964, p 38, para 4.18

\(^{282}\) 2007 Continuous Attitude Survey (Territorial Army), Qq 52 a-b, p 24

\(^{283}\) NAO, HC (2005–06) 964, p 38, para 4.17

\(^{284}\) *Ibid*, p 41, para 4.30

\(^{285}\) Q 93
Regular Army members. The study concluded that 25% of Reservists who had fought in Iraq experienced mental health disorders, compared with 19% of Regular soldiers.\textsuperscript{286} In response to this study, in November 2006, the MoD instituted a Reserves Mental Health Programme, providing a dedicated mental health assessment programme for any member of the Reserve Forces deployed since January 2003, although the \textit{MoD Annual Report and Accounts 2006–07} reveals that the numbers assessed have been small.\textsuperscript{287} \textbf{We note that the MoD has instituted a dedicated mental health assessment programme for Reservists, but we are concerned that the number of Reservists who have used it to date has been small. In its response to our Report, we expect the MoD to set out the reasons for this.}

\section*{Integration}

188. The NAO found that "throughout our fieldwork, Reservists have emphasised how important it is that they have valued, meaningful roles to perform, and are employed in those roles when the need arises; otherwise morale and motivation suffer and they are more likely to leave the organisation".\textsuperscript{288} Not all reservists are trained, mobilised or integrated properly, and short comings in these areas impacts on Reservists operational effectiveness.\textsuperscript{289} 25% of TA personnel felt that the Army’s efforts to improve integration had not resulted in any change.\textsuperscript{290} The MoD told us:

> There will inevitably be cases where individuals moved into larger, formed units, perceive themselves to be initially poorly integrated. This may be exacerbated where individual augmentation occurs for operations although this can affect Regular as well as Reservist augmentees. Integration has significantly improved, but the Department is not complacent and strives for better integration not only on operations, but throughout Reservists’ careers. The Front Line Commands, responsible for force generation, now attempt wherever possible to integrate Reservist pre-deployment activity with Regulars at the earliest opportunity… Legislative limitations on the length of mobilised Service sometimes preclude a Reservist from undertaking all his training with the regular unit in which he is to be embedded but commanders are conscious of this practical limitation.\textsuperscript{291}

We have heard from Reservists that the process of augmenting and backfilling can lead to a lack of cohesion within formed units and can make it difficult to maintain a high level of performance. We note with concern the NAO’s finding that over 40% of those planning to leave the Reserves, cited poor leadership as a factor in their decision.\textsuperscript{292} The MoD has set out details of the training courses which it considers will resolve this problem.\textsuperscript{293}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[286] More medical aid for reservists, 16 May 2006 bbc.co.uk
\item[288] NAO, HC (2005–06) 964, p 36, para 4.11
\item[289] \textit{Ibid}, p 14, para 2.8
\item[290] 2007 Continuous Attitude Survey (Territorial Army), Q 29 a-b, p 13
\item[291] Ev 108
\item[292] NAO, HC (2005–06) 964-I, Appendix Three, p 50
\item[293] Ev 171–172
\end{footnotes}
189. The Reserves provide the MoD with vital capability on operations abroad and in the UK. We acknowledge the important role they play in the Armed Forces. However, Reserves are often used to augment and backfill other units which can damage morale and motivation and undermine retention. We look to the MoD to examine whether the way it uses Reserves contributes to voluntary outflow.

**The role of employers**

190. Employer supportiveness is an important retention factor for Volunteer Reserves. As we discussed in our Report *Medical care for the Armed Forces*, the relationship with employers is particularly important in specialist units where Reservists are being used specifically for their civilian skills—such as medical Reservists. SaBRE was created in 2002 as a marketing campaign group to support Reservists and employers of Reservists. The MoD says that 89% of employers surveyed by SaBRE agree that they should be supportive of Reservist employees; although that support reduced by 6% for second mobilisations and fell again by 10% for subsequent mobilisations. SaBRE research found that employer support also fell when employers realised that the length of the average mobilisation period was 11 months.

191. Not all employers are so supportive. Some employers, particularly those with small businesses, do not feel that they can accommodate the obligations of Reservist’s and will not recruit workers who have a Reserve commitment. SaBRE also reported that some Reservists facing repeat mobilisations had been told by their employers that they should resign from the Volunteer Reserves for the sake of their long-term career. 22% of TA personnel felt that their commitment to the TA impacted on the security of their civilian jobs. 52% said that their employers would react negatively if they mobilised voluntarily and 24% said that their employers would react negatively if they were compulsory mobilised. This is a matter of concern. We asked SaBRE about whether legislation was necessary to protect the rights of Reservists. Tim Corry told us that:

There are two schools of thought here...People say they have been discriminated against but it is very difficult to prove. On the one hand you could say that we have it in the area of gender, paternity etc, etc, and there could be an argument for legislation in this area. My personal view is that it would be counter-productive. There are some people who, if you produced legislation against discrimination, would find a reason to work round it, whereas if it does not exist certainly based on our relationship with employers we talk to broadly it is dealt with as a case-by-case study.

We are concerned that information about the impact of Reservist’s commitments on their civilian employment is anecdotal and unquantified. The MoD must urgently
commission research into this issue, and, if necessary, consider legislation to ensure that the rights of Reservists are protected.

The Military Covenant

192. The Royal British Legion and former and serving military leaders have called for the Military Covenant—the unwritten social and moral commitment between society and the Army—to be formalised and extended across the Services. The campaign centres around a perceived need for an agreed contract between civil society and Service personnel.

193. In their paper Out of Step, Dr Timothy Edmunds and Professor Anthony Forster, maintain that the Military Covenant "has been damaged almost beyond repair. A new civil–military contract is necessary—first, to restore the Military Covenant between the Army and the nation; and second, the Military Covenant must be a tri-Service (rather than Army) pledge between the government (on behalf of its citizens), the military as an employer and individual service personnel". As evidence for the need for a formalised Military Covenant, they point to: the poor quality of some Service accommodation; problems with standard issue kit; breaches in Harmony Guidelines; complaints about pay and allowances; and claim that recent large scale equipment projects have diverted funding from projects supporting Armed Forces personnel.

194. Not all are persuaded by the need for a formalised Military Covenant. Professor Strachan told us that:

   The Military Covenant is a very new expression. Many of the issues that are raised under the Military Covenant are issues to do with specific under-provision in areas which we should be providing for even if there were a written and adhered to Military Covenant…I am not entirely persuaded that there is a need for a written document and I am slightly surprised that it has become assumed that there is such a thing as a Military Covenant.

195. Members of the Armed Forces make sacrifices on behalf of civil society and in return they and their families should receive appropriate support. However, we do not see how formalising the Military Covenant would provide that support. In our opinion any formalised Military Covenant would become a political instrument rather than an instrument to protect the interests of men and women in our Armed Forces. As such, it would divert attention from what is important: ensuring Armed Forces personnel receive what they are entitled to.

Representing Armed Forces Personnel

196. Service personnel are prevented from joining unions and do not have an alternative representative body to make collective representations about pay, conditions of service; and to offer support at disciplinary hearings and employment tribunals. The Police

300 Demos, Out of Step: The case for change in the British Armed Forces, November 2007, 19–20
301 Demos, Out of Step: The case for change in the British Armed Forces, November 2007
302 Q 18
303 HC Deb, 13 May 2008, Col 1215; Ev 90
Service has such a body which represents the interest of police officers, particularly in terms of welfare provision and the efficiency of the Police Service.

197. In evidence to us, Dr Alexandrou argued that “the lack of a collective representative body currently...impacts negatively on the morale, commitment and ultimately on the retention of high quality military personnel at all levels”. 304 The British Armed Forces Federation (BAFF) believes that a possible solution lies in establishing an independent Armed Force’s Federation. 305 The proposed terms for a Federation are set out below:

Table 16: Proposed 10 Point Plan for a proposed Armed Forces Federation 306

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. A professional staff association is to be formed for members of Her Majesty’s Forces under the provisional title of the British Armed Forces Federation (BAFF).</th>
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<tr>
<td>2. Comparable bodies have for years served the Armed Forces of allied countries such as the US and Australia, with official cooperation and no negative impact on operational effectiveness or military discipline. The proposed federation is, however, designed to be a specifically British solution... It will reflect and respect the ethos and robust traditions of the three fighting services. It will meet all requirements of British and other law, including international conventions adopted by the UK.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The federation’s mission shall be to represent, foster and promote the professional, welfare and other legitimate interests of all members of the federation in their capacity as serving or retired personnel of the fighting services of the UK, and in so doing help to maximise operational efficiency and improve the retention of trained personnel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The federation will be a democratic representative institution answerable to its members. Membership of the federation will be open to all personnel irrespective of rank, branch of service or gender. The main membership categories will be Ordinary Membership (Regular), Ordinary Membership (Reserve Forces) and Veteran Membership. In responding to the requirements of its members, the federation will act in the interests of all serving personnel and veterans but will not countenance any pressure on individuals to join.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Within resources, the activities of the federation may include: (a) professional and career development by the provision of education and information; (b) liaison, monitoring and response to proposals or developments within the services, in Parliament, in the provision of public services or in the commercial sector which have a specific impact on forces personnel; (c) appropriate advocacy and consultation to protect and improve the conditions of service life including pay, accommodation, medical and welfare services, resettlement and all other areas of personnel support; (d) appropriate support to personnel facing court martial or other legal proceedings in connection with their service (the federation will not normally comment on any specific case within the systems or military justice and administrative discipline); and (e) the negotiation for members of a range of insurance, financial and other benefits, discounts or affinity deals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The federation will not be beholden to any political party, pressure group, or defence industry interest. While supporting the cross-party consensus on the need for robust, adequately funded but cost-effective forces serving the Nation as determined by the Government of the day, the federation will not be a defence pressure group. The federation will not take a view on matters of defence strategy or operational decisions, although it may raise legitimate subsidiary matters affecting personnel. Parliamentary liaison will be strictly on a cross-party basis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. The federation will not be a trade union and, above all, it will not conduct or condone any form of industrial action or insubordination within the Armed Forces. The federation affirms the vital role of the Armed Forces Chain of Command in representing the interests of its personnel. The federation will seek to agree with the Ministry of Defence appropriate mechanisms for the</td>
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Recruiting and retaining Armed Forces personnel

exchange of information with the Chain of Command as well as centrally. A code of conduct will be adopted, and potential disagreements will normally be raised centrally to avoid placing serving personnel in difficulty with their Chain of Command, or vice versa. The federation will act to protect serving members in their federation-related activities within the agreed code of conduct.

8. The federation will not seek to supplant the role of any existing charity or other agency involved in service welfare. ...

9. Work is already under way on matters such as the structure and legal format of the federation, and staffing. A business plan is being prepared.

10. This draft statement of intent outlines the basic principles established so far. Work continues on detailed aspects of the proposals with a view to wider consultation throughout the Armed Forces community, and with the Ministry of Defence”.

198. Professor Strachan was confident of the advantages of an Armed Forces Federation and told us that: “it could benefit the Chain of Command if you took some…issues [not connected to operational command, for example housing, family support] out of the Chain of Command and enabled them to be dealt with directly as employment issues...in another form of management structure. Of course there will be issues on the borderline between command and personnel management; I entirely see that, and there will be areas of difficulty. That is not a reason for not doing it”. 307 Professor Dandecker was also supportive “it is important that people are involved in decision-making and thinking about the issues that affect the Armed Services. Secondly, the generations of young people who are coming into the military expect it and I think the demand for it is perfectly reasonable”. 308

199. In the 2007, 34% of Royal Naval personnel, 24% of Royal Marine personnel, 36% of Army personnel and 38% of RAF personnel felt that their Service had not treated them fairly. 309 45% Royal Naval personnel, 64% Royal Marine personnel, 46% Army personnel and 40% of RAF personnel felt that senior Service leaders did not understand or represent their interests. 310

200. Respondents to our web forum were also largely supportive of the need for an independent Federation to represent the interests of Service personnel:

it would be nice to have representation at government level which did not involve commissioned officers (who tell you that everything is fine)...the majority of senior officers are far removed from...reality and don't know what happens on the ground.

Ordinarily, I would disagree at the very concept of a Federation or union (that's just the soldier in me) as the only Federation I should need is that provided by the Chain of Command. However...I now feel that there should be an independent forum/organisation where ministers etc can be held to account...

307 Qq 30-31
308 Q 31
309 2007 tri-Service Continuous Attitude Survey, Table 34, p 10
310 Ibid, Table 109, p 28
There are several 'Federations' and no doubt these self-appointed guardians of the faith will appear on these fora shortly. Frankly, we shouldn't need them, and they mere fact they exist leaves a foul taste in my mouth, but at least they…want the best deal for servicemen and women.

It would be good to have proper accountable representation with the AFPRB. The reason for the welfare issues is massive under-spending by the Government causing hardship across the board for servicemen. Contracting out services like DE and JPA has taken the Chain of Command out of the loop and this has created the problems.

201. The MoD has rejected proposals for an Armed Forces Federation for the following reasons:

Individuals have the right to complain about any matter relating to their service, ultimately to the Defence Council. The Armed Forces Act 2006 introduces improvements to the complaints process, including the establishment of a Service Complaints Commissioner.

There are other mechanisms through which the views of Service personnel can become known. Service personnel may join trade and professional associations, as well as organisations representing their interests, ranging from the Armed Forces Pension Society to the Armed Forces Lesbian and Gay Association.

We remain unconvinced that an Armed Forces Federation is consistent with the ethos and traditions of the British Armed Forces, nor is there evidence of widespread grass roots desire for such a development.

MOD will engage with any organisation which represents individual service personnel interests such as the Forces Pensions Society, the Combined Armed Forces Federation (UK). 311

202. We asked the Minister to expand on the MoD’s position. He said "first of all, we do not see the need for it. There are a number of reasons for that. We feel that in terms of the Chain of Command it is very important that issues are dealt with by that process, particularly around welfare issues. As for the changes in terms of redress…the Service Complaints Commissioner has been put in place. 312 Vice Admiral Wilkinson said that "I agree that …representing the wellbeing and welfare of the people under your command is a vital function for the Chain of Command. I am also strongly of the opinion that there are a number of mechanisms and routes whereby people can make representations or state a complaint all the way up to the Defence Council if necessary." 313

203. We have listened carefully to the arguments both for and against an Armed Forces Federation. We are open-minded about the benefits of such a Federation, but we are concerned that the MoD is not. We recommend that the MoD considers more constructively the possible benefits which may be gained from an independent Armed
Forces Federation, and encourage the MoD to consult with the British Armed Forces Federation.
Conclusions and recommendations

Web forum
1. The use of web fora provide us with an opportunity to hear the experiences of a wide range of current and former Service personnel and their families. We value this interaction. We welcome the Minister’s support for our ability to communicate freely with the Service community. However, this is the second time we have had concerns that the MoD has attempted to undermine a web forum that we have hosted. We look to the MoD to demonstrate its support for our interaction with the Service community by actively promoting web fora we set up for future inquiries. (Paragraph 13)

Pinchpoint trades
2. We are disappointed to note that between 2004 and 2008, the number of pinchpoint trades have increased across all Services. In the Army pinchpoint trades have increased by 15.4%, in the RAF by 63%, and in the Naval Service by 150%, so that there are now 30 pinchpoint trades in the Army, 31 in the RAF and 25 in the Naval Service. (Paragraph 36)

Assessing Armed Forces responsiveness
3. We are concerned that, on the basis of the information presented about PSA Target 3, Armed Forces Responsiveness, the Armed Forces have limited ability to meet future, as yet unknown, obligations. The MoD has said that PSA Target 3 provides an assessment of the level of pressure experienced by the Armed Forces and does not reflect on their ability to sustain current operations. As the MoD cannot predict or control the exact nature and timing of future operational requirements, we believe that its failure to meet this target points to a potentially serious weakness in the future capability of the Armed Forces. Furthermore, we question the purpose of a target which, given recent operational tempo, the MoD has no chance of meeting. (Paragraph 44)

Engaging with the public
4. We note that the sometimes negative media coverage about the Armed Forces is detrimental to the public’s understanding of the military and places unnecessary pressure on Service personnel and their families. (Paragraph 47)

5. Any increase in contact between the Armed Forces and civilian society should be welcomed. We hope that the MoD gives due consideration to the proposals contained in the report on National Recognition of our Armed Forces. Budgetary constraints and the level of stretch currently experienced by the Armed Forces limit the extent to which the Services can build and maintain links with civilian society. However, we consider that these activities are central to ensuring the future success of the Armed Forces. The MoD should afford them high priority and ensure that
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they are adequately resourced. It is also important that decision makers in civilian society, including Members of Parliament and Local Government representatives, have an understanding of the military. We recommend that the MoD encourages more contact between the military and such groups to ensure that decisions which affect our Armed Forces are evidence based. (Paragraph 50)

Working with schools to raise awareness of the Armed Forces

6. The MoD does not appear to have adequately considered the delivery of its school visits programme, in particular how the geographical spread of visits and individual Service visits fit into broader objectives of increasing awareness of the Armed Forces. We recommend that the MoD considers the relationship between the historic geographic footprint of the Services and the benefits of school visits. We are concerned that by concentrating on those areas which already have an understanding of an individual Service—particularly for the Royal Navy and the RAF—the full benefits of working with schools to raise awareness and create links between the Armed Forces and civilian society will not be achieved. (Paragraph 55)

7. We are encouraged that in 2006 the MoD investigated how the content of its school visits programme could be improved and has identified a number of methods for achieving this. Outreach school visits and recruiting visits have different purposes and we agree with the MoD that it must keep them separate. We understand that the MoD is to undertake a detailed review of its schools programme. In its response to our Report, we expect the MoD to set out the terms of reference and timetable for that review. We consider that active, adventure based outreach programmes will be most successful. (Paragraph 56)

8. The MoD told us that it would work with Members of Parliament to gain introductions to schools that have not developed contacts with the Armed Forces. We see this as a positive development and we look forward to working with the MoD to put it into practice. (Paragraph 57)

Cadets role in raising awareness of the Armed Forces

9. We welcome the positive impact that the Cadet Forces can have on the lives of young people and we acknowledge the hard work of all those involved in making the Cadet Forces a success. We note that the MoD, in partnership with other Government Departments, is seeking to increase the number of Cadet Forces based in state schools. This is a welcome development which we feel will bring benefit to the young people concerned. It will also help to provide more opportunities for the public to engage with the Armed Forces. In its response to our Report, we expect the MoD to set out its plans and timetable for increasing the number of Cadet Forces based in state schools. We will monitor the MoD’s progress carefully. (Paragraph 60)

10. We also welcome the fact that the MoD recognises that it needs to make changes to the constitutions of individual Cadet Forces to enable them to work together more easily. We believe that these changes will benefit future growth in the Cadet Forces. However, we do not consider that these changes will be possible unless the Cadet
Forces are funded appropriately and that that funding is equitable across the four Cadet Forces. (Paragraph 61)

**Reservists role in raising awareness of the Armed Forces**

11. We support the MoD’s proposals to do more to encourage links between military and civilian society through the Reserve Forces. We look forward to the publication of the MoD’s review of the Reserve Force and its findings about the Reserves role in developing the relationship between the Armed Forces and civilian society. (Paragraph 62)

**Recruiting environment**

12. We note that the MoD is recruiting in a challenging economic environment. It is not consistently meeting its recruitment targets and therefore sufficient numbers are not entering the Armed Forces. We acknowledge that the MoD is trying to respond to a changing recruiting environment, although we do not think that it is responding quickly enough. We believe that current recruiting shortfalls will be even greater in the future, unless the MoD increases its success rate in recruiting women and ethnic minorities. We are also concerned that the MoD has not demonstrated that it is responding to changes in society, such as an ageing population and a growing demand for more flexible careers. If it is to remain an attractive employer, it needs to do so. (Paragraph 65)

13. We were told that a number of recent EU migrants to the United Kingdom had expressed an interest in enlisting in the British Armed Forces. In its response to our Report, we expect the MoD to provide us with an assessment of the impact that opening recruitment to EU migrants could have on the manning situation in the Armed Forces. (Paragraph 66)

**Recruiting diversity**

14. We call on the MoD to acknowledge that the figures it cites for the increase in ethnic minority representation—1% in 1999 and 6% in January 2008—are based on different data sets and are not directly comparable. (Paragraph 68)

15. We are concerned that there is evidence which suggests that there is a widespread culture of complacency at many levels across the Armed Services about the value of ensuring that the make-up of the Armed Forces reflect the United Kingdom’s ethnic diversity. An internal communications strategy is required to ensure that all personnel in the MoD understand the importance of diversity to the long term credibility and legitimacy of the Armed Services. (Paragraph 76)

16. We recognise that improving ethnic minority recruiting is a major challenge and it will take some time to see the success of some of the MoD’s current recruiting strategies. However, we are concerned that the MoD is not collecting the data that is required, and without this data it cannot develop well informed, evidence based policies. The MoD told us that it was improving data collection wherever it could. We do not consider that this is an appropriate response to such an important issue.
In its response to our Report, we expect the MoD to set out exactly how it has improved data collection and what assessment the Equality and Human Rights Commission has made of those improvements. (Paragraph 77)

17. We note the Equality and Human Rights Commission’s conclusion that recruiting strategies based on the individual characteristics of each Service may improve the MoD’s success in recruiting ethnic minorities to the Armed Forces. We recommend that the MoD work with the EHRC to identify such strategies. (Paragraph 78)

Recruiting campaigns and resources

18. We commend the MoD on its recruitment campaigns and marketing strategies and we welcome the Armed Forces use of online resources to engage their target audiences. We also welcome the Armed Forces targeting individual pinchpoint trades as part of their marketing campaigns, but note that on the basis of available evidence, success has been limited. We recommend that the MoD develops a more systematic approach to recruiting to pinchpoint trades. (Paragraph 84)

One Army Recruiting

19. One Army Recruiting, integrating Regular and Territorial Army recruiting, has been in operation for more than 12 months, and has been in development for several years. We are surprised that the Army was unable to share with us its initial lessons learnt about this major change in its recruiting methodology. We expect the MoD to provide us with such an analysis in its response to our Report. (Paragraph 86)

20. Some evidence we received suggests that One Army Recruiting has had a detrimental affect on Territorial Army recruiting. In its response to this Report, we expect the MoD to provide us with its assessment of the affects that One Army Recruiting has had on Territorial Army recruiting. (Paragraph 89)

Recruiting and schools

21. We have concerns that the MoD may be missing opportunities though a lack of co-ordination of its recruitment activities in schools. We recommend that the MoD’s review of its school programme considers how recruiting visits could be better co-ordinated. We commend the Armed Forces on its work experience and enterprise programmes for young people interested in a career in the Armed Forces. We consider that first hand experience of Service life is a positive recruitment tool. (Paragraph 92)

Gap years

22. We consider that the MoD’s recent decisions to close Army and Royal Marine Gap year schemes is shortsighted. We note that the Australian Defence Force has responded to its recruiting shortfalls by launching a scheme for 700 school leavers, which it plans to expand in the future. We recommend that the MoD reconsiders its policy on Gap year schemes. (Paragraph 93)
Educational incentives

23. Professor Strachan told us that the MoD could do more to use educational incentives to draw people to the Armed Forces, we agree. The Armed Forces have a long tradition of using educational incentives to attract officers and medical staff, and we believe that this should be expanded to other ranks. We consider that the MoD could be more imaginative in developing recruitment opportunities based around education and should specifically recognise the need to adapt recruiting strategies to the recent growth in higher education. (Paragraph 97)

Training

24. We believe that initial training should ensure that as many recruits as possible succeed. High wastage rates during initial training suggest that there is a serious weakness in initial training programmes or that the recruitment process does not adequately predict those unsuitable for life in the Armed Forces. We note that there is a balance to be struck in ensuring that the pool of potential recruits is not unnecessarily limited and that resources are not wasted. (Paragraph 101)

25. We are concerned at the high wastage rates in Phase 1 and 2 training and in particular, by the increases in wastage rates since 2005. The Royal Marines’ wastage rates have been consistently close to 50% for the last 5 years, (Paragraph 104)

26. although we note that the standard required by the Royal Marines is very high. In its response to this Report we expect the MoD tell us how many Royal Marine recruits who do not complete training enlist in other parts of the Armed Services. Both the Army and the RAF’s wastage rates are creeping upwards. In its response to our Report, we expect the MoD to set out the causes of such high wastage rates, the factors which have contributed to the pattern of increase in the last five years, and the reasons why our wastage rates appear to be so much higher than our major allies. (Paragraph 104)

The impact of Service life on family and personal life

27. The evidence we have received reinforces our conclusion that failure to meet Harmony Guidelines and the resulting pressure has serious consequences for retention in the Armed Forces. Given the demands placed on our Service personnel from the current level of operations, the Armed Forces are unlikely to achieve their Harmony Guideline targets in the near future. This continues to put Service personnel and their families under considerable strain. (Paragraph 111)

28. We strongly support Service personnel and their families in their calls to have greater stability. If the MoD is to succeed in its efforts to retain Service personnel, it must urgently seek ways to lessen the impact of stretch on Service personnel and their families. We have seen some evidence that the Services have recognised the importance of stability in the personal and family life of Service personnel, but this needs to be given greater priority. In particular, the MoD should examine how more advance notice of postings and deployments could be given to Service personnel, so they and their families have more time to prepare. In its response to our Report we
expect the Government to set out what measures it plans to introduce to create
greater stability for Armed Forces personnel and the timetable for doing so, and in
particular, how the development of Super Garrisons contributes to those plans.
(Paragraph 115)

Welfare provision

29. The importance of first class welfare support for our Service personnel and their
families cannot be overstated. They deserve nothing less. We commend
organisations such as SSAFA FH and the Army, Naval and RAF Families
Federations for the excellent work they do in this area. We acknowledge the recent
improvements the MoD has made to the operational welfare package. However, it
needs to do more. We are concerned that a reduction of Armed Forces Welfare
Officers has had a detrimental affect on the quality of welfare support provided to
Service personnel and their families. (Paragraph 122)

30. We welcome the publication on 17 July 2008 of the Service Personnel Strategy. We
plan to monitor its implementation and we will be seeking regular updates from the
MoD on the progress being made and how the proposals in the strategy address the
current shortcomings in the provision of welfare support. (Paragraph 123)

Co-ordinating welfare support

31. We acknowledge the important work undertaken by the voluntary sector to support
current and former Service personnel and their families. However, we are concerned
that more could be done to make their assistance more coherent. We welcome the
MoD’s recent innovation of welfare conferences, but look to the MoD, in its response
to this Report, to make a clear statement about its future plans to ensure there is a
framework which provides a better focus for co-ordinating welfare support. We are
particularly concerned that the boundaries between the welfare support provided by
charities and that provided by the MoD has become blurred. (Paragraph 126)

Focus of welfare provision

32. We accept that the Command structure has an absolute duty to provide welfare
support, but, at a time of high operational tempo, we are concerned that welfare
support is not always being delivered in the way that personnel and their families
require. The MoD recognises that welfare support can be improved. In its response
to our Report, we call on the MoD to set out the specific improvements it plans to
introduce, and how those changes will place the individual at the centre of welfare
provision. (Paragraph 129)

Standards of Service Housing

33. We have already highlighted in our earlier report the important role that
accommodation plays in the ability of the Services to retain personnel. The MoD
plans to spend some £5 billion on accommodation over the next ten years. Given the
importance of accommodation to family welfare and retention, we expect the MoD
Recruiting and retaining Armed Forces personnel

to ensure that the work to improve accommodation is pushed forward as quickly as possible and, where possible, further resources are earmarked for upgrading accommodation. We note that Super Garrisons provide the MoD with an opportunity to deliver high quality Service accommodation. (Paragraph 133)

34. We were very disappointed that the Government response to our Report on The work of Defence Estates failed to acknowledge the serious shortcomings in the administration and maintenance of Service accommodation. It is now one year since we published our Report, and we are still receiving evidence that the standard of maintenance repairs and level of customer service falls well below the expectations of Service personnel and their families. We note that the Under-Secretary of State for Defence finds this unacceptable. So do we. We recommend that the MoD seeks advice from Local Government Housing Associations about how Defence Estates can move towards a customer-centred approach and we plan to monitor the MoD’s progress in doing so. (Paragraph 138)

**Support for Service personnel to own their own homes**

35. While we recognise the great value in welfare terms of the close-knit community that Service provided accommodation ensures, we support the MoD’s recent initiatives to help members of the Armed Forces achieve home ownership. We consider that moves towards more stable basing of Armed Forces personnel will provide the MoD with more opportunities to develop new home ownership initiatives. It is vital that the MoD begin work on developing new initiatives now, that it works in partnership with the social housing sector, and that the resources to ensure their success are committed early. (Paragraph 141)

**Pay and allowances**

36. We found General Dannatt’s comparison of the Armed Forces personnel pay with traffic wardens and police constables unhelpful. Pay is only one component of Service personnel’s remuneration package which makes such comparisons far from straightforward. It is vital that remuneration remains competitive and does not deter people from considering a career in the Armed Forces or from remaining in the Services. Our Armed Forces are among the best in the world and their pay should reflect this. We note that the overall basic pay package does not appear to be a major cause of Armed Forces personnel leaving the Services. (Paragraph 149)

**Financial Retention Incentives**

37. We note that the MoD has acknowledged that some Service personnel have had trouble understanding their allowances and has introduced a ‘ready-reckoner’ to help personnel determine their eligibility and entitlement to allowances. In its response to our Report, we expect the MoD to set out its analysis of the difficulties that personnel may have in understanding the allowance package, the causes of those difficulties, and the extent to which the ready-reckoner resolves the difficulties. (Paragraph 152)
38. We note that the MoD uses Financial Retention Incentives as a temporary emergency measure to maintain operational capability. Take-up rates have been mixed: FRIs for aircrew, special forces and submariners have had high take-up rates, while FRIs for nurses, the Royal Marines and the Infantry have not been so successful. We note that there are more Financial Retention Incentives operating in 2008 than there were in 2007. This is a reflection of the worsening manning situation in pinchpoint trades. (Paragraph 155)

39. We share the Armed Forces Pay Review Body’s concern that Financial Retention Incentives may not prove to be cost effective over the long term. We understand the necessity of these measures, but we have concerns that Financial Retention Incentives may divert investment away from addressing the underlying causes of worsening retention. In its response to our Report, we expect the MoD to provide a breakdown of the total cost of each Financial Retention Incentive and the numbers of Armed Forces personnel who have been retained. We also expect the Government to set out its assessment of how Financial Retention Incentives will impact on pay scales over time, particularly for those trades which have been in receipt of successive, large Financial Retention Incentives, such as submariners who can receive up to £25,000 and aircrew who can receive up to £100,000. As pinch point trades often involve small numbers the manning situation in those trades can change rapidly. We expect the MoD to keep FRIs under constant review to ensure that money is not spent unnecessarily (Paragraph 156)

Joint Personnel Administration

40. The Joint Personnel Administration system offers potential efficiency and business benefits. However, we are concerned that Service personnel are not receiving the money that they are entitled to because JPA is difficult to use. The number of military administrative and support posts have been cut as part of an efficiency programme and as a result, Service personnel are not getting the help which they require and should be entitled to. We consider that these difficulties stem from poor planning and ineffective training. In its response to our report, we expect the MoD to set out what action it plans to take to address what is, in our view, a totally unacceptable state of affairs. (Paragraph 161)

41. The Joint Personnel Administration call centre is the frontline for Service personnel who have questions about their pay, allowances and career. As such, it is critical that the advisers staffing it are thoroughly trained and properly equipped to perform their roles. However, the feedback we have received suggests that they are not. We welcome the Government’s recent indication that additional training for call centre staff has improved levels of customer satisfaction. In its response to our Report we expect the MoD to provide us with an update on levels of customer satisfaction. (Paragraph 162)

Single Service parity

42. The differences in terms and conditions between each Services are a cause of discontent. Whilst we acknowledge that it is important for each Service to have the flexibility to respond to its unique circumstances, in an era of increasing joint
operations, the MoD must give serious consideration to how different terms and conditions in the three Services could be better aligned. We recommend that both the MoD and the Armed Forces Pay Review Body should urgently consider how this could be best achieved. (Paragraph 166)

Retirement age

43. The Armed Forces require an age profile which is focused on youth and physical fitness. However, the MoD must be careful that its retirement policies do not lead to experienced Service personnel leaving before they are due to go. Experienced personnel are a valuable resource and the MoD’s policies should reflect this. We are concerned that the differences between the retirement policies in each of the three Services creates a disjointed system and causes inequalities. (Paragraph 170)

44. We call upon the MoD to explain how that differences in retirement policies can be justified on grounds of combat effectiveness and how differences in retirement policies fits with the MoD Unified Diversity Strategy mission statement and the Royal Navy Diversity and Equality Policy Statements. (Paragraph 171)

Transfers

45. Transfers between Services can help encourage personnel to remain in the Armed Forces. However, the number of transfers has to date been low. We consider that this is a mechanism which could be examined further as a possible way of encouraging retention. We welcome the Minister’s commitment to look at how the transfer system could be improved and we expect the MoD’s response to our Report to set out details of how those improvements will be achieved. (Paragraph 177)

Efficiency and Change programmes

46. In addition to the current high operational tempo, the Armed Forces face pressures which arise from the various efficiency and change programmes such as the Defence Change Programme and Force Capability Changes. We do not doubt the calibre of personnel in the Armed Forces and their commitment to maintaining the highest standards, but, a combination of demands has created an exceptional burden. We accept the necessity of the change and efficiency programmes, but the MoD cannot neglect the resulting impact on Service personnel. We believe that the MoD must do more to manage the pressure on Service personnel. (Paragraph 180)

Support for Volunteer Reservists

47. Reservists are vital to our Armed Forces and deserve a high level of support. However, in several areas the level of support needs to be improved substantially. We find it unacceptable that the MoD has not developed a welfare package that responds to the unique circumstances of Volunteer and Regular Reservists. We recommend that this should be addressed as a matter of urgency. (Paragraph 185)

48. We note that the MoD has instituted a dedicated mental health assessment programme for Reservists, but we are concerned that the number of Reservists who
have used it to date has been small. In its response to our Report, we expect the MoD to set out the reasons for this. (Paragraph 187)

49. The Reserves provide the MoD with vital capability on operations abroad and in the UK. We acknowledge the important role they play in the Armed Forces. However, Reserves are often used to augment and backfill other units which can damage morale and motivation and undermine retention. We look to the MoD to examine whether the way it uses Reserves contributes to voluntary outflow. (Paragraph 189)

50. We are concerned that information about the impact of Reservist’s commitments on their civilian employment is anecdotal and unquantified. The MoD must urgently commission research into this issue, and, if necessary, consider legislation to ensure that the rights of Reservists are protected. (Paragraph 191)

The military covenant

51. Members of the Armed Forces make sacrifices on behalf of civil society and in return they and their families should receive appropriate support. However, we do not see how formalising the Military Covenant would provide that support. In our opinion any formalised Military Covenant would become a political instrument rather than an instrument to protect the interests of men and women in our Armed Forces. As such, it would divert attention from what is important: ensuring Armed Forces personnel receive what they are entitled to. (Paragraph 195)

An independent Armed Forces Federation

52. We have listened carefully to the arguments both for and against an Armed Forces Federation. We are open minded about the benefits of such a Federation, but we are concerned that the MoD is not. We recommend that the MoD considers more constructively the possible benefits which may be gained from an independent Armed Forces Federation, and encourage the MoD to consult with the British Armed Forces Federation. (Paragraph 203)
## Annex A: List of Abbreviations

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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADF</td>
<td>Australian Defence Force</td>
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<tr>
<td>AFOPS</td>
<td>Armed Forces Overarching Personnel Strategy</td>
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<td>AFPRB</td>
<td>Armed Forces Pay Review Body</td>
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<td>AVM</td>
<td>Air Vice-Marshall</td>
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<tr>
<td>BAFF</td>
<td>British Armed Forces Federation</td>
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<tr>
<td>COBSEO</td>
<td>Confederation of British Service and Ex-Service Organisations</td>
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<tr>
<td>DASA</td>
<td>Defence Analytical Services Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>DE&amp;S</td>
<td>Defence Equipment and Support</td>
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<tr>
<td>DPA</td>
<td>Defence Planning Assumptions</td>
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<tr>
<td>EHRC</td>
<td>Equality and Human Rights Commission</td>
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<td>Flt Sgt</td>
<td>Flight Sergeant</td>
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<td>FRI</td>
<td>Financial Retention Initiative</td>
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<td>ITP</td>
<td>Integrated Project Team</td>
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<td>JPA</td>
<td>Joint Personnel Administration</td>
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<td>MoD</td>
<td>Ministry of Defence</td>
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<td>MMA</td>
<td>Motor Mileage Allowance</td>
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<td>NAO</td>
<td>National Audit Office</td>
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<td>NCO</td>
<td>Non Commissioned Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>OCFR</td>
<td>Officers Commissioned from the Ranks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ops</td>
<td>Operations</td>
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<td>OTC</td>
<td>Officer Training Cadet</td>
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<tr>
<td>PSA</td>
<td>Public Service Agreement</td>
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<tr>
<td>PTSO</td>
<td>Post Traumatic Stress Disorder</td>
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<td>RAF</td>
<td>Royal Air Force</td>
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<td>RN</td>
<td>Royal Navy</td>
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<tr>
<td>SaBRE</td>
<td>Supporting Britain’s Reservists and Employers</td>
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<tr>
<td>SNCO</td>
<td>Senior Non Commissioned Officer</td>
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SSAFA FH  Soldiers, Sailors, Airman Families Association Forces Help
TA    Territorial Army
WO    Warrant Officer
Annex B: The Committee’s web forum

The Committee hosted its third web forum during its inquiry into Recruitment and Retention in the Armed Forces. Web fora allow the Committee to hear from people who would not usually engage in a Select Committee inquiry. In this case, it allowed the Committee to engage directly with current and former Service personnel and their families about the factors which influenced decisions to join or leave the Armed Forces.

Practicalities

The forum was launched on 2 April 2008 and ran until 28 May 2008. The site was designed and created by Parliamentary Information Communication and Technology (PICT). During the registration process, users agreed to a set of discussion rules. The forum was pre-moderated—messages were checked to ensure that they adhered to the discussion rules before they were published on the forum. Assistance in moderating the forum was provided by the Committee Office Scrutiny Unit.

Publicity

The forum was launched with a press notice. Articles about the forum featured on British Forces Broadcasting Service (BFBS) and in Soldier magazine. Links to the forum were provided on the Navy Families Federation, the RAF Families Federation, the Army Families Federation, SSAFA FH, and the Institute of Career Guidance websites. Hive Information Service centres displayed posters advertising the forum.

Forum questions

The web forum asked for responses to three questions:

- What are the positive aspects of working in the Armed Forces? Why join and why stay?
- What are the disadvantages of working in the Armed Forces? If you have left the Armed Forces, what were your reasons for leaving?
- Why do you think that the Armed Forces face such a challenge recruiting ethnic minority personnel?

During the forum, the Chairman of the Defence Committee posted more specific questions about raising the retirement age, transferring between trades and Services, whether welfare issues would be better addressed outside the Chain of Command, and whether a single entry point would improve recruitment.

Participants

The web forum attracted 13,785 views and 184 posts. 226 users registered for the forum:

- 150 current regular service personnel
- 6 current volunteer reservists
Summary of the comments posted

What are the positive aspects of working in the Armed Forces? Why join and why stay?

This question attracted 51 posts (although some of the issues raised related to the retention question and are discussed in that section). Some contributors identified job security and benefits as positive aspects of serving in the Armed Forces, as were comradeship and military ethos. Opportunities to learn new skills, travel and make a positive contribution to the world were also seen as positive factors:

The Army life isn’t a bad one. I am currently nearing the end of my career and if I had the chance to do it all again I probably would. Having joined at the tender age of 16, the Army has taught me how to be a man. To do the right thing even though that is often harder than ignoring the problem. It has given me confidence, strength, a trade and more management skills than you could shake a large stick at. I have made friends for life and visited many and varied countries. I have completed tasks that have meaning, that have had long term positive effects on peoples lives. I have felt the adrenaline rush that only a martial life can offer. The Army has so much to offer a person, if they are willing to become more than they ever thought they were capable of. You only get one shot at life, and I’ve had one hell of a ride so far.

The most positive aspect of working in the British Army today have been the soldiers (and officers) that I have had the privilege to work alongside and/or command…We should be justifiably proud of the commitment and courage that these young men and women show…Our junior and senior NCOs are the best in the world and remain the unyielding backbone of the Army, and if there are those who don’t quite meet the standard then let us not blame the individual but rather those of us who have failed to educate or train…Camaraderie and esprit de corps are alive and well and for those considering leaving the Armed Forces for a new life in ‘civvy street’ do not expect to experience the like again. Whilst looking for your new 9–5 job consider also the fringe benefits that you have enjoyed - a level of fitness and access to gyms for nothing; medical (access to doctors, physios, free-prescriptions etc) not only for you but also your family; ditto dental; married quarters and single living accommodation (some better than others it is agreed) cheaper than you’ll be able to rent your bedsit in your local town; schooling; education (military and SCE); learning credits, enhanced learning credits; 3 superbly cooked meals a day should you so desire (for not a lot of pennies); social opportunities; travel; adventurous training; sport at all levels and of all natures etc.

The majority of respondents did not feel that a single entry point into the Armed Forces would aid recruitment:
That would mean a UK Defence Force instead of the 3 Services. We would lose far more through our individual identities then could be gained. Besides if you are prepared to join the Forces you should be allowed to join the Service of your choice. I don’t think that a single entry point would make a difference at all. What are needed are stricter controls on who gets let into the forces.

The consideration of a single entry point goes a long way to fuelling the feeling that we are heading towards the amalgamation of all 3 Services into one ‘Purple’ Force (with a very green tinge). Having experienced the Tri-Service Operations in Basra, the tour was made more difficult due each Service having their own identities and working practices, upon which they would not compromise.

One respondent felt that having a single entry point for officers and other ranks would be beneficial:

Now if you mean removing the direct entry officer corps, the sooner the better… Who is the better, more experienced, more capable, more respected leader, the WO/SNCO with years of experience doing the job at different levels or the 21 year old with a media studies degree, who’s idea of hard work is doing an essay with a hangover.

There were mixed views about the nature of the relationship between the Armed Forces and society:

I think in the last 15 years the relationship has improved. Several years ago I had the honour to take part in a charity event which saw us heave a field gun from Somerset to Greenwich to raise money for the family members of those lost during the 2nd Gulf war. I was brought to tears on more than one occasion at the generosity and support of those we met along the streets.

Clearly the relationship has changed. The days where literally everyone had a grandfather ‘who fought in the War’ are long gone, along with the idea of service for its own sake and the public good. Frankly, people are more selfish, less inclined to volunteer and motivated entirely by advancement, money and perks.

Contributors felt that involving families in Family days would contribute to an understanding of the Armed Forces and that specific measures targeting ‘gatekeepers’, in particular mothers’ were necessary.

*What are the disadvantages of working in the Armed Forces? If you have left the Armed Forces, what were your reasons for leaving?*

This question attracted 98 posts. Erosion of Service housing, pay and conditions featured prominently in respondents’ discussions:

The second key factor in my decision to leave has been the erosion of the terms of service, allowances and overall package, with the loss of abated food charges, failure to upgrade the service estate (with particular regard to housing), the annual percentage increases in married quarter charges outstripping the percentage of the pay award (the attempt to bring married quarter charges into line with commercial
rental charges), and the continual failure to provide the right kit in theatre (be it spares, essential tooling or operational equipment, or leisure facilities) such that we appear to some of our allies as a first class air force, surviving with third class equipment, to the extent that we are known as "the borrowers" by our American allies. In short the "broken covenant" referred to in the press.

The married quarters at my location are poor, but what is worse is the standard of work carried out and the total lack of support when things go wrong in them. I am lucky in that the house is a good size, but that is as far as it goes. Ever since the quarters were sold off things have got worse. Sadly, the local housing market is so expensive that we cannot buy locally and even if we could, who knows how long we would be in the house.

The support to the front line has been eroded with many of the support functions now being undertaken by front line units which places yet more burden on them. DE&S are a huge money pit with civil servants with little or no experience of the equipment they manage cause huge disruptions to operations. This has resulted in many of them leaving (the few that can do the job) and resulting in many IPT’s not having the staff to carry out the basic functions. This is at a time when recruiting within DE&S has been stopped.

The impact on family life and the quality of support offered was also raised:

It is okay to be told that you should have harmony between tours but where does that come into play when you are being posted to different units. You can get posted to one div or another only to find that your new unit are on a rotation to deploy, they aren't to worried that you have already been away just as long as they have the manpower. The army isn't just a job it is a way of life and not just for those serving for the immediate family also.

Money is not the main issue here, it is quality of Service life, we are all more than happy to 'get our hands dirty' and expect that of our people but we must be prepared to give something back, we are not currently doing this well enough if at all. Whatever technology we bring in ultimately it is our greatest asset, our people, who produce the goods. Sounds corny and it is but has been buried under the mountain of bureaucracy and 'heads in the sand' we now have to deal with.

Many respondents felt that the funding of the Armed Forces, as well as its administration, were factors which contributed to Service personnel leaving:

Over the past 21 years I've watched Armed Forces slip into melt down and as successive governments, senior civil servants and officers have sought to make names for themselves, trying to bring about changes and new practices. Unfortunately these changes have been devised by senior staff who have no idea about how to fix aircraft, maintain equipment or perform the general duties they are about to try and alter, and all parliament sees is a person in a uniform...saying yes we can do it...when will parliament realise that the officer corps mentality is purely based on blind ambition and will agree to push the latest ideas because to refuse is career suicide...the main result of this action has been a reduction of the overall skill levels and an extreme shortage of manpower...Having spent 3 years in an Integrated Project Team
watching engineers trying to act as businessmen because that is what is expected of them nowadays...the problems within the forces run very deep and there is no quick fix solution, parliament must come down to the coal face and hear the words for themselves...you will find the lads have the solutions you are looking for...we all know that Armed Forces spending does not win as many votes as hospitals or schools.

Change for me was also one of the straws that broke the camels back. I am fully supportive of change initiatives but only those where they have been allowed to run through the full change cycle to allow us to measure the impact of the change put in place. I cannot remember of any such initiative in the last 10 years of my service.

Some posters felt that manning levels contributed to voluntary outflow. There was significant support for increasing the size of the Armed Forces.

Manning Levels. In my trade we are 90% manned and as our trade has a specialised war role we are beginning to suffer because of retention and recruitment problems.

The many disadvantages have been well explained by your other contributors and can largely be categorised as ‘excessive workload’ and ‘being taken for granted’. From my perspective, the excessive workload results from the two long term commitments, a level well in excess of that included in the Defence Planning Assumptions (DPA) upon which the services’ manpower numbers are based. Anything above the DPA level can be managed for a short period, ie a few months, but not the several years so far and an unknown number in the future. In my view, there should have been a slowdown in, or cessation of, the manpower reductions, which would have generated a ‘paper surplus’ that could have been used to fill gaps where individuals were deployed and to reduce deployment frequency. This would have reduced workload whilst at home and increased harmony time. This option would have cost money, but that it didn’t happen I can only put down to Treasury insistence and the government’s desire to stride tall on the world stage without being prepared to pay for it.

In the last 10 years there has been a policy to drive down numbers simply to save money without any regard to the operational commitment. Some personnel on front line Units work tirelessly to meet their UK commitment whilst supporting Out of Area Ops. To bridge the manning gap and get the job done, personnel are given acting rank, but at the same time must do their own job as well as their line managers. I just wonder how long it will be before people will be declaring themselves sick or develop chronic fatigue syndrome.

One contributor felt that that better communication between decision makers and Service personnel could lead to solutions:

Try listening to the guys and girls on the shop floor, they won’t bite because they are much better than that. They’ll be honest, just do them the courtesy of listening.

Responses to a question about the retirement age in the Armed Forces were largely positive, but raised issues about promotion prospects:
Mine was a "shortage branch" (submarine nuclear engineering officer) and I was a willing volunteer to remain committed to the Service well beyond mandatory retirement at 50. It beggars belief that the Armed Forces in general are so blinkered that they forcibly retire personnel at the very peak of their expertise. Once people go beyond their late 30s they will have gained vast experience...In short, they are happily institutionalised and are the very best teachers for the new generation coming through...A great institution such as our Armed Forces must adapt to the changing working environment if it is to survive effectively.

Look at the 'no promotion in last 2 years of service ruling', meaning that there is no real incentive for personnel to strive for the next higher rank. Was the demoralising impact of this concept ever truly considered?

Raising the retirement age would be a start but if there is no progression allowed where is the incentive? Is there an incremental increase in pay per service years? And, surely this has already been addressed in the last few years with regards to the changes in service.

Other respondents were not supportive of increasing the retirement age:

I believe that raising the retirement age for the officer cadre would not retain personnel. Given the current state of play it would have the opposite effect. This is because many junior officers 'battle it out' to their first option point (16 years) before they depart. It is a realistic objective and one can 'keep going' against the adverse conditions of service for that time in order to receive the immediate pension.

We are already extending service to 55 to plug the holes. Do you mean beyond 55? Would the pension schemes be adjusted to provide an incentive? Can you imagine having a 64 year old infantryman running across the desert in full chemical protection?

A number of respondents described their difficulties in transferring to another branch or Service. Several stated that they would consider remaining in the Armed Forces if they could transfer to another trade:

It is close to impossible to transfer branches - the best option is to leave and rejoin. This is because all the branches are so short that they don't want to release anybody. Yes it would certainly encourage more to stay and transfer – it would also result in more leaving because the source branch becomes even more undermanned.

One respondent noted that some Service personnel were transferring to Armed Forces in other countries:

service men and women not just transferring from one to service to another, but to another countries service altogether. I ask you to look at the resettlement magazines printed to offer careers guidance to leaving personnel. You will find countries like New Zealand and Australia offering new lives for military personnel. I know of a single mother...PVR’d and applied to join the Australian Airforce at the same rank, with better conditions and was accepted. This is happening to the Navy as well...It
shows people still value Military service but they will not do it for this country anymore.

A number of contributors felt that inequalities existed in the treatment of officers and other ranks:

Officers in the RAF are only in post for two years, where non-commissioned ranks can be in post for many, many years gaining experience. That leads to a lot of reinventing the wheel as many officers feel they know better. They steadfastly refuse to believe that, in many cases, the way of working has evolved over many years and is most probably the best way of doing something. That doesn't mean that ways of doing things shouldn't be queried, but to keep repeating the same changes is a waste of manpower, money and valuable resources.

One disadvantage for Other Ranks is the lack of career management. Those with a Commission have Career Maps and they have some input into these. Unfortunately Other Ranks are pretty much just “bums on seats”, this demoralises people when they end up in a post they don’t like…If they had a Commission they would know that they only had to complete 24 months and then move on to a different challenge…If all careers were looked at more closely then there may be job satisfaction for all.

One contributor noted that Financial Retention Incentives were divisive for those who did not receive them:

All the time we hear of certain trades, new joiners, pilots etc being offered a retention bonus for only a minimal amount of return of service, but i always seem to be just outside the parameters for these bonus, it becomes very annoying listening to young lads boast about the money they have just received and for them to say they will be submitting there PVR as soon as they can anyway. This does not help the under manning of any of the branches, just delays the departure of some personnel. Surely increasing the benefits for those in service would be better rather than trying to buy them of for a short period would be better for retention.

In response to a specific question about training, a number of respondents stated that in order to achieve recruiting targets, standards had dropped. One respondent felt that the recruitment process was too rapid:

Regarding the issue of moving between trades and wastage during phase 1 training. I have several years’ experience in this environment and a common reason for recruits' leaving is that they are often signed up too quickly for a particular arm or trade at the recruiting office, I suspect in order to meet quotas. When they subsequently arrive at basic recruit training their eyes are opened to the many possibilities available and which they may not have been made fully aware of. Because of the severe, and I mean severe, difficulty of moving between trades, even though at that stage it is an administrative exercise because no trade training has started yet, many recruits opt to withdraw from training. Ironically, the system then tends to blame the recruit (doesn't have the right stuff etc) rather than looking at how the recruit could be moved to another trade. An area well worth parliamentary scrutiny I would suggest.
Why do you think that the Armed Forces face such a challenge recruiting ethnic minority personnel?

This question attracted 29 posts. The majority of contributors suggested that targets for ethnic minority personnel were unnecessary:

The Armed Forces should not have a target for recruiting from ethnic minorities, it should have the target of recruiting the best person for the job irrespective of their religious or ethnic background - just as long as those background are not in conflict with the best interests of the forces.

Whereas it may be relevant for a police force to represent the community it wishes to police, there is no need for the Armed Forces to have the same ethnic make-up as the UK as a whole. Arguably we are under representative of a lot of now prevalent communities in the UK, including Polish, Chinese and Lithuanian. If people from communities which are currently under represented wish to join the Armed Forces, if they can meet the same standards as other applicants, they are welcome.

There are those backgrounds where serving in the Armed Forces are not part of their cultural background. If there are those from those backgrounds who are qualified to join the forces and display an interest in joining the forces, then they should be encouraged to do so.

One contributor suggested that mandatory national service would provide a solution to the issue of ethnic minority recruiting in the Armed Forces, as well as addressing a range of other societal problems:

Bring back national conscription for all UK citizens to serve for a period of two years, make this rule apply to anyone under the age of forty-five who wishes to either emigrate to the UK or seeks Asylum in the UK.

One contributor noted that families in ethnic minority communities were often reluctant to see their children joining the Armed Forces:

I believe that the issue is cultural. I served in the recruiting environment for 5 years and one of the main issues that ethnic minority recruits had to face up to was opposition from their families. At a recruiting event in Birmingham a Hindu father said that he had enjoyed the event very much but that, in the end, it had not persuaded him that his son could join the RAF because killing was against his religion. I have served with several very professional Muslim Airmen, two of whom are long-standing friends, and they all say the same; if the military wish to recruit from ethnic minorities they need to target the families first, not the recruit.
Formal minutes

Tuesday 15 July 2008

Members present:

Mr James Arbuthnot, in the Chair

Mr David Crausby MP
Linda Gilroy MP
Mr Mike Hancock MP
Mr Dai Havard MP
Mr Adam Holloway MP

Mr Bernard Jenkin MP
Mr Kevan Jones MP
Robert Key MP
John Smith MP
Richard Younger-Ross MP

Draft Report (Recruiting and retaining Armed Forces personnel), proposed by the Chairman, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 203 read and agreed to.

Annexes (List of abbreviations and the Committee’s web forum) and Summary agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the Fourteenth Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chairman make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 134.

Written evidence was ordered to be reported to the House for printing with the Report, together with written evidence reported and ordered to be published on 1 April, 22 April and 20 May.

[Adjourned till Tuesday 15 July at 4.00 pm]
Witnesses

Tuesday 25 March 2008

Professor Christopher Dandeker, Kings College London, Professor Hew Strachan, Oxford University

Ms Liz Sheldon, Project Director, Soldier, Sailors, Airmen and Families’ Association Forces Help (SSAFA FH); Mrs Dawn McCafferty, Chairman, RAF Families Association; and Ms Julie McCarthy, Chief Executive, Army Families’ Federation

Tuesday 1 April 2008

Mr Tim Corry, Campaign Director, and Ms Sarah Baxter, National Relationship Manager, SaBRE

Mr Richard Longson, President, and Mr Kieran Gordon, Immediate Past President, Institute of Career Guidance

Mr Chris Sanderson MBE, Director Government Support, Control Risks, and Mr Christopher Beese MBE, Chief Administrative Officer, ArmorGroup

Tuesday 22 April 2008

Mr Chris Baker OBE, Director General of Service Personnel Policy, Rear Admiral Charles Montgomery CBE, Naval Secretary, Major General Andrew Gregory, Director General Personnel (Army), Air Vice Marshal Simon Bryant CBE, Air Secretary, Major General Simon Lalor TD, Assistant Chief of Defence Staff, Reserves and Cadets, and Vice Admiral Peter Wilkinson CVO, Deputy Chief of Defence Staff (Personnel), Ministry of Defence

Tuesday 20 May 2008

Derek Twigg MP, Under Secretary of State for Defence and Minister for Veterans, and Vice Admiral Peter Wilkinson CVO, Deputy Chief of Defence Staff (Personnel)
List of written evidence

1. RAF Families Federation  
   Ev 78
2. Armed Forces Pay Review Body  
   Ev 84
3. Dr Alex Alexandrou  
   Ev 87
4. Ministry of Defence  
   Ev 92, Ev 167, Ev 183, Ev 188, Ev 191
5. Army Families Federation  
   Ev 135
6. WRVS  
   Ev 140
7. Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association (SSAFA FH)  
   Ev 141
8. Institute of Career Guidance  
   Ev 142, Ev 160
9. Equality and Human Rights Commission  
   Ev 147
10. British Medical Association  
    Ev 152
11. Stephen Wildridge  
    Ev 156
12. Robin Short, Martin Kinsella and David J Walters  
    Ev 156
13. David Gee  
    Ev 158
14. Naval Families Federation  
    Ev 181
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Recruiting and retaining Armed Forces personnel

Eleventh Report: Strategic Lift
Twelfth Report: Ministry of Defence Main Estimates 2007-08
Thirteenth Report: UK operations in Afghanistan
Fourteenth Report: Strategic Export Controls: 2007 Review
Fifteenth Report: The work of Defence Estates

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First Report: UK land operations in Iraq 2007
Second Report: Costs of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan: Winter Supplementary Estimate 2007–08
Fourth Report: The Iran hostages incident: the lessons learned
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Eighth Report: Operational costs in Afghanistan and Iraq: Spring Supplementary Estimate 2007–08
Ninth Report: The future of NATO and European defence
Tenth Report: Defence Equipment 2008
Eleventh Report: Ministry of Defence Main Estimates 2008–09
Thirteenth Report: The contribution of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles to ISTAR capability
Fourteenth Report: Recruiting and retaining Armed Forces personnel
Fifteenth Report: UK operations in Iraq and the Gulf
Oral evidence

Taken before the Defence Committee
on Tuesday 25 March 2008

Members present
Mr James Arbuthnot, in the Chair
Mr David Crausby
Linda Gilroy
Mr Mike Hancock
Mr Adam Holloway
Mr Bernard Jenkin
Mr Kevan Jones
Robert Key
Richard Younger-Ross

Witnesses: Professor Christopher Dandeker and Professor Hew Strachan gave evidence.

Q1 Chairman: Good morning. Thank you very much indeed for coming. I wonder if I could ask you both to introduce yourselves.

Professor Strachan: I am Hew Strachan. I am Chichele Professor of The History of War at Oxford and I direct the Leverhulme programme at Oxford on the changing character of war.

Professor Dandeker: I am Christopher Dandeker. I am from the Department of War Studies at King’s College London. I am a Professor of Military Sociology. I am also Head of the School of Social Science and Public Policy and, with Simon Wessely, Co-Director of the King’s Centre for Military Health Research.

Q2 Chairman: Thanks very much indeed for coming to start off our inquiry into Recruitment and Retention in the Armed Forces. The purpose of this morning’s evidence is that you will be here for about 45 minutes, if that does not insult the value of your evidence to the Committee. It will be helpful in setting the scene and providing an overview of where we are going on this inquiry. I would ask if you could start by giving us that scene-setting context. Is there a long term problem with recruitment and retention in the Armed Forces? Is it a trend which is becoming apparent? Is it a blip? How would you characterise the current difficulties that are generally acknowledged in recruitment and retention in the Armed Forces? Which of you would like to start?

Professor Strachan: It is the historian’s question, is it? I do not think there is anything new about problems of recruiting and retention in the Armed Forces. Throughout the 19th century, throughout the 1930s, since 1945 (with the exception, obviously, of the period of conscription), the Armed Forces have struggled to meet recruitment targets. That is a very general statement because what is much more evident and I think is largely a consequence of the trend in current operations is what reports call pinch points—particular problems in relation to particular specialisations. There is a change there because I think when Christopher and I were doing this eight years or so ago, the last time this Committee looked at this issue, the problem was much more evident in generalised branches of the Armed Forces rather than specialist branches. Specialist branches had much better recruitment and retention partly, I think, because there was a long term prospect of employment whenever they left the Armed Forces. Today there is a problem with particular specialisations, no doubt partly reflecting a buoyant economy. There is another thing I would say though and that is that of course any debate that goes on about the Armed Forces today has to balance what they are doing currently operationally and what that means for the long term health of the Armed Forces. There is a tendency to reflect what the long term future might be in the light of what are immediate pressures and, of course, there is the $64,000 question: how far are those current pressures going to continue into the future? The issue, it seems to me, is that we are still expecting ourselves to produce Armed Forces that have balanced capabilities, that have, in the jargon, the ability to fight a major war at one end of the spectrum and at the same time carry on with counter-insurgency, peacekeeping, and the practicalities which the Armed Forces are facing at the moment. The fear that is often voiced by chiefs of staff is that, in trying to meet the demands of current operations, how far are you jeopardising the long term capability to fight a major war should a major war eventuate. We might have reached the point, given the size of the Armed Forces, where there has to be a choice. There has to be an opportunity cost here because to retain balanced capabilities across the full spectrum may be impossible given the current size of the Armed Forces and the current recruitment and retention difficulties. You are going to have to structure the Armed Forces to do particular things. That is going to require an unbalancing if you produce Armed Forces that are well adjusted, for example, to operations in Afghanistan; you are not going to retain an all-round capability of the sort that the Armed Forces expect, and I do not think we are fully asking ourselves that question. If we do ask ourselves that question we may be rather clearer about the sort of structure for the Armed Forces that we want and what sort of specialisations we are trying to achieve and where the recruitment and retention effort should be directed, but until we have a sense of the answer to the big strategic questions recruitment and retention are operating in a vacuum. There is a danger of looking at the wrong end of the stick.
Q3 Chairman: So when you say we might have reached the point when we have to make the choice between a balanced and a specialist Armed Forces it sounds as though your answer to the question is that we have reached that point.

Professor Strachan: Given current resourcing, yes, we have. Even if there were not recruiting and retention problems, even if the Armed Forces were not failing to meet current targets—and, as I say, the mismatch between targets and achievement is not historically enormously significant because this has always been the case except in times of very high unemployment—and if we are not going to have Armed Forces that are adequately resourced, then, yes, we have reached that point.

Q4 Chairman: Professor Dandeker, do you want to add to that, and would you differentiate in any way between recruitment and retention?

Professor Dandeker: What has been a good move by the Ministry of Defence over the last eight to ten years is a much more explicit recognition of the interaction between recruitment, retention and other aspects of personnel policy. If you look at the Armed Forces’ overarching personnel strategy that gives a clear indication of that thinking, that is to say (and I know it is a cliché) that one of the worst things that can happen to recruitment is a disaffected veteran. I think that thinking, the need to relate the activities of cultivating the areas where you recruit from, then obtaining the people, retaining them and making them reasonably happy so long as you want them and they want to stay and then looking after them when they have left and remembering them, are all part of, if you like, a spectrum of activity. It is to the credit of MoD and the individual Services that that contextual thinking, that interactive thinking about recruitment and retention and the other activities to which I have referred is good news.

The second point I would make is in relation to Professor Strachan’s comment about means and ends and the balanced capability point. I think time is pressing because the pressures on means and ends are not, so it seems to me, going to go away any time soon. I think the commitment to Iraq is likely to remain whatever aspirations there are to reduce personnel deployed there in the summer. I do not see a major reduction there. That is just an academic guess. Whatever the outcome of the US presidential election, if I had to bet I would see a continuing (and again we can debate it) serious commitment by the US to Iraq for at least one, possibly more than one, presidential term, so the pressures upon the UK Armed Forces in terms of calibrating means and ends and therefore thinking through this issue of balanced capability or not is something that cannot be ignored.

Q5 Chairman: Do you think media stories, like Deepcut, like mistreatment of prisoners, have had an effect on this, and is the impact of those stories diminishing at all over time?

Professor Dandeker: It depends on the effect on what. If I could start with one issue, I think it is interesting that in and around Government Deepcut is no longer a particular base. It is a wider phenomenon. People talk about the Deepcut issue, and I think even if Deepcut was knocked down, abolished, renamed and so on, the cultural phenomenon of Deepcut, that is to say, straying the wrong side of tough training into the field of illegitimate transgressions of the rights of personnel who have volunteered to serve their country, is there and those responsible for recruiting and training personnel are aware it is there, are aware of the need to balance the requirement to be fit to fight, in other words, train people to be fit to fight, but on the other hand not sanction or permit illegitimate and illegal activities which lead to bullying and harassment. Those damage the recruitment climate, not so much necessarily directly on young people but on what are known as the gatekeepers, those to whom young people turn for advice when they are thinking about their military careers. So far as abuses in theatre are concerned, those affect the reputation of the Armed Forces and clearly affect Military Covenant issues about which you might want to talk later. I think that damages the reputation of the Armed Forces in exactly the same way (and I know it is again a cliché) as one bad doctor can do a huge amount of damage to the medical profession disproportionate to the activities of any single individual. I think the same can be said for abuses in Iraq so far as the recruitment climate is concerned.

Q6 Chairman: Have you anything to add, Professor Strachan?

Professor Strachan: I would not agree with that, actually. I think the Deepcut issue has gone away. I think the Deepcut issue was always bigger in the mind of the Army itself than it was in the minds of the public, for all that it was headline news. It is always striking (and this is comparatively unchanged over time) how high is the regard in which the British Armed Forces have been held by the public. You will confront concerns among senior officers about Deepcut, a belief that they are being vilified by the press and having a tough time, which is not reflected in any broad spectrum attitudinal surveys. I think we need to be aware of that because it ties into another question about how the public sees the Armed Forces, which is the crucial distinction between a public unhappiness about certain wars and a public perception of the Armed Forces. The two things are not necessarily linked and this is the point about how far you generalise from current circumstances into the future, because if the current wars are unpopular that is a much bigger issue than Deepcut, and if the wars are unpopular then of course they can affect what Christopher has called the gatekeepers and those who might have an influence on those who wish to enlist. However, if the wars were deemed to be popular, deemed to be acceptable, deemed to be necessary, there would be a different relationship.

Q7 Mr Holloway: Professor Dandeker, of course it is unacceptable to lay into recruits, but is not the true Deepcut effect what I have been hearing for the last
five or six years, that because we have softened the training a lot of these kids are going out not fit to fight?

Professor Dandeker: It goes back to my point about balance. It is important to have robust training to enable recruits, once they have been trained, to survive in demanding conditions. Indeed, it is a duty of care of the trainers to ensure that people can survive those difficult circumstances and that that which is seen as tough on the day may actually save their life later on in an operation. Going back to Hew’s point, I think I agree with him that the dominant mood in the public is an enormous respect for the Armed Services, for their courage, for their resilience, and not least for their competence in being able to deal with things that are very demanding and take place in difficult circumstances and are often politically controversial operations, a point to which I will return. That having been said, those same opinion polls do show that some significant sections of the population find some aspects of the Armed Forces, some of their culture, some of their ways of doing things, anachronistic and that provides an opening for, if you like, the Deepcut effect to erode some of those sectors of the public even though they are strongly in support of the Armed Services.

Chairman: I want to move on, I am afraid, because we have a lot of ground to cover. Is your question absolutely essential, Kevan?

Mr Jones: It is, yes. In the last Parliament three members of the Committee were part of the year-long inquiry into Deepcut and the duty of care which I think one of you were involved in. There is a big difference, is there not, between robust training and some of the appalling cases that we came across (although there was a minority of instances, I have to say), so I have dismissed completely the nonsense that Adam Holloway put forward.

Mr Holloway: I know a bit about it.

Mr Jones: You might do, but from some of the cases we went through and some of the families we spoke to, I am sorry, I do not think you have justified some of the things we discovered, and I reiterate that this is a minority of things. What we found during that inquiry, and it is not part of the general perception, is that society has moved on, it has become more questioning and less deferential, yet possibly the Army, or certain sections of it, is still stuck back in some type of nirvana of the 1950s that thinks that deference and not questioning authority and having other choices in careers is perhaps — my colleague says public school attitudes are still prevalent.

Mr Hancock: Overweight public school attitudes in the officer corps.

Q8 Chairman: Would you like to answer that briefly? Be as quick as possible, please, because we have got a lot of work to get through in less than half an hour.

Professor Dandeker: My brief response to that is that I think the Armed Forces are much more aware of that post-deferential climate to which reference has been made and therefore of the need for the Armed Services to be very clear and principled in terms of describing how the Army is rather different from civilian society and why it needs to be so; it is not different because of tradition but because of its operational need and I think for the cohort of officers that have come through over the last ten years that is second nature to them. They recognise the society and how to adjust to it.

Q9 Mr Hancock: I would like to go back to the previous report, particularly the Deepcut one, and the previous retention report we did. One of the things that was brought up time and time again was that the threshold for recruitment had been lowered, the educational requirement and in some cases the fitness requirement had been lowered, so it became a real shock to people when they had been recruited what they were going to go through, and part of the problems experienced not only at Deepcut but throughout the military was the fact that they had recruited people who maybe ten years previously or maybe a little longer than that would not necessarily have got over the threshold of being recruited in the first place and that the military were not equipped to deal with this quality of recruit, and that is why so much of the bullying took place which was identified not just at Deepcut but throughout the Armed Forces although, as Kevan rightly says, a minority of people were involved. That was given to us as one of the real issues that the military had not been able to deal with.

Professor Dandeker: I would just say that on both sides of the Atlantic there is a persistent problem of how to recruit sufficient numbers of people to the Armed Forces and that certain compromises are made in terms of quality and therefore adjustments have to be made in terms of the recruitment and training regimes to allow that decline or dilution of quality to be made up without sacrificing the overall quality of people who come out at the other end of the training.

Q10 Chairman: Professor Strachan?

Professor Strachan: I would make two very quick points. One is that the shift to more active operations in itself takes some of the heat out of this argument, it seems to me. One of the difficulties in peacetime training is that the Army’s declared need to be different becomes less self-evidently in need of defending if the need to be different is more robustly in the public’s mind, which is the consequence of current operations. The second point I would make is that there is clearly a distinction between the hierarchical chain of command and the pressures that can generate, the patterns of behaviour, which are seen to be central to the management of operations by the Armed Forces, and personnel issues, many of which could be divorced, it seems to me, from the command chain. I know that is not a view that the Armed Forces themselves fully accept. They would see that the management of personnel as essentially good command, and I can see exactly where they are coming from in making that argument, but there are points where these two things could be distinguished. Maybe one of the messages that the Armed Forces should take back, when and if the operational tempo declines, is the need only to defend what has to be defended rather
than find itself in the position of having to defend things that are indefensible. It has made the mistake of doing that in the past.

Q11 Robert Key: Historically is there a relationship between the public perception of a popular or an unpopular war and recruitment and retention?

Professor Strachan: Good question. I would say recruitment and retention are probably more directly linked to the employment and unemployment situation, in other words, to what the market is doing. This country has actually fought in very few deeply unpopular wars. All our recent experience has been very much in wars of national necessity and I think we probably have to go back to the South African war to find a war that generated as much internal division as these wars have done. Ironically, that particular war did generate great popular enthusiasm for recruitment and voluntary enlistment despite division at home about the legitimacy of the war. I would say one of the reasons for that is that South Africa self-evidently was within the Empire and an area of British colonial settlement, so it was rather different from Iraq and Afghanistan.

Q12 Robert Key: Has it made it significantly harder for the Ministry of Defence and the Services to manage this problem in an age of instant media coverage of everything that is happening, embedded journalists and media, mobile phones and photographs, the internet and websites and all of that?

Professor Strachan: We have been involved in a study at Oxford that has been looking at precisely this issue, the critical moment between breaking news on websites, blogs and all the rest of it and how Government reacts, and, of course, the crucial issue is that the Ministry of Defence is put into a reactive position rather than a proactive position. That in a way has been the Ministry of Defence’s natural position anyway, even before mobile telephones and blogs and instantaneous newspaper reporting. There does seem to be a need to think more proactively about how you manage these issues and how you engage with the public than we currently have within the Armed Forces, particularly but more generally within the Ministry of Defence. I do not think it is a uniformed Armed Forces issue. On the whole the uniformed Armed Forces are very good at communicating from operational theatres.

Professor Dandeker: I have two quick comments. There is an argument on your point about recruitment. It may well be merely action and operations that have a positive effect rather than the popularity of a campaign, just the presence of action and deployments. There was a blip after the Falklands War which I think was not so much due to the popularity of a particular operation; it is just that the presence of action can encourage risk-takers amongst the young to join. So far as the breaking news phenomenon is concerned, this connects back to the quality of recruitment and there is a tension there. I think, that on the one hand contemporary operations in the light of Hew’s comments about media pressures mean that soldiers are much more under scrutiny, under pressure, not so much from people in the conflict area but about how their actions are going to be judged, pretty instantaneously, and ensuring that one recruits and trains people able to deal with those sorts of operational pressures and media pressures is a telling point for the future.

Q13 Robert Key: So would it help the situation if members of our Armed Forces were to be encouraged to wear their uniforms more in public (except in Peterborough) and is the idea of an Armed Forces Day a sensible approach to the problem?

Professor Strachan: I think it always makes sense for members of the Armed Forces to wear their uniforms in public, although I have to say you do not want to go as far as an American general the other day who came to see me in Oxford, who intended to turn up in college in uniform and was dissuaded, fortunately, at the last moment. I think it would be helpful, and, of course, again we are in a situation, which the Peterborough example shows, where a minority is taken to represent the views of the majority. I know the majority would be perfectly happy to see members of the Armed Forces wear uniforms in public in exactly the same way as they are in other countries. I am less in favour of an Armed Forces Day, I have to say, because that does seem to me a certain amount of fig-leaf posturing. We do have Remembrance Sunday which is designed to be a day when we commemorate the dead and from which the Armed Forces collectively benefit. I am less certain of the value of what could become yet another day for neglect and abuse (I mean abuse by neglect) rather than proper attention.

Q14 Robert Key: I was very sorry to see that the Ministry of Defence had downgraded visits by the Forces to our schools and the withdrawal of the teams and putting it all on the internet, and now we hear the NUT is debating today whether or not we should allow the military into our schools, which in my constituency will go down like a lump of lead because we are such a military community.

Professor Strachan: I think there are already many areas of the country where it is difficult for the military to get into schools. This is not a new phenomenon. I think though it highlights something that is central to where we should look for responses, and that is at the regional level rather than the national level. There is a tendency to think of the issues we are confronting as somehow coming out from London and being UK-generated. I am sorry if I am going off at a tangent in relation to where the Chairman necessarily wishes to be, but I think at the moment we have Armed Forces that are regionally located. The Navy is concentrated in the south of England and round Faslane, the Air Force historically has been down the east coast of England, and so on, and the result is that the rest of the United Kingdom has a very low awareness of the presence of the Armed Forces, even if they were to wear uniform in public, just because they are not around. The diminution of the Reserve Forces is another
Defence Committee: Evidence  

25 March 2008  Professor Christopher Dandeker and Professor Hew Strachan

Chairman: We are moving on to the Military Covenant.

Q18 Mr Hancock: There has been a lot of debate about the Covenant, what it means to the military, what it means to the general public. My question to both of you is how important do you believe it is and what would be the advantage of formalising a Covenant which is recognised by Parliament and the military, not just the Army but the military generally, and what would be the disadvantages of having a formalised Covenant?

Professor Strachan: I am going to leave a large chunk of this because I think it is a future issue. I am going to duck and say that historically one of the things that has struck me is that the Military Covenant is a very new expression. We peddle it as though it has always been there. I was trying to think when actually it entered public discourse and the answer is that it can only have been in the last couple of years. What was there before was the sense of unlimited liability on the part of those who join up, and of course that was often stressed, to say that those who joined the Armed Services had entered into an extraordinarily contract which ultimately involved the possible loss of their own lives, unlike any other form of employment. But it was presented as a one-sided contract with no expectations, extraordinarily, of a delivery from the other side of the equation. The Military Covenant is essentially the articulation of the idea that there should be a guarantee from the other side. I suppose in many other forms of employment now there is an expectation on both sides in terms of what should be delivered, and clearly there is now an expectation from the point of view of the British Armed Forces, but many of the issues that are raised under the Military Covenant are issues to do with specific under-provision in areas for which we should be providing, even if there were a written and adhered-to Military Covenant. The issues of housing, for example, pension rights, proper support to your workforce, are issues that should be addressed whether you have a written Military Covenant or you do not have a Military Covenant. I am not entirely persuaded that there is a need for a written document and I am slightly surprised that it has become assumed that there is such a thing as a Military Covenant.

Q19 Mr Hancock: I would like to hear what Professor Dandeker thinks about the advantages and disadvantages.

Professor Dandeker: I have two or three quick points if I may. One is that when there is a discussion of the need to be explicit about some kind of contract that itself is interesting. It shows that some of the intuitive, unstated assumptions governing the relationship between military and Government and military and community have broken down when people start grasping for explicit statements, and I think that in itself is interesting. That is the first point.

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Q20 Mr Hancock: Do you think that is happening now?
Professor Dandeker: I think it is. It goes on to my second point, which is that the Military Covenant involves three actors—the Armed Services themselves, the Government of the day and the wider population, each one of which has a set of expectations and, of course, responsibilities. What is interesting from the military side of the Military Covenant is that it is often regarded as a statement, “Here are we making the sacrifices. Where are you with support from the public and where are you with equipment and resources?”. Thinking soldiers are very much aware that part of the deal is that military has to deliver its side of the bargain, which is not only unlimited liability, as you suggest, but also care for others, and others are those in their care but also those in their care in the field of operations, which is why, as Brigadier Aitken’s report shows so clearly and is a point to which I alluded before, one of the things that can undermine the military side of the Covenant is abuse.
Chairman: We will now move on to Harmony Guidelines.

Q21 Mr Jenkin: We recently found in our report on the annual report and accounts that the failure of the Army and the RAF to achieve their Harmony Guidelines was unacceptable, so what can the Armed Forces do to improve observance of the Harmony Guidelines?
Professor Strachan: They can do very little while they are under the operational pressures they are under. One of the absurdities of the report is the expectation that Harmony Guidelines can be sustained. It is back again to the question of balanced capabilities. How do you meet Harmony Guidelines when you are sustaining two operations concurrently as well as other deployments? It seems to me an extraordinary question to ask at that time. There are other things. Of course there are palliatives that could be produced.

Q22 Mr Jenkin: Recruiting to target, for example. Professor Strachan: Recruiting to target would certainly help but that is also integrated with the issue of how you see the Armed Forces publicly, whether your gatekeepers are encouraging their offspring to join or not join, so recruiting to target would undoubtedly help but these are palliatives rather than addressing the fundamental problem. There are still going to be pressures, particularly for certain core skills. The Royal Signals are frequently cited as an example where there is enormous pressure generated through operational tours. One of the points here is: what do we think we are doing? Do we think we are in a state of war, in which case Harmony Guidelines would seem to be less relevant, or do we think we are not in a state of war but in a state of peace, which underpins much of the expectation driven by Harmony Guidelines? In which case, of course, there are real issues to address. The American Armed Forces, which used to be contrasted with our Armed Forces because, they had far fewer pressures in terms of operational deployments, have now gone dramatically the other way, and extraordinarily are dealing with them in a way that we would never have anticipated, partly because there is a greater perception from their point of view and probably domestically that they are at war. I quite take the point about full recruiting but there might be other issues. For example, are you able to ensure when people are at home that they are at home in terms of localisation of battalions? Where do they stay? Are they going to be, when they are not on an operational tour, close to their families and so on? In some ways the regimental reorganisation has not yet delivered in terms of what it should have done or what it promised to do as far as bringing people back home is concerned. We have pressures in relation to operational tours actually to increase the length of tours in terms of getting greater expertise in theatre, particularly at senior command levels, which will only further undermine the Harmony Guidelines if you are going to meet operational requirements.

Professor Dandeker: On Harmony Guidelines, I think there is some important contextual information that needs to be remembered, which is that something between 13 and 20% of personnel are in breach of Harmony Guidelines, but you can turn it round the other way, that is to say, the overwhelming majority of personnel are operating within the Harmony Guidelines. That is point one. The second point is that the Harmony Guidelines, so far as our own research is concerned, show that if you keep personnel within them their mental health does not suffer. It does suffer if you go over those guidelines, so I think the point to recall is that the great majority are within the Harmony Guidelines. I think that the Harmony Guidelines have been well constructed because the evidence suggests that if you stay within them they do not suffer; if you go beyond them there is a 20-50% likelihood that they will suffer in terms of PTSD. That is an important piece of context for this inquiry to remember. Lastly, although it is not the only answer to the question, PTSD outcomes are much worse for American forces. One reason, probably one of about five, is the incredibly lengthy tours of service that they have to undergo overseas, particularly in Iraq.

Q23 Mr Crausby: Professor Strachan, you made the point earlier on that things have always been difficult since 1945. There has always been a problem of recruitment and retention, yet things have changed dramatically since 1945. We have a bigger population these days and very much less in the Armed Forces. We have the opportunity to recruit women and yet we are falling behind, so has something fundamentally not changed in society in the sense that in the 1950s, for instance, the option was to go down the coalmine, get a job in the steel mill or the foundry or join the Army? Was that not just a completely different opportunity than what new people have today? In what way are the Armed Forces addressing that?
Professor Strachan: I think that question absolutely goes to the heart of the Armed Forces’ problems. When you had, let us say, 80% of the workforce in...
manual occupations, and many of them vulnerable to short term cyclical unemployment, then you could target the sorts of recruits which essentially the Army is still targeting (the Army particularly but the Armed Forces collectively) and still expecting to recruit. It is extraordinary that the growth of higher education in this country is seen as a threat to Armed Forces’ recruiting rather than an opportunity. That is something which I think has to be tackled much more head on and requires much more fundamental treatment. One issue, of course, is whether you have a common point of entry, which I know the Armed Forces are deeply unhappy about because they look at the police and they see that as a bad model, but somehow you have to get into the position where in (loose terms) middle England, which is where most people would now put themselves in terms of the aspirations of the workforce, sees it as as reasonable an option to join the Armed Forces as to go into any other walk of life, and that is not the situation at the moment. If there were that shift two things would follow. First of all, I think the issue of ethnic recruiting would be less important, simply because many ambitious ethnic minorities target the professions as appropriate courses for their offspring to follow and do not see the Armed Forces within that spectrum, and, secondly, there would be an opportunity to maximise the extraordinary privilege which the Armed Forces have at the moment compared with other potential employers, which is a direct military presence on almost every single campus throughout the United Kingdom in terms of the OTCs, the naval units and the air squadrons. Those units are seen as poor relations instead of being seen as, as I say, an enormous privilege and opportunity.

Q24 Mr Crausby: But does that not just deal with officers rather than other ranks?

Professor Strachan: That is my point, that at the moment it is seen as dealing with officer recruitment, but if we are talking about highly qualified senior warrant officers, senior rates, with levels of skill and specialisation in particular branches and particular technical skills, then we need to move away from that expectation. That is exactly picking up the drift of your question, that society has changed and we need to recognise that your WO2 in the Royal Logistic Corps may have a degree and not be an officer. We should be ready to embrace them.

Q25 Mr Crausby: But when you look at the proposals that the MoD give us to improve these things, there are things like “Improving the relationship between the career office network and the RAF Museums at Hendon and Cosford”. “Undertaking marketing campaigns . . . ”, “Running research programmes to understand factors affecting recruitment”. In the scheme of things with this massive change in society are the MoD addressing this issue in any way realistically when only 8% of our Armed Forces are women?

Professor Strachan: I do not think they are addressing the issue realistically because they are still looking to recruit in the traditional pools rather than thinking how they adapt the Armed Forces to fit into where the pool of potential recruits now is. One of the reasons for doing that comes back to where we began this discussion this morning, and that is that if you were, let us say, 5% below your recruitment target, you would think, “If we can just give a little more shove in the existing framework then we will cover the gap”. Five per cent is a manageable number of men and women to get to join up, but that does not deal with the underlying problem, which has been there consistently, as I have argued.

Q26 Mr Jones: I totally agree with your analysis there, but when you have a situation in the NAO report where 90% of officers went to public school and three-quarters of scholarships went to public schools rather than state schools, has not the MoD and Army, if it is serious about doing what you are saying (and I do not disagree with you) in your analysis about attracting middle England, really got to get away from that public school mentality?

Professor Strachan: I would be amazed if the figure were 90% but if you say it is I will accept it, but it is not my impression from looking at those who pass out from Sandhurst and comparable military academies. I taught there myself, and even when I taught there 30 years ago it was not the case. There is a shift required but one of the shifts may also be this—and this is why it is a chicken and egg problem: that, if it were the case, is it also true that 90% actually reflected the proportion of those applying for those places in the first place? How much success is being achieved in getting people to apply? This is not dissimilar to the argument about Oxbridge entry. One of the key difficulties is to get people to apply in the first place because you can only reflect success from those who apply. I do not know how many from non-public school backgrounds are applying.

Q27 Mr Jones: But if you are skewing all the scholarships to public schools, which is three-quarters of those, surely that is going to affect the type of applicant coming forward for those.

Professor Strachan: It might do but I am still back to the question: who applies for these scholarships?

Q28 Mr Jenkin: Do you think the Ministry of Defence wants to recruit to target and could it do so if it applied sufficient resources, because there are plenty of battalion commanders, for example, who do recruit to target but others who do not and it seems to be about where effort is applied?

Professor Dandeker: I agree with Hew on that particular point. I think the more fundamental question which Hew started off his comments with is the middle England point. What I think is an opportunity that should not be missed is to convert what is going on in the operational area, which is an erosion of any remaining distinctions between officers and senior warrant officers in terms of skill and contribution, and it is about converting that through, if you like, advertising and marketing into the opportunity to recruit from middle England. In other words, that erosion of the distinction between
these ranks is already developing and needs to be converted into the market place so far as recruitment is concerned.

Mr Jenkin: Can I have an answer to my question?

Q29 Mr Hancock: Why is it then that the Ministry of Defence have not recognised that point and they are still trying to sell to that bottom end of the market the idea of coming into the Armed Forces to get educated when you have lost out in the education system? Why have they not recognised it? I think all of us have, you have, and the previous report that we did recognised that, so why have they not?

Professor Dandeker: Because I do not think they are necessarily mutually exclusive in the sense that it goes back to the controversy about schools. On the negative side there are those who argue that the military should not be “targeting” schools which include disadvantaged young people who can have their heads turned, if you like, by the “glamour” of a military career. Another way of looking at it is that here are the Armed Forces which provide all sorts of opportunities for those disadvantaged people to have a leg-up in the wider community by their military service. That is a point that could be allied to the middle England point rather than being seen as an alternative to it. We do both messages.

Professor Strachan: Mr Jenkin is waiting for a reply. Of course regiments vary, units vary, because commanding officers vary and have different priorities; you are absolutely right. The question here is how do you generalise best practice? I think there is a great deal of inbuilt pressure in the Armed Forces partly because of current pressures to think, “What am I going to do next week?” (or today) rather than, “How am I going to affect the situation a year or two years hence when I will no longer be in command of this battalion; somebody else will be doing it? I want returns in the period of my command”. Secondly, the successor in an appointment within the two-year maximum rotation, which is really what we are talking about in most Service jobs, will have a different order of priorities, no doubt in part a reflection of the fact that the unit may be doing something different at that particular moment. So I think there is a failure to develop continuity and develop best practice, but that in itself is part of an institutional framework which says we are running very hard to stay where we are rather than thinking where we might be.

Q30 Mr Jones: I will just correct it—nine out of ten of the top Army officers were educated at independent schools. I was correct in that three-quarters of Army scholarships in 2006–07 went to independent schools rather than state schools. Can I pick up an issue which you raised, Professor Strachan, during the debate on the Covenant? It was really what members of the Armed Forces expect and how they articulate what they expect. There is evidence that has been put to us that the way of articulating that would be better served if there were some type of federation or organisation within the Armed Forces along the lines of the Police Federation. I wonder what your thoughts are on that.

Professor Strachan: It is what I was referring to when I said that there is resistance in the Armed Forces to having something that is outside the chain of command. My own view is that it could benefit the chain of command if you took some of these issues out of the chain of command and enabled them to be dealt with directly as employment issues. I do not see a problem with an Armed Forces federation.

Q31 Mr Jones: What issues are you talking about particularly?

Professor Strachan: I am talking about issues that are not to do with operational command. That is where much of the argument about the need to be different and so on tends to be enshrined. I think all of us would understand completely that, when in a situation that is war or approximates to war, something entirely different must operate, but when it comes to issues of housing, when it comes to issues of family support, when it comes to issues --- to be absurdly personal and anecdotal, at the moment I have a daughter who is in the Army and she was unable to get a mortgage because she was not deemed to have a fixed abode. Those sorts of things just seem to me to be issues that could be dealt with outside the chain of command in another form of management structure. Of course there will be issues on the borderline between command and personnel management; I entirely see that, and there will be areas of difficulty. That is not a reason for not doing it.

Professor Dandeker: I agree with that. It is important that people are involved in decision-making and thinking about the issues that affect the Armed Forces. Secondly, the generations of young people who are coming into the military expect it and I think the demand for it is perfectly reasonable. If I may go back to the question that was unanswered, your question, Mr Jenkin, I think it is fair to say that regiments differ in terms of how much resource they have to put into recruiting efforts. Some regiments use their own resource and have enough to do so. Others do not and I think that is an important consideration.

Chairman: I would like now to move to the final question, the issue of ethnic minorities.

Q32 Richard Younger-Ross: Professor Dandeker, nearly ten years ago you wrote a report Diversity in the British Armed Forces: the debate over ethnic minority representation. At that time you argued that internal cultural change was required and without it targeting ethnic minorities could be counter-productive. Has the internal cultural change occurred?

Professor Dandeker: I think it has to a considerable degree. It goes back to the points that we have been talking about before, that if the military is to recruit enough people to serve then it needs to broaden its appeal. That is why diversifying the uniform is one of the titles I have used in the various things I have written on the subject. Whether that will be enough
to deliver the targets that are being talked about in various publications, namely, a replication of the figure of minority ethnic communities as a percentage of overall population within the military, I think is most unlikely, and I think it is most unlikely because it is based upon a questionable premise that you should both expect and believe in the value of having, if you like, an exact copy of the statistical percentage of a group in wider society within the military. I think (and I have always argued this) that that premise is questionable. I think it is much more defensible to argue that the Armed Services should not so much seek any particular percentage of a population but stand for the values of the wider society, one of which is equal opportunity, and then see what they can do with that particular value so far as involving more and more of our diverse communities into the Armed Services. I think that is the crucial point.

Q33 Richard Younger-Ross: In your report you argue both the business case and the equality case. You now seem to be reliant on the equality case, not the business case.

Professor Dandeker: I think both will apply. Both the business case and the equality case apply. The question is fine tuning both of them to achieve the result you wish. All I am saying is that I think it is not credible to expect it, particularly when the new census data come out when I think the percentage of minorities in the wider community will be much higher than it is now according to the 2001 census. I think you make a rod for your own back if you ask the military to replicate that figure in its own democratic profile of the military. I think it is most unlikely that will happen and, as your own Committee’s data shows us, 60% of ethnic minorities are not from the UK at all; they are from the Commonwealth.

Q34 Richard Younger-Ross: In terms of the figures, the shortfall is quite dramatic. In 1999 your report said it was 1% of 6% of the total population. However, in that report it also pointed out that that 1% should be taken into the recruiting pool where 19% of the population of 16–24 are from an ethnic background. This is not just a matter of getting close to the figure: We are well short of it, are we not?

Professor Dandeker: We are well short of it, and I think the demography is not favouring the military’s efforts because the military is running to keep still. That is to say that the demographic profile of the wider population is moving, as it were, in a direction which is more and more difficult for the Armed Services to catch up on if you exclude the ethnic minorities from the Commonwealth from your figures.

Q35 Richard Younger-Ross: Is this still the problem though of the military looking at their old recruiting policies rather than trying to diversify where they seek to recruit from?

Professor Dandeker: I think it is a mixture of supply and demand. It is not only that the Armed Services should be looking at their own culture and how they appear to populations and making sure the door is seen to be open. They also have to look at the attitudes and aspirations of those who are looking for places for work. It goes back to Professor Strachan’s point: not every member of a minority ethnic community places the military as high up as certain other populations would do.

Q36 Richard Younger-Ross: Just broadening the question to both of you, the MoD has appointed religious advisers and chaplains from all major faith groups. Are those appointments working?

Professor Strachan: I do not have the knowledge to give the answer to that question but I would simply endorse what Christopher Dandeker has said. My impression is that over ten years there has been a massive change and the Armed Forces have attempted to deal with this in a much more positive and active way than has been the case in the past. The issue may be much more whether you really can expect Armed Forces of a limited size, who are recruiting as professional Armed Forces rather than through conscription, fully to reflect society. One of the consequences of setting targets is that the Armed Forces may do better and may increase their numbers from ethnic minorities in absolute terms but they are still failing to meet targets, so target-setting creates a sense of running very hard to remain in the same place.

Q37 Richard Younger-Ross: Finally, of what they have done what works best?

Professor Strachan: In terms of ethnic minority recruitment?

Q38 Richard Younger-Ross: Yes.

Professor Strachan: The most important thing, of course, has been effecting changes of attitude within those who are serving alongside those from ethnic minorities. That has been the key issue. Essentially, once that was addressed as a command issue, coming back to the distinction I was trying to make before, once those responsible for those under their command saw that that was an issue and addressed it, that changed much of the culture quite quickly, it seems to me, just as the same issues were voiced ten years ago when there was the issue of homosexuality in the Armed Forces.

Q39 Chairman: Anything to add, Professor Dandeker?

Professor Dandeker: Two quick points. Whether it is about sexual preference or women in the military, if you want to change culture it has to come from the very top of the leadership of an organisation. The evidence of that is extremely strong, and to overcome points of resistance, and points of resistance come at middle management and other middle management, not least amongst the NCOs. Secondly, I think the biggest challenge for minority recruitment in the military lies outside the military itself. That is to say, if you take my point that the Armed Services should be recruiting not according to demographic statistics, but according to some key values, like equal opportunity, and you then think about the British Armed Services, then the real
question is: what does it mean to be in the British Armed Services over the next 20 years, and that is an answer that cannot be provided by the Armed Services themselves, but the wider society and the politicians together.

Q40 Chairman: May we thank you both for a fascinating evidence session. The key characteristic of it, I think, was that we could have spent a day with you and still left a huge amount uncovered and we are most grateful to you both for coming to give evidence.

Professor Strachan: May I make just two very quick observations in passing and I promise to be brief, partly in self-interest. One is that in addressing the issue of the Armed Forces and society more broadly and their relationship, let us remember that this is not just an issue of Regular Forces, but Reserve Forces too. One of the extraordinary things, it seems to me, in terms of regional representation is the very low profile, and increasingly low profile, that the Reserve Forces have, partly as a direct consequence of overseas deployments and the way in which they are currently used, and I think a committee such as this needs to think about them as well as the Regular Forces. The second thing that I would say, and we have not talked about at all, is training. It is referred to in relation to Deepcut, but I am talking about pre-deployment training, training at higher levels, because it is training that is most directly affected by the levels of operational tour at the moment and it is training that seems potentially to have some effect on the retention issue. I am raising the question because I do not know the answer to this, but, because training is a casualty of current high levels of deployment and because at the same time the real challenge is to retain senior NCOs and middle-rank officers, to retain the sergeants and the captains essentially. Then it is training at that level because it is these trained people you are seeking to deploy. I have not thought through fully in my mind how these things link up, but I am quite sure there is a relationship.

Chairman: This is very powerful, concentrated stuff and we will have to reflect on it. Thank you very much indeed.

Witnesses: Ms Liz Sheldon, Project Director, Soldier, Sailors, Airmen and Families’ Association, Forces Help (SSAFA FH); Mrs Dawn McCafferty, Chairman, RAF Families Association; and Ms Julie McCarthy, Chief Executive, Army Families’ Federation, gave evidence.

Q41 Chairman: Thank you very much for coming. Now, we have the Families’ Federations and SSAFA and I know that the naval representative is unable to be here, but has spoken to you, so you will be able to represent that aspect as well. Could I ask you please to introduce yourselves and to say what your responsibilities are.

Mrs McCafferty: I am Dawn McCafferty. I am Chairman of the RAF Families’ Federation which was established in about November last year. Prior to that, I served in the Royal Air Force for 23 years, my husband is currently serving in the Service, and my last job in the RAF was Head of Recruiting, so quite a topical subject for us to come and contribute evidence to. Obviously, my aim today is to represent RAF families and their concerns about issues that impact on retention of the Serviceperson.

Ms McCarthy: My name is Julie McCarthy and I am Chief Executive of the Army Families’ Federation and I have been an Army wife for 14 years, so can speak again from the heart about how families affect retention.

Ms Sheldon: I am Liz Sheldon. Director of Service Support for SSAFA Forces Help. My remit is to look after, and support, our community volunteers who worldwide support the serving community. My background is that I was married to an infantryman for 25 years and I ran the Army Families’ Federation about eight years ago, so I have a lot of experience of what the practicalities are in the serving community.

Q42 Chairman: Can I begin with welfare support. There was a recent report, 2006 I think, that 28% of those leaving the Services said that the quality of welfare support was one of the factors in their decision to leave. Does that reflect your experience as well?

Ms Sheldon: Yes, it is our experience that many people find it difficult sometimes to access welfare support, particularly if it is of a uniformed source. We have a confidential support line which we provide under contracts to the MoD and many of our contacts voice their concerns about actually contacting the system directly for fear of not so easy, and they just feel they have more confidence going into an external agency which is independent of the chain of command.

Ms McCarthy: I think there have been improvements recently. The Operational Welfare Package, which came in recently that the three Services all use while a unit is away on deployment, has made a huge impact, especially for the work of the Unit Welfare Officer, and, I think, from a uniformed point of view, that has improved the service that they are able to provide. If we could see that when units are not on deployment and are still under a lot of pressure with training and on courses and doing the stuff in between, I think that would make an enormous amount of difference to families certainly.

Mrs McCafferty: I think the difficulty for families is that there is an awful lot of stuff out there for them to call upon, but it is actually finding access to it, understanding where to go, particularly if you have just joined the military family, say, you have just married and your partner has now been deployed and you are left behind perhaps with a young baby, and knowing where to go to for that welfare support can be quite challenging. Actually, we try through
the Federations and through SSAFA to provide routes to signpost people to the best welfare facilities that are available for them. There is a lot there, but it is just making sure that people know how to access it correctly.

Q43 Mr Holloway: Can you give us some examples of the sort of things that happen to these people that are behind this statistic?

Ms McCarthy: Behind them not being able to get the welfare support?

Q44 Mr Holloway: Behind people expressing this as a factor for the reason that people would leave. Could you give some examples of the sort of things that happen?

Ms McCarthy: I think frequently it is where there are marriage difficulties, where there are relationship difficulties, and I think it comes back again to Liz’s point; it is getting help, especially if you are overseas, so your access to things like Relate. Actually, having the family support network is a huge thing, I think, which is often underestimated, that the majority of families that are within the Forces and are following the Forces, they are away from the traditional support network of their family, so they will look on the Service that they are with to provide that, and I think in times of difficulty in marriage or when you are having a child, that is all swept up in that and it can be very, very difficult then, I think, to not have it to fall back on. Of course, then it is somebody in uniform, so it is knowing, as we said, and being able to hold on, somebody and overseas it is very, very difficult. I think there are long waiting lists for things like Relate and there are not the possibilities of going outside of the Service because you are in that community and, unless you speak German or unless you speak Greek, you are in trouble. I think that one of the major points. Also, if you are abroad and a close member of your family is ill, at that time getting the support you feel you may need to get back to see your close family member who is ill or dying can be very, very difficult. I think that is a huge amount and it is often the influence of the external family, the family at home, that is when that welfare support will have let them down.

Mrs McCafferty: I think the welfare umbrella as well covers an awful lot in that people maybe are citing that on their exit surveys, but it actually covers things like the education of their children, support when they are moving house, trying to find a new home, financial problems. There is an awful lot there underneath that term “welfare” and how they have characterised their reason for leaving as “lack of welfare provision”.

Ms Sheldon: Picking up on Julie’s point about the Operational Welfare Package, yes, I am sure that has made massive improvements, but I have heard professionals and I have had professionals say to me that, once the operations have come to an end and the package also comes to an end, the problems still continue. In fact, very often mental health issues which have started off during an operation deployment may still be simmering away below the surface, so in fact problems are sort of swept up and they do not come to an end when the deployment ends and actually those are still sort of bubbling away and need to be identified and supported. Let me give you an example actually of a situation I came across in Germany last week. I picked up that IV Brigade, which is closing in Osnabruck as the base is closing down at Osnabruck, is moving back to Catterick. The brigade will have an operational tour in Iraq for six months and they will have three weeks when they get back literally to pack up and move over to Catterick, so they will lose their post-tour leave and, during that time, the families have gone through all sorts of strains and stresses, as will the servicemen, and they have got this on top of all the strains and stresses associated with a really big move to Catterick. That, to me, sympotises where welfare support really is failing, it is failing the families.

Q45 Chairman: So those are some of the problems.

Ms Sheldon: Some of the problems.

Q46 Chairman: What are some of the solutions? How do we improve welfare support and obviously try to avoid a decision like that?

Mrs McCafferty: For example, we have talked about Relate and the Royal Air Force is working at the moment on a trial with the RAF Benevolent Fund to provide Relate at unit level, but it is only a trial and I am sure it is quite restricted. I do not know how much money is being spent on doing this, but it is that sort of resourcing, if that could be delivered to all military units as a given, that it will be on your unit, it will be funded. You could take all sorts of examples of community support projects that actually many of the wives and partners initiate because they recognise the need and they will create self-help groups, but actually providing support to that sort of activity would, I think, help an awful lot.

Ms McCarthy: I think that there is a lot within the Army unit about stability that perhaps things like super-garrisons in the next 20 or 30 years will give, and I think with some of that, if we do see that stability, for those elements of the Armed Forces that are stable, there will be a number of the welfare issues which will resolve themselves, if you like, because people will integrate within the community and it will be a little bit easier and you have not got the moving every two years. For those still moving, I think there needs to be still a very comprehensive welfare package. There are a number of small units who do not have unit welfare officers, who do not have people who are single-hatted in that role and who are not given the resources that they need and the proper training, more importantly. It is training not just for the unit welfare officers, but for their whole office to know how to deal with the myriad things that they get coming through their door.

Ms Sheldon: I would like to comment on this and actually I would like to pick up on the comment by Hew Strachan which is that actually the MoD do not have the capacity really to handle many of the welfare issues that come to their door, and really what they need is to have a welfare support
infrastructure which provides seamless support to families wherever they go and servicemen and which also embraces the wider family. We are getting many, many parents now contacting us because they just feel completely out of the loop and they are parents of many of the younger recruits that people are concerned about. The issue is that at the moment we have got three Services which operate their personal welfare support differently. At the moment, this is accepted by MoD under the Armed Forces’ personnel overarching strategy, for good reasons, I am sure, but it means that there is not a continuity, there is not a sort of streamlined approach to handling welfare issues and, when you have got people moving in and out of joint operations, back-filling between different units, it actually can bring an incredible hardship and an inconsistency sometimes in the way in which rules are applied.

*Mrs McCafferty:* We had an example of that recently where we had an RAF family where the individual was deployed overseas, but on a joint unit, and, therefore, actually the lead for welfare was Army which is a very different system from the way the Royal Air Force do things when people are deployed, and the family were expecting the same provision as an RAF unit and it was not delivered. They felt very isolated, very left out and in fact contacted us for help and advice and we had to then go and investigate and find out. Actually, it was not that the Army were not providing, it is just that they did it in a different way which was not necessarily conducive to what the RAF family felt they needed and were used to because, as Liz said, the three Services have a different welfare support system.

**Chairman:** We will come on to that later on because it may well be a real issue.

**Q47 Robert Key:** I specifically wanted to explore this a little bit further. What is your relationship with the Army Welfare Service and the other welfare services because, in my experience, whenever budgets have been tight, the first to go is the Army Welfare Service which puts more of a burden on to you and very often, if you are not in the right place at the right time, there is not an adequate Welfare Service Officer or team to back up problems, crises, families and issues?

**Ms McCarthy:** I think one of the major issues that particularly the Army Welfare Service have at the moment is recruitment and recruiting the right people at the right time. I think they have seen, especially with the operational commitments of the Army, an increase in their budget to allow them to expand what they are doing. We do have a very good relationship with the Welfare Service and we do signpost them frequently and I think probably a role that the Families’ Federations have particularly is that, although people come to us because they are not sure they want somebody outside of the uniformed circle, I think SSAFA are probably the people who then pick up if there are shortfalls.

**Ms Sheldon:** Yes, we provide secondary personal support and welfare support in the UK to the Army Welfare Service and we provide professional social workers who provide that sort of back-up where the Army Welfare Service does not have that sort of expertise. Our experience is that actually some of the Army welfare support is very good, some of it is quite patchy, and I think it really depends on who they have been able to recruit and also how speedily they are able to put people in place. We saw this actually at Birmingham about a year ago when the welfare support there was very, very tight and I know that the Army Welfare Service was very pushed to get people into the hospital quickly.

**Q48 Robert Key:** Directly following on from this, Wiltshire County Council Social Services spend about £4 million a year supporting Army families in the community. That is the third pillar, is it not? It is yourselves, the welfare services and the county council or local authority social services. How do you interact with the local authority social services?

**Mrs McCafferty:** In the RAF, we would do it through SSAFA because we have a contract with SSAFA. I say “we”, the RAF has a contract with SSAFA to provide that professional expertise and they would be our gateway because, in the Federation, there are only six of us and none of us is qualified in social work and we do not necessarily understand those structures, so we would signpost towards SSAFA and they would then open the doors to find provision. The other route I can take is that, because we are part of the Royal Air Force Association, I can also tap into the RAFA network for support if I need that.

**Q49 Robert Key:** But your professional social workers whom you employ, how do they interact with the county?

**Ms Sheldon:** Well, they would link in with, and defer to, the social local authority, as appropriate, and yes, they have links and they work very closely with them.

**Mrs McCafferty:** The RAF also has Community Development Workers and they are professionally qualified and their remit is to go out and liaise with local authorities to talk about provision of service to the local community.

**Q50 Mr Jenkin:** It may be easier perhaps if one of you, or jointly, could prepare us a note that explains this because there is quite a large number of Service charities that support Armed Services personnel. How do you all fit together and how do you dovetail with the Government and how does it actually work? I think it would be useful to have your perspective on that.

**Ms Sheldon:** Well, the Federation of British Service Charities, COBSEO, is supposed to be the coordinating mechanism for all 120, I think at last count, Service charities. Within MoD, at the centre, in SPPoL, there is a staff officer whose role it is to coordinate charitable activity to link in with MoD priorities, but that is an area which needs a lot of work, and they also tie in with COBSEO. Therefore, we try as best as possible to share it or to share information within that sort of mechanism, but there is a lot of work that needs to be done.
Q51 Mr Jenkin: Do you work better with each other than you do with the Government, bluntly?
Ms McCafferty: Yes.
Ms McCarthy: Yes.
Ms Sheldon: Yes, we do.

Q52 Mr Jenkin: Are there areas which you are undertaking as charities which you feel the Government should be doing, and can you briefly describe what those areas would be?
Ms McCarthy: From my point of view as a Families’ Federation, I think we see ourselves sort of independent and this is not something that the Government could do. We are there to lobby the Government or the MoD and say, “What the MoD are doing is disadvantaging families”, and I think we come from that very sort of special point, and I think Kim would say the same for the Naval Families’ Federation as well.

Mrs McCafferty: I think we all value the independence. Although I am funded through an RAF budget, we are independent of the chain of command, hence I can send my evidence to you at the push of a button and nobody checks it before it gets there. When I was in the RAF, it would have gone through about six layers of staffing before it got anywhere close to you, so it is the independence, and that is what the families feel, that they can come to us about issues of concern to them and they know that we can talk direct on their behalf, so it is not necessarily providing a charitable service. I think perhaps SSAFA would be different but the three Families’ Federations have a unique role. You talked earlier about an Armed Forces’ Federation and we believe that role from a families’ perspective; we represent the families independently.

Ms McCarthy: There are areas, I believe, that the Government should be stepping up, such as mental health, if you look at what combat stress is doing particularly, and things like that, but perhaps more in our veteran community I think there is much more that they could be doing there. In terms of the Service community, picking up on Robert’s point about what Wiltshire County Council do, I think there are a lot of local authorities who very much think, “Well, that’s Army families and that’s all RAF families, the Forces, so that would be dealt with by the Forces”, and they sort of perhaps back away from their responsibilities and what they should be doing.

Ms Sheldon: SSAFA comes from a very different angle because our remit is to relieve need, suffering and distress where the public funding is not able to do so and to move quickly. As an example, we have set up Norton House in Ashtead so that families can stay when wounded patients are having treatment at Headley Court.

Q53 Mr Jenkin: Is that not an example of something that, in an ideal world, the Government would be paying for?
Ms McCarthy: I think we would all agree that ideally that would be the case, but you then hope that by what you do in showing where there is a need and where perhaps people should think about changing policy, then hopefully that will bring about change, but it is not our job in SSAFA to bring about the change in policy. We can only hope that the Families’ Federations can raise those issues and, in the meantime, until policy can be changed, which can take ages, then we will help the Service community.

Q54 Mr Jenkin: But the very fact of your being there, does that not actually discourage the Government from taking on these additional responsibilities because, “Oh, we can put that on to the charities; they’ll do that”?
Mrs McCafferty: I think the charities are becoming quite robust in terms of drawing a line and actually saying, “No, that isn’t our business”. They have to be because they have got limited resources as well and the charities themselves have got to raise their own funds. Ms Sheldon: This is a very, very low-key example. One of our volunteer networks was approached in the south of England for funding to help repair accommodation, servicemen’s accommodation. Now, that is where we definitely drew the line and said, “No, this is a public funding issue. Sure, it is not very nice when you come back from deployment and your barrack block looks pretty ratty, but I’m afraid that is not what our charitable funding is all about”, so we were pretty clear.

Q55 Mr Crausby: You make quite an important point about lobbying. Do you see yourselves as lobbying organisations in the absence of your partners not being able to lobby? Do you see that as a substitute or do you see yourselves as organisations that should provide support to Service personnel?
Mrs McCafferty: I think both. Yes, we have been established to represent the families’ perspective, and that includes the Service person who is a part of the family, which is quite a cultural change for the RAF. It used to just be the dependants and the partners but, since the set-up of our new Federation, we represent the serving family member too, as long as what we are representing is a family-related issue, and that is quite broad. If you think about it, most things have a tenuous link to family whether they are to do with parents or siblings or children and dependants, so yes, we are there to represent their concerns, and that is one of the reasons that we are here today, but also to support them. When the families come to us and they have a problem, they have an issue, not only do we capture the evidence and put that into a report, but actually we then try and find a way to help them resolve that issue, and that might be turning to the Royal Air Force, in my case, talking to the RAF Community Support staff, to the policy staff, or it might be going externally to SSAFA or to the Royal Air Force Association, and it is for us to determine how best to support that individual and that family, so we do both. We are not just a lobby group and I would not want to characterise us as that because we are doing an awful lot of fairly low-level, but very important, welfare support.
Q56 Mr Holloway: Just to go back to Liz’s comment about the accommodation at Headley Court, surely it is not a big deal that the charities are doing these things because they probably do it better than anybody else could, but surely it is a question of, when they do it, whether or not they get cash from the Government for things that the Government ought to be funding. In the Headley Court case, has there been a struggle to get cash?

Ms Sheldon: Well, we would hope very much that MoD might, in time, assist us with some funding towards running costs, but, in the meantime, we are raising funds to cover these through fund-raising and other charitable expenditure.

Q57 Mr Holloway: But most people would probably think that that was a pretty reasonable thing for taxpayers’ money to be spent on.

Ms Sheldon: Yes, I would agree with that.

Chairman: We are now moving on to Reserves because you heard either Professor Strachan or Professor Duncker say that Reserves were very important to the Armed Forces.

Q58 Richard Younger-Ross: The National Audit Office found that many Reservists cite personal, family and employment pressures as well as inadequate support as reasons for leaving the Armed Forces, and I think SSAFA’s own submission notes that the families of the Territorial Army and Reserve forces have similar welfare concerns. What more can be done and what more needs to be done to support Reservists?

Ms Sheldon: I think it is very difficult to reach people within the communities where they are based. I gave the reasons before that, from SSAFA’s perspective, we have a network of volunteers across the UK who could be deployed to provide low-level befriending support for families because very often people are coming to terms with an experience which is supportive within the serving community and they do not have a network of people going through a similar experience of anxiety and loneliness which they will be doing on their own, so sometimes all it needs is actually a friendly face to call upon and say, “Hey, I’m feeling really lonely. Can you pop round? I am really anxious and I haven’t heard from my son for a few weeks and I just hope he’s okay”. It is sometimes just helpful to have that reassuring contact and it is really, I think, having a mechanism to put these people in touch, not just with us, but also with other organisations that provide support as well which can just help to sustain people through a very difficult period.

Ms McCarthy: The biggest problem is the footprint of the units at this sort of level because you may have for a TA unit families all over England and Scotland and that is their biggest issue, that the ROSO, the Regional Operational Support Officer, does not have the resources probably—we are back again to resources—to be able to contact. Certainly we have found when we speak to some of the TA families, we have a specialist who works with TA Reserve Forces, and one of the biggest things actually is communication from the soldiers themselves as well.

The Regular Forces have a lot more influence on their soldiers, shall we say, to be able to get them to take information home which I do not think the TA have. Something that we are working on is the Family Support Groups which we are presenting on Saturday to the Future Reservists Conference which is actually trying to empower the units themselves to start collecting this information and, as Liz said, just to put people in touch. I do not think it is something particularly that the chain of command can do; it is a wife wanting to talk to a wife or a sister to talk to somebody who knows what they are going through. It is very much having somebody that you can just pick up the phone to, and the hope that they will have somebody close is not necessarily a realistic one for TA families, but at least, if we can put somebody at the end of a phone, at the end of an email, I think that is one of the key things. I think what we need from the MoD side is the facilitation of that and help with that to make things like Army.net much more accessible to our TA families. It is quite difficult for the Regular families to access, so the TA families probably find it very, very difficult.

Mrs McCafferty: I would echo what has been said. I think there is a smaller percentage of reservists serving with the RAF, but they are a uniquely difficult group to reach and you have to assume that the partners and the families do not actually understand anything about the military lifestyle because they have not chosen to volunteer at the weekends and become a Royal Auxiliary Air Force Officer and disappear off and do exciting things, but they are just carrying on with their normal lives. It is only when their partner is deployed or there is an issue where they need support, suddenly they do not know who to turn to and, as I say, it is facilitating information to them, a welfare package that they can tap into when they need it, but also respecting the fact that they do not necessarily want it forced down their throats. There has to be a respect for the fact that they are in their own community and we need to be there when they need us, but not necessarily be constantly inviting them or sending them lots of information. If you are in the Regular cadre and you are on the patch, you can have families’ briefings, you can have pre-deployment briefings, the families are brought together, you can tell them what is going on and it is far more effective than relying on the soldier or the airman to take that information home because they just do not do, they just do not tell them what is going on. The Reservists are another level removed from us and, as Julie said, they could be at the other end of the country from the parent unit to which that Service person has been deployed.

Chairman: Talking about the patch, let us move on to the role of families in general.

Q59 Mr Holloway: It seems that a lot of the dissatisfaction is as a result of disruption. Could you give us a flavour of the sort of disruption that families suffer, maybe some examples?

Mrs McCafferty: For a large number of RAF personnel, every 18 months to two years you are going to be posted on, not necessarily to an area of choice. When you move, you have to make a
decision whether to leave your family behind and then live unaccompanied, living in a mess or a barrack block, or you take the family with you. Depending on that family dynamic, you have possibly got a wife or partner who wants to follow her own career and now cannot find work, you have got access to dentists, access to doctors, access to accommodation, you may find that the quarters are not in very good condition where you are going, you may want to buy your own home and find that that is very difficult, you may have special needs for your children and getting access to that can be very problematic if, every two years or so, you are changing location. It goes right the way across a whole raft of things that we touched on in the written evidence that we sent, that mobility and the lack of stability that Julie mentioned earlier, it pervades everything in your family lifestyle.

Q60 Mr Holloway: Can you give some specific examples?

Ms McCafferty: Some of the quotes that we have had from the research that we did when we knew we were coming to do this is one where they said it was better to start with, but, when faced with a late posting and all the uncertainty that goes with moving to somewhere where there is no Army housing and all the nonsense that that brings with it or, much worse, also being posted to a TA unit, there is no support, so it is the out-of-normal ones. My son is eight years old and he is on his fourth school and that is a major issue that most families find.

Mrs McCafferty: My daughter attended three schools in three terms when she was four and five and all she wanted to know was, “What colour’s the uniform, mum?” She just could not understand that it was a new school and a completely new location. It is just timing, but the disruption to children’s schooling is massive. Most people do try and take their primary schoolchildren with them and it is only really when it gets to the 11-year-olds that the big decisions are made about whether or not to buy a house and stabilise or take the boarding school option potentially, if you can afford that. You have got lots of primary school-kids who are literally being picked up mid-term and moved for a couple of years and then on. My little boy is in a primary school at RAF Cranwell at the moment which is about 80% RAF children based there and he is consistently coming home and telling me that his best friend is “posted”. “But he’ll be back next year, mum”, and their parents are going off, doing a training course for a year and then they are coming back, and the disruption is massive to children.

Q61 Mr Holloway: So what sort of things could we be doing in order to aid retention in these extraordinary circumstances?

Ms McCafferty: Extend tours, I think. Tour lengths could be longer certainly for the officer cadre (since these are the ones who currently move most frequently).

Q62 Mr Holloway: What else?

Ms McCarthy: I think looking at the Work of Service Personnel Command Paper, in terms of education, some of the changes that are made sort of applying for children to school. For most people, you need to apply in the March for your child to enter school in September. It is not a realistic expectation. Most Army families do not know where they are going until about six weeks before, by which point the school that you may want your child to go to—we moved recently and my nearest school was five miles away and I was very, very lucky that a child dropped out at the last minute, another Army family dropped out because of a late posting and I got my child into the nearest school, but potentially I was driving five miles.

Q63 Chairman: We covered a lot of this extremely important issue in our Educating Service Children Report last year and we had some wonderful evidence from some of the children themselves. What are some of the non-education issues that you would highlight?

Mrs McCafferty: Continuity of or access to careers or jobs for partners and spouses. Again, if they want to stay co-located with their partner, they are faced with giving up that job. In the old days, say, ten or 15 years ago, if you were perhaps a nurse, a midwife or a teacher, you were perhaps expected to be able to transfer jobs reasonably easily, or with a big bank you might be able to transfer, but these transfers do not happen so easily nowadays and there are a lot of partners coming to us, saying, “For his career, I have sacrificed mine”. That is one of the quotes that came out of our AFPRB work—“I cannot have my own career”. We are also finding evidence now of senior officers and senior NCOs who are effectively leaving the RAF to say, “It is now my partner’s turn to have her career because she’s followed me for 20 years and it’s now her turn”, and the wives, many of them, are earning more than their partners anyway and it is time for them to stabilise and let them have a career.

Q64 Mr Holloway: Going forward from here then, do you think that these sorts of minor horror stories, although very big for the families in question, will have an effect on recruiting?

Mrs McCafferty: I think, as I said in my evidence, anything that is bad news in the media in terms of families, whether it is accommodation or it is Deepcut or it is alleged bullying, anything like that is going to have an impact, not necessarily on the youngsters who are thinking about joining up, but on the gatekeepers. When I was in the Service, heading recruiting, it was about three years ago, 40-odd per cent of parents would not encourage their children to join the Armed Forces. That is a massive percentage. That cuts out an awful lot of potential children who might come to join the Armed Forces. Ms Sheldon: I think parents are playing an increasingly major part and the wider extended family are playing a major part in whether or not they encourage their children to stay or even join the Services. If you think about some of the parents of people who are being seriously injured on
operations and their reactions to how well they have been supported or not which have hit the headlines will have a knock-on effect on other members of the community. I would also just like to pick up again on the previous discussion about the profile of the military in terms of recruiting, our presence in the schools and universities. I think the issue that all the Service community has is actually increasingly now seen as very sort of completely separate and almost divorced from the rest of society, so access to education and to healthcare for them is not really recognised because actually mostly people think, “Well, yes, we’ve got this access”, and the very mobile, highly transient population, many of whom are under a lot of pressure, is very small and almost sort of hidden in a way, and I think that is a real danger if the community is seen to be separate and not actually fully accepted within the wider society. **Mrs McCafferty:** Certainly we have had evidence from families who say that, if they live out in the community, and about 45% of the RAF live in quarters and the remainder live out in their own homes, they do not necessarily feel able to speak out openly about what their partners do because of that sense of pride. They have a huge sense of pride in what their partners are up to, but they do not necessarily feel that that community around them may share that, so you find that a lot of them do not actually talk a great deal about the fact that their partner is deployed in Iraq or is currently a pilot in the Royal Air Force or an engineer or whatever. I think that is very sad, that they do not feel able to be proud of what their partners are doing, but there is a certainly a sense that it is not something that they would go and shout about to their neighbours and, therefore, they are very isolated. If things do go wrong and the partner is injured, they do not feel that in that network, that community, there is going to be a lot of understanding and sympathy for them because people just do not understand what they are going through.

**Q65 Mr Holloway:** That takes me on slightly. To what extent do you think the attitudes of people’s partners have on people staying? I remember coming back on a Tri-Star and one of the crew telling me at the reception of the families of the Tri-Star fleet that “these knackered, old aircraft are dangerous”. The fact that someone’s husband or wife, whatever, might get killed or they feel a particular military involvement was somehow unjust or illegal, to what extent does that have an effect on people staying in?

**Ms McCarthy:** I think it has an enormous effect, not perhaps so much for our younger soldiers, but I think definitely for the middle management that we talked about before, for sergeants, captains and majors. I know that with most of my peers, the spouse has said, “Do you know, I’ve had enough. This is not going forward”. There are very few that would last a separated tour. Most will then try settling the family and commuting to wherever their posting is and very few that I know that have done that have actually lasted more than a couple of tours. Either the family has disintegrated and they have ended up being divorced or the husband or wife has said, “This isn’t working. I’m leaving the Service”, and I think there is a massive influence on the families. **Mrs McCafferty:** I think especially where the harmony guidelines are being breached routinely, it is the partners and spouses who are the ones who are saying, “Enough’s enough”. The individual very often, the Serviceman, is quite happy to deploy. He is enjoying it, he is putting his training to good use and he is getting a great deal of job satisfaction out of area, but the family are then faced with him coming home, unpacking his bags and, guess what, he is off again in another six months or so. Whilst I was serving, I certainly had senior military come to me and say, “If you give me that deployment order, ma’am, I’m going to have to go home and face divorce” because it gets to the stage where the families say, “Enough is enough”. The families are very supportive when they go, they are very proud of what the guys are doing, but, if you push it too far, then I think that either, the families break down and then you are left with all of the baggage that that creates and all of the welfare support that SSAFA have to pull in to support that family, or they leave, as a result of an ultimatum from the partners. **Ms Sheldon:** Certainly our statistics show that there has been a massive increase in marital breakdown, relationship problems and emotional issues that people are bringing to us, possibly exacerbated by operational tours, but that is not to get away from the fact that the constant sorts of stresses and pressures of Service life on families put those relationships under enormous stress.

**Q66 Linda Gilroy:** I think you were listening to Professor Dandeker and he contrasted the situation in the UK with the US where he said he felt that more probably for communities the country was at war in the US than it is here. How does it feel to you? Are we at war?

**Ms McCarthy:** That is probably very difficult for us to answer as we are within the communities most of the time. I think our reply would probably be yes, but whether the general public feel that, no, I do not think they do see that. I think it is something that happens on another continent. **Mrs McCafferty:** “It is nothing to do with us” almost, “just to do with them, those Armed Forces people.” **Chairman:** Can we move on to remuneration?

**Q67 Mr Crausby:** In the face of all of those issues about welfare and families, it makes me wonder why anyone stays in at all really, so I suppose the question I am going to ask is: is it just for the money? It cannot be just for the money because that is not the feeling that I get when I talk to members of the Armed Forces and that, whilst the money is important, it is not just for the money. What impact does the remuneration package have on someone’s decision to stay, or leave, the Forces?
Ms McCarthy: We have surveyed 468 spouses and not one of them cited money as the reason for their spouse leaving the Army. It may be a small factor, but I do not think it would ever be the factor. Similarly, we had a quote that, “Bad housing may not be the one factor that drives us out of the Army, but good housing would go a long way to keeping us in,” and I think the same could probably be said for money, that people do not join the Forces for the fantastic remuneration, but I think they deserve, and should have, a good remuneration package and it is not just the basic salary, it is the whole thing as well, it is the allowances and the housing that goes in with it.

Mrs McCafferty: We find as well that the remuneration package has a pull-through factor. If you are on a pension-earning engagement, that will actually be a retention-positive factor until you reach the point where you have earned the pension and then you can walk, so there is an issue about the structure of the remuneration package as well. I have heard talk as well amongst many of my colleagues of the “golden handcuffs” of the boarding school allowance because, if you actually commit to that, then you are in it for the long haul really because you cannot afford to do it on your own if you decide to leave, so I have many friends who have actually stayed in the Services, not just because that is helping them to afford it, but it is certainly a factor. As Julie said, finances do not really feature on our issues database very much at all. There is the odd comment here or there about the odd allowance, so the boarding school allowance or the Continuity Education Allowance (Board) which it is now called, is an issue because there is a view that for those who are claiming it, the cost has gone beyond what the allowance is now compensating for, but the actual pay and allowances do not really feature very highly at all. If you look at the retention-positive factors in the RAF’s report, there is lots of job satisfaction, responsibility training, opportunities for adventurous training, lots of reasons to stay. I stayed for 23 years and there were no reasons why I would have gone any earlier.

Q68 Mr Crausby: Whilst money might not be important, housing must be an enormously important issue, especially with the price of housing these days and the way it is escalating, so the worries that must accompany that as far as the future is concerned. I see that the Government, in recent weeks, introduced a sort of shared equity scheme. Now, my experience of shared equity schemes is that they are usually very complicated, not very attractive and, quite frankly, not much use, but what do you feel about them?

Mrs McCafferty: I think the recent announcement being made about extending the right-to-buy to Armed Forces personnel. It obviously seemed to be a very unfair situation where people lived in council houses and had the right-to-buy, whereas people in Army accommodation did not have the right-to-buy. To what extent has that been developed and how useful would that be?

Mrs McCafferty: We do not own them, so I do not think that is an option.

Ms McCarthy: Our husbands own all of the houses, so really I do not think that was an option for us at all.

Mrs McCafferty: We lease them from Annington Homes and we cannot buy them. When we do not need them, we hand them back to Annington.

Ms McCarthy: With the first issues that Addington did, that a percentage should be offered to Service personnel, I believe that has now faded. Because Addington have their percentage back that they were promised by the MoD, there is no obligation on them to offer any discounts or any priority to Service families.

Q70 Mr Crausby: So it is effectively dead in the water then?

Ms McCarthy: Yes.

Q71 Mr Crausby: All of these arguments about welfare and pay do not matter, but financial incentives must have some importance. What do you think should be the right financial incentives to keep people in? I get the impression that sometimes the Government just stumbles along and puts in money, but does not really know what will attract people.
Ms Sheldon: I would suggest that it would be better for the Government to invest in obviously robust and well co-ordinated accommodation, but also in their welfare infrastructure, in their personal support, because the Service is struggling. As both Dawn and Julie have said, particularly for the Army Welfare Service, they struggle. Once budgets are tight, they struggle and then they have to turn to charities for support. We need to have much more cohesive support for all the families and Service people than we already have and I think that is where the MoD should be putting its money.

Q72 Linda Gilroy: There are probably lots of ways in which money could go into Army welfare services, but, if there was a pot of money, which part of the Service would you put it into? What would you want to see it spent on?

Ms McCarthy: We have a particular set-up for unit welfare officers and I know there was a recent survey done by a serving officer into the training and recruitment of unit welfare officers and it was not pursued because there was not the money for the investment into what he was recommending, and I would like to see, where they have identified things such as that, that is developed and that the unit welfare officers are given the correct amount of funding and resourcing that they need.

Mrs McCafferty: Similarly, the RAF have reintroduced what we would call the “Families Officer”, which delivered a low-level welfare support for those who lived on the patch and liaised with Defence Estates, et cetera. They have now introduced Service Community Support Officers, but only for a limited period, funded by the centre, and there is going to be a need for more money for those sorts of posts. If they are successful, we would like to see that sort of money, delivering people on the ground who can actually talk to the families and talk to the serving personnel about the issues that matter to them, and, as Liz said, broader investment right across the piece would be far better than trying perhaps to look at individual remuneration packages or financial retention incentives. I think they (FRIs) work where they are targeted at particular needs. For example, for shortages in a certain branch or trade, they work for that particular purpose, but they should not be seen as a long-term fix. I think the long-term fix is broader investment into the whole support for the community.

Ms Sheldon: If we are going to do that, it is actually to look at the needs of the individual rather than the current employees at the moment on what the command structure requires. This is not to get away from the fact that this is a duty of care and commanders want to know about the welfare of their families and their Service people, but I have not actually ever seen a questionnaire asking people what they feel about the response they have had from the Unit Welfare Officer or from their SSAFA social worker, whether their response has been timely, confidential, whether they felt properly supported. I have not actually seen it yet, and I might be wrong, but I feel that at the moment, with the way in which people tend to talk about support for families, it is much more focused rather than thinking about what the individuals themselves need, and we need to be very much more focused on the person.

Q73 Chairman: Is that something that you could be doing yourselves?

Ms Sheldon: As an organisation, this is something we think about all the time, but, thinking in terms of the MoD, if they are looking at the way in which they are going to provide personal support for their community, they need to be looking at it very much in that way, much more holistically, rather than sort of top-down.

Q74 Mr Crausby: The RAF Families’ Federation, in their submission, noted that the introduction of the JPA had removed staff who knew the rules and regulations, and that was supported by a report commissioned by the MoD, saying that the JPA had removed many clerks from the front-line who could help them understand rules and regulations pertaining to RAF service. The JPA was designed to provide personnel with a simpler system. Has it and, if not, why not?

Mrs McCafferty: It was designed to allow a greater self-service so that individuals could actually access computers and actually update their own leave entitlement or submit their travel claims without having to go through layers of bureaucracy. The assumption was that that would then remove the need for clerks at the front-line who used to do that work. It has removed a lot of the routine, and very dull, administrative work that needed to be done by clerks, but what it has removed as well is the experienced levels of the people who understood the more specialist requirements for things like allowances, so you now no longer have a specialist in allowances working in a general office that you could go to, either as a partner or as a serving person, and ask them to explain what their entitlements were and how to apply for things. When I was serving, I had a general office of 30/40 people working for me with a chief clerk and we were constantly being visited by serving people and their partners looking for advice on things about postings, things about promotion, and you go in there now and the general offices are denuded of staff and there is hardly anyone there. It is quite frightening, only 20 years on, to see how few people are there and, instead, you supposedly have these terminals where people go and do a lot of the research themselves, but not all of them have access to JPA terminals. I have certainly heard evidence of serving personnel not now claiming the allowances that they are entitled to because either they do not know how to do it because the training package was delivered on the system with very limited actual proper training for people to use it, or they are frightened about being audited on it and making genuine mistakes and getting caught out for being dishonest because the system is so complicated apparently. I have not used JPA, I left
just before it launched, thank goodness, but we are certainly hearing tales of JPA being a very complicated system. I think there are lots of fixes being done. I think there is lots and lots of work going on to try and make JPA the slick system it was intended to be, but, because the RAF bought it off the shelf, well, the Army, Air Force and Navy all bought into the same system, we had to adapt our personnel processes to fit this off-the-shelf system instead of having something designed to reflect our existing processes. My comment in the actual evidence was as well about removing people, for example, from the postings process where in the past you would have had several people working in an office, looking at postings for people, or assignments, as they are now called, and basically having that human interface with somebody and, before you actually pressed the button to say you are posted from A to B, there would be somebody perhaps talking to the warrant officer or the sergeant to find out what the impact might be on that individual, asking questions such as “Has anything changed recently?” They do not have the manpower to do that now, so, more and more, people feel they are being posted and promoted by computer. They are not. There are still people there doing the work, but there are fewer of them hence it is very difficult for people to feel there is a human being actually managing their careers anymore.

Q75 Mr Holloway: Is it fair to say that this is putting a huge burden on particularly young officers in actually doing the work of the clerks?

Mrs McCafferty: Not only that because you are not only line-managing the Service personnel, but you are line-managing the civil servants because, at the same time, the Civil Service moved to, I think it is called, HRMS which is their equivalent to JPA and you are having to do an awful lot more management at a junior officer level and senior officer level of your civil servant staff, whereas in the past you had on your base a civil servant specialist and, if there were any Civil Service employment policy issues, you went to the Civilian Admin Officer (CivAdO) and the CivAdO was your expert, supported by regional support staff. They have all been removed from the units now, they do not exist, so the line managers are having to carry that burden. When you talk about capacity, in the strategic context, capacity to run operations concurrently, but actually at the tactical level, at unit level, the capacity for people to do all this “stuff” means that welfare and community support for families gets squeezed out. We do not blame the line managers for that because we recognise that they are busy, but we do feel that the resources need to go in to put back what they have already taken out.

Q76 Linda Gilroy: Could that be done through a helpline, or is there a helpline?

Mrs McCafferty: There is a helpline.

Q77 Linda Gilroy: Is it effective?

Mrs McCafferty: I would not like to comment; I have never used it.

Ms McCarthy: Phoning up and asking for a bit of advice is different from somebody knowing someone’s personal circumstances within the unit and being able to say, “Actually have you thought about, or did you know about . . . ?” and I think that is the difference. It is that personal touch which I think is where families come in as well. It is where families really need the attention personally and I think that is what soldiers are now finding with JPA.

Ms Sheldon: We have experienced a large number of calls actually all related to JPA coming through to the confidential support line because, at first, people just did not know where to turn to.

Q78 Linda Gilroy: Is that ongoing? Is that still a feature?

Ms Sheldon: I think that has started to drop off, but yes, last year we had a lot of calls initially.

Chairman: Now, terms and conditions of service.

Q79 Linda Gilroy: In your submission, Dawn, on Service terms and conditions, you say that, although the evidence is patchy, there is certainly an emerging theme that the differences in entitlements between the three Services, exacerbated in the joint arena, can cause feelings of resentment. I wonder if you could tell us a bit more about what that is based on.

Mrs McCafferty: For example, when I was serving before, I was working in the MoD on a project to harmonise, and simplify, the allowances policy, and we basically brought together the Army, Air Force and Navy policies and banged them together to simplify them ready for JPA. I spent a year and a bit doing that and there were obviously an awful lot of allowances that have evolved in the individual three Services, and evolved differently, and they had different entitlements. We bashed them together and tried to get rid of as many of the differences as possible, but there was some “tolerant variation” allowed between the Services. Each Service had to fight its own corner, but it ended up with some allowances being different between the Services. Now, that is fine if you are all serving on individual uniformed stations, but, when you serve together or you are deployed out of area, those differences can come to the fore and then it does cause resentment if you happen to be in the cadre that has got the least entitlements. As I say, it is only very patchy evidence because we have only been running since November, but we have had a couple of comments now about where entitlements are different, where perhaps the Army has, for example, a greater entitlement to leave between relocation, (which they do not get anyway by the sound of it) but there is an entitlement there where, on paper, the RAF has less. Now, whether it is down to local management to deliver a better provision, I do not know, but it is those sorts of
things that niggle away. The issue about rank between the Armed Forces as well comes to the fore in that it is the desire for Armed Forces people to own their own houses obviously, does the patch still exist and is there anything that we can do to preserve it? 

Ms Sheldon: I would agree with that.

Q82 Chairman: We all know that hugely important to recruitment and retention in the Armed Forces is the support that is given by the patch, but, with the rise of house prices in recent decades and the desire for Armed Forces people to own their own houses obviously, does the patch still exist and is there anything that we can do to preserve it? 

Mrs McCafferty: It does still exist. It is being eroded though by policies in terms of, for example, selling off or handing back to Addington Homes part of the patch so that it is then sold on for social housing, so you have actually got mixed estates. The one at Wittering that I am based is a mixed estate and it is nowhere near the estate it was when I was serving. It has just gone downhill so fast and you can actually see the differences between the different streets, that those that are owned by the social housing landlords and those that are run by Defence Estates. The communities still exist. We are putting resources into things like HIVEs (help and information centres) in the Royal Air Force, Army and Navy where there is a community focus for those families, and it must continue to exist because there is always going to be a percentage of people who, when they first join the Air Force, the Army or Navy and they actually want to have a home provided by the Service, perhaps while they are saving up for that first home themselves or they just want to enjoy the social life of being in the military, there is going to be a need for houses for them, so I would ask the MoD to protect the patches that it has and to try and invest in them, to put money into the playgrounds, put money into the community centres and support the communities that they have because they are, as I say, degrading over the years. We talked about Annington Homes possibly giving up homes, just one or two in a street in the middle of a military street, and selling off one privately in the middle of a street and we believe that that will very badly erode that feeling of community that the military does need.

Ms McCarthy: I think there is something else happening as well with the introduction of the housing information centres about 18 months ago. The people there allocating houses do not have any concept of the unit where perhaps somebody is posted to. For example, we had a unit going into Thorny Island recently coming back from Germany and their families were dispersed. Thorny Island right the way round to Gosport which, on a map, on paper, is not very far, but actually, when it is one unit with families an hour apart from each other, when that unit deploys, that is a massive amount. If there is only one car in the family, that then leaves the spouse at home without a car to then be able to go out and visit the other families, and there are huge impacts there as well, so it is not just the condition of the estates, but it is the dispersal now of units across various estates.
and the idea that a 50-mile radius around where a unit is based is a suitable distance for a family to be based in a quarter, and it is not. Especially for our younger families, I think that can have a massive impact on their welfare and it is at that point that they start needing much, much more welfare support from people like SSAFA.

Ms Sheldon: In fact, we conversely are helping people in that situation, so in fact we have a team of volunteers in that area who are helping to give people lifts, so this is where the public funding is not there to support people or people are not thinking through where they locate them to make sure they keep them all together, and that is where actually charities and other agencies step in.

Chairman: Thank you all very much indeed for again a fascinating and extremely helpful evidence session, we are most grateful, and thank you for the work that your organisations do as well. Thank you.
Tuesday 1 April 2008

Members present

Mr James Arbuthnot, in the Chair

Mr David S Borrow
Mr David Crausby
Mr David Hamilton
Mr Dai Havard

Mr Bernard Jenkin
Mr Brian Jenkins
Robert Key
Richard Younger-Ross

Witnesses: Mr Tim Corry, Campaign Director, and SaBRE, gave evidence.

Ms Baxter: The negative influence in this instance is lack of flexibility with civilian employers in terms of being able to leave slightly early to undergo training.

Mr Corry: The Committee will be more aware of this than I am, but anecdotally one finds a different type of reservist now joining the reserves. If one goes back five years or more, very few if any reservists expected to be mobilised. Now they all join the reserves knowing there is a very great likelihood that they will be mobilised, so in that sense perhaps one is getting a different sort of person, though not comprehensively so. There are perhaps still people who join the reserve forces in the traditional way, but there is certainly a trend in that direction.

Ms Baxter: We are now getting to the point where a reservist has been deployed for a second or even a third time. We are keeping a very close eye, as I think are all military stakeholders, on the effect of second and third mobilisations, but as yet we do not have any strong evidence either way.

Q87 Mr Jenkin: Do you think that the deployment of reservists overseas to Afghanistan and Iraq over recent years has made it more difficult to recruit and retain reservists?

Mr Corry: The Committee will be more aware of this than I am, but anecdotaly one finds a different type of reservist now joining the reserves. If one goes back five years or more, very few if any reservists expected to be mobilised. Now they all join the reserves knowing there is a very great likelihood that they will be mobilised, so in that sense perhaps one is getting a different sort of person, though not comprehensively so. There are perhaps still people who join the reserve forces in the traditional way, but there is certainly a trend in that direction.

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Q88 Mr Jenkin: Has One Army Recruiting assisted the recruitment of reservists, and would you like to see that extended to the other Services?

Mr Corry: One Army Recruiting came in only on 1 April of last year and the jury is out on that. We work quite closely with the reserve forces cadet associations, of which there are 13 spread round the country, who traditionally had the role of specifically recruiting reservists. That was something they were particularly good at. They are waiting to see whether or not One Army Recruiting will produce results. Depending on those to whom you speak, anecdotally they are not all convinced yet.
Q89 Mr Jenkin: I go back to the earlier question put by the Chairman and extend it to the reservist review that the Government is undertaking. What do you think should be the key conclusion of that review? Would it be that perhaps there should be two types of reservists, one who wants to be deployed on overseas operations and one who wants to be trained for more traditional national security-type operations?

Mr Corry: I hate to predict the conclusion of a review that has not even started, but it is important that what comes out of the review is that the way reserves are structured is either confirmed to support current or future operations or, if not, there is some other structure that makes best use of reserves which are needed for defence.

Ms Baxter: It is an incredibly complicated area. You can promote the taking of reservists who have civilian employers and the development of those two careers. Clearly, that is starting from the defence prerogative and working from there. I do not believe that I can comment.

Q90 Chairman: I go back to the answer you gave about people being deployed for the second and third time. Last week we heard evidence to suggest that once people had been deployed once, twice or three times in really dangerous areas they had almost got it out of their system. Do you find any evidence among reservists of the same feeling arising so that they leave the reserves earlier than they otherwise might have done?

Ms Baxter: There is no statistical evidence. The anecdotal evidence seems to reflect the same occurrence as for regulars. They do not want to be deployed necessarily to the same theatre; having been deployed in Iraq once they want to go on operations to Afghanistan. There is no hard evidence.

Mr Corry: Anecdotally, one picks up the idea that for some reservists they see joining the reserves, one mobilisation and then leaving almost as a right of passage. I alluded earlier to perhaps a different sort of person who now joins the reserves. He now knows that he will be mobilised and may think that it is exciting to start with. I suspect that after the first tour it is a bit more excitement than they have signed up for, but some people will join the reserves and do their bit for Queen and country or their own personal aspirations—whatever it happens to be—and then they will go. There is probably an element of that in the case of a number of reservists.

Q91 Mr Crausby: What about more help for employers? Sometimes when people return from operations they have difficulty settling in again. What do we do to assist employers in helping that process?

Mr Corry: Reintegration is a real issue and a lot of work has been done on the welfare policy side of it to enable reservists to get the same level of support as regulars, but the reservist situation is very different inasmuch as when a regular comes back from deployment or mobilisation generally speaking he has his peer group around him and he can decompress, or whatever the expression is, whereas the reservist goes back to his civilian community. I am aware that a lot of work on medical follow-up has been carried out to make sure these people are looked after once they have been demobilised and against but it is very difficult to prove. On the one hand you could say that we have it in the area of gender, paternity etc., etc., and there could be an argument for legislation in this area. My personal view is that it would be counter-productive. There are some people who, if you produced legislation against discrimination, would find a reason to work round it, whereas if it does not exist certainly based on our relationship with employers we talk to broadly it is dealt with as a case-by-case study. One of the issues behind it, however, is the perception among a number of individuals who join the reserves that they will be discriminated against, though there is no evidence of it, and as a result many, not most, are reluctant to tell their employers that they are in the reserves. That in itself creates extra problems because there is no openness and dialogue with employers. Therefore, when the guy is picked up for mobilisation it comes as a real surprise to some employers. That is not good management.

Ms Baxter: Under employer notification which has been in existence since 2004 employees give permission for the unit to write to notify the employer that they are volunteer reservists. These things take time to come into play and we have evidence that that is happening. Certainly, SaBRE has concentrated more of its activity on helping this dialogue with reservists and talking directly to them because historically we have focused more on employers than reservists. All of this will help because we strongly believe that the key relationship in all this is between the individual reservist and his employer, that is, the line manager and further up.

Q92 Richard Younger-Ross: As far as concerns discrimination, is there any geographical or sectoral difference?

Mr Corry: There are certainly regional differences as to the way people view the Armed Forces. As a general comment, in the North historically people tend to be more supportive, but I am not aware of regional differences in terms of whether or not people are discriminated against. There are perhaps certain sectors where one may find anecdotally more people who are reluctant to have reservists on their workforce but I do not regard that necessarily as discrimination as such.

Q93 Mr Crausby: What about more help for employees? Sometimes when people return from operations they have difficulty settling in again. What do we do to assist employers in helping that process?

Mr Corry: Discrimination has been looked at. In the work we do we are very closely aligned to the policymakers within the Directorate of Reserve Forces and Cadets. There are two schools of thought here. I think there is discrimination but it is all anecdotal. People say they have been discriminated
are back in the broad community to be brought back into the military system should problems with stress, or whatever it happens to be, raise their head some time after demobilisation.

**Q94 Chairman:** In a few minutes we shall be coming to medical help for returning reservists, but this question is directed at help for employers.

**Ms Baxter:** Employers will have points of contact. We certainly explain to them the whole process of mobilisation and brief them in terms of what happens once reservists are demobilised and, I suppose, help them understand issues that may arise once those reservists return. At a more anodyne level we draw a parallel with longer-term maternity leave. We make the point that if the office has moved it is quite good to point that out on the first day before the reservist gets to his office. The larger organisations will raise awareness of inhouse counselling services, etc. Those are the sorts of conversations we have. Quite often, if issues arise it is not unlikely that the line manager will be the first person to detect them because these things bubble under the skin for a while.

**Q95 Mr Havard:** This is easier for large public sector organisations than perhaps large private organisations, and it is much easier for them to do than small employers. There are different types of employers as well as different types of support. I was interested in what you said about One Army Recruitment, for example. What is the relationship? I am trying to figure out who are the actors who deal with any of this. If I am an employer with three or four people and one of them suddenly pops up as a reservist, goes off and then comes back I get over the problem of their absence but I now have another problem of reintegration. Is it only you that I deal with, or, assuming it is an army reservist, is the relationship with the one army recruitment concept where the individual goes back to the person who recruited him? Do they help the individual and do you help the employer? How is all that joined up?

**Mr Corry:** It tends to be quite regionalised. As part of the SaBRE campaign there is a network of representatives who tend to link up by definition with employers in their region. Broadly speaking, they are aware of which employers are affected by particular mobilisations. Part of what they do from SaBRE’s perspective is to keep in touch with them. From the perspective of the Chain of Command the unit which mobilises that individual also has resource within that unit, that is, the Regimental Operations Support Officer (ROSO) who also has a welfare remit to link in. We in SaBRE sitting in London do not speak directly to those people, but certainly our regional representatives on the ground have regular contact with those individuals.

**Q96 Mr Havard:** But the person coming back and employer may have two very different perspectives. The person who comes back has all of the support mechanism available to him; the employer comes to you. At some point that has to be reconciled.

**Mr Corry:** That tends to be reconciled if there is an issue and the relationship is right, but I cannot guarantee that is so in every instance. The employer who has that mobilised reservist will have been contacted by the regional SaBRE campaign director and he will be the point of contact to pick up any particular issues. Depending on what the issue is, it is for him to point that employer in the right direction or give whatever help he can at the time.

**Q97 Mr Borrow:** The NAO report highlights the issue of training and reservists and makes the point that training levels and training priority are lower for reservists compared with regulars. In particular, if you are a regular serviceman or woman you do the training when you are there, whereas if you are a reservist you can book your training on annual leave and suddenly it is switched to a month later and you are stuck with huge problems. Does that have an effect on retention rates within the reservist forces?

**Mr Corry:** I think it does. Quite clearly, the priority is the support of current operations. Therefore, anecdotally for those who are not going on operations there is not so much emphasis on what you have just described as routine training. Having commanded a reserve unit myself, they look forward to their training and if it is properly resourced, exciting and everything else that encourages them to stay. If some of the resource in that area is now being used—I do not know—to support, understandably, current operations to get people mobilised that could certainly give rise to an issue.

**Q98 Mr Borrow:** Do you say there is also a gap in terms of the quality of training which would have an effect in theatre? One matter that has been highlighted is that some of the training given to reservists is more limited in terms of the range of equipment used and level of experience they have and in theatre there could be potential issues about a single unit fitting in with regular forces. Does that have an effect as well?

**Mr Corry:** I think it must have an effect. By definition, the amount of training will determine how much scope there is to learn things in the period available. Clearly, if regulars are not on operations they will spend more of their time training and reservists are back with their employers. What is important is clearly to match the reservist’s abilities and training levels with the operations on which you put him. Clearly, an issue for the Chain of Command is to make sure that the reservist is given a job only for which he is trained. That presupposes that the Chain of Command and particularly the commanding officer is fully appreciative of what those levels are. Therefore, I would argue that training together would be a good thing prior to deployment, or at any other time, because then you would simply know what the levels of competence were.

**Q99 Mr Borrow:** Is there an element of catch-up in the sense that the traditional role of reservist forces has been to be there in the event of a major conflict and threat to the UK mainland and doing backfill in...
other operations, whereas now they are in theatre in Afghanistan and Iraq in a way which would not have been envisaged 10 years ago. Therefore, that has an impact on the sort of training levels that need to be made available to reservists in order for them to be fully effective but also to feel confident in their continued membership of the reserve forces.

**Mr Corry:** That is a fair comment. My understanding of the previous role of reserves before we went to Iraq and Afghanistan was predicated on something like a six-month warning period when we got ourselves up to speed. Clearly, we are not now in that situation. From my observations, I think that the training for operations for deployment to Afghanistan, Iraq or elsewhere is pretty good and focused. People have picked up that previously there were issues. As to the people left behind, that is a different matter.

**Q100 Mr Borrow:** One matter picked up in the NAO report was concern about the robustness of the assessment of fitness levels of reservists before they went into theatre. The question was whether the assessment was as good as it should have been and went into theatre. The question was whether the report was concerned about the robustness of the impact on the sort of training levels that need to be achieved for them to be fully effective.

**Mr Corry:** I am not qualified to comment on that other than to say that if a person is not assessed at the same levels inevitably he will by definition be at a lower level than perhaps his regular counterpart. If that is the case then clearly it would be an issue.

**Ms Baxter:** To go back to the point of what they are going out to do, there may be a certain amount of flexibility. For instance, there may be a little more leeway for a surgeon compared with somebody who is concerned with force protection.

**Q101 Robert Key:** The NAO report looked at reservists who within a year of joining decided they wanted to leave. They found that 48% cited personal and family pressures as the reason for wanting to leave. Can you explain the family pressures to which reservists are subject and to which apparently regulars are not?

**Mr Corry:** There is a range. If we are talking about routine-type training, every reservist takes on a commitment. From personal experience, for the TA the commitment is 30 days’ training a year. Most of that is taken at weekends, but there is a period in the middle called the annual camp where in consultation with employers they get time off to go away and train. Some employers are very generous and will give additional time over and above annual holiday, and the most generous ones even pay them to be there, whereas others say they can go away but they must take it out of their holiday time. If you are an employee who has only four or five weeks’ holiday a year and you have to use two of them to go away and do your annual camp then that person’s partner or spouse might become a bit fed up with it and say, “Come on! This is holiday time.” That is certainly the source of one of the pressures.

**Q102 Robert Key:** What is the answer to it?

**Ms Baxter:** We need to keep on plumbing and doing what we do. Ultimately, we are there to support employers. We make no bones that we seek to create as supportive an environment as possible. When it comes to the three legs of the stool we try to make the employer’s leg as sturdy as possible and encourage employers to be as flexible as they can be and, even better, to provide special leave for training.

**Q103 Robert Key:** One of the problems referred to last week by the Families Federation was that whereas the regulars tended to be in garrison communities the reservists were spread right across the country and that made a very big difference to the sense of welfare and belonging. Can you explain that to us a little more?

**Mr Corry:** For a regular the military culture is like one big family whereas reservists are dipping in and out of it. Clearly, there is strength in all being together and the reservist does not have that natural support mechanism. Therefore, when you are dealing with the support and welfare side it is very much more difficult to support reservists. I am not fully aware of what is being done to deal with that, but I can certainly understand why there would be difficulties there.

**Q104 Robert Key:** The NAO study said that part of the problem was that the Ministry of Defence did not have a family-friendly approach to getting information out to members of the reserve forces because, after all, a lot of reservist families were not used to service life and there is a big difference here. How do you think the Ministry of Defence could improve its relationship with reservists, making the whole approach to them more family-friendly?

**Mr Corry:** Probably the level at which that could happen would be the unit. I know that there are variations in how much people do and do not do, but certainly commanding officers, through the people who work for them, are able to make sure that families are included in broad communications about what reserves are doing and for them to feel included, particularly in the very difficult periods when reservists are away on deployment and perhaps are mobilised for 11 months with their training and then come back, to make sure that families are kept in the picture as to precisely what is happening to their spouses.

**Q105 Robert Key:** How does the Ministry of Defence keep in touch with families and employers? Do they just do it with the odd letter two or three times a year or do they have dedicated websites where families and employers can get information on a daily basis? How does the MoD communicate?

**Mr Corry:** I am not aware of what happens with families; that is not my speciality. Certainly, for employers generally SaBRE is there to provide an information and support campaign. There is a website that gives general information about what it means to employ a reservist. It is not a news site and so it will not give up-to-date information about what
is happening to a particular individual. We certainly encourage the Chain of Command, but our particular remit is to encourage employers to maintain contact with their reservists when they are deployed because, apart from anything else, that also helps with reintegration. If the individual feels that there is someone back at home, his employer, who is still thinking about him then when he comes back reintegration is that much easier.

**Ms Baxter:** We focus very much on the support we can provide to the employer. Equally, there are examples of the support that employers provide to families when reservists are away. I have examples of dedicated reservist points of contact who have helped spouses with mortgage arrangements because reservists have departed, so it can work both ways.

Q106 Robert Key: On the SaBRE website is there information available for employers as well as families about this sort of thing?

**Mr Corry:** Employers, yes. What we tend to do—we are developing it all the time—is produce case studies where employers and reservists work very well together and, through peer pressure, we hope that other employers pick up the good practice. As a further step, last year we launched a list of supportive employers. We know that there are lots of supportive employers, but we want to get employers to put their heads above the parapet and publicly declare their support. There are definitions of what that support means. It is not just “I am supportive”; they must have a positive attitude and display supportive behaviour as well in terms of their HR policies, giving time off, etc. We believe that by promoting good employers others will through peer pressure will feel that they should do some of that too. It is encouragement rather than that they must do this.

Q107 Robert Key: When was the SaBRE website last redesigned?

**Mr Corry:** Five and a half years ago.

Q108 Robert Key: Do you have enough resources to do what you would really like to do with your website?

**Mr Corry:** Currently, no.

Q109 Robert Key: Whose fault is that?

**Mr Corry:** It is the defence budget.

Q110 Mr Hamilton: It would be the defence budget, would it not? Where I live we have Redford barracks and a number of other places that people can visit. I cannot recall regular meetings with employers in the various barracks throughout Scotland, for example Inverness, Perth and a whole host of places. We also have RAF Leuchars and a number of other places where this could be done on an annual basis. Do we do that?

**Mr Corry:** We do have a programme of employer visits which is regionally organised. We also have a national programme where we take employers out to theatres of operation. A trip to Afghanistan with some key employers is to take place later this month. We have also done this in Faslane in Scotland. As to how much we do on visits, again it is a resource issue. In relative terms they may not be very expensive to do. It is not just a monetary consideration; it also requires manpower to organise it, but across the country there are lots of visits, and we could do more.

Q111 Mr Hamilton: Does that apply to the families of reservists?

**Mr Corry:** We do not focus on the families but I am certainly aware anecdotally that the Chain of Command does that. Having commanded a reserve unit myself, we used to have families in. It will vary from unit to unit and, whether or not there is a policy in place, there is certainly encouragement to do that.

Q112 Mr Hamilton: But it is left to the Chain of Command to deal with it?

**Mr Corry:** Yes.

Q113 Mr Hamilton: I think the point Robert Key makes is a valid one in the sense that it seems you have one organisation that does one thing and another does something else. I am trying to work out the crossover. Invariably, there is a crossover throughout the whole process and I am not very clear where there is co-operation between the different areas. How these things are dealt with is just as important to the family of the reservist as it is to the employer. Looking at the table, you can see quite substantial family pressure and that is one of the reasons why reservists leave?

**Mr Corry:** Yes.

Q114 Mr Havard: The idea of having mentors seems to be current all over the place. Is there merit in having people to whom employers and families can go in a consistent fashion to get advice and entry into the process? Robert Key is saying that you could make that information readily available so somebody could tap into it. It seems to me that it could be made more consistent. I refer to your case studies, for example, of how you get it across. Are people and employers given mentors? In that way you can help to guide them through the process rather than having to make telephone calls every time they have a strange question to ask.

**Mr Corry:** Perhaps they are not mentors in the way you suggest. I go back to the SaBRE regional campaign directors.

Q115 Mr Havard: Do they fulfil that role?

**Mr Corry:** No. SaBRE is very much a support campaign, if you like. We cannot do it by ourselves, so there is a bit of stove-piping in what is happening here.

**Ms Baxter:** We have to acknowledge that.

**Mr Corry:** Indeed, even in the employer support arena we find that there are a lot of people playing out in what I call the employer battle space. They are all doing really good work, whether it is the
recruiters, the Armed Forces or the Reserve Force and Cadets Associations (RFCA's). It is not always that well co-ordinated.

Q116 Mr Havard: I was very interested in what you said about types of reservist. It strikes me that if you are to ask somebody to join in the first place a different type of person will respond to that question. If people are already in how you retain them is another matter. I wonder whether a number of reservists are ex-full-timers, as it were, because they understand some of these things. They have done their bit but then remain. Is the profile changing? Is it the case that you are now getting new people who have never been involved before? Is the profile changing in terms of how many old sweats you keep on, as it were?

Mr Corry: I am not aware of the profile of recruits that come in. I know that there are quite a lot of reservists who have had previous regular service. I suspect that the individual I describe will not necessarily have previous military experience. He is the sort of person who wants to give it a crack. He comes in for three years, or whatever the minimum period is, does his mobilised tour and then he will leave. I am not aware of the figures but I am sure that the recruiters have them.

Chairman: We shall have to ask the Ministry of Defence. I said that we would come back to medical matters.

Q117 Mr Jenkins: You mentioned stress. We have one statistic in the report of Kings College which identifies that reservists who come back from operations have a higher rate of stress than regulars. Are you aware of that report?

Mr Corry: I am but not in detail.

Q118 Mr Jenkins: My difficulty is that in the past evidence we have received shows that people present with mental health problems 13 or 14 years after the activity and we do not have a system where we can detect it early on. If we have reservists who have served in the Armed Forces in the past and have come back from action is their mental stress related to that or maybe a previous action? We do not know. What worries me is whether the report will get publicity. How well do you believe the MoD funds medical treatment for reservists?

Mr Corry: I know that it is better than it was. I am not an expert in this area. I am aware that a huge amount of work has been done to improve the medical provision for reservists post-operation for the very reasons you state. I am not aware of the detail of the report of Kings College.

Ms Baxter: This is another very complicated area. As a result of Professor Wessely’s work, the reserves mental health assessment programme was set up. Certainly, SaBRE helps to publicise that clearly amongst employers to make them aware of the support available to them from the Chain of Command. I have heard that the programme is not being used as much as one might have thought it would be and so that raises some questions. All I am doing is putting more into the pot but not giving you any answers.

Q119 Mr Jenkins: In four years an average of 25 a year presented themselves with mental health problems. That does not really fit into the 25% found by the Kings College report. There is a lack of information or misinformation. I can understand the difficulty, but in civilian life it may be thought that with a really abrupt return to the workplace the condition might manifest itself faster than remaining in the military. When they come back what does the sudden impact do to them and their families? Is there any data to show an increase in the level of breakdowns in families?

Mr Corry: I do not have that information and I just do not know the answer to that question.

Mr Jenkins: We have a lot of questions but we do not have the answers.

Chairman: Are you able to say how you see this flowing through into the work that you do?

Q120 Mr Jenkins: What about the retention rate? What impact does it have on people who are thinking of continuing or coming out and also on the rate of recruitment? If there is someone in the reserves working alongside you would you want to learn his experiences and how he had been treated?

Mr Corry: Again, I can speak only anecdotally. I am aware of the study and I can think of perhaps one or two instances where someone has had medical issues back in the workplace, but it is not something that is a big issue for employers. They are all concerned about it but I can probably count on the fingers of one hand the number of events when something goes wrong. The perception is probably greater than the reality. I am not being complacent in saying that. Who can tell what will happen to those individuals in 10 or 15 years’ time?

Q121 Richard Younger-Ross: A young lad who comes back from Afghanistan may have seen a friend’s legs blown off; maybe he has seen other people injured and killed. The chances are that at some point there will be a kickback particularly when he returns to civilian life. What do you do to alert employers to the dangers and risks to that person’s health? If not, do you think there is anything that could be done because obviously it is important that there should be early intervention and help? An individual will be in denial; he may not be sleeping at night but says to himself that he is a big boy and he can cope with it when in reality he cannot. What can you do, or what can be done?

Mr Corry: At a slightly superficial level we do make employers aware of the reintegration issue because these people have had a stressful time. One issue is that employers and the public generally do not realise what some of these people go through, so trying to describe to people what the experience has been like is quite difficult. Therefore, at the level we work the most we can do is to make employers aware that there could be issues.
Q122 Richard Younger-Ross: Is there a pack or video you send to employers showing what people have been through and the possible consequences?  
Mr Corry: Not in the detail that you suggest.  
Ms Baxter: It can be difficult enough to engage in a meaningful dialogue with employers about reservists anyway. I am certainly not belittling the issues we are talking about, but it is a question of how far down the line one is with the relationship.

Q123 Richard Younger-Ross: Do you think it might put off employers?  
Ms Baxter: It is a very delicate balance to strike. We are trying to get employers to accept employees who are reservists, let alone tell them that they could have broken individuals returning to them.

Q124 Mr Havard: They need to have realistic expectations and know what support might be available should this happen. I noticed that the programme for reservists was set up in 2006. My colleague Brian Jenkins referred to the experience of that. The point Richard Younger-Ross makes is: how do people present? These conditions do not always present. Not every employer can expect to have a broken reservist returning to him. Most reservists who return are not broken; they are enhanced. How do you make that clear? How do you identify the problem for the individual and how do you give clarity to the employer about what the expectations might be? I would guess that is a difficult route. What is your experience of the Ministry of Defence in helping you to do that because that come down to you as far as employer expectation is concerned?

Mr Corry: Indeed. Certainly, we would not be looking to hide the problems. I have no statistics to show how many people this affects. If we did we would not be ashamed to share that with employers and be realistic because one of the strengths of SaBRE is that it is impartial, open and honest. We have nothing to hide. Broadly speaking, there is a good, new story out there but there are also some down sides to it—the bit that you suggest—and they should be shared with employers too. If one had some concrete evidence of the real facts and the likelihood of this happening, etc, one would certainly package it up in a way to communicate with employers.

Q125 Mr Havard: But the programme of support is self-selecting by the individual who cries out for help in the area of mental health. How much do employers and others understand the process of support that is available? You appear to suggest that you do explain it in some fashion, but does it need to be done better by others as well as yourselves?  
Mr Corry: The answer is probably yes.

Q126 Mr Havard: We know that the answer is yes.  
Mr Corry: But I am not sure how best it should be done.

Q127 Mr Jenkins: Do you think that reservists are treated as second-class soldiers in any way by the MoD with regard to the provision of health?  
Ms Baxter: I do not think so.  
Mr Corry: No.

Chairman: Thank you both very much for starting us off this morning. We are extremely grateful to you for coming to give evidence.

Witnesses: Mr Richard Longson, President, and Mr Kieran Gordon, Immediate Past President, Institute of Career Guidance, gave evidence.

Q128 Chairman: Thank you very much for coming to give evidence. Would you like to introduce yourselves and say what you do?  
Mr Longson: I am Richard Longson, this year’s present of the Institute of Career Guidance. My day job is head of careers at Leicester Grammar School. I am a qualified teacher and career guidance practitioner.  
Mr Gordon: I am Kieran Gordon, immediate past president of the institute. My day job is that of chief executive of Connexions Greater Merseyside providing information, advice and guidance to young people.

Q129 Chairman: One of the influences on people in deciding whether to join the Armed Forces is the views of their families, friends and the people who have come to be described as gate-keepers. Do you think that enough is being done by the Ministry of Defence to influence these gate-keepers or explain what life in the Armed Forces is like so there is a realistic appreciation of that service?  
Mr Longson: Sometimes it would be quite difficult to reach gate-keepers. There is information on the television. There are gate-keepers for parents, for instance. Parents then come to it once young people have perhaps made a decision to find out more about the Armed Services, and then it is further down the line before the point where they say that they want to join. It then becomes more of an urgent need to find out about it. Parents have come to me and asked. There have been situations where our Armed Services liaison officers have been prepared to give parents a ring and speak to them. In a sense, at that point there is support. As to the world of education where teachers are also gate-keepers, a lot more visits used to be offered by the MoD for people to go on things. They are still there. As head of careers I have been offered a visit to, say, Sandhurst to see how that works. I have also been to the Admiralty Interview Board in the past. There is support there.

Q130 Chairman: You say there used to be a lot more visits.  
Mr Gordon: Yes. It was quite common for the Armed Forces to arrange a regular carousel of visits for teachers and advisers to spend some time with and get beneath the skin of what it was like to go through a recruitment exercise and the various
trades and occupations that the Armed Forces provided. There seem to be fewer of those than there were.

Q131 Chairman: Why?
Mr Gordon: I do not know.

Q132 Chairman: When did they reduce?
Mr Gordon: I would say it has been perceptible over the past 10 years. I cannot quantify it for you; it is just my experience. I have been in the careers advice business since 1980. In my early years as an adviser there were regular trips and experiences to be had and there seem to be fewer now than there were then. There are some upsides to it; there are now more opportunities for young people themselves to get direct experience. Work experience and enterprise programmes are now run for young people and they were not so common years ago.

Mr Longson: Certainly in terms of local RAF bases there has been a greater number of people going out on work experience and a greater awareness and perception of how schools operate, whereas before there was less understanding.

Q133 Chairman: Your memorandum suggests that there is still quite a lot of interest in joining the Armed Forces. Would you say that was true nationally? Are there regional variations? How would you characterise that interest?
Mr Longson: I do not believe there is a set picture and it is really across the piece. I do not believe that compared with past years there has been a perceptible change.

Q134 Chairman: You spoke about visits to military establishments by teachers and career guidance people. What about visits to schools by the Armed Forces themselves? Are they as regular as they used to be or have they tailed off?
Mr Gordon: My experience is that they are still as regular as they used to be. Each of the three Services comes to the careers evenings and conventions run by a number of schools in my patch. The Armed Forces also become involved in interviewing enterprise projects in schools with a classroom-based approach. I do not detect any perceptible change in that. Of the forces, the Army seems to me to be the most active and proactive in that respect.

Q135 Chairman: From your experience would you describe them as worthwhile visits?
Mr Gordon: The visits by the Army to the schools?
Q136 Chairman: Yes.
Mr Gordon: Yes, I would.

Q137 Mr Hamilton: Is that also true of the visits to schools in Scotland?
Mr Gordon: I would be surprised if it was not, but I am not sure.

Q138 Chairman: Does not your institute cover Scotland?

Mr Gordon: It does.

Q139 Chairman: It would be helpful if you would let us know of your experience of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland in that respect. Often in our inquiries we find there is a variation between different areas of the country. You say these visits are worthwhile. How do visits by the Armed Forces to schools compare in terms of quality with visits by other prospective employers?

Mr Longson: The quality of the people who come in is high; it is a quality service. They fall into two categories. There are visits about the Armed Services themselves, but there are also skills development-type visits where the Armed Services provide almost a service to support young people. Obviously, the spin-off is to see the Armed Services as part of the community which is very important and to develop the skills of young people so that they become more aware indirectly as opposed to direct adverts almost.

Mr Gordon: It is obviously very important that the Armed Forces have the personnel, training and resources to be able to present themselves very well in in or out of the school environment which individual employers do not necessarily always have. Maybe some larger private and public sector employers can do that. Usually, you find that professional bodies and institutes or technicians compete on a reasonably level playing field, but the majority of employers cannot deploy the personnel, resource and expertise that very often the Armed Forces provide.

Q140 Mr Jenkins: You have indicated that the Services are different and the Army is probably better in this respect. In what way is the Army better? How do you compare the strengths and weaknesses of the Services in presenting their case to young people?

Mr Gordon: When I said “better” I was referring to the Army being more active and proactive than the other forces. Anecdotally, the Air Force and Navy tend to be more bespoke; they look for a particular skill level and attract people from specific areas of interest, whereas the Army tends to have a more comprehensive approach. Very often in major towns and cities the recruitment offices of the Armed Forces are cheek by jowl, so that at that point there is no great differential. I am not sure whether it is due to resources or sheer weight of numbers of personnel. I do not say it is necessarily better or more effective but it is easier to make contact with the Army perhaps than the Royal Navy or Royal Air Force. But we have plenty of experience of working with those other Services and have also had some positive experiences with them. The Army however seems to be more evident.

Mr Longson: From the school point of view the key thing is the building of trust and relationships between the careers co-ordinator and the incoming liaison officer. That relationship is very important so that when talking to young people about a career in that area you have confidence in the person who is coming in. Accessibility to liaison officers is absolutely crucial.
Mr Jenkins: In a former life I was a teacher and so I understand it. You talk about youngsters making decisions when they are 16 or 18. When they get to the age of 18 they say they want to do such and such and then they are told that they should have done physics. They did not know that. We are talking about youngsters being informed at 13 that if this is the career they want to pursue they must take maths, physics or whatever is the requirement. Are we linking them back to that level in the forces, that is, that if a youngster wants to be a fighter pilot he has to meet certain requirements?

Mr Longson: That will depend institution by institution. The information is there. It does fit into a much wider picture and goes beyond defence; it is about access to good and impartial guidance in education, and external guidance coming into schools to support good decisions being made by young people. I think it goes beyond defence.

Mr Gordon: You touch on a very important issue. Whether it is the Armed Forces or other careers, more could be done to make people aware at an earlier age. Traditionally, the period at which young people move into key stage four and have critical options towards GCSE and other qualifications the emphasis will be more on the logistics of trying to timetable those subjects—I am sure you will be aware of that—than the career implications of those subjects for young people. We need to place greater emphasis on the fact that choices made at age 13 will have a bearing on choices made at 16, 18 and beyond. One hopes that with the new 14 to 19 curriculum and the idea of a continuous pathway those subjects at 14 will have a bearing much later in life. Therefore, I hope that we see better support and evidence within schools for decisions at those points.

Mr Jenkins: I am a great advocate of the cadet force. I believe that it is the best youth service in the country bar none. Do you have any connection or link with youngsters who are in the cadets? Do you see how they do at school and their motivation? Is it a good thing? I am not necessarily worried about recruitment from the cadets. As far as I am concerned that is a bi-product, but do you see the cadets as a valuable force to pass on to other young people any information and knowledge of what the Services are about?

Mr Longson: Unequivocally, it is a great way for young people to develop their own personal skills and to learn about teamwork, good communication and the skills that we want to develop. As you say, a bi-product may be recruitment. It is interesting that when young people talk to their friends and discover that they go to cadets they ask what it is about. That type of statement is very good.

Mr Havard: I am interested in the quality of what you get when the Armed Forces do appear. Do they call themselves military presentation teams? I refer to problem-solving exercises and putting things into context. My experience is that the material they use is of high quality and therefore is a resource for educationalists on which to draw. You suggest that perhaps they do not draw on it in a way that is consistent and variable across the piece. Geographical variations seem to be quite significant.

Mr Longson: Who draws on what will depend on individual schools.

Mr Havard: My understanding is that these things happen only by invitation from the school to the military, so unless the school knows and asks it would not happen.

Mr Longson: For example, we receive a full list—I do not know whether it is every term—of things that are available from the Army, whether it is about the bands going to Bat and Ball or whatever. It is then for the careers co-ordinator to decide whether that would be really good and should be utilised.

Mr Havard: I notice that some of the television advertising for the RAF is about science and how that is related to flying. The military and science—how that might come into your curriculum in relation to schools and an understanding of careers—is itself a very interesting debate. The point made about physics is crucial. I am interested to learn how people know. You seem to suggest that there is less activity to promote this and teachers used to go on visits. For example, are careers people brought together and presented with all of this in any consistent way by the Ministry of Defence? The answer is probably no. What do you think could be happening?

Mr Gordon: The answer is no. One of the problems is that when we start to look at the careers person working within a school the situation can be very variable. For example, my colleague is head of careers. I would not say that is typical of every school. Some schools will have careers co-ordinators. Increasingly, fewer schools now appoint these people because the teaching and learning responsibility changes. We do not see the same level of investment in training teachers as careers co-ordinators. When that piece of jigsaw is missing it is difficult for any employer, Armed Forces or otherwise, to penetrate a school and get across the messages that it wishes to communicate. External independent expert career advisers come into schools but it does depend on the key contact in the form of a teacher who is experienced and trained and has the time to develop a careers curriculum in the school. Sadly, that is not universally the case and it is patchy. I do not think the problem is geographical per se; there is no particular area of the country that is better or worse than that. I think it happens school by school.
Q147 Mr Havard: Or that careers people are there to receive offers being made?
Mr Longson: Yes. Another matter is to allow teachers to go on visits from schools. The implication for the school curriculum of the head releasing somebody to go out on a visit is also an issue.

Q148 Mr Jenkin: Do we know what proportion of schools does receive visits from the Armed Forces?
Mr Gordon: I could not put a figure on it, but it depends on the individual school. I work across six local authority areas and I can tell you that in some cases it is more active just because the schools that collaborate in that area share information and work better with the Armed Forces.

Q149 Mr Jenkin: You referred earlier to the duty on schools to provide impartial career guidance. Do you say that schools that do not admit the Armed Forces into their premises and allow contact with pupils are failing in that duty?
Mr Gordon: I would say so. In some skills it is not just the Armed Forces. There is an inability to bring into the school the world of employment and we need to do more about that. That must have an impact on the level of information and knowledge of young people to be able to make decisions. That does cause a problem.

Q150 Mr Jenkin: Clearly, there is an ideological problem in respect of some schools and teachers. How do you think we ought to deal with it?
Mr Gordon: Part of the problem may lie in the fact that when the Armed Forces do their sales drives, so to speak, they are very good at it. Obviously, they tend to feature the benefits, challenges and opportunities that the forces provide and do not focus quite so much on the conflicts and perhaps more controversial issues. I believe that is counter-productive. There are people who say that they sell all the fine benefits of a life in the forces but they are not so forthcoming about the perils and other issues. That creates a feeling among some people that, therefore, they are less inclined to want to support of the activity.

Q151 Mr Jenkin: The problem does not lie with young people but the preconceptions and views of the teachers, governors or education authorities?
Mr Gordon: Yes, in some cases.

Q152 Mr Jenkin: How do you think we ought to deal with that?
Mr Gordon: I see it as a much wider issue about being more serious as a nation in helping, supporting and equipping young people to make decisions whatever their choice in life might be. I do not think we are very good at that. If we did that on a level playing field for all career prospects and opportunities we would overcome some of the difficulties. Part of the difficulty is that when the Armed Forces can mobilise quite impressive resources to recruit when other employers and career areas cannot people become a little suspicious. Maybe the Army is too prevalent, if you like, and we need to raise the bar for all areas of career preparation for young people in schools. Or, we do that I believe that the Armed Forces alongside any other careers in civilian life will benefit.

Q153 Mr Jenkin: Therefore, you are not looking for the Armed Forces to have some special privileged access to the education system or to be part of a special programme?
Mr Gordon: No. We need to raise the game for all career prospects.

Q154 Mr Hamilton: Perhaps I may encourage you to look at the specific Scottish dimension because it has a different educational system in operation; it does not have governors. I would be really surprised if in my area with six secondary schools an individual had the right to decide whether or not somebody came in; it would be the education authority that decided it. I would be really disappointed if they had taken the decision not to allow the Armed Forces to come in because of their own views. After all, when I left school career choices were quite limited. When it was suggested that you go down a coal mine you were not told that 200 people were killed every year in that industry; when they asked you to undertake an apprenticeship on a building site you were not told how many people were killed in the construction industry. It must be across the board. I agree that it must be developed in a far more positive way. As an ex-cadet I agree with you. There is one matter that worries and puzzles me but may simply be my perception. The Armed Forces now undertake a tripartite approach to advertising, which is a good thing. People now have the opportunity to join not only the Army but the Navy and Air Force. In my area when you left school for the vast majority of people below a certain grade the choices were the Army, the collieries or the textile industry. In the past I used to go to galas and events in my constituency; there were about 30-odd every year. You always saw the Armed Forces' vehicles there. Rarely do you see them nowadays. You do not see them in any of the big towns or settlements. They used to provide a degree of encouragement. Is that happening a lot less than it used to?
Mr Gordon: I would share that perception. There is less presence as you describe it at large conventions. At every careers convention you would see the Armed Forces; you still do so. More recently, they rely on PowerPoint presentations and films than bringing a tank through the back door. There is perhaps an impact in doing it that way.
Mr Longson: There is also a shift in culture nationally and locally and in the family in terms of the Armed Forces and people's experience of the Services over the years has changed. There is a real issue about culture and how it is perceived—hence the debate that takes place in some schools.

Q155 Mr Borrow: I want to move to the question of recruitment standards in the Armed Forces in general but the Army in particular. There is certainly a perception that the standard of fitness of recruits
Q157 Mr Borrow: Are you saying that when the recruitment process takes place the focus needs to be not simply on joining the Armed Forces because you can learn a trade and be set up for life, etc; it also has to do with some of the downsides and risks involved?

Mr Longson: When I do my career guidance with people I challenge them on the moral issues of the decisions they are making. I think that must be done as part of the decision mechanism.

Mr Gordon: I believe that is the crux of impartiality. Often people talk of impartial guidance and assume it is rather equivocal; it is not. A good careers adviser will challenge somebody to think through the consequences of the choice they make, whether or not it is the Armed Forces, and investigate fully what it means. Obviously, in a career such as the Armed Forces the choices you make are not simply where you will be between the hours of nine and five. Therefore, you need to do more to encourage and ensure young people make well informed decisions and understand their importance and what they lead to, not just the trades and skills they can get but the wider life for which they are signing up.

Q158 Mr Borrow: Do you suggest that as part of the Committee’s inquiry into the whole area and its visits to recruitment centres including basic training it ought to focus somewhat on the extent to which recruits get a rounded picture of what life in the military is all about and the extent to which the Services are giving that picture in the initial few weeks?

Mr Gordon: Yes.

Mr Longson: It is also the next link back; it is the link with the recruit between the liaison officers and the schools. As I said earlier, it is about a partnership.

Q159 Mr Havard: If you were talking to individuals about the need to make rounded decisions what would you say about where they should go and how they should do it? What resources would you have available to you to help them do that and where would you point them?

Mr Longson: In terms of information, we get that delivered on a regular basis and it is updated in terms of the recruitment brochures which are in the curricula in our careers library. In terms of my own professional development, I read and try to be informed. Therefore, when I am doing work with young people I would hope that that professionalism in a sense would come through. The issue of frontline fighting is a matter that I would bring up.

Q160 Mr Havard: Do you feel personally confident that you know enough of the outlets to which you could point someone to do that?

Mr Longson: Yes, but the issue is across the piece.

Q161 Mr Havard: That is why you are the president and there are a lot who are not?

Mr Longson: I could not possibly comment.

Q162 Mr Crawshy: The recruiting environment has changed, has it not, in the sense that for some years we have had a growing economy and young people’s
expectations have completely changed, in that they expect more out of life than going down the coal mine and into the factory; they prefer to go into further education? What more can the MoD do to meet those challenges?

**Mr Gordon:** We need to look ahead. There is a Bill going through Parliament at the moment to raise the level of participation by ensuring that young people cannot leave learning before the age of 18. It will be interesting to see where the MoD positions itself in that respect. I suppose that the MoD is a provider of learning in that context, much the same as a school sixth form, college or an employer who employs apprentices. The MoD needs to consider where it positions itself. We are seeing higher numbers of young people staying in learning longer and opting for further education. That impacts on their choices. We see more young people make choices later than, say, 10 years ago; they make their career or job choice at the age of 18 and beyond rather than 16 and beyond as it was years ago. The Bill that is now going through will confirm that is the case. The MoD needs to think about its position in the context of a higher level in participation in learning beyond the age of 16 and the fact that it will not be lawful to drop out of learning before 18. It will raise the age at which some critical decisions are made.

Q163 **Mr Havard:** That will be in England?

**Mr Gordon:** Yes, of course.

**Mr Longson:** The new facilities at Welbeck foundation college are important pieces in the jigsaw about which my colleague has been talking.

Q164 **Mr Crausby:** The MoD has a different strategy for 15 to 18 year-olds and those over 18. Is that not a bit out of date? Should it not pull it all together rather than view them as two separate groups of people?

**Mr Gordon:** I think they should.

**Mr Longson:** We talk about lifelong learning and that is what we are in.

Q165 **Mr Crausby:** The training environment applies also to others. It is not just the MoD that has a problem as far as young people are concerned; the same principles must apply to the Police, Fire and Ambulance Services. What can the MoD learn from those services to attract young people other than to pay them a lot more money—or is that the issue?

**Mr Gordon:** I am not sure that is the issue. At least anecdotally, I am sure there must be people in the MoD involved in recruitment to the Armed Forces who look very keenly at the civilian uniformed forces and see how they fare, and vice versa. I do not believe that it is a major problem with the Armed Forces, MoD and the resources it has available in their emphasis on recruitment in terms of marketing the forces as a career option. There is probably not much that it would learn from the Police or Ambulance Service in that respect.

**Mr Longson:** From my experience, students who have looked at civilian services are different from those who have looked at the Armed Forces. I do not believe that it is a simple picture.

**Mr Gordon:** One can access the Armed Forces earlier than the Police Service, for example.

Q166 **Mr Jenkins:** Mr Longson, you mentioned Welbeck College. Youngsters join up, go off to do degrees and become officers. We have state school pupils and private school pupils in this country and by far the larger number are those in state schools. What percentage of pupils from state schools do you think manage to achieve the Army sixth-form scholarship?

**Mr Longson:** Off the top of my head I do not know.

**Mr Gordon:** I am sure we can find out that figure.

Q167 **Mr Jenkins:** If I told you that in 2006 and 2007 three-quarters of scholarships were awarded to youngsters from private schools would you be shocked?

**Mr Gordon:** No.

Q168 **Mr Jenkins:** Why is it that youngsters from private schools, who are a small percentage of the total, get three-quarters of the scholarships? Is it because it is the best kept secret and nobody in the state system knows about it, or is it because private schools may be the preserve of most of the officer class who send their children to private schools anyway and are supported by the taxpayer? Maybe that is a continuation of the process because military families do tend to produce military families. Why is this not better known or not a secret? Why do we not have youngsters from state schools making applications in larger numbers for this scholarship?

**Mr Gordon:** I suspect you have answered the question in the illustrations you have given. Military families go down the generations. In my experience in private independent schools you will see very active cadet forces in operation whereas you do not see that so much in the state sector.

Q169 **Mr Jenkins:** Do you suggest that perhaps we should have a more active cadet force in the state sector?

**Mr Gordon:** Within schools?

Q170 **Mr Jenkins:** Yes.

**Mr Gordon:** I do not know. It depends on whether the schools themselves would wish to operate on that basis. For me, the danger of over-emphasising and making too accessible certain careers over others is that it skews the picture of choices for young people. There are a number of wider benefits than just recruitment, but we see increasing numbers of young people in the state sector enrolling in Duke of Edinburgh Award schemes and doing very well out of it. That is a change. I would not say that that used to be the preserve of independent and public schools but certainly a much higher proportion came from that sector. When you look at the growth of Duke of Edinburgh Award schemes in the state sector and in non-traditional Duke of Edinburgh active areas that has had a great effect on those young people. It can be done because it has happened outside the Armed Forces context in the Duke of Edinburgh Award schemes.
Q171 Mr Jenkins: Do you think that our bright young people should be made aware of this scholarship?

Mr Gordon: I do not think we should be comfortable about it given the basic premise that all young people should have an equal opportunity to pursue whatever career opportunities befit their interests and potential. Therefore, I cannot agree with that. It is for schools and the Armed Forces to address it. If we were here talking about the number of young people who go into law and medicine from the respective schools we would be very concerned and say that we need to redress the balance. It is true across the board.

Q172 Chairman: Mr Gordon, do you agree with what Mr Longson said about the benefits of the cadet forces?

Mr Gordon: I do not have the same experience as Mr Longson.

Q173 Chairman: It sounds as though you do not have the same enthusiasm for the cadet forces that clearly Mr Longson has.

Mr Gordon: If it does it is because I do not have the same experience. I do not mean that I have a different experience but that Mr Longson has a much closer working relationship with cadet forces than I have ever had. I am sure that there is much I can learn in that respect.

Q174 Mr Jenkin: My son was a cadet and he loved it, though he did not join the Army. Referring to the high proportion of officers that the Army in particular draws from the independent school sector, would you agree that the Armed Forces are missing out on a lot of potential in state schools because they tend to go to familiar recruiting grounds for officer material?

Mr Longson: From conversation with liaison officers who have been to my school, which is an independent, they talk about going into the local schools in just the same way as they go into my school. I cannot comment on whether or not nationally the figures demonstrate that. I referred to different family cultures. I do not think it is necessarily about school but about how a family reacts to it, whether it be an independent or state school. Certainly in an independent school I have known families that are not very keen when youngsters say that they want to join.

Q175 Mr Jenkin: Do you think that it is something for the schools or the Armed Forces to address, or is the imbalance something with which we should be comfortable?

Mr Gordon: I do not think we should be comfortable about it given the basic premise that all young people should have an equal opportunity to pursue whatever career opportunities befit their interests and potential. Therefore, I cannot agree with that. It is for schools and the Armed Forces to address it. If we were here talking about the number of young people who go into law and medicine from the respective schools we would be very concerned and say that we need to redress the balance. It is true across the board.

Q176 Mr Jenkin: How should we address that?

Mr Gordon: I go back to what I said before. It is about better careers education and preparation for young people. All too frequently young people leave school not having had the necessary level of input in terms of career education and are not sufficiently equipped to make important decisions at the age of 16, 17 or 18. They are skills that they need throughout life. We know that more and more young people entering the labour market will be faced with many different career change opportunities, forced or otherwise. I do not think we do enough to prepare young people for those decisions.

Q177 Mr Borrow: Is it a reasonable perception that there are many state schools with a long tradition of being a source of recruitment into the Armed Forces, particularly the Army, but that recruitment is not to the officer corps but to the other ranks? The issue is whether or not within those schools where there is that tradition of going into the Armed Forces, in particular the Army, the perception should be raised that there is a possibility of those youngsters not simply joining the other ranks but to get into the officer stream and it is at that level that we need to make a breakthrough?

Mr Longson: In that sense, when we talk about recruiters coming in and a specific thing that needs to be done in terms of the MoD there is a need to make sure those people understand the shape of their education and appreciate that a young person who is doing a certain set of subjects or is heading in a certain direction does indeed have the potential to become an officer.

Chairman: Thank you very much. This has been another extremely helpful bit of evidence.

Witnesses: Mr Chris Sanderson MBE, Director Government Support, Control Risks, and Mr Christopher Beese MBE, Chief Administrative Officer, ArmorGroup, gave evidence.

Q178 Chairman: Thank you very much for coming. You have been listening to the evidence given earlier this morning. Perhaps we could begin by the witnesses introducing themselves.

Mr Beese: I am Christopher Beese, a director and chief administrative officer of ArmorGroup, a risk management company that has 8,000 employees in 27 countries, of whom about 1,700 at any one time are former British servicemen. I have been working with these people now for 20 years.

Mr Sanderson: I am Chris Sanderson, Director Government Support at Control Risks, which is an international risk consultancy and security management company based in London with 28 overseas offices. Historically, we have employed a number of ex-Armed Forces personnel typically from the ranks of corporal to major but also from private to general. I left the Army three years ago after 30 years' service. My service career included a tour as commanding officer and chief of G3 Operations and Commitments Branch Headquarters (Land Command) Wilton.

Q179 Chairman: In your opening remarks you have
answered my first three questions. How do you recruit from the Armed Forces? What methods do you employ? How do you recruit from beyond the Armed Forces?

**Mr Sanderson:** Currently, we employ fewer than 500 ex-service personnel. The majority have come to us not directly from the Armed Forces. I suspect that no more than 10% of those have come directly from the Army, which is the majority service, into Control Risks. We advertise in *Quest*, the Services' resettlement magazine. Very occasionally, we have advertised to meet surge requirements in the regional press but to negligible effect.

**Q180 Chairman:** What proportion of your employees comes from the Armed Forces and what proportion does not?

**Mr Sanderson:** Of our permanent staff, we have 685 of whom I suspect no more than 40 are ex-Armed Forces. Of what I would call our non-permanent staff employed to meet specific client contracts, I suspect the number is no more than 500 out of a total of something between 700 and 900, depending on the contracts in place at any one time.

**Mr Beese:** Our experience is very similar to that of Control Risks. At the moment we attract something in the Army, which is the majority service, into Control Risks. We advertise in *Quest*, the Services' resettlement magazine. Very occasionally, we have advertised to meet surge requirements in the regional press but to negligible effect.

**Mr Sanderson:** Of our permanent staff, we have 685 of whom I suspect no more than 40 are ex-Armed Forces. Of what I would call our non-permanent staff employed to meet specific client contracts, I suspect the number is no more than 500 out of a total of something between 700 and 900, depending on the contracts in place at any one time.

**Q181 Chairman:** Of the 250 to 300 applications a week, approximately how many do you need to take on?

**Mr Beese:** We will probably brief in person some 40 each week and from those we will employ about 20.

**Q182 Chairman:** Obviously, you get a lot of applications. How do your pay and conditions compare with the Armed Forces?

**Mr Beese:** Favourably but more in terms and conditions than in pay. Pay is better than that of the Armed Forces but again 100% of our people volunteer to work in difficult locations. They do not join us with the idea that one day they may enter a difficult zone; they join specifically for the zone of their choice. The conditions are such that not only do they choose the location in which they wish to work but for how long they wish to work there. Our employees may volunteer to work in somewhere like Iraq or Afghanistan for a year, or anything up to four years. If on the other hand it is not to their liking they can resign at almost a moment’s notice, so they have tremendous flexibility. They have fixed rotations for leave and can live where they like. Generally, it is the conditions of service rather than remuneration that is attractive.

**Q183 Chairman:** But the remuneration is attractive as well?

**Mr Beese:** It is a significant factor.

**Mr Sanderson:** Most of the recruiting is done via our website and word of mouth, so we have a similar input of cv’s at any one time. As to remuneration, historically the obvious factor is that post the end of the Gulf War there was a surge in the pay of personnel operating in the close protection industry, but that surge has now fallen away significantly. I suspect that the majority of personnel are earning between £40,000 to £60,000 per annum, out of which they make provision for their own pensions clearly and they will not enjoy the same allowance and benefits that service personnel have. Our experience is certainly not that pay is a significant factor in terms of drawing people out of the Armed Forces and into the security and risk industry.

**Q184 Chairman:** What is the main factor in attracting people to you rather than to the Armed Services?

**Mr Sanderson:** There is a plethora of factors depending on individuals’ personal circumstances. A large number reflect upon the routine and somewhat unsatisfactory nature of life in barracks. Poorly resourced training and accommodation standards for married and single personnel are often quoted. Interestingly, very few if any would cite an excess of operational postings. A large number of both single and married servicemen look forward to operational postings, obviously within reason. It is a different matter when it comes to the views of families and the turbulence and detachment that that causes.

**Q185 Chairman:** I suppose that is a self-selecting group, is it not? People who apply to you to go and serve in Iraq are not concerned about serving in that country presumably, so that will not be a factor in getting them to leave the Armed Forces?

**Mr Sanderson:** The majority who come to us seek some form of second career, so it is not that they are looking to serve particularly in areas like Iraq and Afghanistan. Many will have come out of the Services, undertaken different types of work and, in the period 2003 or 2004, will have observed that there is an opportunity to use their few transferable skills in the security industry and will take it. Many of them now reflect that having left the service and worked in the risk and security industry there is a possibility for them to develop full careers, not necessarily working as close protection operators in the likes of Iraq and Afghanistan but more widely and with more extensive management responsibilities throughout the Middle East and Africa, for example.

**Q186 Richard Younger-Ross:** Would you say that doing CP work is more family-friendly?

**Mr Sanderson:** I would not say yes or no to that but personnel working in close protection appointments will typically be operating on one of two rotations, something like eight weeks on duty and four weeks off or a permutation of that.
Q187 Richard Younger-Ross: So, every two months they will see their family?
Mr Sanderson: That is correct. That is a very general and much-used basis of rotation.

Q188 Richard Younger-Ross: If there is a family problem in the eight-week shift can you accommodate that?
Mr Sanderson: We can and do. I am sure I speak also for Christopher when I say that large, well-resourced and responsible companies will make proper provision for the welfare of their staff.
Mr Beese: There are other advantages to the family. The opportunity to serve in somewhere like Iraq for two years on improved pay and possibly relief from income tax is a life-changing opportunity. They are able to gain mortgages that they might not otherwise be able to obtain and that provides stability for the family. They know where their long-term home is. That is a less obvious benefit to operating overseas.

Q189 Chairman: The Ministry of Defence has spoken of a number of initiatives designed to improve retention in the UK Armed Forces. Do you think these initiatives will have any impact on the recruitment opportunities of your companies?
Mr Beese: Perhaps one advantage of the company is that whereas a young serviceman leaves after five or 10 years' service in the Armed Forces—perhaps he has had his fill and wishes to transfer—he then has the option to stay in our industry for a further 30 years. Even if Armed Forces retention improves we will have enough people out there who are able to fulfil our needs. What we would suffer perhaps is a lack of developing expertise.

Q190 Chairman: On the whole, are your recruits from an older generation?
Mr Beese: They would have been up until the gulf crisis. Traditionally, we have recruited managers who would have been senior NCOs in their mid-thirties to fifties. Following intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq, we increasingly see younger soldiers come out and we take people from the age of 25 to 50 in increasing numbers.
Mr Sanderson: Historically, we recruited perhaps personnel in their late thirties; typically, now they are in their early thirties and late twenties. I suspect that service personnel have become savvy to what they have perhaps is a lack of expertise. They would have been up until the gulf crisis. Traditionally, we have recruited managers who would have been senior NCOs in their mid-thirties to fifties. Following intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq, we increasingly see younger soldiers come out and we take people from the age of 25 to 50 in increasing numbers.

Q191 Mr Crausby: Have you observed any increase or decrease in the number of applications made to you in recent years? Have Afghanistan and Iraq had an impact on the number of applications that come to you?
Mr Beese: In our case the number of applications has risen considerably. More people are aware of the opportunity. We ourselves have greater opportunity even if it is perhaps a shorter-term one. If we employ people with a different profile—younger infantrymen rather than older senior NCOs—at the moment there is a boom in recruitment; there are many more applicants.

Q192 Mr Crausby: How long do people stay with you? Do you have a retention problem?
Mr Beese: We have a natural turnover. Many will have fulfilled their financial or “excitement” ambitions over a couple of years; some who are older will stay for anything up to four to five years in theatre.

Q193 Mr Crausby: Can you give some of the reasons why your employees come to you? You must have some anecdotal reasons why they leave the Armed Services and come to you.
Mr Sanderson: I am just reflecting on your former question on turnover. Obviously, there is a much more direct correlation between rates of pay and turnover in this industry than there is in the Services. People have entered a career and then make a break from it. Once they are out in this labour market clearly they can observe what market rates are and switch quite easily between companies. Having said that, there is not a direct correlation between pay and ease of recruitment. Individuals very quickly become savvy to what different companies offer by way of duty of care and operational practice, so there are some inflexibilities also in that market.
Mr Beese: We offer an ideal opportunity for many to transfer from the Armed Forces to civilian employment. With us they will be working with people they understand and who understand them; they will learn new skills in dealing with civilian clients and working on budgets; they will gain greater confidence to move on from us to full-time civilian employment. Some of them are concerned about their longer-term prospects in the military which have shrunk significantly in recent years. By no means are all of our people coming from the military; the majority have had another job and have been bored with it or seek a return to more lucrative work consistent with their basic trade. But many people have left the Armed Forces through a degree of redundancy. The large number of people who left the Royal Irish two years ago and the Northern Ireland Police Service mean there are people sitting on sofas in Northern Ireland without the sort of work they might have enjoyed.

Q194 Mr Crausby: Do you see differences between those who come from the military and those who do not, for example in the length of time they stay? Is the turnover the same for ex-military and non-military?
Mr Beese: The majority of ours, some 95%, are military.
Mr Sanderson: There are small differences. I know that armed security is perhaps the particular focus here, but those who are not ex-UK Armed Services are typically ex-Commonwealth armed services or ex-Police Service of Northern Ireland. There is much of a muchness in terms of retention there. For civilian consultancy staff, though they might have
Q195 Mr Jenkin: Our inquiry is into why the Armed Forces are losing so many key people. Do you say that circumstances are different or have got worse for any reason now as opposed to, say, five, 10 or 15 years ago?

Mr Sanderson: Looking back to my time as a commanding officer 10 years ago and at Headquarters (Land Command) when we were concerned about levels of operational commitment, the harmony guidelines and the impact on specific trades and units, it all looks much the same as it did then. I am not aware of today’s statistics and details in that regard, but we seem to be wrestling with the same questions. At that time there were no instant short-term solutions and it may be equally problematic this time round to find the same.

Mr Beese: In addition there is perhaps a change in culture. We live in an age of communications. While it is now possible for many commercial staff to work from home it is also possible for people in the Armed Forces to gain information faster. Everybody is on the email. If there is a new opportunity out there for a change in pay and conditions or something more appropriate emails rattle round at great speed. Therefore, people’s awareness of other opportunities is much greater than it might have been.

Q196 Mr Jenkin: Therefore, if we wanted to make some points in our conclusions about how the Armed Forces should retain more of the people you want to recruit what advice would you give us? What do you believe are the top three priorities that the Armed Forces should pursue in order to retain more of these people, because the statistics are worse than 10 years ago?

Mr Sanderson: To my mind, it should improve accommodation, be it single or married; it should be more consistent and perhaps slightly more generous in the delivery of allowances; and probably predominately it should improve the quality of military life for personnel as they prepare for operations and when they return from them.

Mr Beese: I agree with all that. I suppose that culturally I am stuck with a need for us to find heroes to fight unpopular wars on the cheap. Whatever one can do to redress the balance, on the one hand society looks to the soldier as someone who is good and whose crusades are treasured values and on the other many of the engagements at the moment are culturally I am stuck with a need for us to find heroes to fight unpopular wars on the cheap. Whatever one can do to redress the balance, on the one hand society looks to the soldier as someone who is good and whose crusades are treasured values and on the other many of the engagements at the moment are

Q197 Mr Hamilton: Mr Beese, a few moments ago you referred to the availability of mortgages and relief from income tax. That has always been the subject of continuing discussion among troops. Do you think that if the MoD wants to talk seriously about retention and additional flexibility those discussions should include income tax relief?

Mr Beese: It provides a significant opportunity. Whilst people who have tax relief will miss out on other benefits like pensions that are provided by the Armed Forces, it is an opportunity for them to convert essentially most of their remuneration and benefit into cash to deliver a material gain at a particular stage in their lives. I think that is useful for them. It is not necessarily the best long-term solution.

Q198 Mr Hamilton: Would I be right in thinking that that would apply only to those above a certain level of income, so the officer class would directly benefit from that?

Mr Beese: The differences in pay in our companies are very small as are the distinctions between people. We have very flat command structures. The possibility of promotion through merit is considerable and we see a great levelling of people based on ability and merit in the system. Therefore I do not think that is necessarily applicable. Everyone working in the industry has a reasonably equal opportunity and, therefore, the benefit is the same across the board.

Q199 Chairman: I have never really discovered how this works. Is it right that you do not operate military command structures within your companies?

Mr Beese: If you take our company, which I believe is typical of most, a country like Iraq will have a country manager and below that there will be a raft of operation managers and then team leaders and operators. Therefore, essentially there are four levels in a complex environment like Iraq and the pay difference between them is not significant.

Q200 Mr Borrow: I gained the impression earlier in the discussion that the majority of ex-military people you recruited had gone into civilian life before joining your companies. They did not leave the Armed Forces because they were not happy and go directly to one of your companies which could offer better pay and conditions than, say, the Army. They left the Armed Forces for reasons A, B and C, worked in civilian life for a bit and then saw the opportunity to use their skills by working for your companies and, by the way, the pay and conditions would give them a chance to take a leap forward in a short period of time to set themselves up to do something else later in life. Is that the correct dynamic?

Mr Sanderson: That is correct. There is also the historical dimension that although there was always an industry of security and risk-associated activities

1 Note by Mr Sanderson: Residents and Non-Residents— Liability to Tax in the UK (HMRC 20) outlines the rules for non-residency status which broadly allow for non-payment of UK tax if an individual does not spend more than 182 days in the UK in any one tax year or does not spend more than an average of 90 days per year in the UK over a maximum of 4 tax years.
which drew on ex-service personnel, it became a
great deal larger in the aftermath of the second Gulf
War. Interestingly, when I interrogated the statistics
the proportion of personnel we took direct from the
Services even in 2003 and 2004 when hundreds of
people were being recruited was still between 10 and
15%. If that proportion of direct recruitment from
the Services has risen it is only because the numbers
are much smaller.

Q201 Mr Borrow: Would it be wrong for the
Committee to draw the conclusion that there is a
direct link between retention problems within the
Armed Forces and your existence as private
companies in the security industry recruiting ex-
servicemen?
Mr Sanderson: That would be a wrong assumption
in my view. Perhaps I may observe that probably the
majority of the work we do provides security services
to government and government-funded activities in
hazardous areas, so some would argue that if the
work were not done by private companies it would
be done by the military.

Q202 Mr Jenkins: Are all of your employees British?
Mr Sanderson: No, and it depends on the nature of
the client. If we are working for the British
Government, for example, there may well be
nationality requirements. They may have to be
British or Commonwealth citizens, and there may
also be security vetting requirements. Clearly, we
can work for a range of other clients who may be
non-UK Government or commercial.

Q203 Mr Jenkins: When you employ non-British
personnel I take it you are quite happy with them.
Do you have a chance to compare them? If they are
ex-military from abroad are they as well trained as
British ex-service personnel?
Mr Sanderson: For control risks we employ UK and
Commonwealth ex-servicemen, UK and typically
ex-Police Service of Northern Ireland policemen.
We employ what is known in the industry as third
country nationals who typically will be ex-British
Army Gurkhas. The third category of employment
is local nationals drawn from the indigenous
populations of the countries in which we are
working.
Mr Beese: We have a similar experience. Of our
1,600 employees in Iraq nearly 800 are Iraqi trained
by us who perform very reliably. There are a large
number of Nepalese and Fijians who perform
admirably. The remainder, some 500, are British
Commonwealth personnel and there is no apparent
difference between them in performance.

Q204 Mr Jenkin: You said that poorly resourced
training was one of the prime reasons for people
leaving the Armed Forces. Could you enlarge on
that?
Mr Sanderson: That is a reason they cite. I cannot
observe directly what the frustration is, but the
factors raised—I did a straw poll a few days ago—
were lack of training ammunition and, in a very
general sense, availability of equipment, but I am
unable to comment authoritatively on the detail.

Q205 Mr Jenkin: Do you think that is reflected in the
quality of personnel or professional competence that
people leaving the Armed Forces display today, or is
it as good as ever because of their combat
experience? To put it bluntly, they do more training
on the job.
Mr Beese: In our experience, they consistently
improve; they are better today than they have ever
been.
Mr Sanderson: Obviously, we are in a position where
we have a lot of applications to work for our
companies. We can select the best of those who
apply.

Q206 Mr Jenkin: But you do not find the high
operational tempo a reason for people to leave the
Armed Forces?
Mr Sanderson: That is not cited as a reason,
interestingly.

Q207 Mr Jenkin: But you may have a self-selecting
sample in that respect?
Mr Sanderson: That is true, but we also take a lot of
personnel into non-deployed appointments, so
people will be working in managerial positions in
our offices in London, for example. They cite a batch
of reasons for leaving similar to the ones I raised
before and operational tempo is not one of them.

Q208 Mr Jenkin: Do they get more predictable
training from an employer like you? Servicemen
often complain about their training and personnel
development being interrupted by too many
operational requirements. Do you think that is so?
Mr Sanderson: Companies will differ. I can speak
only for my company which offers a reasonably
predictable and well- resourced training programme
for those who join us.
Mr Beese: Training itself does not appear to be an
issue, but still time away from families is. Social
trends change and husbands are now expected to
spend more time with family and children and take
a greater hand in their upbringing. That will be
reflected also in military personnel. Quality time at
home and reasonably regular communication are
important. All of our employees in Iraq have the
ability to community by email with their families.
Webcams help and they can keep in reasonable
touch. It helps to have regular rotations and to know
that you will go back not simply to see the family but
take them on holidays that you can now afford.
Quality of life is improved.

Q209 Mr Hamilton: Mr Beese, I think the last point
you make is extremely important. I was in Basra
three weeks ago and one of the issues that came up
was retention and turnover. They were over there for
so long and personal circumstances changed. For
example, single people join up and then get married.
Mr Sanderson, surely when personnel complain
about the Armed Forces and say they want to leave
for these reasons they are not likely to tell you that the reason they are doing it is because they are being naged by their wives. 

Mr Sanderson: I would not dispute that at all. That is why one always makes a distinction between the reasons offered by the serviceman himself and the impact of family pressures.

Q210 Chairman: Do you suggest that your experience is something on which the Ministry of Defence could draw in any respect in terms of length of tours, quality of training, flat command structures or pay?

Mr Beese: We come from an industry that provides defensive protective services and therefore at any one time our operational tempo should be less than that of the Armed Forces. If I were a commanding officer who required my men to travel up the foothills of the Hindu Kush and stay there for a month I would need a mechanism and environment that allowed me to do that. We do not have to do that and therefore can afford to take a different approach. We can afford to be flexible with staff. If they need to take a month off to resolve a family problem we can change their rotations and accommodate their needs. That helps our own retention because that person will come back and continue to perform for us and we shall be seen by a wider market to be an employer of choice. But I suggest that we have more luxury in our ability to provide these benefits than the Ministry of Defence. At the end of the day I can instruct no one to go anywhere; they are all volunteers. The military has to be able to send people; we do not.

Mr Sanderson: There are significant differences between the way private companies and the Armed Services operate particularly in the duration of operations. We employ personnel on contract to meet specific client requirements. Those contracts might last a matter of weeks, months or years. The individuals will be employed for as long or short a time as they want to be which could be a matter of months or years. We have personnel who have been with us since the Gulf War and the start of private security operations in 2003. A second important distinction is that typically our training cycle has two components: individual training and collective training. The individual training component has some similarities with that of the Armed Services, but the collective training component really looks at individuals who work as part of small teams typically of no more than six or eight personnel, whereas the Armed Forces must generate a training and operational cycle which supports the operations of sub-units and formations which is a much lengthier process.

Q211 Mr Jenkin: One of the debilitating factors in our operations in Afghanistan and Iraq is the six-month rule which means that all the skills learnt by the outgoing brigades hardly if at all transfer to the incoming brigades. Would it be possible for you to construct a package for the Ministry of Defence so it could have long-term military staff attached to brigade headquarters and GOCs in theatre to provide the continuity which at the moment does not exist and career opportunities for people who want longer-term commitments than are currently provided? Is that idea completely off the wall?

Mr Beese: No, it is not. Certainly, we are asked to brief rotating brigades before they go out to ensure that their staff and senior NCOs understand what the private sector is and what it can offer by way of advantage and what it cannot offer. If a new brigade command team arrives in Lashkargar in Helmand province it will find our same people sitting at operational desks alongside the staff working with the Foreign Office, DFID and other government groups and providing a degree of continuity. Typically, also in peace-keeping operations—we do not simply support the British Government—where we support United Nations staffs and operations the same is true. In the Balkans we had people deployed for four years in all parts of the former Yugoslavia and they provided a huge degree of continuity which was essential in logistics operations. People were not scrabbling for route maps and an understanding of the relative risks on a road. Our drivers and logistics understood every metre of every road and the problems they presented.

Mr Sanderson: I agree. I add that probably the problem of continuity for formation headquarters in the field is exacerbated by what is historically a very high level of augmentation required to make them operational—I have no reason to believe that has changed—by individuals from outside the parent headquarters to give it full manning to be able to perform on operations. The flip side to that is that when we drew individuals from elsewhere to support deployed headquarters they obviously came from their parent headquarters or units and therefore there was some degree of turbulence and disruption as a result.

Chairman: Thank you both very much indeed. We have no further questions. We are extremely grateful to you for a fascinating end to the morning.
Tuesday 22 April 2008

Members present
Mr James Arbuthnot, in the Chair
Mr David S Borrow
Mr David Crausby
Linda Gilroy
Mr David Hamilton
Mr Mike Hancock
Mr Bernard Jenkin
Mr Brian Jenkins
Mr Kevan Jones
Robert Key
John Smith

Witnesses: Mr Chris Baker OBE, Director General of Service Personnel Policy, Rear Admiral Charles Montgomery CBE, Naval Secretary, Major General Andrew Gregory, Director General Personnel (Army), Air Vice Marshal Simon Bryant CBE, Air Secretary, Major General Simon Lalor TD, Assistant Chief of Defence Staff, Reserves and Cadets, and Vice Admiral Peter Wilkinson CVO, Deputy Chief of Defence Staff (Personnel), Ministry of Defence, gave evidence.

Q212 Chairman: This is a further evidence session into recruitment and retention. I welcome you to the Committee. I am sorry that we kept you waiting at the beginning. We have a large number of witnesses and questions. Each witness should not feel required to answer every question because that would take us until breakfast tomorrow, but some of these issues are directed at the particular specialisations of the witnesses. I start by asking you to introduce yourselves and to set out very briefly your roles.

Major General Gregory: I am Andrew Gregory, Director General Personnel, and I am in charge of both setting personnel policies and ensuring on behalf of the Commander-in-Chief the delivery of those policies across the Army.

Vice Admiral Wilkinson: I am Vice Admiral Peter Wilkinson, Deputy Chief of Defence Staff for Personnel in the Ministry of Defence. I am charged by CDS and Ministers to produce sufficient capable and motivated personnel for the operations required according to the government’s policies.

Air Vice Marshal Bryant: I am Air Vice Marshal Simon Bryant, Chief of Staff Personnel for the Royal Air Force and also the Air Secretary, so I am concerned with personnel policy and also human relationships management.

Mr Baker: I am Chris Baker and I work for Vice Admiral Wilkinson in the Ministry of Defence as Director General of Service Personnel Policy.

Rear Admiral Montgomery: I am Charles Montgomery, Chief of Staff Personnel at Fleet and also Naval Secretary and Deputy Principal Personnel Officer responsible for strategic personnel policy, that is, the operational as well as tactical deployment of people.

Major General Lalor: I am Major General Simon Lalor, senior reservist. I am Assistant Chief of Defence Staff Reserves and Cadets and am responsible for tri-service policy for the reserves and cadets in defence.

Q213 Chairman: Let us start with public perceptions of the Armed Forces which play such an important part in recruitment and retention. I suggest it is quite important for the public to have direct contact with the Armed Forces rather than simply through the media. If that is the case what sort of initiatives are most successful in providing that real contact between the public and the Armed Forces?

Vice Admiral Wilkinson: I think this is a question for each of the Services to deal with. Perhaps Major General Gregory can start by talking about some of the marketing and outreach activities that the Army undertakes.

Q214 Chairman: I was hoping that somebody would explain to me exactly what an outreach activity was.

Major General Gregory: I will try. An outreach initiative is one where we take Army personnel out into the wider community to explain the roles and activities of the Service. We do it through a number of forums: first, within schools. Where invited we will visit schools on behalf of careers advisers not in terms of recruiting but curriculum development particularly to support their activities on a wider basis. We visit about 1,000 schools a year and have found that is much welcomed by the schools themselves. More widely, we have an Army presentation team that based on invitation goes to forums to talk to a range of people, particularly gatekeepers and influence-formers, to give them a better understanding of the Army and its activities.

Vice Admiral Wilkinson: Perhaps it would be helpful if the Air Force could either expand on that or make clear any differences.

Air Vice Marshal Bryant: First, at a lower level like Major General Gregory there is such an ability with the reserve and cadet forces which I am sure Major General Lalor will speak to in greater detail, but engagement must be done at strategic level as well and engagement with opinion-formers and gatekeepers, ie parents and the people who have influence above them, are key to assuring success. Some work has been done to suggest that at the moment this is a negative influence. Clearly, this is critical if we are looking at the recruiting side to address that concern.

2 The figure of 1,000 for the number of Army visits to schools given during the evidence session was provided in error. The correct figure is 4,000.
Chairman: No doubt in the course of the morning we shall explore engagement with the gatekeepers in more detail.

Q215 Mr Jones: In terms of opinion-formers and people in various communities, why do you not contact Members of Parliament who have extensive contacts with schools in their own constituencies? On the one occasion I did it with the Royal Marines it was quite successful, but as a Member of Parliament I have never had any other service contact. I go regularly to many of the schools in my area. I am sure that would be quite welcome in terms of any input I can have in getting you past the gatekeepers.

Air Vice Marshal Bryant: We are always trying to do better at everything, but there is a reasonable level of engagement. First, there is the Armed Forces Parliamentary Scheme, with which you are obviously well familiar. Second, at strategic level the heads of service engage on a regular basis with MPs through information groups. The chief of the Air Force does this.

Q216 Mr Jones: It is a group of Tory MPs.

Air Vice Marshal Bryant: But it is part of the engagement strategy. The other point I make is that at local level what tends to happen is that one uses one’s platforms or stations as the source of influence. Therefore, their local engagement will be significant. In the case of the Royal Air Force that platform runs pretty much throughout the United Kingdom.

Q217 Mr Jones: I do not have any Army, RAF or Royal Navy stations in my constituency but there are large numbers of people who join the Armed Forces. Why do you not engage with their Members of Parliament who would help the process?

Vice Admiral Wilkinson: I think that is a helpful point. Perhaps I may remind the Committee of the National Recognition Study led by Quentin Davies announced by the government last November, its objectives being to encourage greater understanding and appreciation of the Armed Forces by the nation. Obviously, I cannot anticipate in detail what Mr Davies’s study will say, but from the work done so far I think the points Mr Jones makes are opposite to those that Mr Davies will pick up.

Mr Baker: We would be delighted to engage with you. If you have ideas on this matter the more the merrier.

Q218 Chairman: I am not aware of which schools in my constituency accept or invite these visits, but if I were aware would you like to do more of these visits? Are you funded to do more? Would it help recruitment if you did more of these visits?

Rear Admiral Montgomery: We operate within finite resources and our business is one of making sure that they are used to best effect. The context here is that we already do a great deal of engagement with schools, both state and private. Last year our regional teams visited 4,000 schools and colleges in the secondary sector and over 300 in the private sector, so we are already doing a very great deal in terms of engagement with schools, but this is always on the basis that schools are prepared to invite us to engage.

Q219 Mr Jones: If you made contact I and I am sure many Members of Parliament would be more than willing to see how you could get into schools with which you have difficulties. In the case of the Royal Marines which went to one of the schools in my area no thought had been given to having such a visit. I was quite happy to do that. In MPs you have a resource. Some would not do it but I think the majority would.

Vice Admiral Wilkinson: To go back to the original question about outreach, I think it is important that you hear from Major General Lalor about his work with cadets and reserves.

Q220 Chairman: I can assure you that we will cover cadets later. Generally speaking, is there a view about how you explain military life to the public in order to make its perception as beneficial as possible to your recruitment activities?

Vice Admiral Wilkinson: Yes, there is and it must be conducted on as broad a front as possible. There is no single solution to fit all the relevant sectors of society that we are appealing to in terms of awareness in schools. This is very much designed to give people a greater understanding of the Armed Forces and is a separate activity from recruiting. We look at a different part of society for that. As you have already said, the need also to influence gatekeepers and people of standing in the community—headmasters and parents—is crucial. We have to advance on a broad front by a variety of means with the resources available to make as much impact as we can.

Q221 Chairman: Can you define the different part of society that you look at in relation to recruitment?

Vice Admiral Wilkinson: I was thinking essentially of the age group.

Major General Gregory: This is a really important subject. You will have seen from the figures for the seven years we have submitted that the Army’s budget—we use the word “advertising” but it is more than that—has increased from £5 million to £26 million. First, that reflects the importance we place upon the business of marketing the Army in its widest sense to make sure that opinion-formers particularly understand where we are going. We find that a significant proportion of that must be spent on removing ill-informed perception and opinion which is an important role for us. In terms of the totality of helping society to understand us—I pick up Mr Jones’s question in particular—commander regional forces is undertaking a study at the moment to look at the Army in society, seeing how better across all the lines, including the point you make, we should pick up our involvement with society to make sure we cover all the strands and hit the right people so they understand us better.
Q222 Mr Hancock: I am interested to hear what you say about dispelling ill-founded perceptions and disinformation. You must have some feedback to suggest to you what those perceptions are. How on earth do you tackle that issue when you go to opinion-formers and start off by saying to them that obviously they have some mistrust or disillusionment with the Armed Forces? On what do you base that?

Major General Gregory: The Central Office of Information has made a range of surveys for us so we can better understand the opinions of the public and gate-keepers in particular. The sort of issues that come up are, first, public perceptions of the operations in Iraq and Afghanistan which inevitably have an effect on people’s willingness to join the Army, particularly parental opinions in that area. Inevitably, there are legacy concerns about things that have happened in the past—the Deepcut incident and things like that—where the perception is that this is still the Army of today which it is not. It is addressing things like that and also removing the opinions and concern of young people about being away from family, the general fear of going to war, being shot at and things like that.

Q223 Mr Hancock: When you have gained that knowledge you then have to have the right people equipped to take the proper message to people?

Major General Gregory: Absolutely.

Q224 Mr Hancock: One of the failures we found in the past, particularly in our inquiry into duty of care, was that the quality of some of the people doing this was not of the best. I am interested to know how you have overcome that so that the message you take out comes from people who are properly qualified to convey it in a positive way.

Major General Gregory: That is a key point. First, why do we use Army recruiting teams? They have all been CRB cleared so that when they go into schools they are properly qualified to do that sort of thing. Second, we look very carefully at those people we put into the Armed Forces careers offices to make sure they are balanced and convey a proper perception of the Services and in my case the Army in particular. Third, we look carefully—I am sure we will come on to this—at the people we put into the training of junior soldiers. All of them now go through the Army leadership school to make sure they are properly prepared for this. In addressing the issue it is absolutely fundamental that if we are to get the right number of people coming into the Army out of training, which is the key measure for me, we must have good people right from the start of the pipeline in the recruiting and training environment, and we are working very hard at it.

Q225 Robert Key: I want to return to cadets and school visits. I am delighted to hear that you visit 4,000 schools but I should like some clarification. In 2006 we were warned that the Ministry of Defence was reviewing the whole policy of visiting schools. In 2007 we were told that the process was coming to an end and would be replaced by videos, DVDs and online access to websites which we were assured was nothing to do with saving money and everything to do with the fact to gain access to young people and explain what the military was doing it was allegedly far more effective to do it through DVDs than through personal visits. Apparently, that is not part of your agenda. What has changed?

Rear Admiral Montgomery: Perhaps I may pick up that point since I mentioned the 4,000 school visits. Those school visits are not recruiting visits but are fundamental to increasing awareness of what the Armed Forces do in the round across a key section of the community. Going back to your very first question, you asked what kind of engagement was most effective in terms of improving awareness. One of the areas not covered in the responses so far has been the electronic media. The electronic media, be it DVDs, internet access or whatever, are fundamental in accessing 16 to 24 year-olds. It is not a question of school visits or DVDs; it is now a combination of these and other means of accessing key elements in the community.

Robert Key: I welcome that change of policy as undoubtedly it is. The Answers to Parliamentary Questions that I tabled made it quite clear that personal visits would cease, so that is very good news. I think we might press that further.

Q226 Chairman: I am confused about the numbers. Is it 1,000 schools and 4,000 visits? Are we talking of different Services or what?

Rear Admiral Montgomery: I am speaking on behalf of the Royal Navy. There are 4,000 school visits. Air Vice Marshal Bryant: And 450 for the Royal Air Force.

Q227 Robert Key: But how many for the Army?

Major General Gregory: A thousand.3

Q228 Robert Key: It does not sound to me to be a very co-ordinated programme, if I may say so.

Air Vice Marshal Bryant: What we are trying to do is to drive it to individual effect. Last year the problem faced by the Royal Air Force as it came towards the end of the service draw-down was different. This year because we are now going back to traditional recruiting levels the number of visits has significantly ramped up. In terms of getting people to focus on doing core business which was the challenge over the past year, in that period we have brought together everything centrally and increasingly they will go out now to enhance the number of visits.

Q229 Robert Key: Is it reasonable to assume, or can you confirm, that the Ministry of Defence has increased your budget for school visits?

Vice Admiral Wilkinson: That is a question for the individual Services rather than the MoD.

3 The figure of 1,000 for the number of Army visits to schools given during the evidence session was provided in error. The correct figure is 4,000.
Q230 Robert Key: What is the answer from the individual Services?
Air Vice Marshal Bryant: We will be spending more money on school visits in the coming year. The budget per se is not divided up on the basis of having more money for school visits but in the way we allocate our resources a greater percentage will go there.

Q231 Robert Key: Can you please say what assessment the Ministry of Defence and each of the three Services have made of the resolution at the recent Easter conference of the National Union of Teachers not to allow the military into schools?
Major General Gregory: We have looked at that. We go only by invitation to support the curriculum. Therefore, where career advisers invite us we shall continue to go to support curriculum activities.

Q232 Robert Key: But what assessment have you made of the impact of this new NUT policy?
Major General Gregory: I think it is too early for me to tell.

Q233 Mr Hancock: It would appear that some are recruitment attempts and others are showboating the forces. There are two different roles here. One seeks to recruit and the other to generate greater understanding of what the Armed Forces are doing. Which is it, and who co-ordinates it from within the MoD?
Mr Baker: You are absolutely right. We have been looking at the way in which we interact with schools, recognising some of the points that Mr Jones made about the unevenness of coverage and the issues that arise because the distinction between our recruiting and outreach activities at schools may not be as clear as it might be. We plan to move forward with a new programme that will co-ordinate efforts and distinguish between those different categories.4 As far as concerns the NUT resolution, it is fair to say that so far we have not noticed any significant impact on our activities.

Q234 Mr Hancock: Within the MoD does funding for these visits as opposed to recruiting visits come out of the recruiting budget or another budget head?
Rear Admiral Montgomery: I can speak on behalf of one of the single Services. The answer is that it is a bit of both. Part of our outreach into schools has been through assets owned by Captain Naval Recruiting. Those visits have been made in part by assets owned by others, whether it be ship affiliations or school affiliations in which we are very active, and in part through very small dedicated teams, for example physical training instructors and others in academic fields, that have engaged specifically with schools and the curriculum. All the latter categories are not scored against the recruiting budget but the former categories are. Therefore, it is a bit of both.

Mr Jenkin: This is a very important line of questioning. There are two suggestions. First, is there a case for having a tri-Service school visit team to do the “awareness” point without disrupting the single Service, even single unit—particular battalions, squadrons or ships—relationships with particular schools? Has that been considered?
Chairman: I would like to come back to that in later questions.
Mr Hamilton: I want to go back to the first answer we received. The 1,000, 450 and 4,000 are extremely discouraging from our point of view because it sounds as if each organisation takes a different view. We are talking about a tripartite approach which will come out in other questions. I ask that those in power consider Mr Jones’s earlier point and do this in a direct sense and they take up the cudgels with MPs. I have 46 schools in my area including six secondary schools which are different. Nobody knows my area better than the MP. I have barracks in my area but I have never been there by invitation. I have been there two or three times at my instance, not the barracks. This issue must be dealt with. I ask that you make a serious endeavour to make contact with all the MPs especially in those cases where there are no resources to help recruitment.

Mr Jones: I am trying to get my head round what Mr Hancock said in terms of co-ordination between school recruitment visits and raising awareness and how that is determined. I do not have a clear view of how that is done. I have been on this Committee for seven years and I consider myself quite a strong supporter of the Armed Forces. I can tell you now that no one from any of the three services in the north east of England has ever contacted me either to ask my opinion or whether I can help with certain things. I reinforce Mr Hamilton’s point: we are a resource that can be used.

Q235 Robert Key: What is the number of cadets in each of the three Services in our schools? Is it going up or down?
Major General Lalor: There is an aspiration to grow the cadet movement. All three single Services have their own intent in the way they manage their resources. To start the ball rolling, the RAF has a mature plan to increase the size of the air force cadets, but there is no defence policy as yet on where we might be in the size of that force in future. I emphasise “as yet” because this is very much a hot area. The government’s admiration of the cadet movement as part of its youth policy is very welcome and I suggest that we shall see greater interest in and mature plans for cadet growth in future.

Q236 Robert Key: I ask the question in a completely different way. Is the number of cadets in each of the three Services going up or down?
Major General Gregory: I will have to come back to you on the specific question. I can tell you how many we have, but I do not have the historical data.5

4 See Ev 167
5 See Ev 169
Air Vice Marshal Bryant: For the RAF it is broadly level at about 40,000 and the stated aspiration is to go to 45,000 by 2015.

Q237 Robert Key: And the Royal Navy?
Rear Admiral Montgomery: Likewise, I will come back to you on the trends.

Q238 Robert Key: Do you have any knowledge—if not, please tell us later—of whether there is any difference in the number of cadets in English, Welsh and Scottish schools? Does a higher proportion of Scottish or English schools have cadet forces?
Vice Admiral Wilkinson: We will have to get back to you with that information.¹

Q239 Robert Key: It is quite important that we make evidence-based suggestions. If we do not have the evidence it makes it a bit difficult. I move on to the reserves and their role in the link between the Armed Forces and wider society. Is this perceived to be a strong or weak link? Do you wish it to get stronger?

Major General Lalor: We consider it to have considerable value. When we talk of outreach we are fortunate that we have a greater national footprint than our regular counterparts and we are supported by a national network, ie the reserve forces and cadet associations. I would certainly be very disappointed if I heard that MPs with reserves and cadets in their areas were not contacted by the RFCAs because that is one of their main purposes. It is now acknowledged that this footprint, including the link with national and local employers, is of considerable importance to defence overall. I know you have taken evidence from SaBRE. For example, we now talk very much to SaBRE, not just about issues to do with reserves but about Armed Forces and society. Therefore, the answer to your specific question is that there is an aspiration that we can be more active using the totality of our national footprint, regular and reserve.

Q240 Robert Key: I wish you well because in an area like mine, Salisbury, HM Armed Forces are an everyday fact of life and are part of the community, but in other parts of England and the UK they are not.
Vice Admiral Wilkinson: That has been recognised and is the reason for Major General Lalor’s answer that we have an aspiration. We realise that for many parts of the country it is only via the reserve forces that the average citizen has any contact with the Armed Forces at all. I think there has been a slow realisation of the importance of that particular role for the reserves.

Q241 Robert Key: How much does that depend upon resources and your having a budget to achieve that aspiration?

Major General Lalor: This morning I shall probably refer on numerous occasions to the reserves review announced in March which commenced on 1 April. One of our terms of reference is very much to try to bring out some science, so we might have some evidence of the cost and effect of this national footprint. In the past we have just accepted it as a good thing without really being able to analyse whether we are achieving effect and thus whether we should devote it to the same, less or more resources. That is a specific term of reference of the reserves review.

Q242 Robert Key: What assessment has been made—maybe it is a personal one—of how well United Kingdom forces are doing in terms of relations with schools, cadets and the place of reservists in national life compared with other NATO countries with which we are on front line in theatre and in peace-keeping?

Major General Lalor: Perhaps I may deal with cadets rather than the outreach into schools. As you suggest by your question, it is slightly subjective. I cannot compare it with other countries but I believe that the cadet movement is now respected more than it has been in my period of knowledge covering the past 30-odd years. I believe that is because of a greater understanding of the effect that the cadet movement has on the development of youth in this country.

Q243 Robert Key: I thought I saw a shaking head from the Royal Air Force.
Air Vice Marshal Bryant: I do not have information about other countries.

Q244 Robert Key: I was asking specifically about other countries. Does anyone present have any knowledge about cadets and reservists in other NATO countries?

Major General Lalor: I have a lot of knowledge about reserves in other countries but not about cadets.

Q245 Robert Key: Therefore, we really do not know how we compare with other countries?

Major General Gregory: But what we can do is be very positive about the links between the Armed Forces collectively—the regular, the territorials and the cadets—with their local communities. The perception of the Armed Forces remains very high. The contact that people have is very strong and communities have had welcome home parades. Mr Key had one recently in Salisbury for The Rifles. They have been hugely well received on both sides of the community, so I believe that we have a very positive story to tell here.

Q246 Mr Jones: What are you doing to get cadets into units in state schools and away from private schools which traditionally are well represented? I am aware that last year when you extended this programme a government minister, who will remain nameless, had to fight to talk to the Secretary of
State for Defence himself to get one for his inner city comprehensive school in Newcastle. First, what are you doing about that? Second, what do you say about co-ordination at local level among the three Services? There is a cadet force in Chester-le-Street in my constituency which is very well funded and has nice minibuses, but the Sea Cadets find it very difficult to get access to those resources. What are you doing to ensure that the money provided at local level to cadet forces is done in a tri-Service way? I know that the Sea Cadets are configured differently from the Army Cadets, but what are you doing to make sure that the impact of resources at local is the same?

Vice Admiral Wilkinson: You have hit on the important point that the constitutions of the three different service cadet forces are completely different which leads to differences that can be seen at local level. Perhaps Major General Lalor can lead us through some of the steps he is now taking to try to iron out those differences.

Q247 Chairman: I want to come back to tri-services issues later. Perhaps you would concentrate on the point about state schools as opposed to private schools?

Major General Lalor: This a slight misnomer. In the schools there is an imbalance. There is a total of 260 units of which 60 are in state schools. This arises because of historical reasons because the original purpose in setting them up was to produce officers for the imperial forces. I would certainly take issue with the suggestion that there was resistance last year; quite the opposite. There was a clear intent to have six new CCFs all of which would be in state schools. There as never any question of them being anything else. The problem was one of finding schools prepared and interested in having those new cadet forces that the government instigated last year. Obviously, we have to acknowledge that there is a historical imbalance there, but I certainly do not think we should try arbitrarily to take resources away. What we get from the independent schools is a lot of other resources to assist the cadet movement. I was involved in a meeting only yesterday with Lord Adonis and the Under-Secretary of State for Defence when the very subject of your question was being addressed. I think we have to improve everybody’s knowledge of where they fit in. The majority of our cadets are in community-based rather than school-based cadet forces, but all the future growth to support the government’s youth policy will be in schools and academies that are predominantly in disadvantaged areas because of the very real benefits that can now be shown from involvement in cadet activities.

Q248 Mr Jones: How will you do that?

Major General Lalor: The very purpose of the meeting yesterday was to try to reach a policy between two government departments. I think the aspiration is widely agreed and so we are getting into the area of ‘how’ which is harder.
become soldiers in the Army. It gives them a broader perspective and opportunity to develop as part of that programme which is a fantastic one. In terms of whether officers are prepared in combined cadet forces as opposed to Army Cadet Forces or in independent as opposed to state schools, they are definitely not. We may come to the statistics for independent as opposed to state school officer candidates who are now going through Sandhurst. At Sandhurst there are more state school than independent school candidates joining the Army. There is no correlation between the two.

**Air Vice Marshal Bryant:** To make a quick point on Mr Jones’s question, there is room for wider help outside schools because a lot of the ambition to expand the Cadet Forces is to be outside schools and the pinch point is to get adult volunteers, so encouragement across a broader front to facilitate that would be much appreciated.

Mr Jones: I raised the issue of the different constitutions of the organisations. Are we using effectively the resources that we put into cadets at local level as between the three Services? Is there scope to get them to share buildings and other things?

Chairman: Again, I want to come back to the tri-service issue later. We are still on the second question and it is now 11.20.

Mr Jones: But this is about cadets and is an issue at local level that needs to be answered.

Chairman: Yes, and we shall come back to it.

Q252 John Smith: As to the role that cadets play, is there a specific problem with retention? In my constituency we are very successful with cadet groups and recruiting youngsters is not the real problem. The problem is keeping them because of competition within the community for other things to do. Has that fed through? Is that an issue or is it a matter about which you are relaxed?

Vice Admiral Wilkinson: It is an acknowledged issue with youth groups, not just cadets, across the community. You are right that certainly it is an issue that all three Services are trying to tackle. Although we have to remember Major General Gregory’s point that there is no link between a cadet group and recruiting we know that if somebody takes the decision to join one of the Services and has been in the cadets that individual stays for longer and gets to NCO quicker on average. Therefore, the experience that they gain in the cadets stands them in good stead if they should then decide to join the Services as a career.

Q253 Mr Jenkins: I believe Major General Gregory indicated that as many youngsters from state schools as from public schools turned up, but is it not true that of the student scholarships for officer courses for the Army 66% were offered to youngsters from public schools and only 33% from the state sector? Considering how much larger the state sector is, 90% of the money going for officer student scholarships went to the public sector and only 10% to the state sector. Is that true, and what are we doing about it?

Major General Gregory: As to the figures for sixth-form scholarships you are right, but you have to balance that by looking also at the opportunities offered at the defence sixth-form college at Welbeck where the figures are almost exactly the opposite: 85% to state school candidates and 15% to independent school candidates. Therefore, across the piece there is a much better balance of opportunity than the figures you present first indicate.

Q254 Mr Hancock: That is not the answer, is it? The answer is that in public schools where there is a higher percentage of involvement in the Cadet Forces it is put to them that one of the advantages of being in the cadet corps is that they stand a much better chance of getting the money to help them through student training. That is the difference. Where the incentive does not exist there is an imbalance. In state schools the Cadet Forces do not persist and the information is not readily available. I would be interested to know how many of the sixth forms in the nine secondary schools in my area are aware that this money is available. I would think very few schools would ever tell their students that that money was available. That is the answer.

Vice Admiral Wilkinson: Mr Hancock makes an important point. There is no discrimination against possible candidates from state schools in their applications for such scholarships, but it is a wider issue of awareness and understanding that we can perhaps do better to try to address.

Q255 Mr Hancock: That is a failing, is it not? If I were you and somebody asked me for that statistic I would be wondering why that was. I know what it is because I have spoken to youngsters. I was at an induction course recently in a school. A major from the Army to his credit mentioned that point. It was the first time I had heard anyone—I have done several of these in my schools—from the Armed Forces mention it to the students.

Major General Gregory: In principle I agree and I think you raise a very fair point. The key is to make sure that where careers advisers invite people in they give the broadest briefing on opportunities available, which they are beholden to do.

Mr Hancock: I am sure that most cadet corps commanders in public schools will tell young people of the advantages that flow from it and that does not happen in state schools, which is a great pity.

Q256 Chairman: Does the fact that your 1,000 visits are generated by invitations to schools mean it is more likely that private sector schools will issue them than public schools?

Major General Gregory: No, it is significantly the reverse. The vast majority of invitations come from state school careers advisers.

Mr Borrow: Are we being told that the proportion of state schools that invite visits is higher than the proportion of public school invitations, or are we

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8 The figure of 1,000 was provided in error; the correct figure is 4,000.
Chairman: Before we get to that perhaps on the first question I might bring in Mr Bernard Jenkin.

Q261 Mr Jenkin: Is it not the case that in concentrating on recruitment at national level we rather under-value traditional recruiting pools? For example, if battalion commanders were given more responsibility to ensure their individual units were recruited as part of their overall task there might be more recruitment to the British Army. It is true, is it not, that some battalions are very well recruited and some are not and it depends very much on the emphasis that the commanding officers places on recruitment among his officers and men?

Major General Gregory: Partly. Inevitably, the emphasis that the commanding officer places on it will depend on other things he is doing and his other commitments. If he is committed to operations he may not be able at that time to commit resources specifically to recruiting. When they have time most of them see this as a priority, but what we are trying to do—the Chairman has mentioned One Army Recruiting—is to make sure we have a more coherent overall approach to recruiting for both the Regulars and Territorial Army and look at all the factors available. We have to make sure that as young people come to Army recruiting teams we can look at their personal circumstances and aspirations and see which part of the Armed Forces best suits their aspirations and abilities and then direct them towards that. That is the key thing. That is then supported by regimental initiatives at a lower level but co-ordinated within the regional chain of command and through the activities of recruiting groups. We try to make sure there is coherence between the high level piece, the Army piece and the regimental activities within the various regions.

Q262 Linda Gilroy: The Services are not alone in facing these recruiting challenges and increasingly learning and skills councils and employment and skills boards are taking a role in seeking people out proactively. What links do the Services have with the learning and skills councils?

Vice Admiral Wilkinson: I sit with the permanent secretary on the Sector Skills Council for Central Government, so from the MoD’s perspective we are covering both the military and Civil Service as we work our way through the skills agenda for government.

Q263 Linda Gilroy: And further down in the regions and cities?

Vice Admiral Wilkinson: It filters down our policies to try to make sure that as many courses as possible are given civilian accreditation and that we are in tune with the up-skilling agenda, because we know that if we give people qualifications that are recognised in civilian life they stay for longer. It is in our interests to do so. Initially, it seems perhaps counter-intuitive, but we know they stay longer because they have greater confidence that when they do decide to go outside they will be able to get a job. It is in our interests to make sure that as many
courses as possible have a recognisable read-across to the civilian world, and we think we are doing reasonably well in ensuring we are up with the government’s agenda on that.

**Rear Admiral Montgomery:** I think there is a very positive story which spans all three Services. LSC funding and engagement with us is quite profound. I can give you some headline figures. In 2006–07, for which we have the latest statistics, 25,000 recognised LSC awards were made in our Service which I think you will agree is a fairly significant degree of award over a relatively small Service.

Q264 **Mr Hamilton:** On traditional recruitment pools, if we take the regiments in Scotland as an example traditionally it would have been the Black Watch in Perth and the Royals would have been down in the borders and the Edinburgh/Lanarkshire area. Have there been basic changes since they changed the regiments in that area? That is a fundamental change in traditional recruitment pools. Before you answer that, the Highlanders are based in Midlothian. The tradition referred to earlier of officers trying to recruit in their area is quite difficult if you are based in the lowlands and you are a highland regiment.

**Major General Gregory:** I cannot pick up your specific example. What I would say is that in terms of regimental recruiting affiliations to areas are seen as a strength. It promotes identity where applicable, but once again it is done within One Army Recruiting where the only regimental recruiting team still out is the infantry where you are a highland regiment.

**Mr Hamilton:** I ask that you try to get some information about what measurable changes have taken place since the Royal Regiment joined up. I like to think that has not happened but I would like to see the figures because there are other organisations and parties who argue the opposite.

Q265 **Chairman:** Perhaps you would write to us in due course.

**Major General Gregory:** I will do my best.10

Q266 **Mr Hancock:** I want to return to the educational issue. The government now expect that at some stage 50% of young people will go to university or further education. What has that done for you? Has it meant you have had to lower your thresholds educationally, consequently holding on to recruits who are then recruited and join up and in one way or another fall by the wayside because educationally they are just not up to it, or the challenge is too great to overcome to make them effective servicemen and women?

**Vice Admiral Wilkinson:** I do not think we have seen an effect, but I shall ask my colleagues from the individual Services if they have. We are certainly aware of the challenges that the government’s push for more people in higher education will cause the Services. On the other hand, we also see as an opportunity the government’s intention on education and training for all those up to the age of 18. I say it is an opportunity because we understand that military training and education for the under-18s is considered to be part of that. Therefore, that is an opportunity for us to enable people to continue their education and lifelong learning at the stage.

**Rear Admiral Montgomery:** Perhaps I may pick up the answer to Mr Hancock’s question. First, the most notable effect it has had on my Service has been an increase in the average age of entry which obviously has an impact later on career compression and so on. Those are issues that we manage on a day-to-day basis, but you ask for effects and that is one of them. The key point I register is that we have not lowered our educational qualifications or the bar one jot to compensate for this.

Q267 **Mr Hancock:** Over what period of time?

**Rear Admiral Montgomery:** I am going back over a significant period of time. The last time we altered the academic attributes of an individual group of entrants it was upwards and not downwards, so we have not altered the educational attainment required of people entering our Service in a downward direction. I made the point about having 25,000 accreditations in the Service over the 12-month period. I am really focusing here on the rating rather than officer structure. These span all the way from the Royal Yachting Association up to level 2 apprenticeships. These are heavyweight civilian qualifications. To an extent, therefore, we are responding to the understandable desire for higher education by accrediting more and more of our courses to satisfy that appetite.

**Air Vice Marshal Bryant:** I endorse that. We have to embrace this because that is where society and government policy take us. There are two ways of doing it. First, I observe that we are an 80% technical service, so an awful lot of people are not disadvantaged or advantaged by this because we are looking for that type of qualification in the first place. Second, where possible within service along with the learning and skills council—we have figures similar to those for the Royal Navy—we embrace it by incorporating within our courses the ability to get foundation and subsequent degrees as a counter to creeping ageism which does not work well for us. Therefore, that is something that we have to work with but it does not cause a particularly bad effect at the moment.

**Major General Gregory:** First, I remind you of the Armed Forces college at Harrogate where each year 1,350 young people go to get educational qualifications. Second, there is a current trial in London and the North West into further education bursaries with the aspiration eventually to have 3,000 people as part of it, getting their educational qualifications and being supported through that and then coming in as more mature but better educated individuals in the Services who are able to fill the roles that we seek of them.

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10 See Ev 173
Q268 Mr Hancock: I am always very impressed when I meet young sailors in the Royal Navy who tell me that the only time they only ever learnt anything was during their period of service in the Royal Navy. Education had either failed them or they had failed education, but they were very grateful for what the Royal Navy offered. I remember talking to five young sailors in one particular ship all of whom had had the same experience. But when you come to talk to people who are about to leave the Service and have been in the recruiting stage but do not make it, how many are unable to cope with the educational requirements once in and they leave because they are not up to it educationally rather than physically?

Air Vice Marshal Bryant: For the RAF it is a tiny number.

Major General Gregory: I have figures to show why people are leaving during training. Training wastage is a challenge as you will have identified. Of the 38% we currently lose in training, 16% discharge themselves as of right (DAOR). Exactly how many of those cite the fact that they feel either embarrassed by or unable to cope with the educational qualifications I cannot tell you, and I am not sure we would be able to get that information. We can say when they go but not why they choose to discharge themselves. We have surveys but I am less clear about whether they are prepared to put that down, because it is quite a revealing thing to say about oneself.

Q269 Mr Hancock: As far as concerns the Army, when we were looking at duty of care Colonel Haes’s report stressed the fact that a lot of disciplinary problems were associated with educational level and the ones who were more susceptible to bullying were those who simply did not understand what was expected of them because intellectually they were not up to it. He registered that loud and clear, but nobody seemed to notice it at the time and his report was all but ignored.

Major General Gregory: My wife has worked in a pupil referring unit dealing with children who have been excluded from schools and so I absolutely understand what you are talking about and the challenges faced by people who perhaps have needs that have not been detected and therefore lose their self-esteem and they face all these problems.

Q270 Mr Jones: Are you not under-selling yourself a little? Certainly, in our duty of care inquiry we went to Catterick and saw the excellent work that you were doing at Darlington College about basic literacy. Having visited Harrogate, some of those people are really getting a second chance educationally which they would not have got if they had not joined the Armed Forces?

Vice Admiral Wilkinson: Yes. Likewise, I visited the infantry training centre and was hugely impressed by the links with Darlington College. For whatever reason, you are quite right that infantry soldiers are being given a second chance. In view of the way they come on through dramatic contextualised learning and training, yes, we are under-selling ourselves on that particular score.

Q271 Mr Jones: I was also impressed that they spotted things like dyslexia which had not been identified earlier. In terms of the evaluation of that you need to ensure that it is sung from the rooftops because it gives some of those kids chances they would not otherwise have.

Vice Admiral Wilkinson: Thank you.

Chairman: We shall write to ask you various questions about careers advice and things like that, but now I should like to move on to manning balance.

Q272 Mr Crausby: I begin by asking you to describe what is meant by ‘manning balance’ and then perhaps you can tell us what the latest position is regarding the position for each Service.

Vice Admiral Wilkinson: Perhaps I may start before handing over to the individual Services. The manning balance is achieved when our numbers are between minus 2% to plus 1% of that stated in the public sector agreement. I think you are aware that we are not in manning balance as at 1 April. I offer to send a note to the Committee round the end of May when the final quarter’s figures are available. They are still being scrubbed through by the analysis agency. We are working on figures up to the third quarter. Before handing over to the Navy perhaps I may say that manpower planning is an inexact process. We are working with gains to the trained strength and retention on one side of the equation and a changing liability on the other. These three factors tend to move independently which makes the problem more difficult. Perhaps the individual Services can enlarge on that and tell us where they are with their particular manning numbers.

Rear Admiral Montgomery: From the Royal Navy’s perspective—you will have seen the figures in the note sent previously—at the moment we are at about minus 4% and so outside manning balance. We expect to close the manning balance in 2009–10 and possibly get into balance briefly before we dip back out of it again in about 2012.

Air Vice Marshal Bryant: The Air Force figures for the turn of the year show that we are marginally outside manning balance because we have drawn down people as part of our medium-term work strengths down towards the 41,000 target but the posts have lagged behind; they have not been disestablished. It is artificial. In effect, I believe that the note to be provided will tell you that as of 1 April the RAF is in manning balance but it is a transitory position. I believe that we will dip beneath manning balance probably by the end of the year and it will then stabilise and go up by 2010–11. The extent of that dip obviously depends on the recruiting versus retention battleground that we are fighting at the moment.

11 See Ev 183
Ev 50 Defence Committee: Evidence

22 April 2008 Mr Chris Baker OBE, Rear Admiral Charles Montgomery CBE, Major General Andrew Gregory, Air Vice Marshal Simon Bryant CBE, Major General Simon Lalor TD and Vice Admiral Peter Wilkinson CVO

Major General Gregory: For me, manning balance will not advance my career. What I am being told to deliver is full manning. There is a step between manning balance and full manning and that is full strength. Full manning is having the right person in the right job fully trained at the right time. That is very difficult to achieve, but what the Army has to reach full strength. In terms of manpower liability we are currently outside it. As you will have seen from the figures, we are about 3.5% down and the balance is minus 2% and plus 1%. We have a range of measures in place to try to get us back up. The modelling suggests that provided things work as we predict—that is a balanced prediction—we should get there around April 2010.

Q273 Mr Crausby: Can you pinpoint some of the major reasons why the Army and Navy in particular do not achieve manning balance?

Rear Admiral Montgomery: There are three factors in achieving manpower balance. I totally agree with my Army colleague’s comment that this is rather more sophisticated than headline manpower balance issues. One key factor is the requirement—the manpower liability—another is recruiting and the third is retention. As you will have seen from the notes already submitted, we are not achieving our recruiting targets and our voluntary outflow rates and another is liability reductions. We make balanced decisions on what we see as the future liability requirements of our Service and we make that against a continually changing backdrop of change programmes elsewhere in defence and make assumptions about those in our forward planning. Those assumptions sometimes do not come to fruition and the reductions that we anticipate and plan for do not materialise in the profile we anticipate. That is the reason why just at the moment we are not due to achieve manpower balance as quickly as we would wish.

Q274 Chairman: I am afraid I did not understand that. You have problems with recruitment, retention and requirements. What assumptions did not come up to scratch?

Rear Admiral Montgomery: Let us take the examples of the change programmes, the Defence Equipment and Support organisation, the changes in the CINC Fleet headquarters reorganisation or the changes in the head office organisation in London. Those are three big change programmes all of which are forecast to reduce the total number of people that defence requires. As a single Service we provide manpower to those organisations and it is our responsibility at least to plan for the numbers and sorts of people required up to 10 or 15 years in advance. If those programmes do not achieve the forecast savings in the profile in which they are supposed to be achieved then the liability eventually will be higher than that which we were planning for at the time and there will be a mismatch.

Q275 Chairman: So, the issue is always that your assumptions tend to be more optimistic than reality turns out to be?

Rear Admiral Montgomery: That has turned out to be the case just recently. Again, one must make a judgment on the balance of risk. If there is one thing that is worse than being in manpower shortage it is being in manpower surplus because then you are spending money on people we do not need. There is a very careful balance of risk judgment here in terms of the assumptions we make about manpower planning for the future.

Q276 Chairman: So, you are by design optimistic?

Rear Admiral Montgomery: We have been proved to be optimistic. This is a dynamic. We continually go back and also learn from these programmes in our future planning. We have been optimistic in the past and we now introduce a greater amount of realism into the assumptions we make about the change programmes, but I am sure the Committee understands that this is a difficult and very complex business management process.

Major General Gregory: There are three factors related to manning balance: liability, inflow and outflow. As to the Army’s regular liability, the 101,800 is reasonably static. We have talked quite a lot about inflow in terms of recruiting. We are not meeting our recruiting figures by a little over 10%. The real challenge at the moment is seeing people who come in at the start of phase 1 training and going out at the end of phase 2 training to join the field army where our numbers are down against the numbers we need. As to voluntary outflow, the numbers are broadly static: 4.3% for officers and 5.9% for other ranks, though over the past year we have had trouble ascertaining exactly what the figures are due to problems with some of the computer systems, particularly some of the fields that are not available. In terms of what we are doing to deal with it, we have recruiting, training and retention action plans that look at all the various elements that we consider appropriate to target to try to improve these two critical things and get us towards manning balance. In terms of the retention action plan, we have some 70 measures that look at a range of things from the applicability of financial retention incentives—certainly, a measure of last resort but very effective—through to looking at the tempo of activity between operational tours, or what we colloquially term “the stuff in between”, to make sure that where possible we reduce the load on soldiers and their families.

Air Vice Marshal Bryant: We have the same three problems. The reason I anticipate we may go outside the manning balance is because we expect as a result of PR08 uplifting the requirement which was not forecast. With regard to the recruiting challenge as we ramp the Air Force back up we are having difficulty recruiting particularly in specialist pinch points, so I anticipate falling short in those areas. There are some gentle indications that the outflow will exceed those that are in the planning assumptions that had us sitting at that level.
Obviously, I am trying to address the last two points and where we bottom out of our draw down to 41,000 will depend on how successful we are in that.

Q277 Mr Crausby: As to consequences, to what extent does it lead to a vicious cycle of overwork and pressure and dissuade people from joining up? How serious is that?

Rear Admiral Montgomery: Manning balance is not the issue which really keeps me awake at night. What keeps me awake at night is the issue referred to earlier: the key pinch points where we are short. This is not an issue of manpower balance per se; it is an issue of key pinch points.

Major General Gregory: I wholeheartedly agree with that. You have seen our list of operational pinch points and manning pinch points. We have specific activities designed to address those key area of shortfall in capability.

Q278 Mr Crausby: What about the financial implications? Given the stresses on the defence budget as things stand, can the MoD afford to be absolutely up to strength?

Vice Admiral Wilkinson: We have the resources that are allocated and the manpower picture you have heard. In terms of money to retain and offer we make to our servicemen and women, the pay rises that the AFPRB recommended to the government last year and this have assisted us in working on the retention side of the equation. A 3.9% pay arise in 2007, a 2.6% pay rise this year plus 1% for the x factor and another .3% for financial retention incentives all help us in trying to balance the numbers. All three Services and me and my colleagues in the MoD are working hard not just to try to achieve manning balance but full manning. Manning balance is a helpful step on the way but I think you are getting the flavour that we are not talking here about big numbers but in a high operational tempo about handfuls of people in some instances that are in key operational pinch points who have an impact on capability that is out of proportion to their numbers. They are the key areas that the navy secretary in particular is targeting, and the air secretary and DG personnel will certainly agree with him on that.

Q279 Mr Jenkins: With respect, I do not think that was quite the question asked. For example, the Army is 3,000 under-recruited. Three thousand extra soldiers would cost a lot of money, but I do not get the sense that that money is knocking around the defence budget unused because the Army is 3,000 under-recruited. Supposing all three Services were on target, where would the money come from to pay that extra wages bill? Is the money there?

Air Vice Marshal Bryant: The answer is that the money is there in that it is finite and it would have to be redistributed elsewhere. My answer to Mr Crausby’s point is that personally I do not believe that particularly in the pinch point areas we can afford not to be fully manned because the effect he spoke about in terms of the downward spiral is a challenge at all points, and it is made worse by the extraordinary things being asked because of the overreach we have through operational stretch against defence planning assumptions. I think we have to target it. At the moment that will cause some shift of resource but from an air force perspective I aim to be at the top end of that manning balance.

Q280 Mr Jenkins: So, it would be a greater sin to be over rather than under-recruited?

Air Vice Marshal Bryant: I did not say that.

Q281 Mr Jenkins: You did not say that but your Royal Navy colleague did.

Vice Admiral Montgomery: I said “overmanned as opposed to undermanned”. The simple reason for that is that if we are overmanned we are denuding resources from elsewhere in the defence programme. If you are overmanned that leads to notions of redundancy programmes which we very much avoid.

Chairman: If you are overmanned the Treasury’s eyes glint.

Q282 Mr Jenkins: Vice Admiral Wilkinson, I sit here listening to the manning issue and totally agree that you have a problem. With a decreasing number of personnel and draw down of the Services and privatisation of function I know that it becomes harder and harder with a smaller number. Do we not now have a position when we shall soon be conducting a review on the merger of the three forces so we can have interoperability and you can meet pinch points by the transfer of operatives from other parts of the forces? Are they not their own worst enemies in keeping ever-diminishing forces independent in this way?

Vice Admiral Wilkinson: The three Services work very closely together on a whole range of operational and administrative matters. We work, live and fight together. We are using the resources allocated to us as effectively as we can.

Major General Gregory: Mr Jenkins’ question is very astute. We do have mechanisms where appropriate to look at loaning ability between Services to support pinch point trades, so we are not in one Service discharging people where we have a critical shortage in another. We do exactly that, which is your point. We now have the mechanisms to address that.

Q283 Chairman: I have one question to which I would like a one-word answer from each Service. It may be a bit unfair to insist on that and you may prefer not to answer in that way. What do you say is the weakest link in the whole of this chain of recruitment and retention in each of the Services? Is it at the level of money, entry into schools or the recruiting office stage?

Air Vice Marshal Bryant: I think I would go for balance, if you want a word, that is, trying to get the resources appropriately spread so you get the best overall effect, because this is a complex equation. If you want to go into recruiting that has an effect. If
you charge at that, whether it is people to go and do the outreach or the resources to fund it, that takes away resources from elsewhere. At the same time, we have operational pressure points that are sitting there which will be further challenged. To go back to Mr Crausby’s point, the question is whether the net effect is a downward spiral. Therefore, to try to find balance is the most difficult part of the equation for me.

Rear Admiral Montgomery: I agree with that. There is not a single point that I register. It is a matter of getting the right balance between the three Rs: retention, recruitment and requirement. I make one point that we have not yet touched on which is germane to my service. One of the key pinch points in achieving the right kind of trained people in the front line of the Navy is the training capacity at sea. That is one of the key factors to bear in mind when we come to the issue of over-recruiting. If we over-recruit and do not have the capacity to train at sea we will end up with unhappy sailors on jetties trying to get themselves to sea which is bad for retention.

Major General Gregory: The greatest challenge is retention in training and in the field army. My greatest concern is our ability to see things before they happen. It is an art and not a science with a whole host of factors that play into it. To make sure you can spot things and have the mechanisms rapidly to react is a challenge.

Q284 Chairman: Major General Lalor, does any of this come onto your desk?

Major General Lalor: Yes, it does. I have responsibility for facilitating and co-ordinating the three Services’ Manning levels and their reserves. If we are at a point where it is considered a concern then it is certainly my job to make sure the necessary focus is put upon it. Manning balance in the reserves is less critical and you can take greater risk against the reserves component. Obviously, the key area in the reserves is: do you have the necessary capabilities that the operations require to deliver them? If you do not have Manning balance it is not the end of the world in the short term as long as you can deliver those individuals and skill sets as a reserve that you are requested to deliver. The only other point is that you must ensure you retain a critical mass in the reserves. Whether it is at unit or formation level, if the Manning balance gets so low that there is not critical mass to provide sufficient activity Manning balance would be a very significant issue for us, but the management of Manning in the reserves area is exactly the same as it is on the regular side. The three single services need to ensure that they apply the effort and resources to get an acceptable balance, but they can take greater risk against the reserves Manning area.

Chairman: I have been shoving everybody off the issue of tri-Service matters but now we can go back to it.

Q285 Mr Jones: I would be interested to have your observations on my earlier question about cadets. What importance do you attach to the three individual Services recruiting separately? What would be the advantage or disadvantage in having a single point of entry into the Armed Forces in terms of recruitment?

Vice Admiral Wilkinson: All our evidence shows that people wish to join a single service, not defence. That must be the starting point. Our careers offices on the high street are Armed Forces careers offices and again the advisers in there work very closely, intelligently and perceptively with the people who come through the doors to try to direct them to the best career and Service. We consider that we are using our resources as effectively as possible, but I defer to my single service colleagues for their views.

Major General Gregory: I totally agree. I believe that this is linked to Mr Jenkin’s question and whether we are managing liability and whether we are doing it from the start as sensibly as possible. The ethos of the Service remains very important and within the Army one then has the ethos of the various cap badges. We are making sure that, first, as people come into the Armed Forces careers office they are targeted as effectively as possible; and, second, we have much better mechanisms to allow transfers within the Army but between cap badges if people find they have made the wrong choice.

Q286 Mr Jones: This point arose in our duty of care inquiry. I know that in the Army a good deal of emphasis is placed on regimental recruiting, but there is not a lot of evidence that people say they want to join a specific regiment, is there? They want to join the Army, do they not?

Major General Gregory: Generally, unless they have family affiliations they probably want to join the Army. Part of the responsibility of careers offices is to make sure that the range of opportunities open to them and the skills they will get in the various areas are properly presented so they can make an informed choice.

Air Vice Marshal Bryant: I have nothing substantial to add.

Rear Admiral Montgomery: I absolutely agree with the Army’s perspective. We have exactly the same feedback as that to which Vice Admiral Wilkinson referred. There is a desire on the part of people to join a single service rather than join defence. This is really important at the entry point into the Services. We have done some work on identity in our Service. Right at the top of what people in our Service identify with, particularly the younger community which we were surveying at the time, is the Royal Navy. That is fundamental to their sense of belonging to our service. Later they will develop their identities with a ship or team mates, but when they join the Navy the identity is with the Royal Navy.

Q287 Mr Jones: Or the Royal Marines?

Rear Admiral Montgomery: Yes.

Q288 Mr Jones: The Royal Marines is almost a hybrid service?
Rear Admiral Montgomery: It is. People are recruited by the Armed Forces recruiting office but the identity there is with the Royal Marines, not defence.

Q289 Mr Jones: If someone came into a recruitment office and wanted to join the Navy but having talked to the adviser felt that perhaps that was not what he or she wanted would that individual be referred to the Army or Air Force?

Rear Admiral Montgomery: Yes, absolutely. I believe that Vice Admiral Wilkinson picked up the point that this is very much the *modus operandi* of the Armed Forces Career Offices.

Q290 Mr Jenkin: Do the recruitment strategies among the Services fundamentally differ and, if so, how?

Rear Admiral Montgomery: It is important to understand that we have different issues in terms of our image among the target audience. When we conducted a survey into the levels of awareness of the Royal Navy before our latest campaign 12 months ago it showed a very worrying lack of awareness. People were distinctly less aware of the Royal Navy then than they were of the other two Services. Therefore, our campaign plan which started 12 months ago began by raising awareness in the wider community. There is an example of where a particular Service issue was reflected in a particular Service’s recruiting strategy. We tackled the fundamental issue of general awareness at the start and then channelled effort in parallel towards the submarine and marine streams, for example. That approach would be unique to this single Service.

Air Vice Marshal Bryant: I think that our footprint and structures will ultimately result in a significant differential. There is the issue of national awareness to which the Admiral referred but that is very much reinforced by local effect. Clearly, with different footprints and resources to support that, for example in regimental terms the way the station commander would liaise and support an Armed Forces presence in his area will be different.

Q291 Mr Jenkin: But that is an historical anomaly rather than a different objective?

Air Vice Marshal Bryant: Yes, it is, but that is conditioned by resource. You are absolutely right that we are where we are and we would like to do better, but that is the most cost-effective way of achieving it.

Major General Gregory: I do not think our strategies are that different. I think they are very well co-ordinated between the directors in the three Services responsible for recruiting right down to the Armed Forces career office level. As a generalisation what must be recognised is the different roles within the Services particularly the Army which is a very people-heavy organisation where one equips the man, whereas the other Services are rather more technically-based in terms of manning equipment and things like that. There will be a difference, but in terms of recruiting strategies they are well co-ordinated and sensibly brought together where appropriate.

Q292 Linda Gilroy: Presumably, interoperability has driven much earlier joint or shared training. Given what we continually hear from our colleague John Smith about the virtues of training coming together on the St Athan site, is there not an inevitability about the Services coming even closer together—not just one Army but one Service?

Vice Admiral Wilkinson: There is certainly an inevitability about coming even closer. I do not think it will result in our being one Service. We are very cognisant of the Canadians in this respect and their attempts at a defence force which effectively they have had to retreat over the past few years. Even a nation with very small armed forces—I think of New Zealand—has still found it effective in terms of ethos and people’s association with their own service to keep individual services. Like Mr Smith, I am certainly a great fan of the exciting prospects of the defence training rationalisation programme and work at St Athan.

Q293 Mr Hamilton: I fully understand the argument and importance of the Services being able to retain their personnel, but when we come to recruitment I am reminded of the fact that as an ex-miner when I started in the collieries there were 400,000 people in the industry. By the time I left there were only 230,000 people. They had a personnel department that dealt wholly with recruitment. I have listened to and looked at all the evidence very carefully and I do not understand how Mr Baker and your department should not be involved directly in all the recruitment that takes place because once they get in you offer three different Services, which is understandable, but when you went into the pits you would become an electrician, engineer or collier. You applied for different services and when you went into the industry there was a department that dealt with that. Are you not under-selling yourselves by trying independently, although there is close co-operation, to do recruitment when a single entry point would be the logical way forward?

Mr Baker: Viewed from the perspective of the Ministry of Defence where we are now makes good sense. We fully recognise the importance of the single Services marketing themselves on their own terms. Each has an individual offer to make and all the evidence shows that people want to continue to join single Services and it is important that they can make their own pitch in that context. What we do in the Ministry of Defence is facilitate the co-ordination of that. I run a defence manning committee where colleagues from the three Services come together and discuss how to co-ordinate and resource campaigns and how to spread best practice where single Service practice appears more broadly applicable. I think that is the right level of integration as things stand. We do not want to homogenise the recruitment process.
Q294 Mr Hamilton: I understand that much of what you said will happen after they come into the various Services. What I am saying is that when an individual comes along and says he wants to go into the Navy, Royal Air Force or the Army that does not require the Services to carry out recruitment; they can be better utilised to do other work and that should be a civil service issue. Once they are recruited then it is up to each Service to deal with it. That makes sense to me. It just seems that you are duplicating the work.

**Air Vice Marshal Bryant:** I can see there is much sense in where you are coming from, but the other observation is that at that juncture people probably have made up their mind where they want to go and they will need some education, possibly some persuasion, which again depends on someone with some authority who can relay what that individual is about to embark upon, not someone who does not wear a tri-Service hat.

Mr Hancock: But to do that requires quite a lot of skill, does it not? Are you equipped with those skills to give that help to somebody? It is easy to say someone should join the Army or Navy and see the world, or whatever. If my father having spent 30-odd years in the Navy was sitting here now he would say that it was the best thing you could ever do, but that would not necessarily be the case.

Q295 Chairman: Do you have those skills?

**Air Vice Marshal Bryant:** Personally, undoubtedly not, but we spend a lot of time ensuring that we select the right people for the front of the shop for the Royal Air Force. Again, within the personnel department I deal with my fellow Air Marshall on the training front and the key is to make sure that the right image is there in the first place and it has the right cross-section so that if somebody comes along in a particular avenue we do not provide advice on just one particular strand of the Royal Air Force.

Q296 Mr Jenkin: I turn to reservists and put the same question. To recruit reservists basically do you use the same technique across the three Services or do you require different things?

**Major General Lalor:** Reserves are very regionally based. Whether it be an air base, a TA centre in the Hebrides or a naval base, you must have a very local campaign. The marketing to facilitate that local recruiting is very much co-ordinated as no doubt we will discuss, for example on Project OAR (One Army Recruiting). But for the reserves it is fundamentally different because you recruit more on a local basis which is supported by national marketing.

Q297 Mr Jenkin: Are the three services basically trying to recruit the same kind of people?

**Air Vice Marshal Bryant:** No. Obviously, there is a lot of overlap. Again, the Royal Air Force is very technically based. It is not that the other Services are not, but the percentage of our people who are technically based is significantly larger, so to a degree that drives one to different conclusions.

Q298 Mr Jenkin: But even in the case of the Army is there not technological convergence?

**Major General Gregory:** But the fact is that 80% of the people who come into the Armed Forces careers offices are interested in joining the Army rather than a specific part and the guidance which we have discussed then points them in the right direction depending on their skills and aspirations. One must also remember, picking up Mr Hamilton’s point, that to be an electrician in the depths of Afghanistan is very different from being an electrician on a fighter base. It suits some people to be in one environment and others to be in another, so it is all part of getting a collective balance and informing them sensibly. That is why the importance of having people with the right skills in the careers offices is fundamental.

Q299 Mr Hamilton: I am aware of that. A special type of skill is also required 3,000 ft underground. The person who gave career advice fully understood that because he came from that background. That was the point I tried to make. The people who would be giving the advice would be those like yourself who had left.

**Major General Gregory:** That is very fair.

Q300 Mr Jenkin: How do you assess the effectiveness of the money that you spend on your more public and expensive marketing and advertising campaigns?

**Rear Admiral Montgomery:** We do assess every one of our marketing campaigns. About 12 months ago we set up a performance cell in our recruiting organisation. Every one of our campaigns now receives feedback not only from entrants but, as of this month, we have established a survey of potential recruits to identify which particular recruiting avenue caught their attention to bring them into the Service. We measure the effectiveness of the various recruiting campaigns. Equally, in a global sense we then look at whether or not we are getting the right return for the right investment in the round. You will have seen that in the Royal Navy our recruiting effort has increased gradually over time and that has been achieved by rationalisations regionally and savings on manpower to enable greater levels of expenditure on marketing. That efficiency has enabled us to maintain with only gradual increases of expenditure overall the same level of intake, that is, 96% of the target. We are looking at both the efficiency of the global effort and the success rate of individual advertising or marketing campaigns.

Q301 Chairman: Is there a different story for the RAF and the Army, or can we move on?

**Air Vice Marshal Bryant:** It is COI evaluated and there is a whole host of statistics showing where we are being more efficient than we have been in the past by being more effective in targeting our effort.

**Major General Gregory:** It is the same story for the Army, recognising that it is a multi-approach across many areas. We talked earlier about the electronic
Q302 Mr Jenkin: Compared with the millions you spend on marketing and advertising, how does that compare with direct word-of-mouth individual contact? If more people in the chain of command in each of the three Services was simply tasked with the job of getting more introductions at unit level as well as across the three Services as a whole would that not be better expenditure of resources?

Air Vice Marshal Bryant: All the station commanders have a specific target in their area to go out and reinforce it. In addition, the individuals are challenged because we have a recruiting bounty, so you can find your friend from back home and be rewarded for bringing him into the Service. Therefore, it goes all the way through the chain of command.

Q303 Mr Jenkin: Does the same apply to each of the other two Services?

Major General Gregory: Yes, in principle.

Q304 Mr Jenkin: But is it structured? One gets the sense that if it is not structured it is rather haphazard.

Rear Admiral Montgomery: We have structured it as of 12 months ago onto a very much more rigorous and quantifiable basis. It is based on both surveys of individual applicants as opposed to just entrants and our quantification of the success of individual marketing campaigns.

Major General Gregory: We are trying to make sure we formalise it because previously it was not done against formal establishment. Where this is appropriate and helpful, let us establish properly the posts we need to enable recruiting. We looked at a bounty for those who brought in people and we did not find it a successful method and so stopped it, but in answer to your question the principles that Air Vice Marshal Bryant talked about are very similar.

Q305 Mr Jenkin: But you say that different units in the Army have different capabilities to what else they have been taught to do?

Major General Gregory: That is absolutely right.

Q306 Mr Jenkin: Even if somebody in the rear party of a deployed unit had the job of producing recruits that should be possible, should it not?

Major General Gregory: And that is my point. What we are trying to do is properly to establish these things where they are successful so we have an established post to deal with recruiting for battalions, which is really what you are referring to, and use our manpower to best effect. That is what we are doing at the moment.

Q307 Mr Jenkin: Sea Cadets get no public money?

Major General Lalor: Absolutely. The three single services run their Cadet Forces in a different way. The specific answer to the question is that greater co-ordination would be beneficial. Beyond that, greater co-ordination would be beneficial as between the reserves piece and regular piece. That aspiration is understood by my directorate and we shall be looking at that. What you are really asking is: if looking at my reserves piece I have a TA centre in one major town with four-tonners out the back and a small cadet attachment of any of the three Services, is there not some benefit in linkage? The answer must be yes. I accept that co-ordination could be greater.

Q308 Mr Jones: Are there any constitutional problems in terms of the Sea Cadets accessing other facilities? For example, in one town in my area they cannot use the extensive fleet of minibuses of the Army Cadets because they are “separate”.

Major General Lalor: The three single Services are organised very differently, if you would like to describe it in that way. What I can say—is this is very much on our agenda—is that there is an understanding in principle with the key officers who run the Cadet Forces in all the Services that some gain is to be had in greater central co-ordination. We are at the point where that is acknowledged.

Q309 Mr Hancock: Have you ever spoken to anyone who has tried to borrow a vehicle from another Service and experienced these problems? I doubt that any of you as senior officers would find it very easy to get a vehicle from a colleague from another Service.

Major General Lalor: To portray a simple picture of a TA centre and an Army Cadet Force, there is absolutely no reason why it cannot be directly linked and the resources utilised by our cadets. I acknowledge and do not underestimate that if one were going between the Services that might be harder to resolve.

Mr Hancock: Major General Lalor, you will be the first TA field marshal before that becomes easy to achieve!

Q310 Chairman: We will produce a report as a result of this inquiry and this may well be something that we shall want to concentrate upon. It would be helpful if within the next month or so you could send us a paper on your knowledge of the aspirations about how it will get better and what you intend to do about it.
Major General Lalor: The paper from which I am drawing is going to our cadet youth council in June. It has been delayed because the minister has not been available, but certainly in line with that paper being taken we shall make it available to the Committee.12

Q311 Chairman: That will be in June?
Major General Lalor: That is my understanding but it is very much predicated on getting our annual youth cadet council convened which has been delayed.
Chairman: It would be helpful if that could be expedited.

Q312 Mr Jenkin: To return to the question of visits to schools, is there any reason why as part of your awareness programme your presence there should not be done on a tri-Service basis?
Vice Admiral Wilkinson: We go back to the fact that they are there at the invitation of the schools and it is an avenue that we can investigate with them. 13
Mr Jones: That is not the answer because the schools ask only for what is available. I think Mr Jenkin is asking whether, if you are to engage not only in recruitment but what I would call Armed Forces diplomacy in schools, there are grounds for putting your case to students on this basis.

Q313 Mr Jenkin: When next time the RAF is invited to a particular school you can say that you will bring all three Services.
Air Vice Marshal Bryant: Indeed, and that does happen to a degree. I would not say it is institutionalised. For example, at school fetes we go en masse with all three Services, but I suspect that to a degree coverage will come down to footprint and resources. I come back to the RAF footprint that I know well.

Q314 Mr Jenkin: Do you accept that the historical footprint and resources result in a rather haphazard footprint on the schools?
Air Vice Marshal Bryant: I do accept that but again we are bound by how far we can spread our wings and where we get the best returns. To go back to your point about value for money, we have done a significant amount of work on this to see where we get the best effect. We have found that by concentrating where there is already a significant footprint and therefore air power is better understood by the people there at least at a subliminal level. Because they see aircraft flying on a daily basis and it is not alien to them that is where we tend to get results.
Rear Admiral Montgomery: I should like to correct one comment by Mr Jenkin. It was said that the Sea Cadets received no public money. They do receive public money in the form of a grant of £8.3 million per annum.

Q315 Mr Jones: But at a local level they do not?
Rear Admiral Montgomery: But the organisation does.

Q316 Mr Jones: But that does not go down to local level because the Sea Cadets in my area have to do a great deal of fund-raising themselves.
Rear Admiral Montgomery: Indeed so, but I just make that point.

Q317 Mr Borrow: I turn to One Army Recruiting which has been in operation for about a year. Can you briefly bring us up to speed on what lessons have been learned? Are there lessons for the RAF and Royal Navy?
Major General Gregory: It is seen as a five-year change programme which has been running for a year and it has the particular aim to integrate the hitherto discrete Territorial Army and Regular activities, to re-focus, modernise and improve effectiveness and efficiency and make greater investment in the development of the recruiting staff, making sure that we compete for the people we need to man the Army. Genuinely, one year into it is too early to give you the detailed lessons learnt. We are looking at it and as we start to get figures we shall be better placed to share our experiences with the other two Services.

Q318 Mr Borrow: Does the same go for recruiting volunteer reservists? At this point you are not able to make any assessment as to whether or not that is beneficial?
Major General Gregory: Within the construct of One Army Recruiting, yes, because you will know that previously volunteer reservists were dealt with very much on a regional basis. We are now trying to ensure that it is co-ordinated much more effectively as a totality. That is the concept of One Army Recruiting. I simply cannot give you detailed lessons at this stage because it is not mature enough in terms of the duration of the five-year programme.

Q319 Mr Borrow: One aspect of the programme is online testing, that is, Pathfinder. The information the Committee has received is that it seems to indicate that the South and South East are recruiting hot spots by that method. Is that leading to changes in the Army’s approach because those are not seen as the traditional hot spots as far as Army recruitment is concerned? The hot spots have been very much in Mr Jones’s and my part of the world, that is, the north of England.
Major General Gregory: I agree that has been the position in the North East, North West and Scotland. You are absolutely right in saying that London and the South East have featured much more strongly than previously. We can better look at the means and methods we use in our panoply of measures we talked about previously to facilitate recruitment in those areas. If one area appears to react better to the electronic media and another area reacts better to personal visits that is how we will
target our resources, but we are very much at the
data-gathering phase. As we get it we can better move to the next phase of the project.

Chairman: Let us now turn to the issue of ethnic minority recruiting.

Q320 John Smith: Can you tell me what the overall recruitment figure for the Armed Forces is for recruits from the British community who come from ethnic minority backgrounds?

Vice Admiral Wilkinson: As you are aware, our figures include foreign and Commonwealth recruits and currently they are nearly at 6%.

Q321 John Smith: That is not the question. Can you tell me whether you know either across the Armed Forces or at single Service level what proportion of the British community recruited into the Armed Forces comes from ethnic minority backgrounds?

Mr Baker: I can tell you that at 31 December 2007 the achievement was 2% of recruits for the Navy, 3.4% for the Army and 1.7% for the RAF.

Q322 Mr Hancock: What is the overall figure?

Mr Baker: I do not have that figure, but we can calculate that for you.

Q323 John Smith: The figure is 2%. According to the National Audit Office, 60% of all ethnic minority recruits into the Armed Forces come from foreign or Commonwealth countries. They are not British, which means that our British recruitment levels for ethnic minorities are 2%. I cannot speak for my colleagues on the Committee, but I consider that to be an absolute scandal. I also believe that the way the figures have been fiddled over the past eight years has been completely and utterly unacceptable. I do not point a finger at the witnesses in relation to the way the MoD collects the figures, but I think you should be aware, if you are not already, that the Ministry claims an increase from 1% ethnic minority recruitment in 1999 to the latest figure we have before us of 5.9%, but that simply is not true. The 1% in 1999 was quite rightly the British recruits who came from ethnic minorities and did not include foreign and Commonwealth recruits. The figures that you are using today are erroneous and give a completely misleading picture of the current situation within the Armed Forces. Does the panel agree with me that if recruitment in the UK was colour blind and we recruited, as does our principal ally the United States of America, the same proportion of British citizens in the community irrespective of colour into the Armed Forces, and therefore the Armed Forces reflected the wider community within this country, we would be able to draw on an additional 18,000 recruits and much of the discussion about recruitment, retention and shortages of manning would not apply? I appreciate that that is a slightly loaded question.

Vice Admiral Wilkinson: The Armed Forces have an aspiration to reflect the society they represent and all three Services have found it an incredibly difficult challenge to recruit from the ethnic minority community. That does not mean they are not working hard so to do. I will ask the individual Services to give you some indication of the efforts they are putting into this particular work. We know we have to do better in this field and we are desperately trying to do so. Perhaps we can turn first to the Navy to see what specifically they are doing to tackle the issue.

Rear Admiral Montgomery: I hope the Committee does not feel that I am offering excuses when I say this, but the first point I make is that we have been trying very hard to make inroads into ethnic minority recruiting. Second, our heartlands in the Royal Navy are on the south coast and in Faslane. That is distant from the main heartlands of the ethnic minorities in the country. It is just a simple fact that there is a geographical dislocation, so the Royal Navy is not as much to the forefront of minds of those from ethnic minorities as it might be the case if they or we were a bit closer together. The third point I make— I do not say it by way of excuse, nor do I seek to make a wider political point—is that, whereas in other instances the Iraq and Afghanistan factors have caused difficulties in terms of Armed Forces recruitment, we have had no feedback whatsoever from the people we recruit that those two factors are at play other than within the ethnic minority communities. Therefore, those are three factors that I just register as context before I go onto the wider points. For some time we have had diverse reaction and dedicated teams which we deploy away from the naval heartlands into the heartlands of the ethnic minority communities. You will have seen from the paper we put together some of the challenges they face in those communities in terms of approaching gatekeepers and getting success with them. They have achieved some success but not enough. We have restructured that now. One of the disadvantages of that process was that it was necessarily a short-term visit by a team deployed from within the recruiting organisation’s overall resource. We have now structured our field force so that every one of our recruiting teams on the ground has the responsibility to engage with ethnic minorities and, therefore, personal contacts become stronger. On the specific objectives, we have established a programme of gatekeepers’ courses which are run every three months and are attended by gatekeepers of the ethnic minority community, and down on the ground we have been particularly active in both Coventry and Leeds on a regional basis in drawing together on the back of football and other activities the ethnic minority recruiting. My sense from the recruiting field force is that it feels it is making progress but it is extraordinarily hard work.

Air Vice Marshal Bryant: It is much the same story. We have had some relative success this year in terms of a significant increase in the percentages but the numbers are still tiny and they are not where we want to be. A huge amount of effort goes into this which is reflected on the budgetary side. It is not disproportionate because we believe that for this disproportionately small recruitment we need that catchment area. There is also a significantly high
level of engagement. There are some award-winning projects out there with Race for Equality and the Linton model, all of which are deemed to be at the very top end of good practice. The four motivational outreach teams are being relocated at the moment. Again, that follows a principle we use elsewhere to reinforce success where we have had better results in areas that are rich in ethnic minorities. Driving forward on the question of how you recruit most cost-effectively, research has shown that digital media and going to niche areas, primarily local radio stations, are likely to reveal the best results, but it is too early to say that we shall be able massively to reinforce the success. Certainly, the targets we are chasing are seen as very challenging.

Q324 John Smith: You are not achieving the targets? 
Air Vice Marshal Bryant: No, we are not.

Q325 John Smith: The Royal Air Force is doing particularly badly? 
Air Vice Marshal Bryant: We have given significant thought to that. I am an apologist on its behalf, but within that analysis the issues come down to this: there appears to be an aspirational difference within the groups we are trying to recruit. At the top end the people who are looking for a profession do not deem the Armed Forces to be the profession to chase; they would rather head towards some solicitors, go into accountancy or do something else. That accounts for the people in the high technical trades—those educational aspirations—that we are chasing and it is difficult to bridge that gap.

John Smith: But why is there a problem of recruitment into the UK’s Armed Forces but not in the United States of America, which is our closest ally, at varying professional levels? Not only do they recruit at the level represented within the community at large in the United States of America; they recruit half as many again. Therefore, 12% of the population of the United States of America is African American or Asian but 18% are recruited across the board in the Armed Forces. I believe this is an issue we must address for the sake of the Armed Forces. In this country just under 10% of the population of the United States of America is of Afro-Caribbean and Asian origin and currently we recruit—because the figures are fiddled with Commonwealth recruits, whom we welcome—only 2%. Chairman, I will finish my question. I have waited a long time for this issue to be raised this morning. The target for 2013 of 8% is an admirable one because it will broadly reflect the community.

Chairman: Can you ask a question?

Q326 John Smith: If the Armed Forces are not visible as representative of the community at large in this country the problem of recruiting and retaining will continue and get worse. I think this is a very serious issue for you to address. 
Major General Gregory: It is a huge issue. We would greatly like to increase our UK ethnic minority representation in the Army. There is a challenge in that in the ethnic minority community in this country there is a significantly lower level of interest in a military career than there is in other parts of society. We have to work to overcome that in the first place. Why is that in existence? The perception is that more able members would rather go and do something else and do not see the Armed Forces as a career of choice. Therefore, a lot of effort is being made to address that. Further, previous perceptions of the Armed Forces in terms of racial harassment and bullying, which I think we have now moved beyond, are still present. The other challenge we face is that there are very few role models in the ethnic minority community at the higher level of the Armed Forces and that is a vicious circle we are trying to break. Your point is a very fair one. What are we doing about it? First, we set in place the Diversity Threads programme in 1998–99 sponsored by some consultants who came in to look at all the angles of our ethnic minority recruiting. We got rid of the consultants in 2006 because the perception then was that this was something being done for us rather than by us because we must own this problem. It is absolutely fundamental. There is a whole series of actions. The Army Board is looking at this again tomorrow because it is a fundamental issue. For example, we are increasing the level of ethnic minority representation within the Army recruiting teams. There is a further challenge in that a number of our UK ethnic minority soldiers do not want to be stuck on a pedestal or to be used as role models; they want to get on and run their own careers. Therefore, the last thing they want is to be used as public figures; they want to be treated just like everybody else and given the same opportunities. We are trying to overcome a whole host of challenges, but your point that we are not utilising a section of society that would bring unique skills which we would greatly value is right.

Q327 Mr Jones: Is not the difference between the UK and the US that in the latter case people join the Armed Forces for access to lifetime healthcare benefits and education rather than necessarily other reasons? 
Major General Gregory: It is a very different package.

Q328 Mr Jones: In terms of the problem that you clearly know exists, is to be quite controversial does not the problem lie with some communities themselves and not with you? For example, certain sections of the Muslim community would never consider allowing daughters to go into the Armed Forces and to try to get over that is not necessarily a problem for you but goes wider than the Armed Forces? It is a matter of changing the perceptions of those communities about what joining the Armed Forces means?

Vice Admiral Wilkinson: You are quite right. Major General Gregory correctly mentioned that we see this as a command and leadership issue, but it is also about changing understanding and cultures both within those societies and our own. Perhaps it is
worthwhile turning to Mr Baker to give a flavour of what we are doing in the centre to try to address the very issues you mention.

Mr Baker: We know that we have to do better. We had a very constructive relationship with the old Commission for Racial Equality which quite rightly held our feet to the fire on these issues and set us the targets that regrettably have not been met. We want to continue that relationship with the new Equality and Human Rights Commission and look forward to drawing on the wisdom and experience it will have to help us move forward. Indeed, we engage with other sources of advice and expertise which include community leaders. The Chief of Defence Staff had two meetings in the past year with Muslim community leaders to break down the perceptions and barriers that I am sure may exist in the minds of some elements of the ethnic communities. We need to reinforce our message through outreach and continue to be clear that the perception of harassment and bullying based on any pretext, but especially race in this context, is not an accurate perception we believe in the modern Armed Forces. We believe that we have the policies in place to ensure that that is the case and we can collect the relevant data as required under our statutory obligations to ensure we can monitor that robustly and identify any problems if perchance they did arise. Therefore, it is a broad approach.

Chairman: We shall end at one o’clock and so it looks as if we will finish on this question. You have caused far too much controversy and interest and as a result we shall be writing to ask a lot of questions to help with our inquiry.

Q329 Mr Hamilton: My question is very specific and is related more to the Army than the other two Services. The Army is based in the regions. The Scottish Regiment is based in Scotland and draws recruits mainly from Scotland. Do you have different target figures for each of the areas? I think that an 8% target for Scotland is unrealistic. For example, in my constituency the white population is 92.9%. The only areas where there is a substantial ethnic grouping are places like Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dundee. Outwith that, I would suggest that in the whole of Scotland very rarely will you find ethnic minorities. Therefore, if you have an across-the-board figure it is unrealistic to get to certain areas within the UK. Does that mean that in the Midlands, for example, you would have a far higher figure than in Scotland? How does that affect the Armed Forces? It is very easy to sit here and say that you need to recruit 8% across the board, but there is a disproportionate effect across the board and there would be very few from ethnic minorities in the Scottish Regiment other than those who come from the Commonwealth. Am I right in thinking that?

Major General Gregory: You are right in thinking that. And the answer is that we can target our resources differently depending on the racial construct of society in any area.

Mr Hamilton: It is important to understand that. Mr Hancock: I was disappointed that none of you said in answer to John Smith’s questions, which I thought were slightly offensive, namely that there was a black and white issue and it was easier to get into the Armed Forces if you were white than if you were black. I think that ought to be refuted because it suggests there is a racial element in Armed Forces recruitment. To my knowledge, that is not the case and I was disappointed that none of you rebutted that immediately. What has been said about the American Armed Forces is not true. There are very few Muslims in the US Armed Forces; proportionately they have fewer. The US Armed Forces have African Americans but they have a lot fewer Muslims. In this country the predominance is people with Islamic faith. The question I pose to you is that you really do not know the community if you do not know why these boys and girls are not joining. You will not know the community by talking to Muslim leaders; they do not talk to young people in the community who do not listen to them. You cannot force people. The one thing I have always found strange is the argument that by some magic to get people to want to join the Armed Forces. If their parents do not want them to join the Armed Forces they will not join. I represent a sizeable proportion of Muslims in Portsmouth. When you talk to parents the last place they would like their children to go into is the military.

Chairman: Perhaps I may stop you there. Can we have one answer?

Q330 Mr Hancock: That is true, is it not?

Vice Admiral Wilkinson: The point Mr Hancock makes is very relevant. We do not try just to reach these potential recruits through community leaders or parents. We try all sorts of methods and approaches through schools and youth groups. Our city of Portsmouth is a good example where people work very closely and hard with societies, clubs and groups to make inroads and see what it is that makes these young people tick, change their perceptions and show them what an exciting, varied and worthwhile career the Armed Forces can offer. We are trying our hardest.

Q331 Mr Borrow: We have been discussing diversity. I just want to raise with you the fact that two or three years ago the Armed Forces discriminated on the basis of sexual orientation. Thankfully, that has now changed. If you can produce statistics they should show that the number of people being thrown out of the Armed Forces as a result of discrimination or sexual orientation has dropped.

Vice Admiral Wilkinson: It is zero; there is no discrimination.

Q332 Mr Borrow: I would be interested to see the figures before the rules changed. Obviously, in terms of recruitment and retention if you are not throwing people out because you are not discriminating against them you are not losing the personnel that you were losing 10 or 20 years ago on the basis of
prejudice and discriminatory rules in place then. I would also be interested to see what the Armed Forces are doing both in terms of recruitment and within the Services to make it easier for gay men and lesbians to serve within the Armed Forces. It is now a few years since I had a lot of dealings with various groups that sought to change the law. Obviously, things seem to have gone quiet, but as we look at these issues I think it would be helpful to the Committee if you could put something in writing to update us on how things are going in the three Services.

Vice Admiral Wilkinson: For us that is an issue with which we are no longer concerned. We believe that it is very much one of yesterday’s issues, but we shall certainly submit the note for which Mr Borrow asks. Since the beginning of the year we had in place an independent service complaints commissioner. We are well aware that complaints about wellbeing and conditions of service are very much a function of the chain of command, but here is an additional method whereby a serviceman or woman can complain about any matters related to his or her service to an independent commissioner. I think that is part of the note we can put together.

Chairman: That would be helpful. I am afraid that we will have lots of questions to ask you. Thank you for answering the many questions that we have already asked this morning. It has been very interesting and has kept us going on for far too long.
Tuesday 20 May 2008

Members present
Mr James Arbuthnot, in the Chair
Mr David S Borrow
Mr David Crausby
Linda Gilroy
Mr Mike Hancock
Mr Adam Holloway
Mr Bernard Jenkin
Mr Kevan Jones
Richard Younger-Ross

Witnesses: Derek Twigg MP, Under Secretary of State for Defence and Minister for Veterans, and Vice Admiral Peter Wilkinson CVO, Deputy Chief of Defence Staff (Personnel), gave evidence.

Q333 Chairman: Good morning. This is the final session in our recruitment and retention inquiry and, Minister and Admiral Wilkinson, you are both extremely well-known to the inquiry. In our particular respect we would be grateful if you could help us because we have, during the course of this inquiry, as we have on the Education of Service Children Inquiry and as we did on the Medical Services Inquiry, been running a web forum and we have been getting quite trenchant views from existing and former members of the Armed Forces. It is always helpful for a select committee such as ourselves to get that sort of information which points us in various directions. However, we have heard today that when people have been in contact with the Ministry of Defence to ask whether they should submit posts on to our web forum they have been discouraged from doing so. I am absolutely sure that this would not come from you, Minister, or from you, Admiral Wilkinson, that it would not come from the top, but it is coming from the Ministry of Defence and it is most dismaying to us that our parliamentary scrutiny of a very important issue for the future of the Armed Forces is being subverted at a middle level, probably, within the Ministry of Defence. I wonder whether (a) you would like to comment and (b) whether you might like to take that away with you and see what can be done, not particularly for this inquiry, because we are getting some good posts on our web forum, but for future web forums, future inquiries, it is very disturbing that parliamentary scrutiny should be undermined. Our scrutiny, we regard, as very helpful to the Ministry of Defence and the defence of the country. I wonder, Minister, whether you would like to respond?

Derek Twigg: Can I, first of all, say to you, neither myself nor Admiral Wilkinson have issued any such instructions, neither have ministers or senior military or civil servants, to my knowledge, and I am, quite frankly, shocked to hear that. I condemn any such instruction that was taken out, and I give you absolute assurance that, after we finish this session, I will ask for that to be investigated very promptly and I will get back in touch with you as soon as possible thereafter. We very much want to encourage our people to have this contact with you. As you rightly say, it enables a good discussion and ideas to be passed through, whether critical or not, from the department and, as you know from the health investigation you did, that worked pretty well. I am really dismayed to hear that and I can give you absolute assurance that it has not come from me and I will investigate it as soon as we finish this session.

Chairman: I would have expected no less.

Q334 Mr Jenkin: This is potentially a breach of Parliamentary privilege. It is a very serious thing to interfere with an investigation by a select committee, and I think, Chairman, we should resolve to write to the Speaker if we find any subsequent evidence that our inquiries are being interfered with.

Derek Twigg: If you have evidence, then we will look into it. It is for the House and the Speaker to deal with that, but we would never give instructions to interfere with a parliamentary process.

Q335 Mr Jenkin: I accept that.

Derek Twigg: I feel, if anything, my style is one of openness and, as you know from the co-operation you have received from us in terms of visits and accessibility of people, I think you would be surprised if it was otherwise the case.

Q336 Chairman: I want to move on. Minister, this is an inquiry into recruitment and retention, a perennial problem; in fact so perennial that the Defence Committee went into the same sorts of thing in 2001. Obviously, the Ministry of Defence has been putting a great deal of effort into trying to resolve some of the many problems that have arisen since then. How would you say the Ministry of Defence was doing?

Derek Twigg: I would say, first of all, we have still got more to do and we still, obviously, have challenges and problems particularly around retention. I think you will see from the figures we have provided that we have made significant strides in terms of recruitment. If you look at it in this context (and I put it to you in this way), given the current economic climate, in terms of the employment opportunities out there, depending on your point of view, in terms of the war with Iraq and Afghan and the amount of work that is obviously entailing for our people, and given the constant criticisms of the MoD and the Government in terms of what it is and is not doing to support our Armed Forces, I think it is quite a good performance, quite frankly, in that climate, not only the demands for recruitment that we have actually been able to do but also in terms of retention: because if you look at the
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Derek Twigg: Retention, I think, is our key area—because of what we term “pinch point grades” we are losing people at a higher rate than we want to—and we need to do more work. I can talk about the financial retention initiatives, I can talk about the pay and the Armed Forces Review Board in terms of...
most successful because, for the type of person that the Royal Marines were trying to recruit, this appealed to their sense of adventure, to their ego and to their sense of wanting to prove they could do it. So counter-intuitive it might have been, but actually it worked.

Q341 Chairman: Minister, this is a question really for you. You are responsible for recruitment, basic training, pay, things like that. Bob Ainsworth is responsible for readiness, personnel issues, training, reputation, things like that. How do you co-ordinate your approach between the two ministers? Do you find there is overlap or confusion?

Derek Twigg: First of all, the changes are relatively new in terms of responsibilities, they were a few months ago, but actually we meet on a fairly regular basis, usually on a weekly basis, to go through lots of issues, of which these are one. So there is quite a lot of contact between the two of us and we work closely together. I think, specifically since we made the changes in terms of responsibility, that was the intention the Secretary of State wanted, for the two ministers to work closely together on these range of issues, and that includes accommodation as well. It is not just the areas you have mentioned; there is a range of areas where we are working together. I think, to be frank, it has been working very well. It is early days yet, but we do have a lot of co-ordination.

Q342 Mr Crausby: The Spring Performance Report tells us that we will not meet target three. In effect, the MoD are saying that we will not be entirely ready to respond to the tasks that might arise. I know there has been a lot of talk about pinch points, but what are we doing about that? The Royal Navy, for Lieutenant Harrier pilots short-fall 51%, but instructors short-fall 57% at the same time that the RAF have a surplus of some pilots. What, effectively, are we urgently doing to ensure that we deal with these short-falls?

Derek Twigg: First of all, we are making sure that in terms of the leadership and organisation in services and across services, as you know, in terms of rotary wing pilots, in terms of medical care, where we have very much a tri-service approach, we are working together to deal with any particular difficulties around any particular service in terms of meeting the overall obligations and our objectives. I think there is a lot closer co-operation in recent years than has been previously, and I think the tri-service approach, the working between the three services, is very much improved. I also think that the various initiatives we are taking in terms of the financial retention initiatives, for which it is early days yet in terms of quite a few of them, are having a beneficial effect, and we have provided you with some figures on that, but, of course, as I say, it is pretty early on at the moment. Also issues around accommodation, where we are making improvements, the healthcare, which I think this committee recognises is world-class, the welfare improvement, support around decompression issues and mental health—there is a whole range of things. Improved equipment in regard to operations like U/D, and people tell me it is the best equipment that they have had. It is not just one particular thing we are using to deal with this; it is a whole range of measures.

Vice Admiral Wilkinson: Sir, at the operational level units the such as Joint Force Harrier and the Joint Helicopter Command are testament to the fact that the Services have realised that they can make the sum greater than the parts. Those two units, have been heavily involved in operations in Afghanistan recently using personnel from all three services to best effect.

Q343 Mr Crausby: Even Objective I in the report—to achieve success in the military tasks that we undertake both at home and abroad—is on course with some risk. There will be some risk, will there not, if we continue not to generate enough forces as quickly as we are losing people? At what point do we panic on all of this and have to completely review our overall strategy?

Derek Twigg: You will know as well from your visits and the other investigations you have done, actually we are achieving a massive amount, not just in Iraq and Afghanistan but elsewhere, and obviously much of that has got to be down to the amazing professionalism and encouraging sacrifice of our people: their leadership skill that is taking place, the organisation, the new ways of working—I talked before about Joint Harrier and Joint Rotary Wing—all these things that are happening. If we sat here and said we had not got any answers, then I could understand we could get to the point where you are suggesting we could get to where there is panic and we cannot do this actually. We do not believe that is the case. We believe the improvements we are making across the piece will provide us with sufficient people to deliver what our aims and objectives are, but we are not complacent about it. It is difficult, it is challenging, we are asking our people to do an awful lot, but we are not at the stage where we think we will be in a panic mode in six or 12 months’ time or anything like that.

Q344 Mr Jenkin: Minister, this performance report is pretty devastating. It shows that nearly half the force elements are reporting critical or serious weaknesses against their peace-time readiness levels and their ability to generate from peace-time readiness to immediate readiness or deployment in operations. Is this not what the Ministry of Defence is meant to do, to have military forces ready to deploy? Nearly half of those forces are incapable of doing that. Is that not pretty devastating?

Derek Twigg: If that is the way you read it, but actually what we are saying very clearly is that we are meeting our requirements, we are meeting our objectives.

Q345 Mr Jenkin: But you are not.

Derek Twigg: Let us be clear, in Iraq and Afghanistan we clearly are. We have just deployed some people to Kosovo. We are managing the situation in which ministers have said clearly we are asking a lot of our Armed Force personnel to deliver the objectives and commitments that we said we
Q346 Mr Jenkin: The real problem is for a long time, as the report says, you have been operating above your defence planning assumptions, and this is set to go on. In the National Security Strategy we were told we were going to be entering on period of reduced commitments. Since then we have cancelled the drawdown from Iraq, we have deployed an extra battalion to Afghanistan, we are deploying a battalion to Kosovo and goodness knows what else, and the equipment problem you are having both underestimates the demands on the Armed Forces, and the recruitment problem you are having both is going to arise. Is not the problem that the Ministry of Defence and the Treasury have consistently underestimated the demands on the Armed Forces, and the recruitment problem you are having both fail to feed the Armed Forces with the personnel they need at the rate they need them but, also, the pace of operations is deterring people from staying on and adding to the difficulty?

Derek Twigg: I think the difficulty I have with your argument is that you can try and predict the pace of operations absolutely accurately and that nothing will change and there will be no issues that arise; it just does not stand up, in my view. There will be always be situations where we have got to react.

Q347 Mr Jenkin: So the National Security Strategy is wrong?

Derek Twigg: No. Let me just finish. We will always be in a position like that. What we have is an amazingly competent and, I think, the best Armed Forces in the world, who have been able to react to these changing situations, albeit we are asking an awful lot of them. We have got the leadership in place, we have got the programmes in place to improve things like equipment and the whole range of facilities which I mentioned to you previously. It is not that we are sitting here as ministers saying, “Just get on with it”; we have got a range of initiatives we are taking to try and move this forward. In terms of coming back to your point about recruitment and retention, which is the specific reason for this inquiry here today, as I have set out briefly, there is a whole range of initiatives we are taking.

Q348 Mr Holloway: Minister, you said to Mr Jenkin there he is assuming you can predict how things are going to work, but in a few weeks’ time the TA Unit is going to deploy, who are going to work outside the bases, they are going with snatch vehicles, they are going with only one or two people having night-vision equipment, they have no aerial weapons, they have no money at all for quips. The MoD has known that this particular unit will be going for well over a year. What do you say to the guy in that unit who says to me, “Because we have not got the right equipment, we are going to come back with less arms and legs attached”?  

Derek Twigg: Mr Holloway, I think even you would recognise that we have made great strides in the last year or two in terms of improving equipment for our people, whether it is for our regulars or reservists. I was only talking to quite a number of reservists last week and they were saying to me how they had seen the improvement in equipment and support that they had had as well. Out in theatre, as you will know again from your background and visits, there are significant improvements. We are not sending people out there under-equipped and not with the facilities that they need.

Q349 Mr Holloway: Minister, I totally accept that, but the fact remains, it is pretty extraordinary that a unit that you guys have known is going to be going there for well over a year is having to fill in a form to try and borrow GPMGs from TA units. It is staggering. If troop commanders are making emergency requisitions, there is something wrong, is there not?

Derek Twigg: The key thing is we are not sending our people into theatre without the right equipment.

Q350 Mr Holloway: You are.

Derek Twigg: We are not.

Q351 Mr Holloway: They think you are, and that is what matters in terms of this inquiry.

Derek Twigg: We are making sure our people are fully equipped, and that is the message I get all the time when I have been in theatre myself or when I talk to the brigades when they come back into this country after a tour. They all say to me it is the best equipment that they have ever had. I was only in Basra five or six weeks ago.

Q352 Mr Holloway: But that is a completely different point; whether the equipment they have got is the best equipment they have ever had or whether or not the equipment they have at the moment is actually what they need to do the job.

Derek Twigg: That is exactly what they say as well. The equipment they have got is what they need to do the job. As I say, I was in Basra five or six weeks ago and that was the clear message I got from our people out there, both the Army and the RAF.

Q353 Chairman: I think, Minister, that is the message that we have had. When we have been to Iraq and when we have been to Afghanistan, they say they have never had such good personal equipment, but I think we should acknowledge that. Am I right in thinking that you said that we were meeting our objectives?
Derek Twigg: Yes, we are meeting our objectives in terms of Iraq and Afghanistan.

Q354 Chairman: One of the objectives is to be ready to respond to the tasks that might arise. We are not meeting that target, are we?

Derek Twigg: In the context that we are asking our people to do what has been set for them so far, they are achieving that. Obviously there is a limit to what we can do in terms of the people and resources we have available. In terms of what we are asking our people to do in Iraq and Afghanistan, we are meeting that. In terms of additional tasks over and over that, there is obviously a limit to what we can do.

Q355 Chairman: We are not ready to respond to the tasks that might arise, are we?

Derek Twigg: It depends what those tasks may be. We are obviously at a stage where our people are doing an awful lot. They do not have a lot of additional resources to respond to a greater degree.

Q356 Chairman: No. Minister, in the last few days, the Secretary of State has issued a paper saying that we are not ready to respond to the tasks that might arise?

Derek Twigg: The point I am trying to make is that what we are asking our people currently to do, they can. That is the point I am making.

Q357 Mr Crausby: The point that we are trying to make is that the report says we will not generate forces which can be deployed, sustained and recovered at the scales of effort required to meet the Government’s strategic objective. It is a pretty clear statement, and the MoD said that that target will not be met.

Derek Twigg: What I am trying to say is that what we currently ask our people to do, we are meeting.

Q358 Mr Crausby: I think we all accept that.

Derek Twigg: In terms of what they may be asked in the future, I cannot predict what that will be.

Q359 Mr Crausby: We all accept, I think, that Objective I the MoD argue is on course with some risk, but as far as Objective II is concerned, the MoD clearly say, “We will not meet our objective.” What we are urgently asking is what urgent action are we going to take?

Derek Twigg: I was trying to explain, in terms of the wholesale initiatives we are taking in terms of recruitment, in terms of the retention initiatives, the equipment improvement, all that is taking place, and, as I say, it will have, and is having, an impact. Some of it is pretty early in terms of initiatives and what the final impact of that will be, and, of course, we have learned lessons from the initiatives we have taken and we are going to continue to do that.

Q360 Chairman: Are you concerned that we are not now ready to meet the tasks that might arise?

Derek Twigg: It is always the case. If we have tasks that we need to meet, of course I would be concerned if we cannot meet them. In terms of what tasks they will be, we could have a discussion about that, but what I am very clear about is the tasks we are asking our people currently to meet we are meeting, and, of course, we need to further improve recruitment and meet our targets in order to be able to meet these tasks, and that is exactly what we are about in terms of our strategy for improving recruitment and retention, improving equipment and improving the range of welfare and other support to maintain the numbers of people within our Armed Forces to meet those additional tasks whenever they may arise.

Chairman: I think we ought to move on.

Q361 Mr Jenkin: Have you got the money to do all that?

Derek Twigg: With respect, Mr Jenkin, I am not going to predict what the final outcome of PRO8 is at this stage. We will make a statement on that, but, as you know, we have had significant amounts of money from the Treasury to fund UORs and equipment and we have the money to recruit people that we need in the Armed Forces at the moment.

Q362 Linda Gilroy: I want to ask some questions on pay and conditions. The Armed Forces have harmonised pay and conditions but they have not all been brought exactly into line, and we have heard that these inconsistencies are causing friction and discord. Can you set out for the committee what these differences are, how they might be better aligned and what plans you have for bringing that about?

Vice Admiral Wilkinson: Shall I lead on that one? Certainly the introduction of JPA (Joint Personal Administration System) has helped us enormously here, and we are now, indeed, paying all our servicemen on the same computer system, the same administration system, and, indeed, we are administering them in terms of some of their personnel, their HR performance on that system. There is much more to do though. We are not yet really joint in the way we have achieved that. To bring the system in on time we had to limit some of its functionality, and we are now working hard to reintroduce that so the system gives us the benefits that are waiting to be taken there; but as to specific differences in pay, I think you will have to give me the examples.

Q363 Linda Gilroy: I think that the introduction of the JPA, while it is solving some problems, is perhaps, hopefully temporarily, creating other problems. The sort of evidence we have had includes that from Dawn McCafferty when she was serving in the RAF and had responsibility for working on a project to harmonise and simplify, and, of course, she is now involved in the Families Federation. She tells us that there are issues which just “grate”—in her words—“I am sure things could be done to try and soften the edges of that to take away any irritant.” Also, looking at the web forum, we have got very specifically there, “The Pay 2000 has
narrowed the pay gap between trades to the extent that the technical grades feel undervalued and, unsurprisingly, many are leaving in droves”. That sounds like quite an important issue. There is disparity between the services in similar jobs in respect of rank, pay and promotion time and there is disparity between the services in similar jobs in respect of rank, pay promotion and promotion time. This person particularly asks why, for example, is a high pay band RAF Flight Sergeant on the same pay scale as an Army or RN WO2, yet the WO2 gets an OR3 pension and the Flight Sergeant gets an OR7 pension? One can see that there have been positive moves. It sounds as if there are some quite significant differences which are bound to cause tensions between people doing similar levels, perhaps sometimes more senior levels, more responsible levels of job getting lesser pay and conditions?

Derek Twigg: Others will, obviously, come and correct me if I am wrong, but, first of all, the obvious fact is that is true. There are obviously a number of differences in pay, particularly amongst the Services and also within the Services. You made one point there about the RAF, the technical people, and of course that is a problem. I think anyone who has spoken to them will get that view, but I think the way the single Services have grown up and developed their own systems and also with the changes that have taken place over recent years, I think they are there, but it is not that we are just sitting back and saying we will never look at that. I think the Armed Forces Pay Review Board will need to examine some of these things as well, but, you are right, it is a fact. Some of them we will probably be able to deal with, but at this stage I would not like to give the committee an absolute assurance that we are going to solve the whole problem overnight. There are, I accept, differences and there is unhappiness amongst some people about this.

Q364 Linda Gilroy: Would you be willing to go a stage further and say that you would ask the Armed Forces Pay Review Board to look at that: because if it is true that people are leaving in droves in trades which pinch point, surely that is something that merits some very serious consideration?

Derek Twigg: Yes.

Vice Admiral Wilkinson: Perhaps I could take over and say, certainly it came out of our discussions with the Pay Review Body this year, and will certainly feature as my colleagues and I begin to discuss next year’s pay round, how we can continue to tidy up and remove these irritants that you have spotted, certainly that emerged from Pay 2000. Again, we are making considerable progress there, and perhaps for my own service the introduction of the Warrant Officer Two rank that did not exist a few years ago is an example of how we have moved to try to align the three Services. We are well aware as we fight and live and work far more together than we ever did actually that, if we wish people to concentrate on achieving operational success, then we do not want them to be distracted by whether the Sergeant, the Petty Officer or the Flight Sergeant sitting next to them is getting more or less pay than they are.

Chairman: Before you move off that subject, Richard Younger-Ross.

Q365 Richard Younger-Ross: How many service personnel were paid late last year?

Derek Twigg: I am sorry; I cannot give you that answer. We will have to write to the committee. We did answer a PQ last year, I think, which would give that detail. I just cannot off the top of my head think what it would be.

Q366 Richard Younger-Ross: I cannot remember the exact figure, but it was ten times the year before, which was higher than the year before?

Derek Twigg: We could get into the JPA, but, clearly, in terms of the transfer across to JPA we had major problems with the RAF when they first went on it, maybe less with the Army where it works better, but, clearly, in terms of education of using the system, and the people who are providing information to the system as well, there have been issues and we are looking at that and examining the training and the time. As a result of that, there have been a number of instances of late information being put into the system. One of the biggest causes of that figure of over payments was, I think, a Navy error which was around a £10 charitable.

Vice Admiral Wilkinson: Three pounds.

Q367 Richard Younger-Ross: Three pounds.

Derek Twigg: Three pounds, yes, but in terms of late payments, we do not have those figures.

Q368 Richard Younger-Ross: The figure has been increasing. My belief is that it is liable to increase yet again this year. The question really is what are you able to do for those people who are paid late, because if you are paid late you may very well get bank charges and other charges. Are you able to compensate someone who has been paid late for their additional charges: because they are not going to be very happy, they are going to be very unhappy if they end up with charges and costs, and that is not going encourage them to remain in the service.

Derek Twigg: Again, someone will correct me about that if I am wrong, but we do have a system where we do advances of salary, in terms of being able to pay people, when they do not get paid by the system, manually, and in the case of any cost they incur we do reimburse them.

Vice Admiral Wilkinson: I believe that is correct. I think, Sir, it is one of the interesting paradoxes of JPA that actually we have increased the visibility of understanding to a large extent, of the payment process. I refer back to the point the Minister made that he has commissioned a short review on training both of HR administrators and of people before they start using the JPA system to make sure they fully understand it, but actually, although we do not wish to be an issue, we have raised its visibility and some of the inaccuracies and some of the difficulties that have always been in existence have now come to the fore more so than they did under the old Legacy pay system.
Q369 Richard Younger-Ross: Would you write to us and give us the detail of that?
Vice Admiral Wilkinson: Yes.
Mr Holloway: While I have some sympathy, and I do not for a minute doubt the good faith of the ministers in the MoD at all on this, in the context of retention and recruitment is it not ultimately a question of commitments as against resources and at some point we have to accept that, if we are going to keep the military as it is, we have probably got to increase the numbers? Does the Minister feel that the Treasury understands defence, in the words of General Guthrie, because I am not sure that it does?

Q370 Chairman: By the way, you do not have to talk in the third person.
Derek Twigg: I think this is it all a myth that the Treasury does not understand. Certainly when you were last in government, the Conservatives—

Q371 Mr Holloway: We were at war in two different places.
Derek Twigg: I can go back over various conflicts, if you want, and we could have a similar argument, the fact is that the Treasury never understood the departments, and no doubt Mr Arbuthnot had similar discussions when he was sitting, albeit in a much higher and esteemed position than me, in the Ministry of Defence. They had similar issues. You only have to look in terms of what the Treasury is providing in terms of the operational requirements contingency fund, the massive improvements that have taken place in equipment, the pay awards we have been able to give. I just do not recognise that point; that the Treasury do not understand. There has always been this tension, not just within the Ministry of Defence but in government departments—

Q372 Mr Holloway: But do you recognise the point that we probably do not have enough people to do what we are trying to do at the moment?
Derek Twigg: With the people we have got, we are able to meet our current obligations in terms of Iraq and Afghanistan. In terms of what we are asking our people to do, we can meet that. They are working tremendously hard doing an amazing job to do that: adaptability and flexibility is second to none. We do, of course, recognise we have got to recruit more people. We do recognise, of course, that we have got to retain more. The answer to your question is that we need more people, and that is why we are taking the initiatives we are taking.

Q373 Linda Gilroy: We need to keep the people that we have got—
Derek Twigg: Absolutely.

Q374 Linda Gilroy: ---and make the best possible use of them, especially if they want to stay, and the conditions can be arranged which continue to attract them. Could you make better use of transfers between and within services? We have heard that they can be quite complicated, even between cap badges, never mind between the services themselves.

If you simplified the process, would you have another way of managing? Are you maximising the way in which you are managing that in order to keep manpower levels where we want them to be?

Derek Twigg: Actually, if you do not mind me being candid, I was quite surprised that this point came up because, like you, I visit many bases and barracks all round the world and talk to hundreds of service personnel and I think I recall once or twice with me, and in fact at one of the pass-out parades in the RAF, they had had two people who had transferred from the Army into the RAF at that particular time; so I do not think we clocked it, to be quite honest, as being a major problem. I am not saying it is not a problem with some people. I did some figures on this. I think in 2007–08 there were about 858 transfers. The next question will be: how many out of how many applications? We do not have that information directly to hand, unfortunately, to be able to give you. I am trying to find that out. Are we in favour of that? Yes. Do we want to allow that to happen? Yes, we are having to encourage it, but it has got to be based on operational requirements, whether the people have the sufficient skills and background ability to transfer into different jobs, of course, depending on the particular pressures at that time. We have no problem with it in principle, we are happy to support it, but it has got to be based on operational needs and also their ability to do the job they are asking to transfer to and, of course, whether we have a particular issue in their grade in that particular part of the service

Q375 Linda Gilroy: You are saying that from being sat in the MoD main building, but when, again, you read some of the contributions we have had—this is from one: “It is theoretically very easy to switch between cap badges, assuming one meets the criteria. You just complete the transfer paperwork and then wait, for a very long time indeed in some cases, and paper work gets lost.” A transfer between services is a great deal harder. It does not happen that often. You have quoted some figures actually in the written submission you have give to us that show that it does happen, but is this happening in a way that keeps people in post? This person also says, “I would be willing to stay quite happily to my 55-year point if the RAF could offer me anything like an interesting and valued job. There is just no way to find out if such jobs exist”, and another point that is raised is that if you do transfer between services, it is often accompanied by a change in pension rights because you have to resign and apply again. You wonder whether there is a difference between your attitude towards this in the main building and whether, when people are faced with the actual practicalities of it with their senior officers, with the chain of command, that there is a different attitude there that does not actually appreciate the overall benefit there may be to manpower retention and whether you actually have to try and do more to achieve a culture change which brings that about.
**Derek Twigg:** I think you make a very important point, particularly around the area of retention. Serving personnel write to me on all sorts of issues, but I have had very little on this. Hand on heart, can I say it is working as well as it can? No, I cannot. I have said to the committee that I can go away and do some more work on that to see whether we can actually bottom out and maximise that.

**Q376 Chairman:** That would be helpful.

**Vice Admiral Wilkinson:** May I just add, Chairman, I am slightly surprised by the tone of the submissions you are receiving, certainly about the Army. The Army, to my way of thinking, are very committed to cap badge transfer. Every division holds a transfer fair twice a year. The Army in Germany holds a transfer fair twice a year. All three Services understand it is far better to keep someone in the service and to transfer them so that they will be content rather than leave, if at all possible. So, I am slightly surprised.

**Q377 Linda Gilroy:** The quotation I gave was slightly surprised. content rather than leave, if at all possible. So, I am understandable it is far better to keep someone in the service and to transfer them so that they will be content rather than leave, if at all possible. So, I am content rather than leave, if at all possible. So, I am content rather than leave, if at all possible. So, I am content rather than leave, if at all possible. So, I am content rather than leave, if at all possible. So, I am content rather than leave, if at all possible. So, I am content rather than leave, if at all possible. So, I am content rather than leave, if at all possible. So, I am content rather than leave, if at all possible. So, I am content rather than leave, if at all possible. So, I am content rather than leave, if at all possible. So, I am content rather than leave, if at all possible. So, I am content rather than leave, if at all possible. So, I am content rather than leave, if at all possible. So, I am content rather than leave, if at all possible. So, I am content rather than leave, if at all possible. So, I am content rather than leave, if at all possible. So, I am content rather than leave, if at all possible. So, I am satisfied.

**Q378 Linda Gilroy:** ---but maximising it is clearly something that could have a role to play in the retention issue, particularly, by the sound of it, in some of the trade issues, perhaps even some of the pinch point trade issues.

**Vice Admiral Wilkinson:** There is often, in my experience, a feeling that the grass is greener on the other side and, therefore, a lot of people, both officers and other ranks, do look during their time in the service at another branch or another trade or career to see if that would be of interest. I am not saying that that is where some of these numbers come from, but certainly, as you know, the recruiting process will do its best to match people’s talents, skills and abilities to the right trade or branch. It may well be they get that right and actually some of these transfers are little more than wishful thinking.

**Linda Gilroy:** I am sure, being realistic, that must be an element. I think our point to you is are you doing enough to maximise this as a method of retention, and I think perhaps it is something that you have acknowledged.

**Q379 Chairman:** You have said you would look at it again.

**Derek Twigg:** Yes. That does not apply to ministers, of course.

**Q380 Linda Gilroy:** There are particular points relating to retirement age. Again, in your written submissions, you obviously acknowledge that consideration to raising the retirement age perhaps has a role to play and gives us some indications of what is happening in each of the Armed Services. You say it will remain under scrutiny for both officers in the Navy on full-time commissions and other ranks on second open engagements to increase one or both to a retirement age of 55. In the Army you are talking about the compulsory retirement age for officers commissioning into the Army no longer 55, but 60, and for soldiers the versatile engagement which has been introduced means that some can keep on beyond the age of 55, even as far as an upper age limit of 65. In the RAF continuance beyond 55 is offered on a case by case basis, relating, of course, to service issues, out of service dates for aircraft, etc. It is all a bit of a mish-mash as far as the different ages are concerned. Are there specific reasons for that which I have not been able to spot?

**Derek Twigg:** Obviously, there is a degree of autonomy that single Services have in terms of their manning and recruitment; historically it has been that way. In terms of the Ministry of Defence, we are keen to examine initiatives around this. You have seen specifically what the Army does. Our view is that you should not explore this further and look to what should be done because there are lots of issues around it, things that we have exposed here today in terms of how each Service might be affected in terms of career development, promotion opportunities, whether people of that age are appropriate for any particular types of job that might become available, whether there is the right turnover in people. There are a number of areas which need to be taken into account in terms of establishing a distinct policy saying, “Yes, you will be allowed to continue until you are 65 or 60.” I do not think it is an exact science.

**Q381 Linda Gilroy:** But there are some equality issues there, although I believe I am right in saying that the Armed Services are exempt from European Union legal requirements on that. Would you, Minister, acknowledge that, whether you are exempt or not, if that too is giving rise to irritations and tensions and people feeling under-valued it is something that you should be looking at as an equality issue apart from a straightforward recruitment and retention issue? Is this something that again we can ask you to look at to see that you are maximising the kind of culture that you want to achieve in valuing the Armed Services, that there are not rules and regulations in the different Armed Services which rub up against each other and cause problems?

**Vice Admiral Wilkinson:** I think we have come a considerable way on this over the years, where they were absolutely categorical that at the age of 40, if you were another rank, you got thrown out, at the age of 55 as a senior officer you got thrown out, and we were losing a lot of talent. If it looks rather disjointed and unco-ordinated, as you lay it out, Ms Gilroy, then certainly we will look to see if we can make it more co-ordinated. It has been done very
much thus far on a case-by-case basis and let us be in no doubt that at the operational end it is still very much a young person’s business. It is physically tiring. Being in a ship at sea in an operational unit at the age of 40-plus is exhausting, so we are talking here, I think, in very small numbers in headquarters or administrative posts rather than the ability to plug big gaps in operational front-line units, but certainly we will look to see if we can be better co-ordinated.

Chairman: We will almost certainly include something in our report about this.

Linda Gilroy: Before we move on, Chairman, could I on an officer issue particularly highlight what can happen in terms of recruitment and retention? The retirement age for Royal Mariners is 50, for the Royal Navy I think it is 53 going on 55 because there is some alignment going on over quite a long timescale, and for the Army it is 55. If they are all competing inter-Service for promotion then by the time you get to your early to mid forties you are beginning to think about exit. If you want to go on and have a successful career the only way is out, basically, whereas if you are in the RAF and the Royal Navy you have an extra three to five years. Apart from the equality issues that are there, that must mean that we are losing really good people from the Royal Marines, which is just ridiculous because of what they are contributing.

Q382 Chairman: Perhaps you could consider that too. 

Vice Admiral Wilkinson: We will.

Q383 Mr Holloway: This is for Vice Admiral Wilkinson. When I did my pathetic bit of military service and one of the top brass over there did a huge amount of military service the expectation of lots of bang-bang was really very small. Today it is completely different. We have kids that are now firing 10,000 rounds in a day, we have this incredible work regime for the Apache crews and so on, and you have got people not just being there but with build-up training and lack of time for their families and probably the feeling that you have been absolutely terrified and you have done lots and lots of fighting and you kind of do not need to do it any more. Does that not point to, in certain types of units, particularly the infantry and perhaps the engineers now and certainly the Apaches, the fact that we need to not just pay certain skills more but also to your early to mid forties you are beginning to think about exit. If you want to go on and have a successful career the only way is out, basically, whereas if you are in the RAF and the Royal Navy you have an extra three to five years. Apart from the equality issues that are there, that must mean that we are losing really good people from the Royal Marines, which is just ridiculous because of what they are contributing.

Q384 Mr Holloway: But does the Admiral think that in those sorts of areas we need to have more people? 

Vice Admiral Wilkinson: We do the best we can with the resources we have, Sir, at the moment. 

Mr Holloway: Forgive me, but that is a politician’s answer. Do we need more people?

Q385 Chairman: The Minister has agreed that we need more people.

Derek Twigg: In terms of the fact that here we are talking about recruitment and retention and do we need more people, we do need more people; that is why we need to recruit and retain more people, because we are not at manning balance at the moment, so we accept that.

Q386 Chairman: I think we have covered that.

Derek Twigg: Whether you want to increase it over and above what our current target is another issue, of course.

Q387 Mr Jones: Can I turn to Service welfare now? There are a large number of organisations—I have just counted what we have here, I think it is 33, and there are perhaps more—but we are still being told that there are gaps in welfare. What are your views in terms of how welfare is being delivered by these organisations and also the MoD, and when is the Command Paper, which I understand is going to address this issue, going to come out? We were promised it in the spring but we did not think it was the southern hemisphere spring that you were indicating. Is there a day that we can announce it?

Derek Twigg: In terms of the Command Paper, the Secretary of State has been on record as saying that we expected it to be around June time. The key thing is to make sure we get it right. We have done extensive consultations with a whole range of bodies and we are taking comments and views. There are many different views about that. I am not going to pre-empt what that will say at the moment but clearly it is going to be a very important paper in terms of defining where we are in terms of support, what we can do further and what is possible. Coming back to the first part of your question in terms of welfare, I came to this job about 20 months ago. If
you want my honest opinion, I think there are an awful lot of people doing an awful lot of good work. Whether it was truly joined up, whether it was ensuring that gaps were being plugged, the honest answer to that is that it was not. If you look at the range of people who are involved, from the Ministry of Defence, the single Services, the regimental associations, the many ex-Service charities, not just the big three or four, and lots of other organisations, I suspect they are in the hundreds, I asked the question of myself, “Why should there be anyone falling through the gaps, given that there are lots of resources around, whether it is within government or outside government? There are lots of people who want to do good. What can we do about this?”, so last year, along with the Chief of General Staff, we organised a welfare conference which brought all these bodies together to look at how we could improve that, and I will give you two examples of how that has improved. Selly Oak, for instance, which we discussed in terms of the welfare support and accommodation which you yourselves recognised in your previous report, was a significant improvement. In terms of the Pathway of Care we have now put in place, because basically we could not understand why we did not have a pathway which was monitored from the time and point of wounding through to, if necessary, leaving the Service (although many people do not leave the Service today), we will make sure we have that monitored and looked after all the way through. That is in place and the database is now up and running but further work needs to be done to enhance that. In terms of case where you get somebody who has been wounded, has to leave the Service and we find Defence Estates issue him with a 93-day notice that he had got to quit, we suddenly find there is a story there when actually the story was that you go through a legal process and no-one is going to chuck you out anyway, but we have to make sure things like that are joined up. In terms of welfare support, in terms of the compensation package, despite the criticism there is a major step forward from what was there previously.

Q388 Mr Jones: Can I be controversial? Is there not a need, frankly, to cull some of these organisations and is it not the fact that some of these have grown up over time and might, as you say, be very worthy causes but possibly in some cases are employment agents for ex-servicemen or serving senior servicemen’s wives rather than providing the joined-up service that you want? Is there not also a debate about what Government should do?

Derek Twigg: In terms of the number of organisations, that was something I recognised when I came to this job and I think part of the reason for having the Welfare Conference was to try and get people thinking about how these organisation work together and the amount of organisation there are not. COBSEO have recognised this line and they are working very well with the organisations, and I think it is a much more joined-up approach than there was previously. It is not for me as a minister to say an organisation or a charity should not exist or that it should join up with X other charity, but clearly COBSEO have recognised the work they did and they are moving forward along with the big four in particular but also the rest of the organisations, so I think that is recognised, is the short answer to your question. In terms of this interesting debate about the dividing line between charities and the MoD and the Help for Heroes Fund and the swimming pool at Headley Court, I would answer it this way. There has always been a history of the ex-Service organisations and charities working with the Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces to provide support for our Service personnel, families and veterans, and that has been for ever, frankly, so there is nothing new in that. Some people decided, because of the health fears, which I praised because they did an amazing job there, to use it for political purposes to attack the Government, that suddenly we were accepting charity. The fact is that at Headley Court, which is owned by a charitable trust and we pay for the staff and the facilities, there are already four or five gyms there, they already had a hydrotherapy pool, but we welcome this support from Help for Heroes; it has enhanced the facilities, so that is a good thing. It also brings in members of the public. I think it gives people a much more tangible way of expressing their support to the Armed Forces, so I welcome it. Part of the Command Service paper will look at this dividing line, but you know as well as I do, Mr Jones, that if you look at the Health Service it is in terms of hospices and Macmillan nurses and research or in education it is educational foundations; it is throughout public services. Maybe there is an argument about where that dividing line should be but I certainly do not think it is the case that the MoD is using charities to do things it should be doing as a matter of course.

Q389 Mr Jones: One of the issues that has come up is frequent postings and access to care services, not just for serving men and women but for families. For example, it came out in the medical report and also the educational report we did in terms of how families get access to priority services when they move. What can be done better there, do you think, to provide families, when they move and certainly when loved ones are on operations, with that support, not just in terms of practical things but also things like medical services or the right school to go to?

Derek Twigg: This is one of the things that the Command Paper is looking at in some detail in terms of support. I have had a number of meetings with my counterpart in different government departments, not least in terms of health. We want to see a position where anybody who is a family member is not discriminated against by the fact that they move into a different area in terms of the waiting list, and those discussions are going on as part of the Command Paper and the discussion that we have had with ministers. In terms of schooling, again, discussions have been taking place with education. As you know, as part of the Missions policy that has to be looked at now, and a marker has now been put on
education to try and find out whether there are any issues around educational attainment, so a number of things have happened there. You rightly point out some of the concerns of Service personnel, issues around basing strategy in terms of super garrisons, ensuring that people do not move around as much so that they have a better, more stable future. There are a number of issues taking place but we certainly do recognise that as a major concern and that is being looked at in some detail as well by the Command Paper.

Vice Admiral Wilkinson: We risk running into the realms of speculation as to what the Command Paper is going to say, but I will support the Minister in that certainly those areas that he has mentioned—super garrisons for the Army, base porting for the Navy and a reduction in airfields for the RAF so that people are more stable than they were 20 years ago—have all been recognised as helping to reduce the difficulties of military mobility.

Q390 Richard Younger-Ross: First of all, my apologies: I have to go fairly shortly, but perhaps I may ask you about housing. Housing has repeatedly come up as an area of dissatisfaction in more recent surveys and reports and has a bearing on retention. Bob Ainsworth announced a £5 billion plan. How long is it going to take and what impact do you think that will have on retention?

Derek Twigg: I can just say this before I go into the detail of it, there is a clear issue that there have been decades of under-investment in housing and we accept our responsibility in that but it is going to take us some time. Even the previous Government after 18 years could not solve the problems of Service housing. Having said that, what are we doing about it? We have got responsibility now. We intend to spend on housing over the next ten years over £8 billion. If you look at that, it will involve lots of improvement of single living accommodation. There have already been since 2003 26,000 new or improved single living bed spaces and we intend to have another 30,000 by 2013. Since 2001 I think nearly 13,000 Service family homes have been put to the top standard for condition. There is also a programme of replacing boilers which was a major problem the winter before last. There have been major improvements but it is going to take some time and, as I say, a spend of £8 billion over the next ten years is a major step forward but we have a lot to do.

Q391 Richard Younger-Ross: Those figures you gave were 13,000 family units, of which there are 71,000—Derek Twigg: Worldwide. We are currently looking at the whole commission of our stock at the moment because a lot of it is already at the top condition but obviously a number are not at the moment. The only other thing I can say to you is that the standards we are asking for our people are well above the Decent Homes standard. I just thought I would make that point. That never quite gets brought on. The Decent Homes standard is something that we exceed in terms of aspiring to for the condition of our houses.

Q392 Richard Younger-Ross: Of those remaining 71,000, how many need to be upgraded or knocked down and replaced?

Derek Twigg: In terms of “knocked down”, there is a whole programme taking place around the country in terms of refurbishing houses but also in terms of giving houses that we do not need any more back to Addisoning Homes or demolishing houses which we own and which we do not need any more, but it is always going to take some time and, as I say, a spend of £8 billion over the next ten years over £8 billion. If you look at that, it will involve lots of improvement of single living accommodation. There have already been since 2003 26,000 new or improved single living bed spaces and we intend to have another 30,000 by 2013. Since 2001 I think nearly 13,000 Service family homes have been put to the top standard for condition. There is also a programme of replacing boilers which was a major problem the winter before last. There have been major improvements but it is going to take some time and, as I say, a spend of £8 billion over the next ten years is a major step forward but we have a lot to do.

Q393 Richard Younger-Ross: In terms of maintenance, on our website there were a number of complaints regarding maintenance. One person wrote that it took 15 years to change a carpet. The same person complained that the plumber was called after a water leak because there was water running down the light fitting. The plumber came, went to the wrong house and, despite having a contact number, went away again and did not come back. The person went on to complain that everyone blames everyone else. What are you doing in terms of day-to-day maintenance to make sure that what is there, even if inadequate, is maintained to a reasonable standard?

Derek Twigg: After the initial problems with MODern Housing Solutions, not least in terms of the response times, I think you will see that response times now are significantly improved for repairs. We are working very closely with the MoD. Admiral Lawrence, who runs Defence Estates, has a very close relationship with them and he has been in the job over six months now, I think.

Vice Admiral Wilkinson: Just over 12 months.

Derek Twigg: He has set out a plan and target to improve the maintenance and to keep pressure on MODern Housing Solutions, so a lot of work is taking place at the moment.

Q394 Richard Younger-Ross: I now know if something goes wrong in my house and it is not fixed it will cause friction between myself and my wife, and the import of this cannot be stressed enough in terms of keeping a family background or two partners happy with each other.

Derek Twigg: There is no argument here. If repairs are not done on time it is not acceptable, full stop. There have been problems, as you rightly point out, but we are continuing to improve the responsiveness and ensure that these repairs get done. There will always be cases. What we need to make sure is that we learn from any of those to make sure that we put the solution in place first time. I think you will find that our response times now are significantly improved, so at a ministerial level I can assure you—and I ask some very serious and searching questions
and I get the regular monthly reports about repairs—that we continually want to drive up the responsiveness for them.

Q395 Mr Jones: Can I just ask, in terms of MODern Housing Solutions, is the problem that what you did—and I understand why the contract was let in the way it was done—was that, unlike any other housing provider, be it housing association or social provider, you took away the person at local level whose job it was to ensure that things were done? We went to Pirbright, for example. The Commanding Officer there was saying that he had no say. At one woman’s house we went to, for example, her ceiling had been collapsed for four or five weeks. You were a local councillor, Mr Twigg, and I was. You just would not put up with that, but he did not have any ability to action anything. Is not the problem that there is nothing wrong with the system being set up but what we need is somebody responsible at a base or an area to drive those things forward in terms of when those unacceptable delays come forward?

Derek Twigg: I could not disagree with you. That is an issue and it has been raised with me on a number of occasions. I will just say two things, first on whether the old system was perfect. When you talk to people, there were lots of issues around the old system. One of the things that strikes me is that sometimes it is not just about whether they are doing the repairs. It is about someone keeping on top of the maintenance, which is basic stuff in some cases and it has just been allowed to drift. In terms of someone locally doing that, I think there are a lot of interesting questions about, despite that change, whether some people should intervene to stop things like the problems happening that we saw at Pirbright. In terms of the local connection, that is one of the things that is being brought to our attention. We are looking at it as part of the Service Command Paper. We should not detract from the fact that having this centralised system gives us much better focus and overall control on the issues which we did not have before. It was left often to single Services.

Q396 Mr Jones: I do not disagree with that, but if you talk to any housing professional about the way in which management of housing stock has gone over the last 20 or 30 years, even with some of the big social landlords now, the one thing they do is that they have someone locally responsible for it, but, as I say, everybody seems to have forgotten that they are looking after the housing here and somehow have done it completely differently.

Derek Twigg: As you know, MODern Housing Solutions has managers responsible for particular areas. Having someone on every base is another issue but we do need to look at how we can improve that situation. You rightly did highlight that and I have seen it myself when I have been on to bases and talked to families and people, and it is an issue that has been raised as part of the Service Command Paper, so I do not want to pre-empt what we might decide there but we are keen to improve that situation. I cannot give you a definitive answer at the moment because otherwise it will pre-empt what we might say later in the year but yes, I accept the point you make.

Q397 Chairman: Minister, we drew attention in our report on the Defence Estates to these issues and we suggested a number of ways in which there could be some sort of local ownership of the problems so that local Service men and women did not feel that everybody was saying it was somebody else’s fault. I am afraid we thought that the response from the Ministry of Defence that we got to that report was pretty defensive. I wonder if you could revisit that and look again at that response and see whether that could be done better in response to Mr Jones’ question.

Derek Twigg: I accept the point that has been raised. It raised with me regularly. Whether it means someone on every base is another issue but we do need to look at how we can improve that situation. You rightly did highlight that and I have seen it myself when I have been on to bases and talked to families and people, and it is an issue that has been raised as part of the Service Command Paper, so I do not want to pre-empt what we might decide there but we are keen to improve that situation. I cannot give you a definitive answer at the moment because otherwise it will pre-empt what we might say later in the year but yes, I accept the point you make.

Q398 Richard Younger-Ross: Service personnel report difficulties in accessing allowances and understanding them. What impact does the system have on retention?

Derek Twigg: We have just introduced a ready-reckoner which I think 26,000 Service people have accessed. We have put on the website a ready-reckoner and you can go through a series of screens telling you what allowances you will be entitled to, depending on what you are doing at a particular time, so that is a major step forward. We can always do more on that. As you rightly said, there are a lot of allowances that people qualify for. I will give you an example. We have just introduced the council tax refund which came into place on 1 April. There was some uncertainty about where you would claim for that. Some people thought you would go to the local authority and others thought you asked someone in the units or the Ministry of Defence. There has been some uncertainty and confusion about this but I think the ready-reckoner has been an innovative step forward to try and improve that and we do need to do more work on that. In terms of recruitment and retention, I do not have any figures to suggest that that has been a major problem. I am sure it has affected some people’s judgment in what they want to do but I do not think we are sitting back and saying we are not doing anything about it. We have taken steps to try and improve that.

Q399 Richard Younger-Ross: So the ready-reckoner is in response to the round-Europe criticisms of the current system where they say there is a disconnect somewhere between policy and execution and that this may be because of the complexity of the allowances, the way in which they are communicated within each Service or both?
Vice Admiral Wilkinson: Like the Minister, I do not really recognise that as a major issue that our people are raising with us. It may well be a by-product of the introduction of JPA that people have become more aware, as we have introduced a much more self-service culture, of allowances that are available to them. I certainly do not recognise a gap between the policy and delivery around those allowances, but I can investigate further if you wish, sir.

Q400 Richard Younger-Ross: How far are you reviewing the allowances to see what allowances are necessary, because the report had a number of views from personnel about what they thought the allowances ought to come to? I will give you some examples—increasing net pay to those on operations, improving child care to help spouses deal with the effects of disruption, improving moving allowances.

Vice Admiral Wilkinson: All these are covered annually in what used to be the Single Service Attitude Surveys and we are now awaiting the results of the first Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey.

Q401 Richard Younger-Ross: So there is another study that will say everything is fine?

Derek Twigg: It is not a case of “everything is fine”. It has not been raised with us as being a major issue. It clearly is an issue for some people. In terms of knowing what you are entitled to, I think we have recognised that and we have demonstrated that we want to try and improve that recognition, but, as a number of Service people have said to me, they tend to be pretty good at finding out what allowances they should be entitled to. That is not being complacent because some people will have problems and that is why we recognise that and the ready-reckoner is one way of improving that.

Q402 Mr Jones: Dr Alex Alexandrou, when he gave evidence to us, argued that the military personnel need a body to represent their views, and, as you know, I have a third attempt, I think it is, with my Ten-Minute Rule Bill and my amendment to the Armed Forces Bill calling for a federation.

Vice Admiral Wilkinson: All these are covered annually in what used to be the Single Service Attitude Surveys and we are now awaiting the results of the first Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey.

Q403 Mr Jones: You were dragged screaming and kicking to introduce that. That was not easy.

Vice Admiral Wilkinson: I agree that certainly representing the wellbeing and welfare of the people under your command is a vital function for the Chain of Command. I am also strongly of the opinion that there are a number of mechanisms and routes whereby people can make representations or state a complaint all the way up to the Defence Council if necessary.

Q404 Mr Jones: Come on; there are very few who do that. We took evidence on the Armed Forces Bill. It is a handful, is it not, because they never get that far?

Vice Admiral Wilkinson: We can give you the number, sir, I am sure, if you would like us to. Certainly in my own career I have complained at least three times officially. The lightning conductors are there, the individual briefing teams that the Services operate. The Armed Forces Pay Review Board takes a lot of information from Service men and women. There are the attitude surveys, the spouses’ attitude surveys. As the Minister says, a lot of families and dependants write to him. People can join societies, trade organisations that represent their particular career interests. There is any number of outlets for them to discuss or raise issues of difficulty. I think we just have to be cognisant of whether this would strike at some of the areas of ethos that the Services have.

Q405 Mr Jones: I know why the Chain of Command do not want it, but it was good enough, for example, for most of our major allies, including the United States which has a plethora of these organisations representing different branches of the Armed Forces and it works there. It does not affect the Chain of Command there or the ethos. Why are you so against it? You are going to have to give in eventually, I will tell you this. You have to recognise that society has changed. Unlike with the Service Complaints Commissioner which you were dragged screaming and kicking to approve eventually, I have to say you will eventually have to agree to this.

Derek Twigg: Whatever the perception was, and I accept collective responsibility—I was not around at that particular time but I did the last bit of the Bill—I thought there was a lot of support ministerially to do that. That is another area which would mitigate against doing what you are asking for. We have not seen any great groundswell of opinion from Armed Forces personnel that this is what they want. The current organisation has about 200 members. Unless I am mistaken, that has not increased significantly, but also I have to say that Service personnel write to me if they have issues, so they have access to ministers. I deal with correspondence with individuals on a range of issues that they may have concerns about. For those reasons I am not sure that I see the benefit over and above what that this would bring. I know you feel very strongly about it but I do not know whether Admiral Wilkinson wants to add something to that.

Vice Admiral Wilkinson: I agree that certainly representing the wellbeing and welfare of the people under your command is a vital function for the Chain of Command. I am also strongly of the opinion that there are a number of mechanisms and routes whereby people can make representations or state a complaint all the way up to the Defence Council if necessary.
robust. Recently the Australian Federation has disbanded or got in trouble; I am not quite sure which.

Q406 Mr Jones: It has, yes. 
Derek Twigg: So I can only say to you that I talk, like you do, to probably thousands of Service personnel, and I get lots of correspondence and I cannot ever say I have seen a groundswell of opinion saying that it is absolutely essential to have this federation, and for the reasons I have given I really could not add any more to that.

Mr Jones: We will wait and see.

Q407 Chairman: Minister, you have seen the way that the Police Federation has grown up. I do not suppose you would say that that had damaged the police or in any way, would you? 
Derek Twigg: It is not a case so much about whether it has damaged the police or been a bad thing. In terms of the Armed Forces, we have this tradition. In terms of the options for taking forward these issues and the special nature of the Armed Forces, I do not necessarily think because something is right for another organisation it is right for the Armed Forces.

Q408 Mr Borrow: There is a danger when you are trying to gauge what the views of the people you employ are that you can look at the websites and you can get the odd letter and that gives you a certain picture. One of the advantages of some sort of representative body such as a federation is that there is a collective view arrived at by that body of what is wrong or right and some mechanism to put it right. The danger is quite often that you get one or two observations which are at the extreme end which do not necessarily reflect the generality of views and it is about how the MoD gets a view of what the generality of opinion is within the men and women that they employ and how that mechanism works. There is no formal structure to do that. It is just opinion surveys, etc. The thing that the Police Federation can do for the Police Service is say, “This is collectively what we think the police as a service need and these are the views”, and they come to some collective views. There will be people at one extreme and the other outside that but there is at least something for the Police Service and the Home Office to discuss with and to form a view with. Within the MoD there is not that same structure.

Derek Twigg: If you look at the range of things we do in terms of the Continuous Attitude Survey, that is often quoted against us because it often is the negatives that are picked out from it, so obviously that is perceived to be a pretty reflective view by a large number of people. That is one way. We as ministers meet literally thousands of Service personnel during our time in office, but the Chiefs do the same sorts of briefings and talk to Service personnel. There are, of course, many items of correspondence that I particularly receive because I deal with lots of these issues around personnel and discipline areas, whether it is from individual serving personnel or their wives or partners. It is on a regular basis. Without being arrogant about it in any way, in terms of whether we do not know what the general view is of our Service personnel, I think we would be missing something if that was the case given the range of opportunities we have to get views, as I say, and I have not seen a groundswell of opinion from serving personnel that they want this.

Q409 Mr Jenkin: Are there any public expenditure implications to the possibility of an Armed Forces federation? Would it cost public money?
Derek Twigg: The honest answer is that I do not know as we have not decided to have one.

Q410 Mr Jenkin: May I just point out that the Chain of Command is already compromised by the Service Complaints Commissioner, and indeed by the courts which are interfering with the Chain of Command. I rather agree with the general sentiment in this Committee that it is an inevitability and it might be an advantage to have an Armed Forces federation speaking more confidentially and more closely to the Ministry of Defence than a variety of organisations that claim to represent the Armed Forces from outside the Armed Forces at the moment. I have not heard a killer punch against the idea.

Derek Twigg: Obviously I have failed in my task then, Mr Jenkin. I can only repeat what I have said. I do think with the range of views and getting the opinions of our Service personnel it means there are lots of opportunities for ministers to do that down the line. There are the Continuous Attitude Surveys, the various surveys we do, the various forums that exist, etc, so I do not necessarily agree with that. On the other hand, I have not seen a really strong argument that outweighs that, to be quite frank. In terms of the Chain of Command, I do not accept that. We had a discussion about this on a statutory instrument last year with regard to the changes that are being proposed in terms of the Service Complaints Commissioner if he was there. I think the Service Complaints Commissioner is complementary. I think the processes are robust and people have the opportunity to take their complaints up the line.

Q411 Chairman: I do not think you have been trying to punch this to death, Minister. I think you have been trying to smother it.

Derek Twigg: It is not my intention. Vice Admiral Wilkinson: I hesitate to say it would be anything like a killer punch, but can I just point out the low level work of my own committee, the Services Personnel Board, that I chair and on which are three principal personnel officers, one from each of the Services, sit. I am left in no doubt as to the strength of feeling that they are representing on behalf of their own Service on a whole range of personnel issues. This work goes on largely unseen but I think it is yet another mechanism by which Service people are making their feelings known. I freely admit this is coming up through the Chain of Command but there is a strong vein through here that means that in the Ministry of Defence we are
Q412 Mr Jones: SSAFA and the Families Federations told us that welfare support is based around the needs of the Command structure rather than the needs of an individual and the individual’s family. They said it needs to be more cohesive, the welfare package, and I think the Ministry have already touched on some of the things you are trying to do. Would you agree with that and what could be done to improve that?

Derek Twigg: Clearly the Command has an absolute duty to ensure that welfare support is provided for the Service personnel; it is important that the structure is in place, and if it has meant that it is too much around what they specifically want and not enough around what families want I am not sure I go along with that. I think SSAFA themselves have been very much involved in welfare. The Families Federations are very much involved in welfare, ranging from the padre to the HIVE information centre. There is a whole range of welfare support on bases and out in operations. As to whether that can be improved, I accept it probably can, and I think that is the point I made to you earlier on, that we recognise this. In fact, we are having another welfare conference in July to follow up from the previous welfare conference on what more improvements could be made. Yes, there clearly is room for more improvement but whether it is in some way stymied because it is based on the Command structure, I would not necessarily accept that.

Q413 Mr Jenkin: Why is ethnic minority recruiting so important?

Derek Twigg: It is very important that we have Armed Forces which reflect society as a whole. I think that is why we have put so much effort into it, to try and raise the number of ethnic minority recruits.

Q414 Mr Jenkin: And you are missing out on a great deal of potential talent.

Derek Twigg: We have a full range of talented people that we would like to see from communities recruited into the Armed Forces and ethnic minorities are clearly one of a number of people that we want to do that and see more people involved in the Armed Forces and recruited, and that is why we have put so much attention and effort and resource into it. Of course, we have seen that our ethnic minority recruits have done tremendous things in the Armed Forces and we hope to continue to improve the level of recruitment that we have. It is a very difficult task, as you know, from the information we have given you, but it is not through want of trying and that comes from ministers down to the Chain of Command and the Chiefs of Staff.

Q415 Mr Jenkin: So what is the principal reason we keep missing our targets?

Derek Twigg: That is a very difficult question to answer. There is not one reason. We engage at all levels, whether it is from the Chief of the Defence Staff or leaders of the Muslim community to our recruiting officers to the special community events to engage with specific parts of the ethnic minority community. I do not think we know the full reason why we cannot improve on that further.

Q416 Mr Jenkin: Are they all realistic?

Vice Admiral Wilkinson: They are aspirational. I fully support the Minister’s view that we need to reflect the society we represent if we possibly can. We are carrying out a research project at the moment to try to understand better the reasons why people from the ethnic minorities do not wish to join the Services. We have made considerable ground over the last few years in understanding the importance of speaking to the gatekeepers within the communities, those individuals of standing, parents and in many cases grandparents, but there are huge difficulties sometimes in reaching particular areas of our society. The Chinese community in this country is well established and has been for a number of years but our attempts to recruit from that have been extremely difficult.

Q417 Mr Jenkin: And the Hindu community, for example?

Vice Admiral Wilkinson: Again, we are trying extremely hard, sir. It is not for want of trying that we have not achieved success thus far.

Q418 Mr Jenkin: So are we ever going to meet these targets?

Derek Twigg: I cannot guarantee that we will meet the targets but we want to and we are working very hard to do that and we believe we can, but a lot of work is needed. This is not going to be something in the short term. We have to build upon the work we have already done, and perhaps you will understand, as Admiral Wilkinson has said, in terms of the reasons why people do not want to join the Armed Forces. I do not think it is a case of never meeting the targets. It is about not giving up on that and I think it is right that we do not give up and it is right that we have a target that you may argue is an aspiration at the moment but is actually a target we think better reflects the ethnic minority community and how they should be represented in the Armed Forces.

Q419 Mr Jenkin: And reflects the values that the Armed Forces are trying to present to the public.

Derek Twigg: And the values we all know.

Q420 Mr Jenkin: What about the reliance on ethnic minorities from outside the UK? Are we over-reliant on that?

Derek Twigg: I do not accept that we are over-reliant. There is a long-standing history in terms of Commonwealth citizens being members of the Armed Forces. Clearly, they form a very important part of our need and do an amazing job but I would not say we are over-reliant on them. I do not accept that point.
Q421 Mr Jenkin: Some people feel that you are almost fiddling your figures by recruiting from overseas. You are not really recruiting ethnic minorities from within the UK and therefore not really reflecting society.
Derek Twigg: There is a narrow point of difference here but in terms of active recruiting that is not what we do. We were asked to go and recruit; we will do so, and clearly many people of their own volition apply to join the British Armed Forces, so it is not that we are going out there with a strategy to recruit to replace the shortfall we have in the Armed Forces, that is not the case, but we do obviously welcome recruits from other countries and they are doing an amazing job for us.

Q422 Mr Jenkin: And the Equality and Human Rights Commission has complained about the quality of data that are collected within the Armed Forces about ethnic minorities. Can you say something about that? Are you addressing that? Are they going to be pleased with your next set of data?
Vice Admiral Wilkinson: I would certainly hope so. We worked very well with their predecessors, the EOC. We are trying to establish a similar relationship with the EHRC. We are well aware that the veracity of the data is important, both for them and for us. We are using their skills to help us improve wherever we can, so we are looking forward to quite a positive relationship with the EHRC.

Q423 Mr Jenkin: How effective do you think it has been to recruit civilian chaplains from ethnic minority communities?
Derek Twigg: It is early days. I think it is a good innovation. Having met a number of them, I think it is something that will help our overall aim to recruit from ethnic minorities. It is too early to say at the moment how beneficial that has been but I think it is the right thing to do, to be quite frank, and they are very committed individuals.

Q424 Mr Jones: When I was at HMS Raleigh yesterday I have to say that, in terms of the Commonwealth recruits I saw there, the Commanding Officer was saying they are very good, they are of a high quality and very dedicated, so I think they add to the Service, but just looking in terms of the actual numbers in the Armed Forces, apparently 305 Muslims are in the Armed Forces according to the figures we have here. Is it possible, not today, to supply how many of them are from the UK rather than abroad, because I have come to the conclusion that this is a problem of communities rather than the Armed Forces themselves in terms of attitudes, etc. If you could break that down that would be helpful, and women as well.
Vice Admiral Wilkinson: Yes.

Q425 Mr Borrow: One Army Recruiting into the TA—how effective has that been? Has it made things better or worse?
Vice Admiral Wilkinson: One Army Recruiting, as you know, is only a year old and certainly when my colleague, General Gregory, was here when we gave evidence before he said that it is very difficult to tell thus far. It is too early to make judgments, but, instinctively, by offering a range of options to anyone who declares an interest in joining the Army, we think that that will be an improvement on past distinct and separate recruiting for the regular Army versus the Territorials.
Derek Twigg: Some of the Reservists in the TA I have spoken to in recent months think it is a good thing. I could not tell you whether that has brought about the increase that we would all like to see but people serving think it is a good thing, so I think that is beneficial.

Q426 Mr Borrow: To what extent is there an interest in this as a concept from the Naval Marines and the RAF?
Vice Admiral Wilkinson: They are watching closely.

Q427 Mr Borrow: So they are in a look-and-see mode at the moment in terms of whether to implement something similar?
Vice Admiral Wilkinson: Indeed.

Q428 Mr Borrow: Can we move on to a bigger issue, and it is certainly something that we hear anecdotally quite regularly, which is the difficulties of Reserve Forces continuing in the Reserves when they are deployed quite regularly in that they are coming under pressure from their employers? Of course, in the UK there is no statutory right in this area. I just wondered to what extent you are reviewing whether or not we should, if you like, give a bit more strength to those people who are in the Reserve Forces and are facing pressure from their employers to leave the Reserves because of the deployments they are taking?
Vice Admiral Wilkinson: There is, of course, some legislation that protects both the employer and the employee, but, given the current operational tempo, of which we have spoken already this morning, the fact that Reservists are having to deploy more frequently than perhaps was the case in recent times has brought to a head some of the issues that we are now trying to address to make sure that people who join the Reserves have a fulfilling career within them and that we are fair both to them and to the employers, who we gratefully acknowledge release them in most cases very willingly.
Derek Twigg: On the very positive side, SaBRE, which does an amazing job, the organisation with employers, is very supportive and there is a great deal of support out there from employers. While there are, obviously, issues there, I think the vast majority are very supportive and organised in a way that supports us, given the challenges we have in terms of our current operations. Also, for instance, in terms of medical Reservists, we are working very closely with the NHS to see how we can encourage even more to join the Reservists or at least spend some of their time in an operational theatre, so there is a lot of work taking place with the NHS on that.
Q429 Mr Borrow: Is there a recognition that there has been a change over the last 30, 40 years in employment patterns? If you go back 30 or 40 years, a large number of the Reserve Forces population worked for very large employers and therefore it was easier, whether it was jury service or magistrates or whatever it was, for people to be out of the workplace doing things that are public duties. It is much more difficult now, given the changes to much smaller workplaces.

Vice Admiral Wilkinson: There is no doubt that it is more difficult for a small business to manage a Reservist’s frequent deployment as compared to the period of large commercial organisations a few years ago.

Q430 Linda Gilroy: As far as young people are concerned and their changing expectations and careers, are you matching these with flexible entry points and training routes? I am sure you will be aware of the NAO reports and the demographic issues, changing expectations, not having a career for life in the same way that people expected, and Professor Strachan has told the Committee that we ought to be looking much more at the universities as a potential source of recruitment and a positive thing rather than, in his impression, that it is not viewed in that way.

Chairman: Minister, you nod.

Vice Admiral Wilkinson: Again, sir, we covered much of this in our last evidence session, but I do not detect any movement against recruiting from the universities. In fact, we need to explore all avenues that are open to us. There are opportunities here. We realise that people no longer perhaps want a career for life as they did in the past. If we can be more flexible about the way we employ them that would be to our advantage and we have people looking at the possibilities here in terms of taking career breaks or part-time or flexible working so that we reflect the lifestyles of the people who now join the Services. We realise it is to our advantage to do that.

Q431 Linda Gilroy: But does a re-engineering of the role of the Reserves have a role to play in that?

Vice Admiral Wilkinson: Indeed, and you are well aware that there is a review of Reserves being undertaken at the moment, and I would have thought that that is one of the areas that they are going to be looking at, to be more flexible in the future.

Derek Twigg: To sum up, basically, we have to be smarter and more flexible in terms of recruitment and retention, and that is a yes.

Q432 Chairman: Minister, yesterday I visited Basingbourne, which was a very helpful visit from the Defence Committee’s point of view. I wonder if you could help to clear up some confusion that I now have in my mind about the number of people who discharge as of right? Yesterday I heard that we lose something like 23% of new recruits in training and that it is much the same as our loss at the same level in the United States, but I have also heard different figures, that the United States only lose 10% in training and that we lose 37%. I wonder if you could write to us setting out precisely what numbers we do lose discharging as of right and how it compares with our major allies and, if we are doing worse, why you think we might be doing worse and how we can learn from other countries how to do it better? If you could break that down by Service that would be helpful.

Derek Twigg: Yes, we will do that.

Q433 Chairman: Thank you very much indeed. One final suggestion. I met yesterday some young boys. They were all at that stage boys going through the junior entry. They were 16, 17, and they were very impressive after ten weeks of service. I wondered whether there might be some mileage to be gained in asking them at the end of the early part of their training to go back to the schools that they had left, possibly not having done very well in their schools, completely transformed into confident and contributing young men and women and showing their teachers, who are sometimes the gatekeepers, quite how Forces training can transform a personality.

Derek Twigg: It would probably be best after phase two rather than phase one.

Q434 Chairman: It could well be.

Derek Twigg: I think it is an excellent idea and it is something we will explore.

Vice Admiral Wilkinson: It is certainly a thread, sir, that Quentin Davies’ report brought out yesterday as one of his recommendations.

Derek Twigg: The answer is yes, we will explore that.

Chairman: Excellent, thank you. It is 12.30; you have to go. Thanks very much indeed for this final session. It has been very helpful.
Written evidence

Memorandum from the RAF Families Federation

1. The RAF Families Federation, operating under The Royal Air Forces Association (RAFA), has been invited to contribute both written and oral evidence to the House of Commons Defence Committee (HCDC) Inquiry into Recruitment & Retention in the Armed Forces. We are grateful for the opportunity to inform this Inquiry and we are hopeful that the views of RAF families will influence to some degree the HCDC’s report on these important issues. We have all heard the American maxim “Recruit the Man (or woman!), Retain the Family” and we believe that one of the strongest “pull factors” encouraging Service personnel to consider leaving the RAF is the impact of the military life-style on family life. It is therefore all the more important that families’ views form part of the evidence being considered by the HCDC and we are pleased to see the 3 Family Federations actively engaged in this work.

2. There is no doubt that military families today are facing significant challenges and that expectations are high in terms of the support they believe the uniformed and family members of the Service deserve. An increased operational tempo and a massive shift from the old “Cold War” scenario to the more recent “expeditionary” air force sees thousands of personnel deployed to Iraq, Afghanistan and other trouble spots around the world. Families are experiencing frequent and prolonged absences of loved ones, and Out of Area deployments are no longer the exception but more the rule. Whilst welcoming improvements in some allowances and the painfully slow progress in improving accommodation standards, many families believe that the military are under-valued and that the disadvantages of the military life-style outweigh the advantages that perhaps attracted them to join in the first place.

3. This report focuses on retention as we believe that this is the area of the Inquiry to which our evidence is most relevant. However, we do believe that many of the factors highlighted by families have a negative read-across to recruitment since public awareness of many of these issues undoubtedly has a negative impact on their perception of life in the Armed Forces. Every bad news story about Service accommodation, inadequate support to casualties, alleged bullying at training camps, etc, whether based on fact or not, adds to a perception of a military life-style that is unattractive in comparison to careers available in civilian life.

4. As the RAF has only recently re-established a Families Federation (we launched in November 2007), our mechanisms for gathering evidence from families are as yet relatively immature in comparison to our sister Services’ Families Federations. However, we have conducted a number of liaison visits to RAF units and our Issues database is evolving every day, with more and more RAF personnel and their families bringing issues to our attention, many of which have a direct read-across to retention. Moreover, the Federation team itself has over 60 years experience of serving in the RAF, either in uniform or as a partner of a Serviceperson, hence our appreciation of many of the issues being reported to us is based on personal experience.

5. To inform this inquiry, I have reviewed earlier work completed last year for the Armed Forces Pay Review Body review of the X-factor, since many of the messages emerging from RAF families for that review have a resonance with this current inquiry. Annex A details the key issues that RAF families believe impact adversely on family life, broken down into the key X-factor areas (“Features of the Job”; “Impact of the Job” and “Social Aspects of the Job”). Ministers will be aware that the AFPRB included this evidence in their deliberations and that, as a result of this and other evidence, a 1% increase in X-factor was included in the last Pay award. I have now updated this evidence to reflect the evidence emerging from unit liaison visits and our Issues database in the hope it will give the HCDC an insight into the issues impacting on RAF families today.

6. I have also included (at Annex B) a simple narrative report detailing the top family-related issues that we believe are having a negative impact on retention. These issues are drawn from our (admittedly relatively immature) database and from discussions we have had with family members, both serving and non-serving, during the seven unit liaison visits undertaken during the last three months.

7. Finally, the HCDC will wish to note that the RAF Families Federation launched a simple survey of family members during the period 1-21 March 2008 to inform the work being undertaken for the Service Personnel Command Paper, a study being chaired by Min AF. Several of the questions posed in our survey covered retention. Unfortunately, the analysis of this work will not be complete for the HCDC deadline for written evidence but, once this work is complete, we will send a copy to the Committee for consideration as you deem appropriate.
EVIDENCE PRESENTED TO THE AFPRB IN JULY 2007. UPDATED TO REFLECT EMERGING EVIDENCE GATHERED BY THE RAF FAMILIES FEDERATION NOVEMBER 2007-MARCH 2008

Annex A

Aspect of RAF Comments
Career/Lifestyle

Features of the Job
Adventure and Travel
Closure of units overseas has limited opportunity for travel. Many feel that access to Adventurous Training is limited and that increased gapping and the increased operational tempo has made it even more difficult to secure time off for such training. Closure of UK units has also reduced the opportunity to live in different parts of the UK, reducing the sense of adventure that prevailed when there were many more bases upon which to serve.

Job Satisfaction
Many commented on the additional stress caused by increased workloads—covering for those Out of Area and also for the gapping caused by the draw-down of the RAF. This impacts on job satisfaction to a great degree as people feel overworked and undervalued. Some commented on the frequency of guard duty which is still required on some units, despite the arrival of MPGS staffs.

Job Security
Impacted adversely by recent redundancy rounds—people are far less certain they will enjoy a full career. Reduction in uniformed numbers is reducing opportunities for promotion, which is linked to further service and job security. Job security for partners trying to pursue separate careers is non-existent.

Promotion & Early Responsibility
Most feel that promotion is far harder to obtain and that levels of responsibility have been eroded, particularly at the junior non-commissioned level. Evidence of many turning to internal commissioning route in order to secure greater responsibility and promotion as they feel stuck in the lower levels of non-commissioned service, with some trades experiencing very poor promotion flows.

Degree of Autonomy/Management
Most report a poor level of autonomy, albeit it gets better when on operations where there are fewer staff and individuals feel a greater sense of control.

Workplace
Returning to the UK home base can then be very frustrating as they revert to lower levels of responsibility. Flexible working practices is not part of the RAF ethos despite promises to the contrary for “family-friendly” employment policies.

Flexibility
Too much depends on the personality and management style of the boss.

Training
Many report that it is becoming far more difficult to get released from primary duties to undertake professional and/or personal development training. Resettlement training can also be difficult to achieve if your last tour of duty is on a busy front-line unit where absence for key resettlement courses can impact on the operational effectiveness of the squadron. Family members can find it difficult to pursue training courses and higher education as postings disrupt the study period and access to colleges.

Impact of the Job
Danger
Since the X-factor was last increased, the level of danger and risk being faced by RAF personnel has gone up significantly, with casualties in Iraq and Afghanistan a regular feature of the daily news. The impact of combat stress has not been properly evaluated and families fear that repeated exposure to dangerous operational activity is having a negative impact on the mental and physical health of the uniformed members of the family, with knock-on effects on the rest of the family. Personnel return from current operations reporting regular attacks by mortar and small-arms fire, plus incidences of suicide bombers within their vicinity. This is not something RAF personnel (other than perhaps the Regiment) were accustomed to experiencing before the Service moved towards “expeditionary” ops in the global war on terrorism.

Hours of Work
Most families report that their uniformed partners are working longer hours than they used to, carrying extra duties to cover for those on OOA or taking on more secondary duties as the number of uniformed personnel available to undertake them has fallen. This can impact adversely on provision of child care if the other partner also has a job.

Leave
Many report that, whilst they do manage to get most of their leave entitlements, it is often not at their preferred time of year due to operational commitments. Several report short-notice cancellation of family holidays. Where partners are also working, co-ordinating leave plans is very difficult, especially if children’s school holidays are also a factor. Many feel they cannot plan ahead for those “once-in-a-lifetime” holidays for fear of seeing their plans unravel closer to the time.
Aspect of RAF Comments

Career/Lifestyle

Separation from Home and Family This is a major concern of RAF families and they feel that separation is increasing, with more frequent turn-arounds between operational tours and some trades routinely breaching the “harmony guidelines”. Some pointed out that separation from the uniformed partner is exacerbated when you are also separated from family and friends because you have opted to “follow the flag” and live away from your family home. Those left behind feel forced to adopt single-parent coping strategies to compensate for the missing partner, whilst often trying to maintain their own job/career.

Turbulence Although some would expect turbulence to reduce as we move to larger bases and withdraw from most overseas bases, most families feel that turbulence is still a major negative factor. The need to move the family at frequent intervals impacts on so many family areas—housing, education, healthcare, partner’s careers, special needs, etc. The majority of respondents felt that they required more stability as a family. The impact of turbulence on a partner’s career aspirations is significant, even with those professions traditionally considered easily “transferable” (teaching and nursing). Most partners cannot pursue a sustained career path of their own and this impacts on earning capacity and ability to afford housing, private education, private healthcare, etc—options that could make the Service families’ lives easier, if they were affordable. The lack of stability also means the partner can rarely build up his/her own pension entitlements. Many respondents highlighted the impact of postings on their ability to enter the housing market, something many aspire to, particularly in light of rising FQ rents.

Social Aspects of the Job

Divorce and Family Although comparative divorce/separation rates are not available, many RAF families share a perception that the level of relationship breakdown is higher than in the civilian world. They believe that it is often too easy for couples to marry, perhaps to gain that first home and access to an allowances package that continues to benefit the married over the single. It is then relatively easy for the uniformed member to move out—he/she can simply return to the Mess or Barrack block, leaving the rest of the family to be eventually evicted from quarters. Reasons for the breakdown range from too much separation, posting to the wrong part of the country, impact on partner’s career aspirations or any number of relationship issues that seem to be exacerbated when the uniformed member is away from home too much.

Health and Education RAF Families are still crying out for access to the RAF facilities they used to enjoy. Many families are commuting hundreds of miles back to old locations to maintain continuity of dental care. Whilst access to NHS doctors is not so acute, families still believe that partners and children of the uniformed member should be treated by the same doctor and not in isolation. As far as education is concerned, many families report difficulties in accessing their preferred school on relocation and many have to go through the stress of the appeals process. Whilst the CEAS provides excellent support, many feel they should not have to go through this process. Several commented that the increasing cost of Boarding School is not reflected in the Continuity of Education allowances. Further requests for the postings of those with school-aged children to be timed for the main school holiday to minimise disruption.

Stress at Work Many report that their partners are very stressed at work because they are either deploying frequently to areas of known danger and risk, or they are covering the duties of those who have deployed.

Support to Personnel and Families Most RAF families feel that the level of support available to them has declined over recent years. The introduction of JPA has removed many clerks from the front-line, who could help them understand rules and regulations pertaining to RAF service. The demise of the RAF Families Officer left many in FQs feeling they had no one to turn to and the withdrawal of the DE housing staffs merely added to that perception (The RAF’s introduction of Service Community Support Officers is seen as a welcome reversal of this trend but their effectiveness and impact has yet to be measured). Many feel that the RAF personnel staffs are simply too busy to provide adequate support and the lack of access to RAF doctors and dentists leaves families feeling isolated. Lack of affordable childcare on base was also cited as an area that the RAF should do more to counter, particularly when both parents are serving. Many respondents felt that they had not had any information about “family friendly” policies and doubted they existed.
Aspect of RAF
Career/Lifestyle

Travel to Work

Many report that it is now costing them a considerable amount of money and/or time for the uniformed member to get to work—many are being housed in quarters miles away from their work base and for some, the allowances available do not cover the costs involved. There is limited recognition that the need to have a second car is often predicated on where the RAF can provide housing—partners also need to be able to travel to and from work or to local facilities. Service-provided buses to and from FQ sites are often extremely inflexible and do not meet the needs of many who may be required to work early or late, or do shifts.

Quotes from Family members

RAF life has “a profound affect on family life—we have all moved repeatedly with each of my husband’s postings”

“For his career I have sacrificed mine”

“Leave has been refused at short notice recently”.

“We make fewer decisions together which strains the relationship”.

“Causes anxiety in the children”.

“Often I feel in the dark or left alone to cope”.

“Service life is not family friendly”.

“I feel families are an inconvenience to the Services”.

“I will be pressuring my husband to leave the Service before our eldest reaches High School age”.

“Marriage should be a partnership but a Service spouse is treated like an extra child”.

“Spouses with children liken their lives to those of single parents, taking on full responsibilities of life and parenting”.

“Men are missing out on their children’s milestones”.

“Due to high operational commitments and under manning, morale is low and the workload and pressures on individuals is increasing”.

“The pros for working in the RAF are diminishing”.

“Behavioural problems amongst children can be extremely exhausting for the single parent who is left to cope”.

“Partner’s careers are often put on hold or compromised”.

“Spouses’ expectations are considerably higher than the support now available”.

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Annex B

Family-Related Issue

Housing

Housing features as the main issue on the new RAF FF database. The main complaints centre on the allocations policy and entitlement to SFA (based on rank, size of family, Special Needs requirements, etc). These issues seem to cross the rank structure and special needs provision is clearly a growing area of concern.

We have also seen recent evidence arising from non-entitled partners who are not permitted to co-habit with long-term partners, many with children from the relationship, due to the lack of a formal marriage certificate. This lack of recognition causes resentment and is cited as a reason for some to consider leaving the RAF. We are aware that work is in hand in the Centre to address this but it has been on the policy desks for at least 10 years, with no promise of delivery in the near future due to the cost implications of extending entitlements to partners. Other housing issues relate to the performance of the Housing Information
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<td>Centres, the delivery of response and pre-planned maintenance, and the overall lack of investment in the estate leaving a backlog of repairs and upgrades required to bring accommodation up to a standard the families believe is appropriate. Many families aspire to own their own properties and welcome initiatives such as the Key Worker Living Scheme that enables military personnel to apply for shared equity and similar initiatives. However, the constant mobility of RAF life, coupled with the lack of control over future family location, makes entry into the housing market a particular challenge and a high-risk endeavour for many.</td>
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**Education**

The key issue here is mobility and the need to move children to different schools if the family is to stay together or to opt for boarding school to guarantee continuity of education.

Access to first choice primary and secondary schools across the UK is becoming a very emotive subject, with many families having to appeal against decisions by local authorities, adding to the stress of moving home. Often, the short-notice of an assignment, or the late notification of an address can make the application process even more challenging and whilst recent enhancements in policy have allowed unit addresses to be used for school registration purposes, if the accommodation is in a different catchment area to the base, this does not make the application any easier.

Access to special educational needs provision is also complicated by the mobility factor, with some families reporting long delays in securing the same provision at a new location. Whilst statements of special need are supposed to be transferable, this is not always the case in practice, meaning that children have to be re-assessed by the new school, creating delays in their educational support.

Although we do not have hard statistical data to back this up, we are led to believe by many families that the cost of boarding school has increased significantly over recent years and that the Continuity of Education Allowance (Board) has failed to keep pace with this, meaning that families are now required to pay a larger proportion of private education costs.

**Health**

Whilst this is an “old chestnut” as far as the MOD is concerned, it would be remiss of us if we did not include the continuing angst caused by the lack of access to NHS dentists. Families are either waiting for protracted periods to gain access to dental cover, are travelling back to previous locations to secure continued access, or are simply not registering either themselves or their children for routine dental care. Whilst we acknowledge that this is a national problem that is being addressed by a national strategy, the problem continues to be exacerbated by the mobility of Service families, who frequently re-locate every 18 months to three years, sometimes at short notice and to locations not of their choice.

Access to GP care for families seems to cause fewer problems and some lucky families are cared for by RAF doctors on training units, where junior doctors use the family population as a resource to extend their learning and experience. There is still concern that family care is split between different doctors, with the Serviceperson covered by the RAF and the partner and children required to register in the local NHS clinic.

Access to specialist medical treatment can also cause difficulties for RAF families required to move frequently around the country. The “post code lottery” that appears to determine whether specialist treatment is delivered, and if so, at what cost, can create real difficulties for families, with some opting to serve unaccompanied in order to allow a partner or child to continue to receive specialist medical care. Whilst the RAF is sympathetic to requests from serving personnel to delay or cancel a posting that would have a negative impact on medical care, the Service need must come first and this can force families to make very difficult choices.

**Financial**

Although we have limited evidence in our database regarding financial issues, we are aware that the continuing increase in accommodation charges is considered a negative factor by many families who perceive that the quality of accommodation, lack of choice and limits on self-help to improve the quality of the family home, does not justify the higher rents.

We have received some comments that the pay and allowances for RAF personnel deployed to operational theatres are still insufficient to recompense for the increased risk and danger now being faced in many Out of Area locations. However, we do not sense that financial issues are a strongly negative retention factor, except where the cost of house purchase is concerned, covered earlier under housing.
### Family-Related Comment

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<tr>
<td>Operational Tempo/ Separation</td>
<td>One of the key concerns arising from RAF families is the increased operational tempo, with some specialisations facing repeated breaches of the “harmony guidelines”. Whilst many serving personnel relish the opportunity to serve on operational deployments, and volunteer to put their training into practice, the impact on family life cannot be under-estimated. The constant fear that the next media report will be about your loved one being killed or wounded is a stress most of us cannot imagine and the impact on children is an area that has yet to be fully evaluated. We have received reports of families finding the disruption of the partner’s return extremely difficult to cope with, for all parties, and the difficulties caused when he/she then deploys again having a major impact on children’s behaviour. The difficulties experienced during the absence of a serving partner are often exacerbated by the distance between the family and their other relatives, since many Service families continue to “follow the flag” and will serve miles from their home base and the support that can offer. Clearly, many families cope extremely well with the regular deployments and might argue their relationships are all the stronger for the enforced separation. Our evidence, however, tends to highlight the negative aspects of separation and its impact on a family’s willingness to continue to support the Serviceman or woman throughout repeated deployments. We have received evidence of some families slipping through the “welfare net” and of partners not receiving the level of support that is available to them during the deployment of the Serviceman or woman. These individuals report an extreme sense of isolation and many are unsure who to turn to for help, particularly the younger wives and partners who may lack experience of the RAF welfare support structures. We have also received comment from some parents of serving personnel who feel that they are not kept well-informed when their loved ones are deployed and that their concerns do not appear to merit much support from the Service welfare agencies. Contact with parents very much depends on the Service person nominating them as individuals to be kept informed via the Point of Contact system that operates within the RAF; often this covers only the spouse/partner and parents can feel isolated, relying on the media to keep them informed of events impacting on their son/daughter.</td>
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### Service Terms & Conditions of Service (T&COS)

Although our evidence is patchy, there is certainly an emerging theme that the differences in entitlements between the three Services, exacerbated in a joint arena, can cause feelings of resentment amongst the cadre with the less favourable T&COS. Relocation leave has been cited as one example—the Army having a greater entitlement than the RAF. We have also received negative comments regarding the inability of those who wish to stay in the Service beyond the Normal Retirement Date (NRD) of 55 being forced to leave at a time when there is so much attention being paid to retention. Similar comments come from those unable to extend beyond an engagement through “continuance” or “assimilation” (both terms referring to Service-led requirements for limited numbers to serve beyond the normal exit point). Whilst the Federation recognises that strategic manpower planning is a complex science, there is a view amongst family members that the RAF is losing experienced staff when it could perhaps retain their services for longer to cover current and forecast gapping or increases in established tasking. We have received comments from some families that longer tours, particularly for officers, who tend to move every 18 months to two years, would be a welcome step towards mitigating many of the problems experienced by mobile military families. We are aware that proposals for more regional postings are being considered to improve family stability; we would support this development, subject to the Service recognising the needs of those who do not achieve an area of choice—there will always be some who need to serve in locations not of their choosing to meet the Service requirement.
Memorandum from the Armed Forces Pay Review Body

INTRODUCTION

1. The following evidence summarises our views on recruitment and retention in the Armed Forces to inform the Defence Committee’s inquiry. It is based on our published reports (2007 and 2008 Reports enclosed). To help the Committee we first describe our remit, approach and evidence base, and then the factors influencing, and steps taken to improve, recruitment and retention.

HOW WE OPERATE

2. As an independent Pay Review Body, we provide advice to the Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Defence on remuneration and charges for members of the Armed Forces (up to and including Brigadier and equivalent ranks). Our terms of reference (see Annex) require us to consider recruitment, retention and motivation of personnel, pay comparisons with civilians plus Government policies, its inflation target and departmental affordability.

3. Since 1971, AFPRB has been recommending pay and charges which, in the main, have been accepted by Government. We operate on an annual cycle starting in March with a full briefing from MoD and the Services on current issues, followed between March and July by our extensive visits programme. In 2007, we visited 25 Service units in the UK, overseas and operational areas meeting 3,800 personnel and families in around 300 discussion groups. These visits allow us to hear views first hand and to better understand the role of the military. They often highlight issues which we can then test out with MoD or, if outside our remit, which can be relayed back to MoD for action. In the autumn, we receive written and oral evidence from the Government and various parts of MoD. Annual evidence covers current strategies, manning, recruitment, retention, working hours and leave plus various aspects of the package under periodic review. We also commission our own independent research covering pay comparability, pension valuations, X-Factor and civilian housing costs. Our extensive evidence base is completed by generic information on economic indicators, the labour market, employment legislation and pay developments.

4. In making our recommendations, we are also mindful of the total reward package available to the Armed Forces including pay, pensions, allowances and support. MoD keeps us up to date with developments outside our remit.

GENERAL

5. Armed Forces’ manning, recruitment and retention are important elements within our terms of reference. Our 2008 Report noted that all three Services saw a decrease in trained strength at 1 April 2007 compared with a year earlier, partly due to restructuring which was being achieved through a combination of natural wastage and redundancy. The drawdown was at a time when operational commitments were significantly higher than planned and continued to exceed Defence Planning Assumptions. Armed Forces’ manning levels have been persistently below requirement for many years. The April 2007 deficit of 3.2% was the largest since April 2003 and was outside the tolerance for the Public Sector Agreement target. Looking forward, we pointed to the problems each Service reported having to meet manning balance in 2008 and 2009.

6. We have repeatedly drawn attention to the fact that the overall manning position masks severe shortages in Operational Pinch Points. These cover some 67 trades and critical manning groups amounting to around 35,000 personnel (20% of trained strength). Management of pinch points was a MoD priority but even if overall full manning is achieved pinch points would remain. The manning shortages have exacerbated the pressures on the Armed Forces over a period when commitments have outstripped resources.

7. Manning deficits, variable achievement of recruitment targets and a gradual increase in Voluntary Outflow have all informed our pay recommendations. Developments in the package available to the Armed Forces have focused on targeted measures primarily aimed at improving retention. However, we have frequently commented that pay measures are only part of the solution and must be accompanied by action on a range of non-remuneration measures to support recruitment and retention. The desire for home ownership and improved employer support are increasingly raised with us by personnel and their families on our visits. We have commented on the difficulties measuring the effectiveness of support measures in helping retention but their importance is frequently raised on our visits. We therefore welcome the intention to publish a Command Paper in 2008 setting out the Government’s view on existing and further support to Service personnel.

1 All our reports and accompanying research are published on www.ome.uk.com
Factors Influencing Recruitment

8. The labour market. We observed in our 2007 and 2008 Reports that the current labour market presents challenges to the Armed Forces in maintaining or improving its share of the recruitment market particularly as they must “grow their own”. Forecasts of labour supply and demand point to increasing employment and economic activity among the population, an ageing labour force, higher female employment, a reducing supply of young people and increasing numbers of young people continuing in education. The labour market is becoming more competitive with vacancies rising, unemployment on a downward trend, redundancy rates at low levels and competition for higher skilled personnel increasing. We have suggested that the Armed Forces should develop flexible entry points and training routes, develop careers for those from non-traditional labour market sources, and attract the higher skills required to support operational capability. The Armed Forces cannot respond as other employers do to these changes, for example they cannot readily fill gaps or skill shortages by recruiting older workers or non-commonwealth foreign nationals. Moreover, increases in labour supply are mainly from groups that traditionally have not entered the Armed Forces.

9. Pay comparisons. Our recent assessments, under our terms of reference, suggest Armed Forces’ pay is broadly comparable with other young people and graduates in civilian employment. In 2007, Other Ranks’ starting pay was comparable with civilian median starting salaries up to age 21. Between ages 22–29 comparability varied, being behind civilians for Privates/Lance Corporals (and equivalents) but ahead for Corporals. Officers’ starting pay was behind that for graduates entering civilian employment but the military offer significant progression in the early years and starting pay was comparable with the public sector. Our recommendations in recent years have targeted the most Junior Ranks and we have made significant increases to new entrants’ pay. However, Armed Forces’ pay rates must remain competitive to attract sufficient numbers and quality of recruits with current labour market pressures.

10. Other influencing factors. In evidence for our 2008 Report, MoD commented that some factors both encouraged and discouraged recruitment, such as current operations. This is borne out on our visits when personnel tell us that operations are both the reason they joined the Armed Forces and an influencing factor to leave. MoD also recognises the challenges of the buoyant job market, recruitment of ethnic minorities and women, the impact of the Deepcut Review and the potential for lateral recruitment. We have commented on the importance of turning effective recruitment into Gains to Trained Strength. Recruitment failing to meet target is followed in later years by shortfalls in Gains to Trained Strength. In the longer term, deficits follow through the rank structure, as we have noted when assessing remedial pay measures for several shortage groups.

Factors Influencing Retention

11. Outflow rates. Against the background of manning shortages and improving but still fragile recruitment, retention remains critical to operational capability. Voluntary Outflow has continued on an upward trend, increasing during 2006–07 from 3.4 to 3.6% for Officers and from 5.4 to 5.6% for Other Ranks. Exit rates for Officers and Other Ranks in 2006–07 were the highest since 2001–02.

12. Commitment levels. Numbers in Iraq have reduced and operations in Northern Ireland ceased in 2007, but numbers in Afghanistan are planned to increase. Evidence to us and personnel on our visits to operational areas, emphasised the qualitative transformation in the intensity of warfighting engagements on operations so increasing the stresses on personnel. The Armed Forces also continued to support the Government’s wider counter-terrorism operations and civil emergencies. MoD has stated that the Armed Forces have operated significantly beyond resources since 2002 and assessed, in evidence to us, that the Armed Forces “can cope but only just and that they have a very limited capacity to generate a reserve to meet the unexpected”. The direct impact of operational commitments is enduring breaches of harmony guidelines which were difficult to meet for each of the Services and particularly so in pinch points essential to operational capability. Around 10% of Army personnel had exceeded the guideline for involuntary separation with significant pressures experienced by the Infantry, Royal Armoured Corps and Royal Artillery. The RAF had over 6% of personnel exceeding the 12-month guideline. The RN minimised harmony breaches which led to significant increases in front line gapping (12.9% RN and Royal Marines 17.7%). We conclude that, while the numbers committed to operations remained high and manning deficits persist, personnel and their families will continue to come under pressure posing real risks to recruitment, retention and morale.

13. Pay comparisons. Base pay plays an important role in retaining personnel in the Armed Forces. Our remit specifically requires us to maintain broad pay comparability with civilians. We concluded from our comparisons on job weight at April 2007 that pay levels were broadly in line for Other Ranks and Junior Officers but the gap with civilian pay levels at Lieutenant Colonel through to Brigadier (and equivalents) had widened. Pay movements for civilians of similar job weight were in a range of 1.5 to 4.5% for Other Ranks and 2.6 to 8.4% for Officers. We also assessed that the packages available to uniformed civilian services were advantageous compared to the military, particularly on starting pay although civilian entry ages are much higher. Personnel see uniformed civilian services as natural comparators and often in competition for recruitment or as second careers. Armed Forces’ pensions also have a role in retention in
both their value and the early payments. The structure of the schemes is not within our remit but we undertake pension valuations so that the relative military advantage can be taken into account in our pay comparisons (the last valuation was for our 2007 Report).

14. **X-Factor.** Basic pay in the Armed Forces is supplemented by the X-Factor of 14% to recognise the relative disadvantage of conditions of service compared to civilians. X-Factor is an important element of the remuneration package and influences recruitment and retention in that it clearly sets apart the military from civilians. Our 2008 Report (and accompanying research) sets out our most recent review from which we concluded a 1% increase was justified based on diminishing aspects of Service life and slight improvements in civilian life. Military changes were driven by significant increases in danger, turbulence, separation and working hours—all seen as the highest priorities by Service personnel and also influencing whether personnel stay in the Armed Forces. Our recommended increase also recognised targeted improvements such as the Operational Allowance, Longer Separation Allowance and the Operational Welfare Package.

15. **Continuous Attitude Surveys.** Operational pressure, separation and the impact on family life continue to have a negative influence on retention according to our interpretation of the 2007 Services’ Continuous Attitude Surveys. All these factors were strongly emphasised by personnel and families on our visits. Compared to the previous year’s survey results, Army and RN Officers said they were more likely to leave while RM Officers said they were less likely to leave, with the RAF data showing little change. For Other Ranks, data for RN, Army and RAF showed little change but those in the RM said they were less likely to leave. For those personnel intending to leave the Armed Forces, the most frequent reasons given relate to the impact of Service life on personal family life and the impact of operational commitments and overstretched. While survey data indicated that overall pay in the Armed Forces remained a positive source of satisfaction, dissatisfaction with absolute and relative pay was increasing.

**Steps Taken to Improve Retention**

16. Our recent reports have noted the growing emphasis on targeted pay measures where specialist shortages directly impact on operational capability. These measures are increasingly important to the remuneration package.

17. **Financial Retention Incentives.** FRIs are becoming MoD’s measure of choice to influence retention. We have accepted, as has the National Audit Office, the necessity of this short term approach and have welcomed MoD’s time limits and exit strategies for each FRI. However, we consider that MoD should urgently assess the cost effectiveness of FRIs including robust cost benefit analysis which estimates the additional numbers retained rather than looking at absolute numbers who benefit. We also observe that the widespread use of temporary measures (now capturing larger groups within the Armed Forces) points to potential pay structure problems which MoD should keep under review. FRIs can be divisive and we have asked the MoD and the Services actively manage other groups not receiving these incentives.

18. FRIs in recent years have targeted various categories of Aircrew, the Infantry, Royal Marines, Submariners, Specialist Nurses and the Royal Signals. For introduction in 2008, we endorsed MoD’s proposals for FRIs for Submarine Nuclear Watchkeepers, RAF Regiment Gunners, RAF Firefighters, REME Vehicle Mechanics and the Royal Artillery. We consider extensive evidence on each before endorsement. Since 2005, the Principal Personnel Officers of each Service have had delegated authority to implement quick remuneration responses to emerging manning problems. These have included FRIs for Submariner Medical Assistants, Royal Artillery Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Operators and Courier Despatch Riders plus a Golden Hello for Leading Aircraft Controllers.

19. **Specialist Pay.** Specialist Pay is specifically designed to address longstanding recruitment and retention difficulties. We review rates of Specialist Pay annually and periodically review each item. Targeted changes to aid recruitment and retention have included a new category for Explosive Ordnance Disposal Operators (in 2008), specific increases to rates and restructuring as proposed by MoD. Each of the Services regularly reviews posts attracting Specialist Pay.

20. **Other measures.** Personnel on our visits have frequently highlighted the need for remuneration to be focused on those deploying to operations. In response, the package has been developed by enhancements to Compensatory Allowances, the introduction of the Operational Allowance (in 2006), improvements to the Operational Welfare Package and Council Tax relief on operations. We have successfully targeted compensation through the Longer Separation Allowance (and its predecessors) to those experiencing the most separation. These have included targeted rate increases and reductions and removal of the initial qualifying periods. All these enhancements have been widely welcomed by Service personnel and Senior Officers on our visits.

**Impact of Recruitment and Retention Difficulties on Meeting Commitments**

21. The size of the Armed Forces’ manning deficit is crucial to running the business of the Armed Forces. The deficit leads to gapping of posts, additional workload pressures on individuals and challenges delivering manpower requirements for operations. These effects are most keenly felt in the Operational Pinch Points. In our view, the manning deficit can only be rectified by improved recruitment, reducing training wastage and encouraging longer service. It might be normal business practice for employers in many sectors of the
economy to carry a manpower shortage but, since the Services only recruit at base ranks and grow their experience, they cannot respond in the same way as employers in the wider economy who have a greater range of employment or resource options.

**Specific Groups**

22. Reserves. Our reports have commented on the crucial role Reserves play in supporting operations. The Reserves have seen a significant shift in focus in the last ten years towards being available to mobilise in support of operations. Reserves’ manning shortages tend to mirror those in Regular Forces and recruitment has declined since 1999. From the evidence presented to us and meeting Reserves on our visits, recruitment and retention factors apply equally as they do to Regulars. We welcome the introduction of a combined Regular and Reserve recruitment process and await its impact on numbers recruited. While pay does not appear to be a major concern for Reserves, the Training Bounties influence retention particularly in the early years although we have advocated the tailoring of bounties to match individual Services’ needs. We are also told on our visits that regular opportunities for and quality of training also help to retain Reserves. A major consideration is the attitude of and support to Reserves’ civilian employers. While MOD and individual Reserve units make efforts to engage with employers, this is an area which is frequently cited by personnel as requiring more resource and priority.

23. Defence Medical Services. We report separately on Service Medical and Dental Officers which have suffered from significant specialty shortfalls for a long period. Our terms of reference require us to maintain broad pay comparability with NHS equivalents and, in recent years, there have been numerous pay measures introduced to support retention, including new DMS pay structures in 2003 and significant targeted pay awards. Key retention influences are similar to the rest of the Armed Forces including operational pressure, separation and quality of life.

**Conclusions**

24. Recruitment and retention have both been influential on our deliberations regarding appropriate Armed Forces’ pay awards. The Armed Forces’ remuneration package has seen considerable development in recent years involving base pay awards, increases to X-Factor and targeted measures. MOD’s strategic approach to remuneration has focused on targeting specialist areas or providing better compensation arrangements for those experiencing the impact of operations. However, we have learned from more detailed reviews of specific areas of the Armed Forces that pay solutions need to be accompanied by effective non-remuneration measures. The Armed Forces face an increasingly competitive recruitment market, including competition for higher skilled people, and will need to look at alternative sources. Retention of expensively trained personnel will also be the focus of MOD strategies if operational and other commitments remain at high levels. We consider the factors influencing retention can often be traced back to the underlying problem that Armed Forces’ commitments continue to exceed resources.

17 March 2008

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**Memorandum from Dr Alex Alexandrou**

**Introduction**

I would like to thank the Defence Committee for inviting me to give evidence to this much needed inquiry. I have become increasingly concerned with recent developments that I believe have impacted negatively on both the Military Covenant and the Armed Forces ability to retain key personnel. Britain’s participation in both Afghanistan and Iraq have brought these matters to a head but the problems are more deep seated and have been threatening to undermine the commitment, morale, motivation and the retention of personnel for a number of years.

The past decade has increasingly seen the “dirty washing” of the Armed Forces done in public ranging from any number of disciplinary matters and employment tribunals to issues of manning, deployment, compensation for injuries received whilst on active duty, the standard of housing and equipment and how far senior military personnel can go with their political masters. To an extent this has destabilised the Armed Forces and it is my belief that a significant number of issues could and should have been dealt with “in-house”.

Thus, with this in mind I would like to put forward a proposal that in my opinion will in part help the Armed Forces deal with these issues, particularly retention in a positive manner. I propose that this is achieved by the creation of a representative body for military personnel that is governed by statute and has the best interests of both the forces and their personnel in mind.
CURRENT REPRESENTATIVE BODIES FOR BRITISH MILITARY PERSONNEL

There have been significant developments in relation to the issue of the creation of a representative organisation for British military personnel particularly from a legislative and non-legislative perspective. I will not rehearse these arguments in full in this submission but suffice to say that as I have proved in an article for the academic journal *Defence Studies*, that British and European legislation does not expressly forbid military personnel from having a representative organisation and there is a legal obligation for them to have one in relation to both the Human Rights Act 1998 and European Directive 94/45/EC that deals with European Works Councils. Bartle (2006) also provides significant non-legal arguments as to why military personnel require a representative body from both a national and international perspective.

However, I would argue that these academic and legal arguments have been overtaken by recent events that have seen the establishment and proliferation of bodies that claim to represent the views of British military personnel. In 2003, the Combined Armed Forces Federation (CAFF) was set up. Membership is open to all ranks but CAFF is essentially there to represent the interests of all other ranks. Officers can join CAFF but they are barred by the Federation from becoming members of its Executive and Management Committees. In 2006, the British Armed Forces Federation (BAFF) was officially launched and is a representative body for serving and past members of all the armed services and is open to all ranks, both in terms of membership and serving on its Executive Council. It has produced a Ten-Point Plan (BAFF, 2006) which explains its aims, objectives and how it is structured. I will return to this plan in a latter section of this submission.

Significantly, CAFF is currently in dispute with BAFF, which it regards as an organisation that has no legitimacy amongst the other ranks. It basically argues that CAFF should represent the other ranks and BAFF should only represent officers.

To add to the mix both these groups are now under pressure from the United Kingdom Defence Association (UKNDA) that was set up in 2007 by an esteemed group of politicians and recently retired senior military chiefs. The UKNDA has been set up to lobby for more resources (financial and otherwise), better accommodation and better health care for Armed Services personnel. This is in direct competition to both CAFF and BAFF and it seems that this organisation is better funded and structured than both federations and more powerful in terms of the individuals who run it. Its President is Winston S Churchill and its Patrons are Admiral Lord Boyce, Air Marshal Lord Craig, General Lord Guthrie, Sir Menzies Campbell and Lord Owen. Its Vice-Presidents include such colourful and famous characters such as Colonel Tim Collins, Major-General Patrick Cordingley, Professor Richard Holmes, Colonel Bob Stewart, Simon Weston, Bruce George and Michael Ancram to name but a few. So if nothing else this will be a powerful lobbying group with the know-how and personnel to get to the heart of government and get issues stirred up.

In representative terms this is all getting quite messy and this may suit the Ministry of Defence (MoD) as “divide and rule” may mean that it will not have to go down the road of helping to legitimise a representative body in terms of supporting a legally constituted organisation. To a degree it has been further helped by the fact that a Private Members Bill presented by Kevan Jones (Labour MP for North Durham) entitled Armed Forces (Federation) Bill which called for a federation to be created based on the BAFF Ten-Point Plan failed to get its Second Reading in October 2007. Interestingly (and obviously) BAFF supported this Bill, whilst CAFF did not. CAFF even went as far as petitioning MPs not to lend their support to this Bill.

These are interesting times for the representation of Armed Services personnel as not only do we have the above mentioned groups we also have the Commonwealth Soldiers Association and a number of other charitable and specific lobbying groups who also claim to be the voice of Armed Forces personnel. These include the British Legion, the Army, Navy and RAF Benevolent Funds, the three Service Families’ Federations, Combat Stress and the Gulf Veterans’ Association to name but a few.

In addition to which there are any number of websites that carry the views of military personnel, with one of the most publicly quoted being the British Army Rumour Service. Significantly, the key fact is that not one of these groups or websites have been either elected or selected by the overwhelming majority of serving military personnel to represent their interests within the MoD, Parliament and wider society. This is not to say that these organisations and the individuals who have set them up and run them are not well-meaning and well-intentioned. However, they do not have an official mandate from those who matter most—current serving military personnel and they are not underpinned and supported by primary legislation.

ARMED FORCES PAY REVIEW BODY

It may be argued by both the MoD and senior military leaders that the Armed Forces Pay Review Body (AFPRB) represents the interests and views of military personnel in relation to what are commonly referred to as terms and conditions of employment. I would argue that this is a weak argument as I hope to prove in the next few paragraphs.
The Review Body’s terms of reference as laid out by its Thirty Seventh Report 2008 presented to Parliament in February of this year are as follows:

“The Armed Forces’ Pay Review Body provides independent advice to the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Defence on the remuneration and charges for members of the Naval, military and Air Forces of the Crown.

In reaching its recommendations, the Review Body is to have regard to the following considerations:

— the need to recruit, retain and motivate suitably qualified people taking account of the particular circumstances of Service life;

— Government policies for improving public services, including the requirement of the Ministry of Defence to meet output targets for the delivery of departmental services;

— The funds available to the Ministry of Defence as set out in the Government’s departmental limits; and

— The Government’s inflation target.

The Review Body shall have regard for the need for the pay of the Armed Forces to be broadly comparable with pay levels in civilian life.

The Review Body shall, in reaching its recommendations, take account of the evidence submitted to it by the Government and others. The Review Body may also consider other specific issues as the occasion arises.

Reports and recommendations should be submitted jointly to the Secretary of State for Defence and the Prime Minister” (AFPRB, 2008: iii).

I contend that as the terms of reference are laid out above, the AFPRB is constrained by Government strategy, particularly in relation to finance and there are other problems that in my view are detrimental in relation to looking after the interests of military personnel from an independent standpoint.

The most fundamental problem relates to the parties selected to provide information to the Review Body. They are limited and unrepresentative as the following quote from this year’s report clearly highlights:

“Our work programme began in March 2007 with full briefings from MoD and each of the Services on the issues relevant to our review. These briefings set the scene for our visits programme which enables us to engage with personnel and families, to hear their priorities first hand, to understand the role of the military and to explain our approach. We visited 25 Service units between March and July 2007 in the UK, Germany, Gibraltar and on operations in Afghanistan. We met with around 3,800 spouses in 300 formal and informal discussion groups. Our visits also enabled to hear the views of Commanding Officers and their management teams and to view all standards of Service accommodation. All Services provided excellent support throughout these visits and, in the current operational climate, we cannot over-emphasise the importance of our operational visits to gain an understanding of the frontline role of the Armed Forces and to enable us to deliver our remit . . .

. . . We held 11 meetings between September 2007 and January 2008 to consider the evidence presented and our commissioned research. We reviewed over 130 evidence papers and held six oral evidence sessions which allowed us to test out the written evidence. These sessions were with the Secretary of State accompanied by MOD’s 2nd Permanent Under Secretary and HM Treasury; the Principal Personnel Officers (PPOs0 and Deputy Chief of defence Staff (Personnel); the Assistant Chief of Defence Staff (Reserves and Cadets) and the Director of Reserve Forces and Cadets; and the Deputy Chief Executive of Defence Estates. We also helpfully met with the three Service Families’ Federations, specifically focusing on the review of the X-Factor” (AFPRB, 2008: 4).

Laudable as this approach is, I would argue it clearly shows that a collective voice for military personnel should be heard by the Review Body as well. The fact that stands out from the Review Body’s explanation as to how it gathers its evidence is that while the management of each service and the MoD give oral and written evidence to the AFPRB, military personnel are not afforded the same right. A very small minority (which does not even equate to 2% of all armed forces personnel), not all of whom are serving personnel; receive a “visit” where they are “talked with” both formally and worryingly informally. The question is how representative can their views be and how are they chosen? To independent observers such as myself, this approach does not encourage confidence as to the credibility of the evidence being gathered as there is a distinct possibility that it is skewed to ensure both political and military leaders are happy with the outcome and the voice of those who matter the most—military personnel is barely heard.

This is clearly inequitable and further underlines the need for a collective body that can adequately represent the views of all personnel. It could also represent the views of personnel in such a way that ensures that issues are discussed within the structures and system of the MoD and not in public via the media. I contend that such an approach is not only feasible but will have a positive impact on the morale and retention of Armed Forces personnel. Additionally, I believe it is a good recruitment and retention tool as firstly, not only will the voice of military personnel be heard but negative issues will not be aired in public which can affect not only those serving, possibly leading them to question their continuing involvement with the Armed Forces. Secondly, it can also help to ensure that for example, negative issues relating to the
treatment of military trainees, sub-standard housing and inadequate equipment are dealt with in-house. As which parent would want their child to join an organisation that is routinely criticised within the media and cannot be trusted to look after their loved ones who are prepared to put their lives at risk?

The membership of the Review Body also highlights a further inadequacy. The current membership of the AFPRB is as follows: Professor David Greenway (Chairman), Robert Burgin, Alison Gallico, Dr Peter Knight, Professor Derek Leslie, Air Vice Marshal (Retired) Ian Stewart, Dr Anne Wright and Lord Young of Norwood Green (AFPRB, 2008: iii). As the website of the Office of Manpower Economics (which also acts as the Secretariat for the Review Body) shows in relation to the biographies of those listed only one of them has served in the military and there is currently not one person who is serving in the Armed Forces representing the views of military personnel. Yet again, I would argue that this is a serious anomaly that needs to be rectified in favour of current serving military personnel.

**Representative Arrangements for Police Officers**

I would argue that the only way forward is by the creation of a representative organisation by statute that will work in the best interests of military personnel, the Armed Forces and the MoD. A precedent was set in the previous century in relation to the Police Service. The Police Act 1919 helped to create the Police Federation of England and Wales that would represent the interests of police officers, particularly in terms of welfare and the efficiency of the Police Service. It is not a trade union but a staff association.

The Federation today represents the interests of almost 140,000 police officers, who hold the rank of Constable, Sergeant, Inspector and Chief Inspector. It negotiates on terms and conditions of employment; lobbies on issues that will not only affect its members but which will also impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of the Police Service and is also consulted on police regulations. I would argue that the Federation along with the other Police staff associations do a good job in representing the interests of their members within the structures and systems of the Police Service and the ministries that have overall control of the Service. Rarely, are issues brought into the public domain by the Police staff associations and when they are it is only when all internal avenues and procedures have been exhausted.

Similar organisations exist for the Superintendent and senior ranks in the form of the Police Superintendents’ Association (PSA) and the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO). This template is replicated in both Northern Ireland and in Scotland.

**A Possible Solution?**

The lack of a collective representative body currently in my view currently impacts negatively on the morale, commitment and ultimately on the retention of high quality military personnel at all levels. This can be witnessed by the almost daily deluge of negative press the Armed Forces attract either in relation to their current operations to issues of housing, equipment, length of tours, overstretch, compensation for injuries whilst on active service and military personnel and/or their families pursuing high profile cases against the MoD and the three Services.

I am not advocating that the Armed Forces replicate the representative structures of the Police Service but what should be copied is the creation of a representative structure made up of one or more bodies that is enshrined in statute and as with the Police Service forbids any form of industrial action.

As noted above, a number of bodies purporting to represent the interests of Armed Forces personnel have been set up recently. Most notably BAFF, which has its own constitution and structures that have been constructed in accordance with civilian-based legislation. It has also produced the following Ten-Point plan which was originally posted on the British Army Rumour website in January 2006 before BAFF set up its own website. BAFF proposed the following:

1. A professional staff association is to be formed for members of Her Majesty’s Forces under the provisional title of the British Armed Forces Federation (BAFF).

2. Comparable bodies have for years served the armed forces of allied countries such as the United States and Australia, with official cooperation and no negative impact on operational effectiveness or military discipline. The proposed federation is, however, designed to be a specifically British solution for the British armed forces. It will reflect and respect the ethos and robust traditions of the three fighting services. It will meet all requirements of British and other law, including international conventions adopted by the United Kingdom.

3. The federation’s mission shall be to represent, foster and promote the professional, welfare and other legitimate interests of all members of the federation in their capacity as serving or retired personnel of the fighting services of the United Kingdom, and in so doing help to maximise operational efficiency and improve the retention of trained personnel.

4. The federation will be a democratic representative institution answerable to its members. Membership of the federation will be open to all personnel irrespective of rank, branch of service or gender. The main membership categories will be Ordinary Membership (Regular), Ordinary
Membership (Reserve Forces) and Veteran Membership. In responding to the requirements of its members, the federation will act in the interests of all serving personnel and veterans but will not countenance any pressure on individuals to join.

5. Within resources, the activities of the federation may include:
   (a) professional and career development by the provision of education and information;
   (b) liaison, monitoring and response to proposals or developments within the services, in Parliament, in the provision of public services or in the commercial sector which have a specific impact on forces personnel;
   (c) appropriate advocacy and consultation to protect and improve the conditions of service life including pay, accommodation, medical and welfare services, resettlement and all other areas of personnel support;
   (d) appropriate support to personnel facing court martial or other legal proceedings in connection with their service (the federation will not normally comment on any specific case within the systems or military justice and administrative discipline); and
   (e) the negotiation for members of a range of insurance, financial and other benefits, discounts or affinity deals.

6. The federation will not be beholden to any political party, pressure group, or defence industry interest. While supporting the cross-party consensus on the need for robust, adequately funded but cost-effective forces serving the Nation as determined by the Government of the day, the federation will not be a defence pressure group. The federation will not take a view on matters of defence strategy or operational decisions, although it may raise legitimate subsidiary matters affecting personnel. Parliamentary liaison will be strictly on a cross-party basis.

7. The federation will not be a trade union and, above all, it will not conduct or condone any form of industrial action or insubordination within the armed forces. The federation affirms the vital role of the Armed Forces chain of command in representing the interests of its personnel. The federation will seek to agree with the Ministry of Defence appropriate mechanisms for the exchange of information with the chain of command as well as centrally. A code of conduct will be adopted, and potential disagreements will normally be raised centrally to avoid placing serving personnel in difficulty with their chain of command, or vice versa. The federation will act to protect serving members in their federation-related activities within the agreed code of conduct.

8. The federation will not seek to supplant the role of any existing charity or other agency involved in service welfare. Where appropriate the federation may help to direct members to appropriate sources of advice and assistance.

9. Work is already under way on matters such as the structure and legal format of the federation, and staffing. A business plan is being prepared.

10. This draft statement of intent outlines the basic principles established so far. Work continues on detailed aspects of the proposals with a view to wider consultation throughout the armed forces community, and with the Ministry of Defence”.

I would argue that this is a good basis to begin discussions in relation to setting up a body or bodies to represent current serving military personnel. I would argue that if collective representation is afforded to military personnel then there is a need for a number of bodies to be created that will be able to effectively represent the interests of the three Services. They would also represent the interests of the other ranks and officers within each of the Armed Forces, particularly taking into account their individual traditions, ethos and needs.

As a basis for discussion I propose that each of the three Services should have three main representative bodies. The first would represent the interests of the other ranks. The second would represent the ranks of (Army) Lieutenant (and similar ranks in the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force) up to (Army) Major (and similar ranks in the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force). The third would represent the ranks of (Army) Lieutenant-Colonel (and similar ranks in the Royal Navy and Royal) up to (Army) Brigadier (and similar ranks in the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force). Finally, there should be one sole representative body for the most senior ranks in all three Services akin to ACPO.

Each of these representative organisations would require not only a constitution and set of rules and procedures but would also have to be organised at local, regional and national level in such a way that they replicate the organisational structures of their individual Service. The membership of these organisations would be restricted to currently serving military personnel.

Each of the representative bodies will have a ruling body in the form of a National Executive Committee (NEC) with its key office bearers being the Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. All key office holders and committee members will be elected only by its membership.

The representative organisations should not become a financial drain on the MoD, so they should be allowed to raise monies by charging the membership an annual subscription as most representative bodies and trade unions do.
All the representative bodies would be set up and governed by primary legislation and this legislation will also ensure that military personnel will not be allowed to take any form of industrial action.

The above suggestion is at this juncture a framework for discussion and is put forward to initiate a serious debate as my observations, research and working with the British Armed Forces for the past decade lead me to conclude that collective representation for current serving military personnel will have a positive effect, particularly in relation to morale and retention which have undeniably been negatively affected in recent years.

References

Memorandum from the Ministry of Defence

1. This memorandum aims to provide the House of Commons Defence Committee with information for their inquiry into Recruitment and Retention in the Armed Forces.

Introduction

2. The manning position facing the Armed Forces remains challenging. At 1 January 2008 the Armed Forces were outside the agreed Public Sector Agreement Manning Balance. Trained strength was 174,910, against a liability of 180,430. The shortfall of 5,420 is 3.1% of the requirement. Manning balance is a broad measure, and within the overall picture there can be larger shortfalls or excesses against particular trades and specialist groups. Where there is a shortfall in a particular area, or a commitment that exceeds the formal establishment, this is identified as a pinch point and closely managed to alleviate the impact. Details of current pinch points are listed below. Recruitment (intake from civilian life) has been relatively strong in 2006–07 and so far in 2007–08. Wastage in training, however, means it is proving harder to sustain our targets for gains to the trained strength. Voluntary Outflow rates remain broadly stable and in line with historic norms. Nevertheless, they are edging upwards, and in a number of specialisations (for example the Infantry and RN General Service Warfare Branch) are higher than we wish. MoD is focussing its investment on Service Personnel to try to improve retention, through direct measures such as commitment bonuses and targeted Financial Retention Incentives, and indirect improvements to the overall Armed Forces package, for example the extensive investment to improve the quality of Service Accommodation.

Data

3. The information provided in the MoD’s Annual Report and Accounts 2006–07 has been updated at Annex A to include the latest available figures which, in most cases, reflect the position at 1 January 2008. It includes the original figures provided in the MoD Annual Report and Accounts 2006–07, revised figures for 2007 and figures at 1 January 2008. The original 2007 information presented Naval Service and RAF figures at 1 April 2007 and Army data at 1 March 2007 because Army data from the new Joint Personnel Administration System had not been validated. The Army information has now been updated to show figures at 1 April 2007. There have also been some minor Naval Service and RAF 2007 revisions.

The latest position regarding the Manning Pinch-Points

4. An Operational Pinch Point is defined as a shortfall in trained strength that has a detrimental impact on operational effectiveness. Trades facing structural manning issues requiring recruitment and/or retention measures for resolution are described as Manpower Pinch Points, Critical Shortage Groups and Critical Manning Groups. Details of the current pinch points are provided at Annex B.

5. There are 16 pinch points in the Naval Service plus nine Critical Manning Groups which are potential pinch points. A shortage of Submarine manpower, in particular Able Rate Warfare Systems (Tactical Submariner) and Strategic Weapon System Junior Rates, is beginning to cause concern. Although the nuclear watchkeeper plot is improving, a potential shortage of Reactor Panel Operators remains a concern, as does the more general risk to retention of nuclear watchkeepers implicit in the resurgent civil nuclear programme. A second area of concern is naval aviation, notably Royal Navy Harrier GR7 Instructors and Lieutenant Pilots. The Air Engineering Technician situation remains challenging. Merlin Pilots, Observers
and Aircrewmen shortages are leading to gapping of frontline crews with a subsequent impact on Operational Capability. Long term gapping of Leading Seaman (Warfare), the mainstay of the RN’s operational capability, remains serious. Royal Marine Other Ranks are still an area of concern despite high uptake of the Financial Retention Incentive payment.

6. The Army currently has 30 pinch points. The Army Pinch Point Working Group regularly reviews the action plans in place to address each of the Pinch Point areas. A manpower shortfall which has affected the structure of that specialisation and will take recruitment/retention measures to rectify is defined as a Manning Pinch Point. Shortages in the Infantry, Royal Artillery and Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers all impact on sustaining operational capability. In February 2008, Royal Artillery soldiers and Musicians were added to the Register as an Operational Pinch Point and a Manning Pinch Point respectively. Royal Logistic Corps Petroleum Operators were removed from the Register in February 2008 as a result of the successful implementation of measures to improve the manning situation.

7. The RAF currently has 31 pinch points; 16 are manpower pinch points, and 15 are operational pinch points. Operational pinch points reflect the pressure of current operations and can change rapidly as a direct result of outflow at specific ranks. They are therefore highly sensitive to Voluntary Outflow and re-engagement rates. The areas under most pressure comprise Weapon System Operators, Helicopter crewmen, the operations support area (RAF Regiment gunners, Intelligence analysts), airfield support trades (firefighters, movements controllers, Air Traffic Control assistants and managers, drivers), and medical staff. The RAF Harmony Working Group maintains a robust set of action plans designed to ameliorate the effects of the shortfalls. Currently, operational success is not at risk from the existence of these pinch points.

How much was spent on recruitment for each of the last seven years by each of the three services and the reserves

8. Overall spending on RN/RM recruitment over the past seven years is detailed in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial Year</th>
<th>RN/RM Recruitment Expenses</th>
<th>£M</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001-02</td>
<td>Manpower</td>
<td>16.259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marketing and Publicity</td>
<td>10.251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>5.753</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recruiting Offices</td>
<td>1.997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other costs including utilities, vehicle repair, agency fuel cards, stores, travel &amp; subsistence</td>
<td>4.399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td>32.894</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note:
1. Financial Year 2007-08 is a forecast.

It is not possible to break down the data for Financial Years 2001–02 to 2005–06. Similarly, expenditure on Royal Naval Reserve and Royal Marine Reserve recruitment is only included for FY 2006–07 and FY 2007–08.

9. The total amount spent on Army recruitment in each of the last seven years was:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial Year</th>
<th>Army Recruitment Expenses</th>
<th>£M</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001-02</td>
<td>Manpower</td>
<td>27.360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>5.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Offices</td>
<td>4.430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regional Marketing</td>
<td>8.565</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bursaries</td>
<td>2.533</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regimental/Corps/Army Recruiting Teams</td>
<td>1.903</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Information Technology Systems</td>
<td>2.617</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Army Development &amp; Selection Centres</td>
<td>1.113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHER</td>
<td></td>
<td>8.599</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td>66.349</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note:
2. Excludes costs related to Army Development and Selection Centres which became part of Recruiting Group in April 2007.
— Manpower (41%).
— National Marketing/advertising, including television media and production, publications, websites, response handling etc (27%).
— Regional Marketing (9%).
— Bursaries and Cadetships (2.5%).
— Rent & Rates for Armed Forces Careers Offices & Army Careers Information Offices (4.5%).
— Property maintenance, relocation, refurbishment, utilities costs etc of Armed Forces Careers Offices and Army Careers Information Offices (1.5%).
— Supporting Regimental Recruiting Teams, Corps Recruiting Teams and Army
— Recruiting Teams (2%).
— Recruitment and Selection Management Information Systems (2.75%).
— Army Development & Selection Centres [primarily costs of session doctors] (1%).
— Headquarters of the Army’s Recruiting Group (7%)
— Other costs (1.75%)

12. Prior to the introduction of One Army Recruiting, Territorial Army recruiting effort was spread through the Chain of Command from Regional Forces through Divisions and Brigades to Units. The Regional Forces Cadet Associations were also involved, particularly in the marketing and advertising campaigns, albeit under direction from the Chain of Command. As a result it is not possible to easily separate out those costs linked directly to recruiting from the historic data.

13. RAF recruiting expenditure over the past seven years was:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial Year</th>
<th>Financial Year</th>
<th>Financial Year</th>
<th>Financial Year</th>
<th>Financial Year</th>
<th>Financial Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001–02</td>
<td>£M</td>
<td>£M</td>
<td>£M</td>
<td>£M</td>
<td>£M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manpower—Officer and Aircrew Selection Centre</td>
<td>2.541</td>
<td>2.617</td>
<td>2.696</td>
<td>2.777</td>
<td>3.206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manpower—College</td>
<td>2.566</td>
<td>2.643</td>
<td>2.722</td>
<td>2.804</td>
<td>3.209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armed Forces Careers Office running costs (11 RAF Sponsored)</td>
<td>0.884</td>
<td>0.906</td>
<td>0.929</td>
<td>0.952</td>
<td>0.868</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armed Forces Careers Office Lease costs (paid centrally)</td>
<td>0.679</td>
<td>0.696</td>
<td>0.713</td>
<td>0.731</td>
<td>0.713</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Costs including educational sponsorships, travel and subsistence, admin, vehicle hire, contracts</td>
<td>4.158</td>
<td>3.308</td>
<td>7.090</td>
<td>5.948</td>
<td>7.018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>29.690</td>
<td>31.010</td>
<td>35.564</td>
<td>36.066</td>
<td>37.143</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note:
1. Financial Year 2007–08 is a forecast.

Information on the recruiting budget for the Royal Auxiliary Air Force is not separately identified in these figures. From 2008–09 the Royal Auxiliary Air Force is to be allocated a separate recruiting budget from the RAF Directorate of Recruitment.

14. In addition, all three Services undertake activities not included in the costs above which raise awareness of the Armed Forces and which are likely to be recruitment positive as a by-product. These include:

**RN**
— Navy Days/ Meet your Navy.
— Ship and submarine visits to UK non-naval ports.
— Air Days at two Naval Air Stations and Naval Historic Flight involvement in local air shows.
— Sea Cadet Activities.
— University RN Units.

**Army**
— Cadet activities.
— An Army Careers Exhibition each year in every Brigade area.
— “Look-at-Life” events where potential recruits are invited to spend some time with the Army and experience aspects of Army life.
— Links between units and their local communities including support to civic events and local charities.
— Significant Public Military Events such as “Music of the Night” (Plymouth), “Music on Fire” (Camberley) and the Aldershot Military Show; other smaller open days. These are frequently fund-raising events for local and military charities.
— Presentations by CGS’s Briefing Team to key decision makers across the country.
— Ad-hoc support to local Further Education Colleges by units.
— National coverage of recruiting and career events by recruiters and informal support by units.
— “Public Duties”—ceremonial guards and parades.
— Freedom of the City parades and those held by communities to welcome home troops following operational tours.
— The use of military bands at public events, including national sporting occasions.
— Parachute, motorcycle and equitation display teams at public events.
— The Defence Career Partnership initiative, with the other two services, to foster links and exchanges with industry to mutual benefit.

RAF
— Air Cadet Activities.
— Four Motivational Outreach Teams working with young people currently focussed on working with British ethnic minority communities.
— Youth outreach to local youth groups and schools by Station personnel.
— Pairing of Stations with Armed Forces Careers Office organisations to enable station personnel to directly support careers office effort at specific events.
— RAF Air Days held annually at two Stations.
— Informal station families’ days normally involving a large element of the local community with a strong charitable dimension.
— Specific charitable activity by individual personnel and also station charities committees.
— Annual freedom parades by station personnel of station granted the freedom of the local borough/area.
— Engagement with specialist and professional organisations such as WISE (Women in Science & Engineering) and the various chartered engineering bodies.
— Red Arrows, RAF Battle of Britain Memorial Flight, and individual display aircraft and pilots’ attendance and participation across the UK.

How do the services/reserves measure the impact of expenditure on recruitment and how has this influenced their recruitment strategies?

RN
15. The FLEET financial and requirements approvals process requires that Business Cases and Investment Appraisals are carried out. These identify the outcomes required and how the expenditure will deliver the outcomes. Projects are subjected to Post Project Evaluations to determine whether the desired outcome has been achieved. The Northern RN Acquaint Centre was subjected to evaluation which found that the expense of setting up the facility and operating it was justified. Based on these findings, work to provide a Southern RN Acquaint Centre was initiated.

16. The Directorate of Naval Recruiting’s Performance Cell was set up in December 2006 to bring coherency to the collection and analysis of recruiting performance information. Examples of the work undertaken to collate data and ongoing/developing work are:
   a. Survey HMS Raleigh and BRNC Dartmouth new entrants to ascertain the factors which have influenced them in their choice of a Naval career.
   b. The New Entrant survey is to be replaced by a Potential Recruit Survey from April 2008. This will capture information on influences at the application stage, such as marketing and outreach impact, whilst still fresh in the recruit’s mind. It will capture information from a much larger audience (approx. 70% more) including potential Royal Marines recruits.
   c. Public Service Courses—a survey was carried out to ascertain the number of attendees since 2005 who subsequently enquired about Naval careers and who ultimately joined the Service. The survey revealed that 27% of attendees subsequently contacted the RN about careers.
d. Teachers’ Feedback from the RN Schools Presentation Team—both quantitative and qualitative data has been obtained since 2005 from feedback forms issued after presentations to ensure that the content and relevance of the presentations is at the required level. The results of this survey have been positive, confirming that the presentations meet teachers’ expectations.

e. A feedback form to ascertain the usefulness of visits to submarines for stimulating interest in submariner careers was introduced in January 2008.

17. Other work currently in development includes:

a. A dashboard-style reporting system which allows the interrogation of data on information seekers. This will allow for flexible, responsive reporting on the impact and effectiveness of marketing and outreach activity, enabling us to measure both the immediate impact of a campaign in terms of interest generated, but also the ability to develop a full contact history for each information seeker allowing us to determine whether we are attracting the right people.

b. An information tool to better understand the effectiveness of the recruiting processes in the Armed Forces Careers Offices and to understand and address factors which lead potential candidates to withdraw.

c. A feedback questionnaire to ascertain the effectiveness of the RN Acquaint Centre which potential entrants attend voluntarily prior to joining the Navy to familiarise themselves with life at HMS Raleigh.

d. A survey to collate information on the resource expended on an outreach event and the amount of interest generated by that event. This will enable the Marketing Department to better focus their resources on activities that provide most impact.

Marketing

18. Each marketing campaign has bespoke objectives: for example, the main objective of the RN “Life Without Limits” campaign launched in January 2007 was to raise the level of awareness and understanding of the range of RN jobs available and to show the key target audience of 16–24 year olds what people in the navy are really like. The channels selected (television, online advertising etc) were chosen because they reach more of the target audience, and the content of the advertising was designed to inspire and motivate our target audience to want to find out more about jobs in the RN.

19. Online activity is a major focus of the recruiting campaign. The target audience of 16–24 year olds spend more time online than watching television and this is a strong starting point for recruitment search. The interactive nature of the web enables the use of moving images, sound and interaction to bring to life the reality of the range and depth of jobs. The careers pages of the RN website have been redeveloped to complement the “Life without Limits” campaign. Online activity is planned to reach 96% of 16–24 year olds with an Opportunity to See of 15 per user (seeing five executions displayed three times each). Weekly metrics are provided on each area of activity covering a range of data from the number of clicks per format, through the number of requests for more information, to the nature of “user journeys” through the site.

20. Television is measured by television ratings. Through the television channels and the programming planned we aim to reach 71% of all 16–24 year olds and that that audience will have an Opportunity to See our adverts an average of 4.2 times. We receive viewing figures from the television channels each week so we can identify the best performers and monitor the delivery of television ratings.

21. The RN also uses Pub television spot timings in major football matches on Sky Pub Sports. Added to television this increases coverage to 73% of 16–24 year olds with an Opportunity to See of 4.4. Cinema activity is running from 12 February to the end of March with films most likely to appeal to 16–24 year olds (reach 19% of 16–24 year olds with an Opportunity to See of 2.1). Magazine adverts generally run in four (two male, two female) of the strongest lifestyle magazines (reach 42% of 16–24 year olds with an Opportunity to See of 3.3). Press adverts support the campaign in the classified sections of major regional newspapers (reach 40% of 16–24 year olds with an Opportunity to See of 4.3).

22. Pre and post-wave research will track awareness of the campaign and its key messages, and perceptions of the RN brand among the key target audience. The pre-wave, which is run before launch of the campaign, sets the benchmark by identifying the current level of awareness and understanding of the RN and the range of jobs offered. Once the campaign is complete, the research is run again to identify the new levels of awareness and understanding so the effectiveness of the campaign at achieving its communication objectives can be measured. Online tracking research will be carried out to evaluate the effectiveness of the online advertising. Based on the findings of the tracking research, the weighting of the campaign can be altered to augment the most successful elements across all media channels, and decrease the advertising spend on the least successful elements.
Army

23. The key measurement is the effectiveness of marketing, which is the primary tool for generating enquiries from individuals, some of whom will become applicants and, ultimately, enlistments. It is measured both in relation to the number of enlistments, and to awareness of and attitude towards the Army as a career. Recruiting marketing, advertising and public relations are conducted via a network of commercial marketing communication suppliers.

24. The success and effect of marketing is assessed by recording and analysing enquiries made about an Army career and comparing that data against targets for enquiries required from National advertising and marketing activity; performance is reported on a weekly basis. At regional level, outputs are measured against enlistment targets given to Brigade Commanders through the annual Army Recruitment Plan issued by Commander Regional Forces.

25. Awareness and attitude indicators are also analysed extensively, using a combination of Tracking Research (three times per annum), Media Buying Reviews (after every major campaign), on-line advertising effectiveness, and weekly performance measurement of all key national and Brigade level outputs. In addition, econometric modelling is run annually to establish the effect and impact of the marketing and advertising strategies employed in the context of the wider media environment. Supplier efficacy is formally measured on a bi-annual basis.

26. The Army’s Recruiting Group’s expenditure plans, including marketing, are subject to review through the MoD’s normal financial processes. All new expenditure proposals are subject to investment appraisal, to be judged against affordability, value for money and the recruiting effect to be delivered. Recruiting activities are continually tested and examined to ensure they deliver efficiency, effectiveness and economy. For example, “One Army Recruiting” will be reviewed to identify the lessons, strengths and areas for development since its implementation one year ago. A Recruiting Activity Review will examine the effectiveness of marketing and the current Army Careers Information Office “footprint”.

27. The Army has avoided using cost per recruit as a measure of effectiveness because of the complexity of the recruitment process, and the fact that some costs are not directly attributable to the recruit. The Contact Management System was established to look at the cause and effect of marketing activity not only in terms of determining what led to the enquiry but how much that part of the advertising cost. It can not however provide a cost per enlistment or cost per recruit. As an example, the Everest West Ridge 2006 Campaign lasted for eight weeks, generated 929,645 web-site visits, resulting in 59,353 enquiries to join and 10,092 eventual applicants for a cost of approximately £6 million. In macro terms, however, the recruiting budget for 2006–07 was just over £91 million, which resulted in 12,725 enlistments, and eventually just over 7,600 trained soldiers. The theoretical cost for 2006–07 was thus £7,150 per recruit entering training.

28. Comparative effectiveness against industry is difficult to measure as the Army has a unique and substantial target to achieve which is significantly higher than RN, RAF or other corporate employers. Benchmarking research has been commissioned to compare the efficacy of the recruiting activity.

RAF

29. The impact of all marketing expenditure for RAF recruitment is measured by the Central Office of Information, who provide a specialist marketing service to the Inspectorate of Recruitment. Post campaign analysis covers three specific areas: awareness generated of the RAF and RAF Careers; attitudes towards joining the RAF; and the effectiveness of the associated advertising. The resulting data is used to inform, plan and implement future campaigns to greatest effect and has enabled detailed profiling of target audiences. In addition, analysis of on-going activity also ensures value for money for the Department. Analysis of the July to September 2007 marketing campaign identified that the cost per response for television advertising was £32.71, which compares favourably with other Central Office of Information-led campaigns such as the recent Department of Health Tobacco campaign. During the Summer Marketing Campaign from June–October 2007, Central Office of Information confirmed that that:

a. Compared to the January–March 2007 campaign, valid responses to the RAF’s Response Handling Agency, Broadsystem, were up by 35%.

b. Spontaneous awareness of career opportunities in the RAF increased amongst both the 16–24 age group (from 20% in November 2006 to 38% in September 2007) and parents (from 6%–23%).

c. A better informed buying strategy for television airtime allowed Central Office of Information to target the most suitable programmes for reaching the required audience, achieving 5% more coverage than original predictions at no additional cost.

30. The RAF has introduced a Recruiting Tactical Action Plan, plus the follow-on Combined Recruiting Youth and Gender High Level Action Plan. With an additional £3 million specifically targeted at marketing activity, this has underpinned a progressive improvement in recruitment and that trend is expected to continue. Of the 37 trades available in Manning Plan 2007–08, 19 have achieved 100%, eight have achieved 90–99% and 10 will undershoot 90%. Coherent and targeted marketing, coupled with a stronger relationship

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3 An applicant is someone who formally applies to join the Army; an enlistment is someone who is accepted for training, having passed initial screening checks (security, aptitude, medical).
with Trade Sponsors, has succeeded in improving some recruiting to pinch-point trades such as Gunner and Aircraft Maintenance Mechanic (Avionics). There are of course still challenges to be overcome and these are illustrated by the forecast achievement in Financial Year 2007–08 of 89% for airmen and 87% for officers of the overall recruiting target. Additionally, recruitment to some of the pinch point trades remains difficult with a forecast of underachievement between 40%–50% in a discrete number of trades.

**What analysis has the MoD undertaken of the main factors affecting recruitment to the three services/reserves? What is the MoD doing to address these factors?**

31. The NAO report on Recruitment and Retention in the Armed Forces\(^4\) identified a number of socio-economic factors which were having a detrimental effect on recruiting:

- Health of the economy: Services recruitment is always easier in times of high unemployment.
- Future workplace demographics: Long-term trend is of ageing population with a decline in numbers of working age.
- Increasing proportion of ethnic minorities of target recruiting age.
- Proportion of women in workforce expected to reach 50% by 2030, while women in the Armed Forces account for 11% of officers and 8% Other Ranks.
- Increasing levels of obesity and resultant health problems among young people reduces number eligible to join.
- Attitudes and expectations of young people towards work and career may be moving away from a “job-for-life”.
- Government is encouraging more young people to enter further and higher education.
- Events such as the Iraq war, Deepcut Barracks fatalities and allegations of mistreatment of prisoners have had a potentially negative effect on the reputation of the Armed Forces.

These remain our key challenges.

**Royal Navy**

32. As part of the development of robust recruit marketing strategies, the Royal Navy undertook in-depth market research exercises to understand the views of our target audience. 85% of 16–24-year-olds would not consider a career in the Armed Forces. Of the remaining 15%, levels of awareness and understanding of the RN are worryingly low. Of the three Armed Forces, the RN scored lowest among this group in terms of top-of-mind awareness. Analysis of research among a representative sample of the target audience pointed unambiguously towards a trend of ignorance among the RN core target audience. It indicated that this audience had a basic lack of awareness of the RN, and a lack of understanding of the associated career options available within the RN.

33. However, the number of 15–24-year-olds who said they “had heard of, but knew nothing” about the RN had increased from 37% in March 2005 to 56% in January 2006. The overriding image that this audience had of the RN was of a big grey ship becalmed on a dull grey sea. They largely had no informed views as to what the people on board did—“scrubbing decks” was a common refrain—nor what career prospects were available. Often, the RN was seen as nothing more than a carrier service for the two other Armed Forces—carrying supplies to the Army, and acting as landing platforms for the RAF.

34. In terms of recruiting delivery, the strategic approach is divided into two areas, Marketing, and Process and Structure. The updated Marketing strategy was completed in 2007 and analytical data is already showing an increased awareness of RN career opportunities amongst the target audience. After significant FLEET reorganisation, a new recruiting delivery strategy, in terms of process and structure, is being worked up that will lay the platform for the next five years. With the completion of the Recruiting and Retention Strategy due this year, there will be a reinvigorated, robust, coherent and prioritised approach to recruiting within the Naval Service.

35. Recent marketing campaign initiatives have targeted identified shortfalls:

a. Aircrew—Spring 2007. In response to shortage of Pilots and Observers, a four month television campaign resulted in over 100 candidates. Formal agreement has been reached with RAF so that some categories of unsuccessful RAF aircrew candidates can be redirected to consider flying opportunities in the RN.

b. Royal Marines—A six month campaign commenced in autumn 2007 in response to identified shortages. A cinema / online / multi-media campaign has resulted in a 50% increase in applications but only a small in year increase in entrants so far. It is forecast that this will provide a significant increase in 2008–09.

c. Submariners—A five month television campaign supported by a two month media targeted campaign generated significant numbers of PDF downloads and Dataforce contacts in the first few

\(^4\) Report by the Comptroller and Auditor General, HC 1633–1, Session 2005–06 dated 3 November 2006.
days. Submarine “Look at Life” courses are planned to target submariner shortages, together with Submarine acquaint courses at the RN Submarine School. Improved liaison with Fleet programmers will increase availability of submarines for candidate visits alongside and at sea.

d. Regional coherence introduced on 1 April 2007 delegated day to day command of the Recruiting Field Force to the four Naval Regional Commanders to make them more responsive to local needs. Recruiting policy is still set centrally.

e. FLEET are reviewing medical standards which are a bar to entry in certain branches (submarine, eyesight for warfare officers) to ensure they are the minimum necessary to perform the operational task.

f. Working with the other services to converge information and communications technology used to support recruiting both now and in the future.

g. The Royal Naval Acquaint Centre opened at Rosyth in 2005 provides a preparation course for those allocated a Raleigh entry. The feedback is positive with reduced failures at Raleigh from those who had attended. A second Royal Naval Acquaint Centre opens in Portsmouth in March 2008 doubling capacity and additionally offering a “Look at Life” course for potential recruits to experience the Service before committing to an application.

36. Recent Ethnic Minority recruiting initiatives include:

a. Transfer of Ethnic Minority responsibilities from dedicated Diversity Action Teams to entire the Field Force to widen the knowledge base and spread EM recruiting.


c. Sponsorship of the “GG2” Diversity Leadership Awards.

d. Working relationships opened with Sikh communities and Afro-Caribbean communities with events being planned for Spring and Summer.

e. Attendance at diversity fairs in London, Manchester and Birmingham.

f. Contract with Asian Media Group to broaden the footprint of the RN and raise awareness of the RN/RM amongst minority communities and highlight opportunities available to the target age group.

Army

37. The Army runs a research programme to identify and understand factors affecting recruitment. This assesses public perceptions and attitudes towards the Army as a career. A key part of this work is also to assess the relative success of national marketing campaigns, particularly penetration of advertising and messaging. Tracking research (carried out three times per annum) consists of over 100 questions, and segmented analysis is carried out on responses from Northern Ireland, Wales, Scotland, UK Ethnic Minorities and Parents.

38. Other research projects include assessment of brochures, fact sheets, DVDs, printed advertisements and the Army web site to ensure that potential recruits are receiving the correct level of information in a format best suited to their needs. “Mystery Shopping” (researchers posing as potential recruits) at Army Careers Information Offices provides further information with regard to the recruiting experience and what improvements can be made. The first such exercise was conducted in this Financial Year; a second is currently underway.

39. Modelling is undertaken to provide insight into the impacts and subsequent challenges for Army recruiting resulting from coverage of operations, Courts Martial, alleged bullying within the Army training regime, and debate about honouring the Army Covenant. This research suggests that the combination of these factors is reducing the efficacy of all pro-active marketing by 20–27%. As a result, Army recruit marketing now has to work more efficiently to produce the desired result. National campaigns and marketing programmes are targeted accordingly to both produce the volume of enquiries to fuel recruitment and to re-shape some of the attitudes indicated within tracking research.

40. Interest in the Army amongst young people has been around 23% over the last seven years. The most recent data that has been fully analysed, as at May 2007, shows interest levels at 28%, albeit that summer research often presents raised results, with 39% of males and 18% of females expressing an interest. Lifestyle factors are strong drivers in generating interest in the Army, particularly travel, fitness, adventure and learning new skills. Moreover, several opportunities associated with military service are strong motivators to join, the most notable being further education, outdoor pursuits, fitness training, organised sport, training in leadership, Information Technology and communications.

41. Three main barriers to joining the Army are consistently identified as:

— A general fear of going to war, being shot at, killed or injured (28%).
— Being away from family and friends (14%).
42. 56% of parents would currently discourage an Army career due to conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, and 35% of young people are less inclined to join. Iraq and Afghanistan have previously created a polarising effect on those with a keen interest in the Army, some becoming more interested in the Army, others less, but the net effect has nearly always been positive. More recent data, for three consecutive research projects since November 2006, indicates that operations are now having a consistently negative overall effect even for the Army-interested group.

43. Initial results from the most recent marketing campaign indicate that advertising recall ranks highly against previous campaigns. The marketing message, particularly in portraying the importance of women, appears very successful. Further encouraging signs are that the Army continues to maintain a good image and most young people think they would meet people like themselves in the Army. Forthcoming arrangements for a Further Education Bursary scheme offer great potential to strengthen the appeal of an Army career to young people and, importantly, to their parents. Salary is a key factor for young people choosing a career, though not a primary reason for joining the Army. The recent increase in salary for new soldiers places Army pay roughly at the level anticipated by the target audience, with a third of the Army interested group more likely to join on learning how much they will earn. 16% of Army interested youngsters are put off from joining by a perception that pay is too low.

44. In addition to raising general awareness of the opportunities offered the Army’s marketing addresses the complex array of sub-component targets within the headline figures. These include the differing requirements of the Army’s Arms and Services, and 140 Career Employment Groups. This allows Operational Pinch Point trades to be highlighted within specific advertising and marketing copy.

45. Regional level marketing is focused on areas where success in recruiting is falling short of targets within a framework consistent with the national campaign. This is ensured by a network of Regional Marketing Managers. The primary role of regional marketing is to signpost experience events and the location of recruiting centres.

46. Up to four major national campaigns are structured each year. In a market place where the conditions are increasingly competitive, the Army is aligning its recruiting “products” to compete in a technology-driven environment through major investment in and commitment to the digital environment. The Contact Management System ensures that the Recruiting Organisation has an efficient adaptable technology platform fit for contemporary engagement with UK youth.

One Army Recruiting

47. One Army Recruiting was launched on 1 April 2007 as the biggest change to Army recruiting since the end of National Service. Its intent was to integrate Regular and Territorial Army recruiting in a consistent and customer-driven environment, to examine underpinning structures, processes and assumptions to as far as possible deliver a more efficient and effective operation. As a result, we now have Army Recruiting Teams in place of Regimental Recruiting Teams (with the exception of the Infantry) and Army Youth Teams to invigorate and energise the outreach component of recruiting. The “Army Be The Best” brand has been refreshed, the on-line presence has been and continues to be strengthened and modernised, and the Army’s entire marketing approach has been refocused on “customer” needs and desires and how the Army can satisfy them. The Army Careers Adviser operation has also been refreshed to meet the One Army Recruiting requirement, and the entire Field Force retrained and refocused. The transfer of the Army Recruiting and Training Division to Land Command under Commander Regional Forces also provides the basis for ensuring the wider Army’s contribution to recruiting becomes more effective.

48. The main components of One Army Recruiting are:

- A single process for Regular and Territorial Army Officer and Soldier recruiting.
- Culture change, placing the applicant (not the recruiter) at the centre of the operation (customer focus).
- Effects-based recruiting, linked to intelligent targeting based upon econometric data and demographics. Resource is then applied where the desired effect dictates.
- Recruiting is now the responsibility of the Regional chain of command, with targets and resources allocated to Brigade Commanders.
- Army Recruiting Teams allow the release of “black economy” recruiters (those who conducted recruiting activities on an informal basis in addition to their designated responsibilities) back to the Field Force and provide professional impetus to the recruiting operation.
- Raising the quality of personnel, thereby re-invigorating the recruiting Field Force. This is also known as Manning the Recruiting Engine.
- The increased use of technology to speed processes and throw the net wider.

49. The Potential Soldier Programme is aimed at improving the ratio of conversion of enquires into trained soldiers by improving retention during the recruiting process and Phase 1 training, through better preparation and selection methods. The factors that affect wastage and the measures introduced to reduce
50. The main components of the Potential Soldier Programme are:
   - Improved provision of information using web-enabled technologies, virtual experiences (Virtual Army Environment), DVD etc.
   - Improved communication through a Potential Soldier application hosted on Armyjobs.mod.uk, which will provide a social network and access to interview, selection and training information.
   - The conferring of status upon individuals earlier in the recruitment/selection process. Once the application passes the eligibility phase an individual would be granted status of “Potential Soldier” and given password access to the Potential Soldier application.
   - Better preparation and development opportunities, through Army Preparation Courses delivered by the regional chain of command and also by local authority funded organisations.
   - Improved selection methods including on-line Assessment of Individual Motivation.

51. In April 2007 the Army launched an online analysis tool—Pathfinder—as part of “One Army Recruiting”. This has provided the Army with the ability to define enquiries by four key demographic segments, in line with best practice in this area in the private sector. These have been developed to move the Army towards a better relationship with its potential recruits based on their needs. Research had clearly indicated that, prior to this redefinition of segmentation types, the Army’s approach to potential recruits was beginning to fail.

52. Between 5 April 2007 and 14 January 2008, 325,729 Pathfinder surveys were completed, and although it is too early to judge the success of One Army Recruiting or to re-target recruiting activity, the first year of Pathfinder consumer insight records is an important source for providing e-mail contact addresses which can be pursued, validating the One Army Recruiting segmentation approach, identifying which One Army Recruiting segment groups live in which areas and developing an effective regional marketing plan for 2008–09. Of the 325,729 enquiries completed between April 2007 and January 2008:
   - 81% of profiles delivered were to those under 26.
   - 30% of profiles delivered were to those under 17.
   - 31% of profiles delivered were to those between 17 and 20.
   - 24% were female, 76% were male.
   - 21% did not have positive associations with education and come from the Escaper segment.
   - 48% of the responders’ opinion of the Army was influenced by the “best brand” marketing, television and press, and the Army’s operational casualties/fatalities.

Pathfinder also showed that the East and South East are now “Army interested” hotspots as opposed to the traditional recruiting heartlands in the North and Scotland.

RAF

53. The challenge to RAF recruiting activity needs to be seen in the context of greatly increased targets following a fallow period during the recent reduction in RAF numbers. This is combined with the effects of recently increased outflow, demographic shifts, changing attitudes to careers, skills shortages (particularly technical skills) and media reporting affecting public perceptions of the Armed Forces. These factors are compounded further by the backdrop of buoyant civilian employment and the impact of current operations on gatekeepers, comprising parents and teachers, and potential applicants. Advertising tracking research conducted during January 2007 showed that 25% of 11–24-year olds claimed they were less interested in a career in the RAF specifically because of Iraq/Afghanistan. Furthermore, 41% of parents of the same 11–24-year olds claimed they were more likely to discourage their children from joining the RAF for the same reason.

54. In the face of the challenges, mitigation was initiated in the form of of a Recruiting Tactical Action Plan. An additional £3 million was also provided for specifically targeted marketing activity. All recruiting policies, including age and educational qualification requirement, and processes were reviewed critically to facilitate greater recruiting agility. This, plus the follow-on Combined Recruiting Youth and Gender High Level Action Plan, a single high level action plan bringing together a number of recruitment, youth and gender initiatives, has already underpinned a progressive improvement in recruitment. That trend is expected to continue. The three key objectives are to: achieve the RAF Manning Plan; to increase awareness of the RAF amongst the youth cohort as offering a career of choice; and to improve gender representation at the point of recruitment. These objectives are supported by numerous work strands and measures including:

a. Creation of the ALTITUDE Customer Relationship Management programme, a web-based, RAF focussed initiative designed to attract the interest of 14—16 year olds from a wide and varied background.
b. Establishment of the Youth Activities Liaison Officer network and other outreach initiatives to establish relationships and involvement and hence develop understanding and interest in the RAF amongst the youth cohort and youth organisations.

c. Making greater use of RAF station personnel and resources as part of the recruiting effort, and improving links between stations and the career office network.

d. Improving the relationship between the career office network and the RAF Museums at Hendon and Cosford to support recruiting activities at key events and times during the year.

e. A review of entry requirements leading to changes such as a reduced age of entry for RAF Regiment gunners to align with the Infantry and Royal Marines. This work has also enabled the offer of places to potential candidates pending the outcome of security clearance, thus reducing the time in the recruiting pipeline.

f. A study to determine the most effective deployment of RAF manpower in an augmented Recruitment Field Force which is due to report in March 2008.

55. There has been a 44% increase in expenditure on recruitment in absolute terms since Financial Year 2001–02. Other than personnel costs, marketing activity is the main area of recruitment expenditure. The challenges facing recruitment in forthcoming years, particularly the significant upturn in Gains to Trained Strength targets, dictate that the RAF’s recruitment marketing activity will continue to be a critical enabler in building interest and the early stages of securing commitment. An effects-based, holistic approach to marketing has therefore been developed to help to attract the right numbers of the right quality to the right areas at the right time in an increasingly competitive recruiting environment. This includes a wide variety of marketing initiatives working in concert with other RAF recruiting activities to communicate effectively key messages to the different target audiences.

56. The drive for greater value for money and the need to target more diverse, appropriately skilled potential candidates in an increasingly competitive marketplace demands agility, inventiveness and audacity. A number of Director Recruiting and Initial Training (RAF) initiatives have been combined into a single, cohesive and costed High-Level Action Plan to bring coherence to recruitment and to provide a strategic focus on early engagement to deliver better quality applicants in the right numbers. The plan articulates both the strategic objectives and enablers to deliver effect in recruitment, cementing the relationship between youth activity and recruitment and acknowledging that females and UK Ethnic Minorities are essential components of future success. Specifically, it identifies Early Engagement as a key activity, necessarily ring-fenced from the achievement of in-year targets. The RAF aims to build and develop a relationship with the youth audience from the initial and generic awareness-raising stage through to their reaching the age of eligibility. This work will provide an insurance policy designed to safeguard the RAF against future recruitment challenges by cultivating a targeted, well informed component of the potential candidate pool that possesses the requisite skills sets and academic qualifications and is receptive to the idea of a Service career.

What lessons have the three services/reserves learned about recruitment from (a) UK public sector organisations such as the police; (b) the armed forces in other countries

57. Challenges facing the Services in recruitment and retention are discussed on a tri-Service basis during meetings of strategic human resource leaders from the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the United States. There is considerable consistency across the five countries in both the difficulties and the tools that have been used to improve the situation. In particular, those groups subject to the greatest commitment to operations show similarly short periods of retention in the order of four to five years.

58. The Royal Navy regularly shares experiences with the Army & RAF recruiters both at a local and national level to see what works best. There is also a significant cross pollination of ideas between the single-Services through organisations such as the Defence Manning Committee and its associated sub-committees and working groups. The RN has drawn on commercial experience to inform and develop its marketing activities, both through the use of contractors and secondtees. The Second Sea Lord has held bilateral talks with senior personnel from other friendly navies.

59. The Army has studied the Cabinet Office Civil Service Graduate Entry scheme with particular emphasis on how candidates are managed through the recruitment and selection process. A number of the Army’s lines of development mirror those in place for this scheme (web based tools, on-line applications, self de-selection, candidate ownership of their own recruitment process etc).

60. The Army has also engaged with the MoD Police, the Metropolitan Police and, more recently, the London Fire Brigade to share Best Practice in recruiting from UK Ethnic Minority populations. These discussions revealed that while we are working very much along the same lines, some new approaches could be used in respect of specifically targeted audiences such as UK Ethnic Minority advertising media.

61. The Army continues to be involved in the Race for Opportunity benchmarking scheme which enables us to gauge our recruiting operations against the recruiting activities of industry and the public sector. In the six years to Financial Year 2006–07, the Army has come top of the public sector; it was runner up in 2007–08 and was awarded the only “Highly Commended” of the 2007 Race for Opportunity Awards for the Gurdwara Project (working with the Sikh Gudwara community in Southall).
62. Army recruiting staff have visited the USA and Australia to look at recruiting techniques and procedures, including civilian contractorisation, partnerships with service providers, technological solutions and awards/bonus schemes. In addition, the Army meets US and Australian counterparts annually under tri-partite arrangements, designed to explore manning, and recruiting, initiatives. Other armies’ experience, and particularly the USA’s heavy commitment to enduring operations, indicates that the characteristics of a professional armed force represent an attractive package to many elements of society, which must be exploited in marketing terms, but that other market forces must also be recognised, particularly in the context of the risks that service in the Armed Forces brings.

63. Much of the Army’s recruiting activity is already outsourced to the private sector, seeking to reap the best benefit from their expertise for example in marketing and web technologies. Arrangements being developed under the Defence Career Partnering project will seek to take that partnership to another, more coherent, level.

64. The RAF keeps abreast of recruitment initiatives in public (military and non military) and private sector organizations both at home and abroad. The quest for best practice remains constant. The RAF has for some time liaised routinely with United States Airforce counterparts, sharing experiences and recruitment challenges. Similarly the recently completed gender study paid extensive attention to a wide range of employers and learned much about the impact that skills shortages, particularly technical, are causing within the UK and, perhaps more importantly, are forecast to cause over the forthcoming decade. Almost as helpful is the recognition of what does not work, which is essential in the current manpower and retention challenge. Similarly the recently completed gender study paid extensive attention to a wide range of employers and learned much about the impact that skills shortages, particularly technical, are causing within the UK and, perhaps more importantly, are forecast to cause over the forthcoming decade. Almost as helpful is the recognition of what does not work, which is essential in the current manpower and financial environment if we are to avoid the speculative and potential ineffective use of precious resources.

Details of the MoD’s targeted retention activities including details of current financial retention initiatives

65. The NAO report recognised the cost effectiveness of retention versus recruitment albeit acknowledging that all three Services need a proportion of their people to leave in mid career in order to maintain a balanced structure with a focus on youth and high standards of physical fitness. The issue therefore is to retain those people of the right quality whose premature leaving would threaten the ability of the Armed Forces to meet their structural and operational requirements.

66. MoD’s approach to securing sufficient, capable and motivated Service personnel is set out in the Service Personnel Plan. This encompasses a number of projects designed to deliver specific contributions to the Plan. Better retention of personnel is a key theme underlying some of these projects. Improving retention is a key driver in a project looking at the Strategic Review of Remuneration. This is also tied in closely with another project, the Defence Living Accommodation Strategy, which includes work to further support the home ownership aspirations of Service Personnel. A third strand of Service Personnel Plan work is a project to review the Armed Forces Terms and Conditions of Service, which includes examining options to make military service more flexible, and potentially more attractive to a wider cross-section of Personnel at the different stages of their careers.

67. The overall “offer” to the Armed Forces clearly plays a fundamental part in attracting, and hopefully retaining personnel. A combination of good recent pay awards, this year’s increase in X-factor, enhancements to the package of allowances, and the significant investment being directed towards the upgrading and improvement of Service Families and Single Living Accommodation, provide the broad underpinning for our retention effort. This is supplemented by specific measures such as Financial Retention Incentives. In addition each of the Services has a targeted series of specific retention initiatives.

Financial Retention Incentives

68. Financial Retention Incentives are viewed as a targeted measure of last resort to ensure operational capability in a critical manning area is maintained. They are highly effective, quickly stemming outflow by guaranteeing service from personnel, allowing the Department a period of time to address the underlying causes of a manning shortfall. Before a Financial Retention Incentive can be considered, a thorough manning review is conducted which ensures that a Financial Retention Incentive is always part of a wider package of financial and non-financial measures to address the issue. Financial Retention Incentive take-up rates are closely monitored. Details of past and current Financial Retention Incentives are provided at Annex C.

69. Table 1 shows the Financial Retention Incentives currently in payment to eligible Service personnel and their current take-up rates. As Financial Retention Incentives are endorsed for a period of time, these rates represent the current success of the measure but not necessarily the final take-up rate. In the majority of cases, the Services predict that final rates are likely to increase as more of the original target population become eligible. In their 2008 Report, the Armed Forces Pay Review Body endorsed MoD proposals for a further six Financial Retention Incentives due to commence on 1 April 2008 (Table 2). Table 5 details those which have recently concluded and their take-up rates.

70. In 2005, a two year trial gave the single Service Principal Personnel Officers delegated authority to address small-scale critical manning issues with Financial Retention Incentives in a quicker timescale than that associated with the Armed Forces Pay Review Body process. Each Financial Retention Incentive is subject to strict governance criteria and is funded from a Principal Personnel Officer’s own budget. The
manning case for each proposal must be agreed by all Principal Personnel Officers and the MoD. After an evaluation of the trial, Her Majesty’s Treasury have concluded that MoD may use the delegated authority on a permanent basis subject to the governance of the scheme being formalised. All three Principal Personnel Officers consider the delegated authority to be an extremely useful and flexible tool to tackle critical manning issues. Table 3 shows those currently in payment to eligible personnel whilst table 4 shows those which have concluded.

71. In light of the recommendations from the NAO Report, the MoD has refined policy and guidance for Financial Retention Incentives. Additionally, in their 2008 Report, the Armed Forces Pay Review Body have echoed the views of both the NAO and PAC by asking for greater cost benefit analysis to be undertaken for each Financial Retention Incentive to ascertain their effectiveness. The MoD has introduced a generic template to be used for each proposed Financial Retention Incentive or Principal Personnel Officer delegation. The evidence base required for the introduction of a Financial Retention Incentive has been strengthened by requiring comprehensive details of the issue and its effect on operational capability; cost benefit analyses to quantify the benefits achieved; details of the key performance indicators, success criteria and exit strategy along with details of the post project evaluation to be carried out. The progress of each Financial Retention Incentive is monitored on a regular basis.

Naval Service

72. In response to current and forecast manning concerns the RN is developing an Integrated Recruitment and Retention strategy. A Scoping and Feasibility Stage Project to bound the scope of this strategy is drawing to a close. This strategy will seek to refine our recruiting approach to focus increasingly on those we consider have both the aptitude and the “attitude” to progress quickly and remain in service long enough to reach key supervisory levels (Leading Hand/Corporal or Petty Officer/Sergeant).

73. The second main component will increase the strategic focus on through-life retention, adopting a mindset of “internal recruitment” (ie to get a eight-year Length of Service sailor or Marine you need to “recruit” a seven-year Length of Service sailor or Marine to serve for another year). In particular this is likely to involve an increased effort on marketing the “Offer” to our own people and the development of policies explicitly aimed at improving Employee Engagement. We will also seek to deepen our understanding of Leavers’ issues to enable us to better target retention efforts.

74. Supporting elements to these two main thrusts will include: a number of developments in our strategic manpower modelling capability; a focus on the establishment, delivery and sustaining of the psychological contract; development of a strong Employer Brand; and finally, development of a Total Reward approach.

75. Project FISHER, the Navy’s Flexible Manning initiative is specifically looking at the way in which we man our ships in the future without imposing an unsustainable burden of separation upon our people and their families. The ultimate goal is to target separation by devising a system that will enable us to deploy our ships for as long as is necessary whilst still giving our people sufficient time at home with their families and, critically, the stability of knowing when and for how long they will be separated; thus de latching Operational Tempo from Personal Tempo.

76. The Project has completed its concept phase and is taking forward a range of options, as approved by the Navy Board, to test their viability in delivering improvements to the manning system. These options range from moderate changes to the current structures through to potentially radical departures from existing practice.

77. In addition to these longer-term strategic projects Financial Retention Incentives are employed to reduce VO rates over a limited period for a number of trade groups. The RAF/RN Aircrew Financial Retention Incentives continue to be successful, as was the recently completed Junior Submarine Warfare Officer FRI (£25,000 for a four-year Return of Service) which achieved a first stage take-up rate of 93%. The RM Other Ranks Financial Retention Incentive (an additional £4,500 on top of the £5,500 commitment bonus for a three-year Return of Service) has had a more limited take-up, probably reflecting the lower payment offered, but has still contributed significantly to improving the manpower situation. The ability of the PPO to implement Financial Retention Incentives within delegated limits has been recently used to address retention difficulties in the Submariner Medical Assistant specialisation.

78. Other specific targeted non-financial retention policies include:

- Targeted engagements, such as Full Term Commission (Aircrew).
- Professional Aviator Spine for Aircrew.
- Reduce average age of promotion to Lieutenant Commander for aircrew.
- Increase training capacity for Fast Jet Qualified Flying Instructors thereby reducing gapping/ churn.
- Creation of Manning Working Groups to focus on retention issues.
- Fast Track Petty Officer scheme to streamline promotion and increase empowerment.

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5 The unwritten set of expectations between the Naval service and the Service Individual.
— Enhancements to restore Submarine Operational Stand-Down Periods.
— Targeted Extensions of Service and reductions in Liability to reduce gapping and churn.

Army

79. The Army has re-doubled its retention effort over the last 15 months, and introduced a Retention Action Plan with some 70 measures designed to improve terms and conditions of service. Initiatives include planning, research, resources, communications and the sharing of “best practice”. This is further supported by so-called Exceptional Measures which include retention measures as part of a “Whole Army” effort, and specific recommendations to the Armed Forces Pay Review Body. At one end of the retention effort are remuneration packages such as commitment bonuses, re-engagement packages, and Financial Retention Incentives. At the other end are “softer” measures, designed to improve the quality of Service life, but whose retention effect is not directly calculable.

80. Remuneration packages include the committal bonus which was introduced in April 2004 and is payable to all soldiers. It is worth £3k for those who reach their five-year point and a further £2.5k when they reach their eight-year point. On 1 April 2007 an infantry Financial Retention Incentive of £4.5k was introduced for those reaching their four-year point of service; acceptance requires a two-year Return of Service. The Royal Artillery Unmanned Aerial Vehicle level four operators also received a Principal Personnel Officer Financial Retention Incentive of £10k for a three-year Return of Service (this Financial Retention Incentive ends on 31 March 2008). From 1 April 2008, Royal Artillery soldiers and Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers Lance-Corporal Vehicle Mechanics will also receive Financial Retention Incentives; the Royal Artillery Financial Retention Incentive is £4.5k at the five-year point for a two-year Return of Service and the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers Financial Retention Incentive is £7k valid for those between four to six years service for a three-year Return of Service. These are all linked with the initial commitment bonus of £3k paid at the five-year point to increase the retention impact. In addition, there is Specialist Pay for some Explosive Ordnance Disposal qualified personnel and improvements to the pay of the Special Reconnaissance Regiment from 1 April 2008 as a result of Armed Forces Pay Review Body recommendations.

81. Other major measures and initiatives include:
— “Doing Alright”. Republication and funding a web based version of this pamphlet that reinforces the advantages of continuing to serve in the Army.
— Reducing the strain in barracks between operational deployments.
— Extending soldier engagement by two years under the Versatile Engagement contract was introduced for those enlisting from 1 January 2008 as well as offering the opportunity to a number of selected individuals to extend their current service.
— Encouraging soldiers to transfer to a new trade to provide individuals with an alternative to leaving.
— Family stability has also been consistently recorded as important for education stability, access to local health services and spouse careers. The Super Garrison concept will eventually provide greater stability for Army personnel and with this the increased possibility of home ownership and a second income.
— Improving the standard of Single and Service Families Accommodation.
— Gurkhas. Under their new terms of engagement, introduced in 2007, Gurkhas have the opportunity to serve for 22-years on the same basis as the rest of the Army. This will have the effect, over the next few years, of increasing the number of soldiers in the Brigade of Gurkhas above planned levels. The Army is managing the increase in Gurkha numbers by encouraging voluntary transfer from the Brigade into the wider Army.

82. For untrained personnel the Army Recruiting and Training Division has constructed a Retention in Training Action Plan. The main effort is to reduce wastage across Phase 1 and Phase 2 training to a rate of 30% or less. The primary focus is on the handover between stages of recruiting and training in order to ensure that the management of an individual is seamless as he/she moves through the pipeline.

83. In addition, the Army is looking at the provision of additional amenities at training establishments, the injection of focused activities during periods of leisure, and improved arrangements for keeping in touch with family. Specific measures include funding to support formally programmed platoon outings and activities during Weeks one to seven, Parents’ days, welfare and better communications to reduce the number that discharge through homesickness, and a trial to assess the potential advantage and impact of paying a bonus on successful completion of training. Although this will be paid to all those who complete the course, its aim is to give those that waver an incentive to stay on. Priority is being given to measures to improve Infantry retention. The success of the trial will determine whether it has merit for wider application.
RAF

84. Approximately 80% of the RAF strength has technically-based skills. To maintain experience levels developed through lengthy technical training plus practiced application, which cannot be bought directly in from outside, the RAF needs to retain a majority of its personnel over the long-term. Failure to retain leads to skill and experience levels across the force fading with a concomitant rise in the risk to the safety and effectiveness of RAF operations or a reduced output.

85. Despite the retention challenges the resulting dilution of experience levels is not placing current operational success at risk. Nevertheless, many areas are stretched and prioritised placement of manpower has been implemented to ease the pressure, which results in a correspondingly greater number of gaps elsewhere. Increased gapping impacts on sustainable activity rates and reduced experience, that will take time to rebuild through new recruits and re-training of any surplus manpower.

86. Identifying the reasons why personnel choose to leave is critical to being able to target measures appropriately. Assessment of the objective and subjective sources of information on this complex subject indicates that the factors impacting negatively on retention fall into 4 main categories as follows:
   a. Stretch caused by operational pressures.
   b. Perceived erosion of the overall Service package including pay and allowances.
   c. Perceived absence of co-ordination and coherence amongst the myriad of change programmes within Defence.
   d. Irritants such as the performance of housing management and repair services and with the introduction of the Joint Personnel Administration system.

87. In response a Retention Action Plan has been developed that brigades principal lines of development under the four key factors identified as impacting negatively on retention fall into 4 main categories as follows:

88. The most pressing retention consideration for the RAF is that of officer aircrew, where outflow is exceeding inflow. We need to both encourage aircrew to remain in the Service in flying appointments and to encourage personnel to continue in the RAF as Career Stream officers to fill the essential staff and flying appointments to the highest levels of the Service. The RAF is therefore running a narrowly targeted continuation of the aircrew Financial Retention Incentive package that encourages individuals to serve beyond their optional exit point with a five-year return of service, paying pilots £100,000 and Weapon System Operators £50,000 (subject to tax and National Insurance). The Financial Retention Incentive take up this year is 41 which equates to 205 man years of service. In addition, action has been taken to adjust the aircrew Gains to Trained Strength targets to ameliorate immediate shortfalls.

89. Overall, manning within the Non-commissioned Aircrew cadre is broadly healthy with only a 3–4% shortfall in strength. Furthermore, the six year return of service requirement and 10 year commitment bonus result in very few Non-commissioned Aircrew leaving before the 12 year initial engagement point. However, there has been a rise in the Voluntary Outflow rate in the last year particularly amongst Weapon System Operators for whom the trend between April to November 2007 was double the norm. These personnel are heavily tasked on operations. The front line Weapon System Operator (Linguist) strength of 72% and overall Weapon System Operator strength of 80% will be corrected by resolving the 18% shortfall against the Gains to Trained Strength target. However, while the training pipeline is close to capacity, the length and complexity of training could result in this taking three years to resolve. The situation with Support Helicopter crewmen is also finely balanced, although action taken recently to streamline the training regime has released crewmen to the front-line earlier. This has reduced operational turn-around times within the cadre and mitigated the increase in Voluntary Outflow rates.

90. The retention picture for ground branch officers reflects specific pressures as follows:
   a. To help stem the outflow of doctors, individuals are being offered short extensions of service of up to three years to remove the pressure to leave immediately that the initial engagement is complete.
   b. Engineering officers show high levels of outflow at option points in order to start a second career and achieve greater family stability. This is being ameliorated by a combination of offering the flexibility to defer the optional retirement date in order to relieve the pressure on making an early decision, and through action to discuss suitable jobs and locations of choice at a far earlier stage than would normally be required.
   c. Across the Operations Support Branch only the Provost/Security specialisation is currently at manning balance. Measures being taken to address retention include increased numbers of offers of assimilation to age 55 in order to retain experience levels, a limit on the number of new Out of Area posts in the case of intelligence officers, prioritisation of posts to move gaps and relieve pressured areas, and in the case of the RAF Regiment, adjustment of the training targets.
   d. Non-formed unit action plans have been adopted for the Intelligence, Flight Operations, Supply (Fuels) and Provost Security specialisations within the officer branches.
91. A large number of ground trades are experiencing higher than normal outflow where personnel are choosing to leave at the end of their current engagement rather than sign on for an extension. This correlates closely with those directly involved in supporting current operations. The areas affected include ground tradesmen in the engineering trades, intelligence analysts, air traffic and flight operations assistants, communications & Information Technology technicians, RAF Regiment gunners, drivers, firefighters, and medics of all specialisations. In order to improve retention in these areas the following actions are being taken:

a. Financial Retention Incentives are being applied to RAF Regiment gunners, Firefighters and Paramedics.

b. Under tri-Service arrangements, specialist pay will be introduced for Explosive Ordnance Disposal operators from April 2008.

c. Targeted offers at base rank (senior aircraftman) to complete 22 years service and thus qualify for an immediate pension in order to maintain experience levels. In addition, offers of continuance are being given to Junior Non commissioned Officers & Senior Non Commissioned Officers up to three years beyond their current regulated Regular Service Expiry date.

d. A financial package is being finalised for elements of the Explosive Ordnance Disposal and Firefighter Trade to mitigate high Voluntary Outflow rates and retention issues. The Armed Forces Pay Review Body 2008 report recommended the introduction of Explosive Ordnance Disposal operators pay with effect from 01 April 2008 and a Financial Retention Incentive for Firefighters. A paper is currently being staffed that will continue the Firefighter Financial Retention Incentive on to 2010.

e. The formation of the Harmony Working Group has enabled the RAF to improve the management of deployment turnaround times. Actions include: reviewing post requirements and the competencies required for the posts; use of Royal Auxiliary Air Force; use of “Any branch/trade”; deployment of personnel with lowered medical employment standards; contractorisation of posts; and rank-ranging. Non-formed unit action plans have also been adopted for: Firefighter, RAF Police, Movements Control, Flight Ops Assistant/Manager and MT Tech ground tradesmen.

f. Manpower prioritisation to enable use of a minor surplus amongst Aerospace systems operators to alleviate the pressures on air traffic assistants, flight operations assistants and managers and supporting certain Urgent Operational Requirement equipment procurements.

g. More efficient use of medically downgraded individuals.

Volunteer Reserve Forces

92. The retention of Reserves personnel involves the addressing of different issues to those affecting regular service personnel. These factors include external pressures from employers and families. The demands of the civilian job and the impact of Reserve service on family/domestic life feature at the top of the five retention negative factors for Territorial Army personnel.

93. Employer Supportiveness is an important retention component for the Reserves against an increasingly demanding operational tempo, and variable public acceptance of Defence activity on deployed operations. Given the resistance that this environment creates amongst employers, supportiveness remains buoyant with 89% of employers surveyed in the Support for British Reservists and Employers research agreeing that they should be supportive. In addition, whilst mobilisation is particularly difficult for small enterprises, many employers still recognise that reserve service is good for their employees and for their business. Although research shows that supportiveness reduces slightly (−6%) for second and subsequent mobilizations (−10%) the statistics show that there has been a continuing increase in employer supportiveness between January 2006 and January 2008.

94. Support for British Reservists and Employers research indicates that supportiveness also falls once employers become aware of the length of the average mobilisation period (about 11-months for the Territorial Army). Evidence has been obtained that shows some employers do not feel that they can accommodate the demands of Reserve Service and will therefore not recruit workers who have a Reserve commitment. There is no legislation to prevent this, and it is a subject being examined through the Service Personnel Command Paper.

Employer Supportiveness in the Public Sector

95. Encouraging the recruitment of medical Reservists from the National Health Service is one of the key current MoD / National Health Service Partnership Board workstrands. The intent is to make a career in the Reserves more attractive to both National Health Service employers and individual employees. Medical Reservists are sent on shorter deployments to reduce the impact on the National Health Service.
The National Health Service provides a significant proportion of the Reserves providing healthcare in Afghanistan and Iraq. At present they represent about a half of the military healthcare staff in those two areas. During deployment in an operational theatre, these personnel learn management and clinical skills without cost to the National Health Service. The National Health Service, like any other employer, can claim funding to meet any costs for temporarily filling a post temporarily vacated by a Reservist.

96. It is recognised that some National Health Service staff, due to their unusual shift practices, are unable to make the regular commitment to the reserves which is normally required, but wish to contribute to an operational theatre. The Department is encouraging the formation of National Health Service Sponsored Reserves, enabling clinicians, with fairly limited Armed Forces training, to be able to go out on short tours of duty to provide focused, specialist capability without any long term commitment.

97. Some large employers in the Public Sector are not supportive and internal HR policy within a number of Public Sector organisations excludes Reserves from joining. Manning and resource pressures have been cited as the underlying reasons for their policies. In addition, introduction of compulsory Employer Notification in April 2004 raised awareness of the number of Reservists in Public Sector employment but this openness has not always been reciprocated in changes of policy to support Reserve membership amongst their employees. The MoD, supported by the National Employer Advisory Board, will be engaging with Other Government Departments with the aim of producing a report on this issue.

Integration of Reservists

98. There will inevitably be cases where individuals moved into larger, formed units, perceive themselves to be initially poorly integrated. This may be exacerbated where individual augmentation occurs for operations although this can affect Regular as well as Reservist augmentees. Integration has significantly improved, but the Department is not complacent and strives for better integration not only on operations, but throughout Reservists’ careers. The Front Line Commands, responsible for force generation, now attempt wherever possible to integrate Reservist pre-deployment activity with Regulars at the earliest opportunity dependent upon the function the former are mobilized for. Legislative limitations on the length of mobilized Service sometimes preclude a Reservist from undertaking all his training with the regular unit in which he is to be embedded but commanders are conscious of this practical limitation.

Sustainability

99. The Department has used Reserves at unprecedented levels in the past 10 years with the Reserve Forces making an increasingly important contribution to Defence. Historically, during this period Reserves have comprised approximately 10% of the forces deployed on operations. The Defence Intent for the use of Reserves on operations is one year in five; however, the reality for the RAF and Maritime Reserve is closer to one year in three for the majority. The RAF has already mobilised some “unwilling” personnel in a limited number of specialisations (including Force Protection). Already included in the Operational Commitments Plot, the Territorial Army has routinely provided a minimum of 1200 personnel for mobilisation in support of Enduring Operations each year, with approx 40–50% in an infantry role. There will be increasing pressure on the Territorial Army this year to deliver on operations. The Services have stated that without Reserves they would not be able to meet their current operational commitments.

100. The demands on Reserve Forces need careful regulation, which is currently afforded by Reserve Forces Act 96, Armed Forces Act 2006 and the Defence Intent for the use of Reserves. We do not believe that the demands being placed on Reserves are excessive, but they need to be managed carefully. Land Command believe that the current output is becoming increasingly challenging. The Royal Navy and the RAF both believe that they can sustain the current operational output for the next 12 months. The Royal Navy is considering whether it will have to mobilise “unwilling” personnel for future deployments to Afghanistan.

Bounty

101. Reserves receive an annual training bounty if they achieve their annual commitment. The different annual rates are designed to combat outflow which is proportionally high in the first two to three years. The following rates from 01 April 2008 were recommended by the Armed Forces Pay Review Body 2008:

— Year One £405, Year 2 £891, Year 3 and 4 £1,376 and Year 5 £1,596.

Bounties continue to feature in the top five Retention positive factors in the latest Territorial Army Continuous Attitude Survey (July 2007) and has been ranked in first or second place for the last four Surveys. A review of Bounty and Call-Out Gratuity is due to start in 2009.
Training

102. The most recent Territorial Army Continuous Attitude Survey indicated that satisfaction with training has decreased. A lack of opportunity to train on equipment and alongside Regular counter parts is frequently cited as an issue for all three Services and there is decreased satisfaction with the realism of battle training. Limited opportunity to gain educational/vocational qualification is also a concern for many. Both the Army and the RAF have recently introduced a pairing mechanism between Regular and Reserve units for training activities. The RAF has recognised that delays in starting training often lead to outflow, and work is ongoing to improve the integration, standardization and modularization of training courses to reduce this trend.

Medical/Dental Care

103. Reservists are unique in that we demand military standards of medical and dental fitness, but their healthcare is provided, for the most part, by the National Health Service until Defence compulsorily mobilises them, at which time the Defence Medical Service assumes responsibility. MoD continues to work closely with the Department of Health to better serve Reserve Forces’ medical requirements and to improve access to National Health Service dentists.

104. 2 Division is carrying out a nine-month Pilot on behalf of the Army Commander Regional Forces to evaluate an enhanced level of service to the Territorial Army, for routine medicals, vaccinations and audiometric assessment. The desired outcome of the Pilot is improved Territorial Army deployability, through better health assessment.

105. The Reserves Mental Health Programme was launched in November 2006 and is open to all current or former members of the UK Volunteer and Regular Reserves who have been demobilised since 1 January 2003 following operational deployment overseas. It offers assessment and, where appropriate, out-patient treatment to eligible Reservists for mental health problems associated with operational deployment. Referral into the programme will primarily be via an individual’s General Practitioner. Self Referrals will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances for an initial assessment. Every individual attending assessment, regardless of whether they are eligible to enter the treatment phase of the programme, is given a personal management plan detailing their key problems and how they might be addressed. Currently the volume of calls received and, consequently, the number of assessments undertaken has been low. The project will be formally reviewed after three years.

106. Following recent experiences of serious injury to Reserve Forces both on operations and whilst undergoing training activities a policy review has been undertaken to ensure appropriate care is provided for Reserve Forces injured as a consequence of their military duties. The review concluded that in order that non-mobilised Reservists who have suffered a relatively serious injury during training should receive the most appropriate clinical care, this might now include facilities available through the Defence Medical Service if such facilities are not available in the National Health Service following their initial emergency management. Injuries to Reservists categorised as less than serious are still not covered by Defence Medical Service and individuals are expected to National Health Service facilities for treatment and rehabilitation.

The main lessons about retention contained in the latest continuous attitude survey

107. The Reserves Mental Health Programme was launched in November 2006 and is open to all current or former members of the UK Volunteer and Regular Reserves who have been demobilised since 1 January 2003 following operational deployment overseas. It offers assessment and, where appropriate, out-patient treatment to eligible Reservists for mental health problems associated with operational deployment. Referral into the programme will primarily be via an individual’s General Practitioner. Self Referrals will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances for an initial assessment. Every individual attending assessment, regardless of whether they are eligible to enter the treatment phase of the programme, is given a personal management plan detailing their key problems and how they might be addressed. Currently the volume of calls received and, consequently, the number of assessments undertaken has been low. The project will be formally reviewed after three years.

108. The Continuous Attitude Survey is distributed to a sample of RN and RM personnel annually. Over the past four years the results have consistently shown the top driver of intentions to leave amongst both RN and RM personnel to be the impact of Service life on family/domestic life. For example in the Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey 2006 83% of RN and 94% of RM personnel, who had their notice in, reported that the impact of service life increased/strongly increased their intention to leave. The remaining top three were; opportunities outside and the excitement of the job amongst RN personnel, and excitement of the job and morale for RM personnel. The results varied by rank. Healthcare provision was rated as the second top driver of intention to stay for both RN
and RM Ratings/Other Ranks, and the excitement of the job was rated as the second top driver of intentions to stay for both RN and RM Officers, and joint second driver for RM other ranks. Remuneration and enjoyment in the job have been identified as key retention positive factors over the past four years.

Army

110. There are some differences between Officers’ and Soldiers’ top five factors. “Impact of Army life” on family and personal life is the number one negative retention factor for Officers and Soldiers. “Opportunities outside the Army” is the second highest retention negative factor for both Officers and Soldiers. For Officers “spouse/partner’s career” was the third highest retention negative factor and for Soldiers “Amount of pay” was third. For Soldiers, “Unit management” and “Service accommodation” were joint fourth retention negative factors. “Service accommodation” was also fourth for Officers. “Effect of operational commitment and stretch” is the fifth-highest negative retention factor for Officers, and is sixth in the case of soldiers.

111. In previous surveys the most influential factor for both Officers and Soldiers staying in the Army was “Job security”. However, in the latest survey it is not among the list of factors, therefore “Pension” becomes the top retention factor for both Officers and Soldiers, with “Healthcare provision” and “Excitement of the job” also featuring in the top five for both. For Officers, “Job satisfaction” is the third retention factor, with “My morale” rating fifth.

RAF

112. The top five retention-negative factors cited within the AFCAS by officers and airmen were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Officers and airmen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Effect of operational commitment and stretch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact of RAF life on family and personal life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities outside the RAF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service accommodation (4th factor raised by officers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of operational deployments (4th factor raised by airmen)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

113. The top five most retention-positive factors for officers and airmen were (in order of importance):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Officers</th>
<th>Airmen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pension</td>
<td>Pension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excitement of the Job</td>
<td>Health care provision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Job Satisfaction</td>
<td>Opportunities for Personal Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health care provision</td>
<td>Current Job Satisfaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities for Personal Development</td>
<td>Excitement of the Job</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary of recent exit survey findings covering the issue of retention

RN

114. The latest Fleet Exit Interview Report for Ratings conducted in the 3rd quarter of 2007 indicated that previous trends continue with separation and domestic issues dominating Naval Service returns. Lack of job satisfaction is the second ranked issue. Workload and lack of manpower is a major issue for submariners as well as domestic stability. The main employment route that interviewees wished to take continues to be the Police, Fire or Prison Service. There is no exit interview report for Officers, though a new survey was introduced from 1 January 2008.

Army

115. Leavers are defined as Officers and Soldiers who have given “Notice to Terminate” or resign their commission, and are therefore leaving the Army voluntarily, and before the end of their engagement/commitment. The Leavers 1 survey was distributed on a rolling basis between October 2005 and November 2006 to 3,881 leavers. The overall response rate was 36% (70% for Officers and 30% for Soldiers) and a total of 1,365 (388 Officers and 977 Soldiers) surveys were returned. Leavers 1 captured the views of Officers and Soldiers as close to their decision point to leave the Army as possible. From giving notice to actually leaving there is a period of approximately seven to twelve months for Officers and about a year for Soldiers. During this period they are able to withdraw their notice. Approximately 30% do not leave having handed in their notice.
116. The main reasons for the intention to leave given by Officers and Soldiers centre around family and quality of life issues (for example, 73% of Officers and 77% of Soldiers cited the reason “Impact of Army lifestyle on personal domestic life”). Married leavers are twice as likely as single leavers to cite these as reasons for leaving, whereas lack of job satisfaction is a more important influence for leavers who are single.

117. Two-thirds of Soldiers said that they were leaving “sooner than they expected” and more than 40% said Army life was “worse than they expected it to be”. Around a third of Officers and Soldiers who commented said that the Army could not have done anything to prevent them from leaving the Service early.

118. A series of questions ask about the leaver’s future on leaving the Army. Almost 50% of Officers and Soldiers said that they would consider re-engaging with any of the three Armed Services at some point in the future. Specifically, 20% of Officers and Soldiers said that they would consider re-engaging in the Army.

119. Comparisons with the general Army population reveal that leavers are less satisfied with different aspects of Army life including their leadership, feeling valued and their general job satisfaction.

RAF

120. The emphasis on family and stability-related issues is borne out very clearly in the most important reasons for leaving cited by the 228 respondents of the latest Officers’ Leavers Survey. It is similarly mentioned by the most recent Airmen’s Leavers Survey completed by 490 personnel:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Officers</th>
<th>Airmen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current government policies in the Services</td>
<td>Expected future job satisfaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future of the RAF</td>
<td>Future of the RAF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family stability</td>
<td>Service morale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future job satisfaction expectations</td>
<td>Opportunities to spend time with the family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To spend time with family</td>
<td>Separation from family</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the four main categories of retention negative factors, “overstretch” and “erosion of the Service package” are jointly the two most important. The issue of overstretch is clearly visible in current detailed retention trends and, alongside measures that tackle discrete elements of the overall package, features strongly in targeted retention measures.

The valuing and investing in service personnel research programme

121. The Valuing and Investing in Service Personnel project was initiated in response to a gap analysis of the research programme underpinning the Service Personnel Plan. It will be the largest independent survey of its kind in the Services to date. MoD identified the requirement to better track, over a number of years, the attitudes and expectations of regular Service personnel in relation to their careers as they move through the Service. This will enable MoD to assess the impact of policies upon the same individuals at different points in their careers, providing the evidence required to develop the most effective policy to motivate and support Service personnel throughout their careers. It is planned to extend the project to the Reserves at a future date.

122. The analysis also identified the requirement to exploit the data provided by Joint Personnel Administration. Since almost all attitudinal data is collected anonymously, no association between that data and Joint Personnel Administration data could be accomplished. Even were it to be de-anonymised and linked to Joint Personnel Administration, such “snapshot” attitudinal data could not reveal information on the cumulative effects of deployments, family moves, training, take up of bonuses etc as it does not follow the same individuals over time. It was therefore determined that a longitudinal study was required to make best use of the information anticipated to be available in line with the pan-Government emphasis on evidence-based decision-taking and policy-making.

123. The NAO report on recruitment and retention made a number of recommendations on the use of longitudinal research to address recruitment and retention issues. The Valuing and Investing in Service Personnel project will be able to respond to these recommendations without the need to establish additional work.

124. Defence Analytical Services Agency is undertaking the survey distribution, data collection and basic analysis with the aid of a Departmental project manager. Kings College London are employed in a consultative capacity to develop the survey and carry out more complex data analysis using Joint Personnel Administration data combined with the survey results.

125. Valuing and Investing in Service Personnel has undergone 18 months of preparation and preliminary testing. In 2006 a series of focus groups were carried out with groups of different rank across the three Services and a pilot questionnaire developed. This questionnaire was assessed and developed with Service personnel.
126. The sample for the main study will be divided into four categories based on length of experience. The cohorts have been selected with the aim of giving priority to new recruits and to the analysis of the main decision points regarding continuation in the Service. The cohorts will then cover four lengths of service bands of 0–2 years, three to seven years, eight to nine years and 20+ years. The survey was sent to 50,000 Service people, a quarter of the Armed Forces. The closing date for questionnaire return is 31 May 2008 and the findings of the first Valuing and Investing in Service Personnel survey will not be available until late 2008/early 2009. Subsequent Valuing and Investing in Service Personnel surveys of the same individuals are planned for 2010 and 2012–13.

**Supplementary question on ethnic minorities in the armed forces**

127. The long term aim is that the Armed Forces will be manned by personnel from all sectors of the UK’s diverse communities so that they reflect the society they serve. Against this background the MoD aims to attain 8% ethnic minority representation by 2013. By 1 April 2007 the Armed Forces had attained 5.8% representation, a 0.3% increase on the 1 April 2007. The overall representation aim is underpinned by ethnic minority recruiting goals that are specifically targeted at people from UK. These goals are set at an increase of 0.5% on the previous year’s achievement or at the previous year’s goal whichever is greater.

128. The Armed Forces therefore engage with ethnic minority communities, including the Sikh and Muslim communities, to raise awareness of Armed Forces’ careers. In order to ensure that potential recruits from ethnic minorities are not discouraged from joining, every effort is made to allow members of minority faiths to practise their religious observances.

129. The Services place a great deal of importance on the spiritual development of Service personnel and encourage people from all faiths to practise their religious observances. Members of the Armed Forces are normally allowed to celebrate religious festivals and holidays and to fast and pray where this would not jeopardise operational effectiveness or health and safety. Where practical, areas of worship are made available in all Service establishments, including ships and submarines and, in most circumstances, arrangements can be made for daily prayer.

130. The Armed Forces recognise the need to observe specific codes of dress in accordance with particular religious beliefs. Jewish men may wear a dark, plain yarmulke when not wearing other headgear. Muslim women may if they wish wear trousers and long sleeved shirts and may wear a hijab except when operational or health and safety considerations dictate otherwise. Sikhs may wear the 5Ks. However, there are some constraints on the wearing of turbans or long hair where this is not compatible with necessary specialist headgear. Muslim or Sikh men are permitted to wear a short, neatly trimmed beard. For occupational or operational reasons, where a hazard clearly exists, personnel authorised to wear beards on religious grounds must be prepared to remove or modify them to enable the correct wearing of a respirator or breathing apparatus.

131. The Armed Forces aim to cater for the religious dietary requirements of all Service personnel. Halal, Kosher and vegetarian meals can be provided by Service messes and are available in Operational Ration Packs for operations and exercises.

132. The Armed Forces have appointed religious leaders from the Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh faiths to act as advisers on matters of religious requirements and to ensure that personnel from minority faiths receive appropriate pastoral and spiritual care. The first MoD civilian chaplains to the Armed Forces from the Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh faith communities began work in October 2005; the Services have had an honorary officiating chaplain from the Jewish faith under long-standing arrangements.

133. A Directory of Local Faith Group Representatives was launched in September 2003 to provide details of local religious advisers for military regions in the UK and overseas. The MoD and Armed Forces published internally a guide on religion and belief in the UK in July 2005 as a reference document for Commanding Officers and line managers.

134. The Armed Forces are again sponsoring the annual Muslim News Awards which recognise the achievements of individuals, initiatives or organisations within the Muslim community. The awards aim to highlight Muslim achievers and success stories throughout the UK and provide role models and counter misconceptions and prejudices about the Muslim community.

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6 Supplementary question submitted by the House of Commons Defence Committee’s Inquiry Manager on 6 March 2008.
Data

Strength and requirement of full time UK regular forces, full time reserve service and Gurkhas [Table 19, p 161]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>RN/RM</th>
<th>Army</th>
<th>RAF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trained Requirement</td>
<td>36,470</td>
<td>36,800</td>
<td>36,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variation</td>
<td>-1,280 p</td>
<td>-1,880 r</td>
<td>-1,860 p</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. The Trained Strength, Untrained Strength and the Trained Requirement comprise UK Regular Forces, Gurkhas, Full Time Reserve Service personnel and Nursing services. They do not include the Home Service battalions of the Royal Irish Regiment or mobilised reservists.
2. Original Army figures published in MoD Annual Report and Accounts were as at 1 March 2007.
3. Due to ongoing validation of data from the new Personnel Administration System, Army statistics from 1 April 2007, and Naval Service and RAF statistics from 1 May 2007 are provisional and subject to review.
p denotes provisional.
r denotes revised.

Intake to UK regular forces from civilian life [Table 20, p 163]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>RN/RM</th>
<th>Army</th>
<th>RAF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12 months ending 31 December 2007</td>
<td>12 months ending 31 December 2007</td>
<td>12 months ending 31 December 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officer Intake</td>
<td>320 p</td>
<td>320 p</td>
<td>1,070 p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Ranks Intake</td>
<td>3,470 p</td>
<td>3,450 p</td>
<td>13,410 p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Intake</td>
<td>3,760 p</td>
<td>3,770 p</td>
<td>14,470 p</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. UK Regular forces includes Nursing services and excludes Full Time Reserve Service personnel, Gurkhas, the Home Service battalion of the Royal Irish Regiment and mobilised reservists. It includes trained and untrained personnel.
2. Figures are rounded to ten and may not sum precisely to the total shown.
4. Due to ongoing validation of data from Joint Personnel Administration, Army statistics from 1 April 2007, RN statistics from 1 October 2006 and RAF statistics from 1 May 2007 are provisional and subject to review.
p denotes provisional.
r denotes revised.
TABLE 20a Historical Intake to UK Regular Forces from civilian life (Original)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Officer Intake</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>770</td>
<td>760</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Ranks Intake</td>
<td>3,570</td>
<td>3,320</td>
<td>11,910</td>
<td>10,940</td>
<td>1,110</td>
<td>1,880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Intake</td>
<td>3,940</td>
<td>3,690</td>
<td>12,690</td>
<td>11,690</td>
<td>1,430</td>
<td>2,180</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. UK Regular forces includes Nursing services and excludes Full Time Reserve Service personnel, Gurkhas, the Home Service battalion of the Royal Irish Regiment and mobilised reservists. It includes trained and untrained personnel.
2. Figures are rounded to ten and may not sum precisely to the total shown.

TABLE 20b Historical Intake to UK Regular Forces from civilian life (Revised)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Officer Intake</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>820r</td>
<td>790r</td>
<td>330r</td>
<td>290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Ranks Intake</td>
<td>3,570</td>
<td>3,320</td>
<td>11,910</td>
<td>10,940</td>
<td>1,150r</td>
<td>1,880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Intake</td>
<td>3,940</td>
<td>3,690</td>
<td>12,730r</td>
<td>11,720r</td>
<td>1,480r</td>
<td>2,180</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. UK Regular forces includes Nursing services and excludes Full Time Reserve Service personnel, Gurkhas, the Home Service battalion of the Royal Irish Regiment and mobilised reservists. It includes trained and untrained personnel.
2. Figures are rounded to ten and may not sum precisely to the total shown.
r denotes revised
### Gains to Trained Strength [Table 21, p 164]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31 December 2007</td>
<td>Target</td>
<td>Revised</td>
<td>Original</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Achieved</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RN Officers</td>
<td>330p</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>430p</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RN Other Ranks</td>
<td>3,040p</td>
<td>2,920</td>
<td>2,320</td>
<td>2,960</td>
<td>2,320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army Officers</td>
<td>970p</td>
<td>660</td>
<td>1,160p</td>
<td>1,020</td>
<td>960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army Other Ranks</td>
<td>10,220p</td>
<td>9200</td>
<td>9,370p</td>
<td>9,050</td>
<td>7,640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAF Officers</td>
<td>600p</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAF Other Ranks</td>
<td>1,050p</td>
<td>1330</td>
<td>1,010</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>1,010</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**
1. Gains to Trained Strength represents those added to the trained strength, usually having completed their training and thus transferring from the untrained strength. However, because of the nature of the data Defence Analytical Services Agency draw on, this has had to be inferred by adding trained outflow to the net change in trained strength.
2. The original Army number and target for 2006–07 showed Gains to Trained Strength on officers completing the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst and soldiers completing Phase 2 training. This metric is used for internal management and does not match the figures produced here by Defence Analytical Services Agency.
3. Due to ongoing validation of data from Joint Personnel Administration, Army statistics from 1 April 2007, RN statistics from 1 October 2007 and RAF statistics from 1 May 2007 are provisional.
4. Target shown is for 2007–08 Financial Year. These targets were provided by the individual Services and are not Defence Analytical Services Agency figures.
5. The apparently healthy Army Gains to Trained Strength is only one element of the recruitment/manning process and should be set in the context of the outflow rates.

* p denotes provisional
* r denotes revised
Voluntary Outflow rates [Table 22, p 165]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Long term Voluntary Outflow Rates</th>
<th>12 months ending 31 December 2007</th>
<th>12 months ending 31 March 2007 Revised</th>
<th>12 months ending 31 March 2007 Original</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RN Officers</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>4.0%&lt;sup&gt;p&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3.1%&lt;sup&gt;r&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RN Other Ranks</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army Officers&lt;sup&gt;3&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army Other Ranks&lt;sup&gt;3&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAF Officers</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>3.0%&lt;sup&gt;p&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAF Other Ranks</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>4.8%&lt;sup&gt;p&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tri-Service Officers</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tri-Service Other Ranks</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
3. Voluntary Outflow information has not been published for the Army since introduction of Joint Personnel Administration due to ongoing data validation.
4. RN/RM Officers Voluntary Outflow rate year ending 31 March 2006 has been revised to 2.8%.
5. Due to ongoing validation of data from Joint Personnel Administration, Army statistics from 1 April 2007, RN statistics from 1 October 2006 and RAF statistics from 1 May 2007 are provisional and subject to review.

<sup>p</sup> denotes provisional  
<sup>r</sup> denotes revised
### Outflow of UK Regular Forces to Civilian Life [Table 23, p 165]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>RN/RM</th>
<th>Army</th>
<th>RAF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>12 months ending 31 December 2006–07</strong></td>
<td><strong>2006–07</strong></td>
<td><strong>2006–07</strong></td>
<td><strong>2006–07</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Revised</strong></td>
<td><strong>Original</strong></td>
<td><strong>Revised</strong></td>
<td><strong>Original</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>December</strong></td>
<td><strong>December</strong></td>
<td><strong>December</strong></td>
<td><strong>December</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ending 31 December 2007</strong></td>
<td><strong>Ending 31 December 2007</strong></td>
<td><strong>Ending 31 December 2007</strong></td>
<td><strong>Ending 31 December 2007</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Officer Outflow</strong></td>
<td>570(^p)</td>
<td>500(^p)</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Voluntary Outflow)(^2)</td>
<td>(260)(^p)</td>
<td>(210)(^p)</td>
<td>(200)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Ranks Outflow</strong></td>
<td>3,850(p)</td>
<td>3,810(p)</td>
<td>3,770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Voluntary Outflow)(^2)</td>
<td>(1790)(^p)</td>
<td>(1750)(^p)</td>
<td>(1670)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Outflow</strong></td>
<td>4,420(p)</td>
<td>4,310(p)</td>
<td>4,270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Voluntary Outflow)(^2)</td>
<td>(2050)(^p)</td>
<td>(1960)(^p)</td>
<td>(1870)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Voluntary Outflow information has not been published for the Army since the introduction of Joint Personnel Administration because of ongoing validation of data.
3. Due to ongoing validation of data from the new Personnel Administration System, Army statistics from 1 April 2007, Naval Service statistics from 1 October 2007, and RAF statistics from 1 May 2007 are provisional and subject to review.
4. .. denotes not available.
5. Figures are rounded to ten and may not sum precisely to the totals shown.

\(p\) denotes provisional
\(r\) denotes revised.
### Armed Forces Ethnic Recruitment [Table 24, p 166]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Target</td>
<td>Actual</td>
<td>Target</td>
<td>Actual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navy</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAF</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**
1. The “Actual” figures are un-audited Single-Service estimates of UK ethnic minority intake.
2. Army officer intake is measured by intake into Sandhurst and Professional Qualified Officer courses.

### Armed Forces Ethnic Minority Representation [Table 25, p 166]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1 January 2008</th>
<th>1 April 2007 Revised</th>
<th>1 April 2007 Original</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Navy</td>
<td>3.0%&lt;sup&gt;p&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>8.7%&lt;sup&gt;p&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>8.4%&lt;sup&gt;p&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAF</td>
<td>2.2%&lt;sup&gt;p&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armed Forces</td>
<td>6.0%&lt;sup&gt;p&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**
1. Original Army figures published in MoD Annual Report and Accounts were as at 1 March 2007.
2. Due to ongoing validation of data from the Joint Personnel Administration system, Army statistics from 1 April 2007, and RN and RAF statistics from 1 May 2007 are provisional and subject to review.
3. Ethnic minorities are calculated as a percentage of those personnel for whom we hold a record of ethnic origin, ie excluding those of unspecified ethnic origin.
4. UK Regular forces includes Nursing services and excludes Full Time Reserve Service personnel, Gurkhas, the Home Service battalion of the Royal Irish Regiment and mobilised reservists. It includes trained and untrained personnel.

**p** denotes provisional.

### Women in the Armed Forces as of 1 April 2007 [Table 26, p 167]

**Table 26a Women in the Armed Forces as at 1 April 2007 Revised**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RN/Royal Marines/Army/ Royal Air Force</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>RN</th>
<th>Army</th>
<th>RAF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commodore/Brigadier/Brigadier/Air Commodore</td>
<td>20.4%&lt;sup&gt;p&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>10.0%&lt;sup&gt;p&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>10.4%&lt;sup&gt;p&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Captain(RN)/Colonel/Colonel/</td>
<td>39(3.3%&lt;sup&gt;p&lt;/sup&gt;)</td>
<td>1(0.3%)&lt;sup&gt;p&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>19(3.2%&lt;sup&gt;p&lt;/sup&gt;)&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>19(6.1%)&lt;sup&gt;p&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Captain</td>
<td>200(14.8%&lt;sup&gt;p&lt;/sup&gt;)&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>33(3.0%)&lt;sup&gt;p&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>76(4.4%)&lt;sup&gt;p&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>88(7.1%)&lt;sup&gt;p&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commander/Lieutenant/Colonel/Colonel/Wing Commander</td>
<td>890(9.2%)&lt;sup&gt;p&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>160(6.6%)&lt;sup&gt;p&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>460(9.7%)&lt;sup&gt;p&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>280(10.4%)&lt;sup&gt;p&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lieutenant/Group Leader/</td>
<td>1,800(14.8%)&lt;sup&gt;p&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>400(13.3%)&lt;sup&gt;p&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>650(13.8%)&lt;sup&gt;p&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>750(17.0%)&lt;sup&gt;p&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub Lieutenant/Midshipman/</td>
<td>79017.7%)&lt;sup&gt;p&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>911(12.8%)&lt;sup&gt;p&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>430(16.2%)&lt;sup&gt;p&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>280(24.6%)&lt;sup&gt;p&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lieutenant &amp; Second Lieutenant/Lieutenant &amp; Second Lieutenant/ Officer Designate/Flying &amp; Pilot Officer/Officer Designate&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Officers</td>
<td>3,720(11.6%)&lt;sup&gt;p&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>680(9.0%)&lt;sup&gt;p&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1,630(11.1%)&lt;sup&gt;p&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1,410(14.3%)&lt;sup&gt;p&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warrant Officer Class 1/ Warrant Officer Class 1/</td>
<td>130(3.4%)&lt;sup&gt;p&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>25(3.0%)&lt;sup&gt;p&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>68(4.0%)&lt;sup&gt;p&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>34(2.9%)&lt;sup&gt;p&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warrant Officer Class 2/ Warrant Officer Class 2/</td>
<td>220(4.0%)&lt;sup&gt;p&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1(0.1%)&lt;sup&gt;p&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>220(4.7%)&lt;sup&gt;p&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warrant Officer Class 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief Petty Officer/</td>
<td>570(4.1%)&lt;sup&gt;p&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>160(3.6%)&lt;sup&gt;p&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>300(5.1%)&lt;sup&gt;p&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>110(3.3%)&lt;sup&gt;p&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petty Officer/ Sergeant/</td>
<td>1,700(7.7%)&lt;sup&gt;p&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>330(7.0%)&lt;sup&gt;p&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>740(7.1%)&lt;sup&gt;p&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>630(9.1%)&lt;sup&gt;p&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 26b Women in the Armed Forces as at 1 January 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RN/Royal Marines/Army/ Royal Air Force</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>RNArmy</th>
<th>RAF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Other Ranks</td>
<td>17,640</td>
<td>3,650(9.4%)</td>
<td>8,180(7.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>17,640</td>
<td>3,650(9.4%)</td>
<td>8,180(7.7%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Due to ongoing validation of data from the Joint Personnel Administration system, Army statistics from 1 April 2007, and RN and RAF statistics from 1 May 2007 are provisional and subject to review.
2. The ranks Sub Lieutenant/Lieutenant and Second Lieutenant/Lieutenant and Second Officer/Pilot Officer also include Midshipman/Officer Designate/Officer Designate.
3. The following ranks are grouped together: Able Rating/Marine/Private/Junior Private/Junior Technician/Leading and Senior Aircraftman/Aircraftman. Since the introduction of Joint Personnel Administration it is no longer possible to get a reliable breakdown between the ranks Other Rank 1 and Other Rank 2.
4. Figures less than 100 have been left un-rounded so as not to obscure the data.
5. Percentages have been calculated from un-rounded figures.
6. Due to the rounding methods used, figures may not always equal the sum of the parts. When rounding to the nearest 10 numbers ending in five have been rounded to the nearest multiple of 20 to prevent systematic bias.

p denotes provisional.
r denotes revised
 denotes zero

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RN/Royal Marines/Army/ Royal Air Force</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>RNArmy</th>
<th>RAF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commodore/Brigadier/Brigadier/Air Commodore</td>
<td>24.0%</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Captain(RN)/ Commander/Colonel/Colonel</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>18.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commander/Lieutenant Colonel/Lieutenant Colonel/Wing Commander</td>
<td>210%</td>
<td>36.3%</td>
<td>84.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lieutenant Commander/Major/Major/Squadron Leader</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
<td>46.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lieutenant/ Captain/Captain/Flight Lieutenant</td>
<td>1,800%</td>
<td>390%</td>
<td>640%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub Lieutenant/Midshipman/Lieutenant &amp; Second Lieutenant/Lieutenant &amp; Second Officer/Officer Designate/Flying &amp; Pilot Officer/Officer Designate</td>
<td>750%</td>
<td>96.1%</td>
<td>400.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Officers</td>
<td>3,710%</td>
<td>690%</td>
<td>1,610%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warrant Officer Class 1/Warrant Officer Class 1/Warrant Officer Class 1</td>
<td>120%</td>
<td>222.8%</td>
<td>71.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warrant Officer Class 2/Warrant Officer Class 2/Warrant Officer Class 2</td>
<td>240%</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
<td>230%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief Petty Officer/Colour Sergeant/Staff Sergeant/Flight Sergeant/Chief Technician</td>
<td>600%</td>
<td>170%</td>
<td>320%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petty Officer/ Sergeant/ Sergeant/ Sergeant/Petty Officer/ Sergeant/ Sergeant</td>
<td>1,730%</td>
<td>350%</td>
<td>750%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leading Rate/Corporal/Corporal/Corporal</td>
<td>3,460%</td>
<td>680%</td>
<td>1,600%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lance Corporal</td>
<td>1,520%</td>
<td>30.5%</td>
<td>1,500%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Able Rating/Marine/Private/Junior Private/Junior Technician/Leading &amp; Senior Aircraftman/Aircraftman</td>
<td>6230%</td>
<td>1790%</td>
<td>2,170%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>13,890%</td>
<td>3,020%</td>
<td>6,570%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Due to ongoing validation of data from the Joint Personnel Administration system, Army statistics from 1 April 2007, and RN and RAF statistics from 1 May 2007 are provisional and subject to review.
2. The ranks Sub Lieutenant/Lieutenant and Second Lieutenant/Lieutenant and Second Officer/Pilot Officer also include Midshipman/Officer Designate/Officer Designate.
3. The following ranks are grouped together: Able Rating/Marine/Private/Junior Private/Junior Technician/Leading and Senior Aircraftman/Aircraftman. Since the introduction of Joint Personnel Administration it is no longer possible to get a reliable breakdown between the ranks Other Rank 1 and Other Rank 2.
4. Figures less than 100 have been left un-rounded so as not to obscure the data.
5. Percentages have been calculated from un-rounded figures.
6. Due to the rounding methods used, figures may not always equal the sum of the parts. When rounding to the nearest 10 numbers ending in five have been rounded to the nearest multiple of 20 to prevent systematic bias.

p denotes provisional.
r denotes revised
Reserves [Table 27, p 169]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>December 2007</th>
<th>April 2007</th>
<th>April 2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Regular Reserves</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Provisional</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naval Service</td>
<td>10,330</td>
<td>9,600</td>
<td>10,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army</td>
<td>33,650</td>
<td>33,800</td>
<td>32,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAF</td>
<td>6,685</td>
<td>7,300</td>
<td>7,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Volunteer Reserves</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RN Reserve</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strained Strength Requirement</td>
<td>1,780</td>
<td>2,340</td>
<td>2,440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trained Strength</td>
<td>1,650</td>
<td>1,640</td>
<td>1,740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manning Balance</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Marine Reserve</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trained Strength Requirement</td>
<td>580</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trained Strength</td>
<td>520</td>
<td>470</td>
<td>490</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manning Balance</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Territorial Army Reserve</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trained Strength Requirement</td>
<td>30,270</td>
<td>30,270</td>
<td>30,270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trained Strength</td>
<td>19,940</td>
<td>21,070</td>
<td>20,830</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manning Balance</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Auxiliary Air Force</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trained Strength Requirement</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>2,100</td>
<td>2,210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trained Strength</td>
<td>778</td>
<td>1,390</td>
<td>1,080</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manning Balance</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note:
1. Strengths rounded to the nearest 10.
## ROYAL NAVY/ROYAL MARINE OPERATIONAL PINCH POINTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trade</th>
<th>Shortfall</th>
<th>Shortfall Mitigation Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MERLIN Aircrew (Pilots)</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>39% Gains to Trained Strength increased to maximum from April 2008. Aircrew Financial Retention Incentive2 100% uptake from those eligible. More flexible use of Full Term Commission (Air). Rebalancing of branch structure and increasing promotion flow. PAs introduced for aircrewmen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MERLIN Aircrew (Observers)</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MERLIN Aircrew (Aircrwmans)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AB Weapon Systems (Sensors Submariner)</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>26% Range of priority recruiting and retention measures including Golden Hellos and Financial Retention Incentives. Gains to Trained Strength is forecast to increase to 79% from 68% next quarter but this will still delay the recovery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AB Weapon System (Tactical Submariner)</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>22% As for AB Weapon Systems (Sensors Submariner)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Weapon System Junior Rate</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>17.8% Full range of Recruiting and Retention measures coherent with other specs in Submarine service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leading Seaman Warfare</td>
<td>514</td>
<td>33% Effect mitigated as far as possible by local management. Streamlined promotion beginning to take effect. Fast track Petty Officer and Project Fisher initiatives aimed at increasing pull-through.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AB Diver</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>35% Increased Gains to Trained Strength and focus on minimising course wastage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Marine Other Ranks</td>
<td>501</td>
<td>8% Extensive recruiting campaign including recruiting bounty. Combined committal bonus and Financial Retention Incentive for ranks with 4-6 years reckonable service with current uptake of 61%.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEA-KING &amp; LYNX Avionics</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>18% Gapping is mitigated in Second line by use of civilian manpower. Training has been rationalised from 18 to 12 months with a view to further reducing to 6 months in length. Rebalance of AV versus M trades and potential Streamlined promotion techniques being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisors (Leading Air Engineering Technicians)</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>39% Golden Hello Financial Retention Incentive to aid Recruitment and Retention. Improvements to training to improve Gains to Trained Strength. Scoping possible introduction of direct entry to Aircraft Controller specialisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leading Aircraft Controllers</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>25% Financial bid to increase Leading Hand billets implemented in January 2007 now using Streamlined promotion to pull-through Senior Rate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petty Officer (Mine Warfare)</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>40% Improvement is dependent on pull-through from Able-Seaman2 to Able-Seaman1 Drive to fill training courses. Close monitoring of personnel to tailor progress. Selection board to identify high flying Engineering Technician(Marine Engineering Submarines) for early pull-through to acting Cat B posts. Increase in Extended Career and Full Time Reserve Service. Submarine Quinquenial Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AB(Seaman)</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## ROYAL NAVY/ROYAL MARINES CRITICAL MANNING GROUPS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Arm/Trade</th>
<th>Forecast</th>
<th>Initiatives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Submarine Arm:</strong></td>
<td>If mitigation and recruiting plans are successful then the situation is expected to slowly improve</td>
<td>Mitigation plans focus on Recruiting and Retention. Submarine recruiting is now Captain Naval Recruiting’s top priority and activity includes TV advertising, phase I and II transfers in training, port visits, “recruit an oppo” schemes and fast track naturalisation where applicable. Retention measures include Golden Hellos, combined committal bonuses, targeted Extensions of Service, Financial Retention Incentives and improvements to remuneration via Quinquennial Review of Specialist Pay (Submarine) by the Armed Forces Pay Review Body.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Able Seaman (Communications &amp; Information Systems Submarine); Lieutenant/Lieutenant Commander Warfare Submarine (Advanced Warfare Course); Lieutenant Commander Warfare Submarine (Submarine Command Course); Logistics (Catering Services)(Delivery)(Submarine); Logistics(Personnel)(Submarine)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fleet Air Arm</strong></td>
<td>Grouping is suffering high (11%) Voluntary Outflow and a desire of Commando Helicopter Force (CHF) aircrew to serve outside of cadre. In the short term end of CHF commitment to TELIC and a more palatable HERRICK deployment cycle may stabilise or improve situation slightly but that will still mask ongoing CHF un-sustainability.</td>
<td>Mitigation package being developed to include: increased broadening opportunity for CHF aircrew, commission transfers and increased promotion flow, pull manpower from other aviation cadres and increase Operational Conversion Unit output from 848 Naval Air Squadron.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commando Helicopter Pilots</td>
<td></td>
<td>Consideration of increased training output (will not solve the demand for 2nd/3rd tour PWOs), seek Transformation savings on PWO liability, increase Full Term Commission transfers, Extensions of Service and utilise officers qualified by the Advanced Command &amp; Staff Course from other branches in target appointments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>General Service</strong></td>
<td>Shortages leading to moderate levels of gapping as the “Black Hole” transits 2nd and 3rd tour PWO population. No improvement expected before 2012.</td>
<td>Extra-ordinary board in January 2008. Study into career path and training required to pull through such officers, and branch education of the new Ship Command Examination process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal Warfare Officer (PWO)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Continuation of Streamlined promotion, re-profiling of liability, resistance to hull reductions, and supporting Project FISHER training initiatives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Junior Warfare (Hydrographic, Meteorological and Oceanographic) Officers</strong></td>
<td>Ability to pull-through suitably qualified officers to Command Qualification and Executive Command Appointment Board selection is not expected to improve in the medium term.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petty Officer Warfare</td>
<td>Small deficit expected to increase over next 24 months leading to front-line gapping.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## ARMY OPERATIONAL PINCH POINTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trade</th>
<th>Shortfall No</th>
<th>Shortfall %</th>
<th>Remedial Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private/Lance Corporal Infantryman</td>
<td>1280</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>Financial Retention Incentive; IMP published with monthly review; focus on reducing wastage in training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private-Corporal Vehicle Mechanic Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers</td>
<td>535</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
<td>Financial Retention Incentive staffed; removal of Class 1 time bar, target rejoins and transfers; early eligibility for Lance Corporal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private-Corporal Armourer Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>16.8%</td>
<td>Armourer Working Group established; Removal of Class 1 time bar; Apprenticeship scheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lance Corporal-Corporal Recovery Mechanic</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>36.5%</td>
<td>Removal of Class 1 time bar; Apprenticeship scheme; early eligibility for Lance Corporal promotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers Corporal-Sergeant Operational Military Intelligence Staff Sergeant- Warrant Officer 1 Clerk of Works</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>26.0%</td>
<td>Restructuring of Military Intelligence Brigade, examine pay increment qualification.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Engineers Sapper-Lance Corporal Military Engineer fitter Royal Engineers Lance Bombadier—Bombadier Gunner</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
<td>Foundation training introduced prior to the start of the course in order to increase pass rates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Artillery</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td>Armed Forces Pay Review Body 2008 Financial Retention Incentive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### ARMY MANNING PINCH POINTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trade</th>
<th>Shortage</th>
<th>Remedial Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corporal-Captain Intensive Treatment Unit Nurse Army Medical Service</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporal-Captain Emergency Medicine Nurse Army Medical Service</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>30.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major and above Radiologist Army Medical Service</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major and above Orthopaedic Surgeon Army Medical Service</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>46.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major and above General Surgeon Army Medical Service</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>41.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major and above Anaesthetist Army Medical Service</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>59.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Captain and above General Medical Practitioner Army Medical Service</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporal and above Radiographer Army Medical Service</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>57.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registered General Nurse Army Medical Service</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>26.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporal and above Operation Department Practitioner Army Medical Service</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lance Bombadier-Bombadier UAV Operator (Level 4) Royal Artillery</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>47.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade</td>
<td>Shortage</td>
<td>Shortage Remedial Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military Engineer Geographic Royal Engineers</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>26.2% Entry standard review; foundation degree on completion of Class 1 Course; Geographic recruiting team.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporal-Staff Sergeant Explosive Ordnance Disposal Royal Engineers</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>28.7% Specialist Pay for Officers &amp; Senior Non-commissioned Officer Explosive Ordnance Disposal operatives; extension of course to increase first time pass rate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPR-Lance Corporal; Military Engineer Close Support 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Engineers Corporal—Staff Sergeant Ammo Tech Royal Logistic Corps</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>22.8% Entry qualifications and standards may need increasing due to digitisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private-Corporal Postal &amp; Courier Operators</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>15.4% Longer Service Scheme August 2006, SOTR increased.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Logistic Corps Private-Corporal Chef</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>8.5% Targeting at Internal Transfer Fairs; additional training teams.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Logistic Corps Corporal-Sergeant Information System Engineer Royal Signals</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>5.4% Management Consultancy Services (Army) study regarding employment of chefs in peacetime.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Sergeant Mil Admin Adjutant General’s Corps(Staff and Personnel support) Musician</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>10.4% Recruiting directive; Strategic Manning Committee; greater use of reserves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corps of Army Music</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>16.2% New Operational Pinch Point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade</td>
<td>Shortage</td>
<td>Shortage Remedial Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporal-Sergeant Aircraft Technician</td>
<td>−40</td>
<td>−7.9% Continuing to monitor trends in outflow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lance-Corporal-Sergeant Avionics Technician</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4.3% Continuing to monitor trends in outflow.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### RAF OPERATIONAL PINCH POINTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trade</th>
<th>Shortfall No</th>
<th>Shortfall %</th>
<th>Measures Being Taken</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>28.8%</td>
<td>Continuing aggressive recruitment with golden handshake and retention bonuses. Out of Area detachments revert to 3 months from January 2008 reducing deployments to 34 per year (but generating longer time away from retained home task)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operations Support (Intelligence)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>Work done to minimise demand for Out of Area. No more Out of Area detachments will be accepted without a corresponding offset. Increased offers of Permanent Commission/Assimilation to maintain experience levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operations Support (Regiment)</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
<td>Manning shortfall eased with increased offers of Permanent Commission /Assimilation. Recruiting targets have been adjusted. Manning Strategy seeks to address recruitment, retention and other manning issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operations Support (Provost/Security)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>Medium-term MTWS will reduce Joint Provost requirement thereby closing the gap between strength and requirement. Rank-ranging opportunities being used to balance Officer level 2 and Officer level 3 level gaps with reorganisation of RAF Station Provost and Security staff will amend the requirement for Officer level 2/Officer level 3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operations Support (Flight Operations)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
<td>Increased number of PC/Assimilation offers currently in progress. Request for increased output of phase 2 training to fully utilise current and expected phase 1 training output as soon as possible. Work done with Specialization Sponsor to prioritize posts in order to share the impact of gaps. Desk Officers currently working with Air Command to reclassify 2 posts as Senior Non-commissioned Officer “Any” and not accepting any more Out of Area detachments without a corresponding offset.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Princess Mary’s RAF Nursing Service</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
<td>Overall figures for establishment review now confirmed, breakdown work of specialisation and rank in progress; this will significantly increase Intensive Treatment Unit and Accident and Emergency numbers. ‘Golden Hellos’ to attract and retain specialists increased. Financial Retention Incentive for specialist operational pinch points introduced and popular, (£20K for 3 year Return of Service within speciality). Recruiting and re-brigading being targeted towards specialists. Specialist pay spine and a number of non-renumeration initiatives for nurses being developed for Armed Forces Pay Review Body Nurse Pay 2007 paper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weapon System Operator (Air Loadmaster)</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>Recent increase in recruiting achievement against targets is starting to ameliorate the overall shortage. All crewman training places at DHFS are utilised.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weapons Systems Operator (Loadmaster)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
<td>Recent increase in recruiting achievement against targets is starting to ameliorate shortages. High quality Sergeants are starting to emerge who will compete for promotion to fill the middle management void within the next 2-3 years. Principal deficit is within the Support Helicopter Force, but this continues to reduce as recruiting targets are achieved. All crewman training places at Defence Helicopter Flying School are utilised.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air Traffic Control/Flight Operations Manager/ Flight Operations Assistant Sergeant</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>Artificial Forecast Manning Distribution Level to be implemented at Corporal rank (90%) to alleviate base ranks concerns. This will remain for the foreseeable future. Harmony Working group to investigate Sergeant Flight Operations Manager/Assistant issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade</td>
<td>Shortfall No</td>
<td>Shortfall %</td>
<td>Measures Being Taken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firefighter</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
<td>Out of Area commitments under review by Trade Sponsor. Any reductions in burden may be offset by projected reduction in requirement. Financial Retention Incentive was offered to eligible Senior Aircraftsmen in February 2007.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gunner</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
<td>Work being carried out to improve training success rate. RAF Regiment presentation team set up to assist recruiting. Potential benefit from Ground Based Air Defence drawdown by 2007/2008.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controller</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Transport (Mechanic)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAF Police</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
<td>Changes in recruiting now part of the core trade—situation improving. Out of Area posts under review in an attempt to reduce posts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Nurse (Registered General Nurse)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accident and Emergency</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
<td>Possible amalgamation of manning desks may help alleviate some conflict between the various agencies allowing greater flexibility within the Trade/ branch.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade</td>
<td>Shortfall No</td>
<td>Shortfall %</td>
<td>Measures Being Taken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative (Training)</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
<td>Defence Analytical Services Agency projections show a slow recovery to near manning balance in the 2009 time frame. In the short term, gaps at SO2/SO3 levels are being managed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chaplains</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
<td>Recruiting effort continues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
<td>Medium Term Workstrand projects 15-20% reduction in requirement by 2008. Strength has been reduced by application of manning regulators, including redundancy (although this will compound pinch point in the short-term until requirement is reduced). Permanent Commission/Assimilation offers made to all scoring candidates on the October 2006 Permanent Commission/Assimilation. More offered in February 2007.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Support</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
<td>Establishment of MSO-specific phase 2 training (5 main pillars) and career management to incorporate broader experience before promotion to next rank. Mentoring of first tourists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operations Support (Fighter Control)</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
<td>Training system full to capacity with high attrition rates. Project ongoing to review employability and qualification of Senior Non-commissioned Officer cadre. Indications are that deficits will remain an enduring problem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Squadron Leader Aircrew</td>
<td>+119</td>
<td>+16.8%</td>
<td>Squadron Leader aircrew—gradually being “reclaimed” from the cockpit; not in position to reclaim many more without impacting on the front-line. Long-term restructuring is slowly resulting in a reduced number of staff appointments. Gradual decrease in gapping helped by use of Squadron Leaders in out-of-specialisation appointments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Health Technician</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
<td>Training output due end 2007/2008. Manning balance should then be achieved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Technician Weapons Systems Laboratory Technician</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td>Trade currently undergoing output study which could result in manpower reductions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Administration/Assistant</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
<td>Defence Medical Capability Study 2 awaiting confirmation for future requirement. This could reduce the trade by 100 within 5 years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musician</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>Recruiting going well and substantial reduction in manning deficit anticipated 2008.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supply</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>Loss of posts under Medium Term Work Strand reductions will go some way towards improving manning. Clearer picture of manning position should be known early 2008.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pharmacist Technician</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Personnel in training should improve manning balance, however, recruitment and retention problems with no easy solution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radiographer</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>Basic posts fully manned. Phase 2 output should improve situation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAF Physical Training Instructor</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
<td>Basic posts fully manned. Phase 2 output should improve situation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Nurse (Registered Mental Nurse)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18.7%</td>
<td>Personnel in training should improve manning balance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FINANCIAL RETENTION INCENTIVES

Table 1: Financial Retention Incentives (Financial Retention Incentives) currently in payment to eligible Service personnel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incentive</th>
<th>Who applies to</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Return of Service</th>
<th>Current Take-Up Rate</th>
<th>When Introduced</th>
<th>Lifespan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aircrew Financial Retention</td>
<td>RAF and RN Career Stream Senior Officer</td>
<td>£50,000</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>RAF: 106%</td>
<td>April 2002</td>
<td>April 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incentive</td>
<td>Aircrew at the Immediate Pension Point only</td>
<td>£50,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>RN: 98%</td>
<td>Extended in</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>RAF: 81%</td>
<td>April 2007</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>RN: 59%</td>
<td>April 2007</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infantry Financial Retention</td>
<td>Other Ranks with 4 years' service</td>
<td>£4,500</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td></td>
<td>April 2007</td>
<td>April 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incentive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Marines’ Financial Retention</td>
<td>Other Ranks with 4 years' service</td>
<td>£10,000 inc RN Commitment Bonus</td>
<td>3 years. For 2007-08 only a pro rata Financial Retention Incentive for those with 5 and 6 years service</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>April 2007</td>
<td>April 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incentive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurses’ Financial Retention</td>
<td>Emergency, Intensive Treatment and Operating Theatre Nurses</td>
<td>£20,000</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td></td>
<td>July 2007</td>
<td>July 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incentive</td>
<td>Sergeants, Colour Sergeants, Warrant Officers and Officers Commissioned from the Ranks</td>
<td>£50,000</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td></td>
<td>April 2006</td>
<td>April 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Forces’ Financial Retention</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incentive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submariner Financial Retention</td>
<td>Category B2 Nuclear Watch Keepers</td>
<td>£25,000</td>
<td>4 years</td>
<td></td>
<td>April 2003</td>
<td>April 2008</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2: Financial Retention Incentives approved by Armed Forces Pay Review Body for implementation in April 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incentive</th>
<th>Eligible Population</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Return of Service</th>
<th>Lifespan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Submariner Financial Retention Incentive</td>
<td>Category A2 Nuclear Watch Keepers</td>
<td>£25,000</td>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>April 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Category B2 Nuclear Watch Keepers</td>
<td>£20,000</td>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>April 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Artillery Financial Retention Incentive</td>
<td>RA Bombardiers and below with 5-6 years’ service</td>
<td>£4,500</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>April 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers Vehicle</td>
<td>Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers Lance</td>
<td>£7,000</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>April 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanics Financial Retention Incentive</td>
<td>Corporal Vehicle Mechanics with 4-6 years’ service</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAF Firefighters Financial Retention Incentive</td>
<td>SAC Firefighters at the 4.5 year point subject to</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>concurrent acceptance of the Commitment Bonus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Commitment Bonus</td>
<td>£9,000</td>
<td>Service to the 7.5</td>
<td>April 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>year point</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAF Regiment Financial Retention Incentive</td>
<td>SAC Gunners at the 4 year point subject to concurrent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>acceptance of the Commitment Bonus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Commitment Bonus</td>
<td>£10,000</td>
<td>Service to the 7</td>
<td>April 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>year point</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal Personnel Officer</td>
<td>Eligible Population</td>
<td>Value</td>
<td>Return of Service</td>
<td>Current Take-Up Rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submariner Golden Hello</td>
<td>General Service transfer incentive to Submarine Service to supplement existing Golden Hello (£5K)</td>
<td>£2,500</td>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>No personnel have yet reached qualification point yet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Assistant Submarine</td>
<td>Qualified Medical Assistant Submarines and those £10,000 who qualify up to 31 March 08</td>
<td>£10,000</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leading Aircraft Controllers</td>
<td>Ratings on completing LAC Qualifying Course or to any re-joining Leading or Petty Officer Aircraft Controller who has left the Service since April 01</td>
<td>£5,000</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>75% on current course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAF Recruitment Bounty</td>
<td>Reward eligible RAF personnel with a bounty for introducing a recruit who successfully completes Phase 2 training in an operational pinch point trade</td>
<td>£1,300</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>No eligible recruit has yet reached the end of Phase 2 training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UAV Operators</td>
<td>RA soldiers who have qualified, or who qualify before 31 March 2008, as Level 4 UAV operators</td>
<td>£10,000</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courier Dispatch Service</td>
<td>Courier Dispatch Service couriers paid on completion of Courier Dispatch Service commitment to 31 July 2009</td>
<td>£3,250</td>
<td>Service until 31 July 2009</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4: Take-up rates of recently completed Principal Personnel Officer Delegated Authority Financial Retention Incentives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal Personnel Officer Retention incentive</th>
<th>Eligible Population</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Return of Service</th>
<th>Take-Up Rate</th>
<th>When Introduced</th>
<th>Lifespan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engineering Technician (Weapon Engineering Submarine Strategic Weapon System) Senior Rates</td>
<td>Strategic Weapon Systems Petty Officer-Warrant Officer Class 2</td>
<td>£20,000</td>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>18 February 2008</td>
<td>31 March 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAF SAC Firefighters</td>
<td>SAC Firefighters with between 4–4.5 years service</td>
<td>£9,000</td>
<td>to those not in receipt of CB</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>January 2007</td>
<td>March 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>£6,000 to those already received CB</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAF Regiment Senior Aircraftsman Gunners</td>
<td>Service to the 7.5 year point</td>
<td>£8,000 and existing £3,000 CB</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>March 2007</td>
<td>August 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SAC Gunners with between 4–4.5 years service</td>
<td></td>
<td>Service to the 7.5 year point</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5: Take-up rates of recently completed Financial Retention Incentives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incentive</th>
<th>Who applies to</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Return of Service</th>
<th>Take-Up Rate</th>
<th>When Introduced</th>
<th>Lifespan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Airmen Aircrew Financial Retention Incentive</td>
<td>Airmen Aircrew after 17 years’ service</td>
<td>£20,000</td>
<td>5 years to the IPP</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>April 2003</td>
<td>April 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submariner Financial Retention Incentive</td>
<td>Junior Submarine Warfare Officers firstly on completion of Training Module 4 and the Navigating Officer’s Course and then on passing the Advanced Warfare Course or four years after receiving Stage 1 payment whichever is later</td>
<td>£25,000 each</td>
<td>4 years for each Financial Retention Incentive</td>
<td>93% Financial Retention Incentive</td>
<td>18 March 2008</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46% Financial Retention Incentive2</td>
<td>Weapon Engineering Artificers (Submarines)—on promotion to Chief Petty Officer</td>
<td>£25,000</td>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>April 2003</td>
<td>April 2006</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

18 March 2008
Memorandum from the Army Families Federation

AFF SURVEY MARCH 2008—RETENTION ISSUES FROM THE FAMILY’S PERSPECTIVE

This survey was conducted between 6 and 14 March 2008 to establish the current mood of families with regard to soldiers’ decisions to stay in or leave the Army. During this period all AFF staff and volunteers in the UK, Germany, Cyprus and Northern Ireland asked families the questions below. The questions were also sent to members of AFF’s Facebook group. A total of 468 responses were received. The results therefore provide a representative sample of the views of spouses, ie the married community. However, there is no representation from the significant unmarried section of the community (girlfriends and boyfriends), nor from parents, who would also have an influence over a soldier’s career decisions.

1. How long have you been an Army spouse?

This question was asked to determine whether there was an association between the length of time someone had been married and their attitudes towards Army life. Responses ranged from 25 years through to one year, with an average of four years.

Analysis of the relationship between number of years as an Army spouse and attitudes towards Army life (all respondents):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years as Army Spouse</th>
<th>Better</th>
<th>Worse</th>
<th>As expected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1–5</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>27%</td>
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<tr>
<td>6–10</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>11–15</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>47%</td>
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<tr>
<td>16–25</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>46%</td>
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Length of marriage counts for how you feel—you don’t necessarily get used to it.

AFF believes that the higher rate of dissatisfaction within those spouses who have been married between one to 10 years is down to three main factors: the first is that those married for the shortest length of time have joined the Services when they are at an unprecedented level of operational commitments. Secondly, we believe that the higher rate reflects an alteration in the expectations of Army spouses and changes in Army culture. Spouses have come to expect more for themselves and their families, a career, a nice home, stability while changes in Army culture (PAYD, erosion of patch life, poor quality SFA) have compounded to increase dissatisfaction.

2. Is Army life better or worse than you expected?

Of all respondents 50% of spouses said that Army life was better than they expected; 37% said that it was worse, and the remainder said it was just as they expected.

The 46 responses received via Facebook were analysed together and included in the statistics above. However, separate analysis shows that 15% said that Army life was better than expected, 50% said that it was worse, and 30% said that it was just as they expected.

However, comments given indicate that attitudes change due to individual circumstances or the tempo of the Army’s commitments:

- has got harder the older I get—I want to settle and put down roots;
- my outlook on army life has changed since I had the children—it’s not family orientated;
- the army isn’t how it used to be—there is a disagreement politically with how I feel about the current operations;
- it was better to start with, but when faced with a late posting and all the uncertainty that goes with moving to somewhere where there is no army housing and all the nonsense that brings with it, much worse also being posted to a TA unit where there is no support;
- I am fed up of having so little consideration for me and also for my husband who is continually worked to the point of exhaustion;
- I hate the fact that the Army is incapable of planning properly. They give you a date for them going off on exercise/tour but it is never kept to;
- One did say she thought it was worse to begin with but now she has been married for almost five years it is better as she is now aware of the help she can get.
3. Would you feel happier if your spouse chose to leave the Army?

52% of spouses answered “no” to this question, and they commented that they were happy to support their soldier in his chosen career. They also stated that they valued the financial security offered by the Army, and some had left the Army and then signed back up. However, 46% said they would be happier if their spouse was not in the Army. The less satisfied respondents made comments such as:

I would love my husband to leave if I was confident of his future job prospects;
I don’t want him to leave, but I’m not going to accompany him.

Only 2% of respondents said they didn’t mind either way.

AFF believes that most Army spouses are independent and resourceful with a “can do” attitude. It is rare to meet a spouse who will freely admit to badgering their spouse to leave the Army.

4. Which aspect of Army life would make you want your spouse to leave the Army?

We asked respondents to indicate which of the following aspects would influence their decision. These categories were based on responses given in previous research (December 2007 to February 2008). However, respondents commented that increasing deployment frequency and length would be a deciding factor as well.

- Housing: 20%
- Children’s education: 26%
- Your education: 4%
- Your career/employment: 19%
- Your relationship with your spouse: 31%

Comments pertinent to this question included:

Bad housing may not be the one factor that drives us out of the Army—but good housing would go a long way to keeping us in.

No aspect of army life would make me want him to leave the army. I have enjoyed my time as a wife and other than monetary problems have never had any concerns. Have always managed to get the school I want and even have a daughter at boarding school. We have now settled into our own house and are looking forward to the next chapter.

I think the frequency and duration of tours puts undue pressure on relationships and family life.

The highest scoring section included many spouses who commented that frequent and lengthy operational tours were having a detrimental affect on their relationship and this was the factor that would influence their decision to encourage their spouse to leave the Army.

CONCLUSION

AFF believe that families often have a key role to play in the decision of a soldier (or officer) to remain in the service of the Army. It is unfortunate that this study could not include an audience of spouses whose service person had already left the Army. An area of particular interest to AFF is those partners of young soldiers whose reluctance to marry and “follow the drum” speeds the soldiers exit from the Army. This audience is unfortunately very difficult for us to monitor or survey and so we can only speculate on their effect.

From our recent research and experience of operating within the service community for 25 years we would suggest that there is no one factor which causes a spouse to ask their partner to leave the Army. It will invariably be a combination of key factors that prompt the decision. Although many Army families cannot survive on a single wage and certainly are not in a position to become home owners on one, interestingly few cited money as a reason for leaving the Army in our research.

It is our belief that without addressing a number of key welfare issues and by investing immediately and substantially in Defence Estates families will continue to be a major influence in a Service persons decision to leave the Army.

BACKGROUND

As background information for the committee, attached is the evidence prepared for the AFPRB X factor study in 2007. All points remain valid and provide useful background as to the pressures experienced daily by Army families.

This evidence will be organised in line with the report to the AFPRB for consideration of the X factor:—

- features of the job, impact of the job and social aspects of the job. This report will be based on judgement rather than any mechanistic formulae. All evidence in this paper will be from the viewpoint of Army families as a whole rather than the serving family member.

As set out in 2.3 of 2002 AFPRB report.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The greatest influence of a military career is the impact of the job on family life—separation and turbulence are both at higher levels now than in 2002 due to high operational tempo and reorganisation of the Army. Danger levels, media interest, and high rate of churn make being an Army family today more anxious and challenging than previously. Home ownership is inaccessible for the majority of Army families due to turbulence and its impact on feasible second incomes. Accommodation issues remain the area of greatest concern presented to the AFF over the last five years.

The social aspects of the job have changed with the introduction of MoD change programmes and efficiency measures that have reduced the ability of the chain of command to influence and assist personnel effectively. The lack of a coherent body representing Army personnel is felt by all ranks.

1. Features of the Job

1.1 This is not an area that would normally be of concern in family life however opportunities and travel have been seen by some as an advantage of Army family life particularly postings overseas. One change in recent years is the change in travel of the general population. For example many civilians go to Cyprus for their holidays therefore Army families posted to Cyprus expect to be able to spend time as a family, to enjoy good accommodation as seen on holidays and that the cost of living will be low. The reality is that whilst family and friends are envious Army families cope with extended periods of separation\(^8\) without the support of family and friends, their accommodation has been of a low standard, the cost of living has not been not been low and opportunities for employment as a spouse are very low and low paid.

1.2 Job security is seen as a benefit from a family point of view.\(^9\) However any decrease in the transferable skills or training for civilian employment are noticed by families and reduce choice—ie if a soldier is trained as a forklift driver he can choose to be a soldier, own his career choice with confidence. If his qualifications do not translate into a civilian context (infantryman) his concern will be after Service career.

1.3 Workplace flexibility is an issue for partners and families with two careers. Increasingly this is two military careers\(^10\) where childcare responsibilities and opportunities to live in the same area are both barriers to work life balance or feasibility.\(^11\) At present many families find that one parent can continue a military career and the other has to resign.

1.4 A feature of military life is the lack of separation between work life and home life, especially for those living in military accommodation. Service Families Accommodation is seen as a mixed blessing—being provided with a house as a young couple is attractive however the last two years have seen disturbing levels of failure within the housing delivery organisations.

The quantity of available accommodation is reducing all the time as SFA are returned to Annington Homes, and demand increases through Units returning from Germany and families unable to afford to buy their own property. Increasingly families have to live spread out, not benefiting from Unit cohesion and meeting additional travel costs. There is frequently expressed concern that SFA charges will increase further.

2. Impact of the job on family life

2.1 The perceived and real threat of danger has increased for the total UK population since 7/7 but for the Army it is a reality within the family. Many have friends who have been wounded or killed, constant media coverage makes the dangers seem close and all families have or expect to experience their soldier to be deployed into a dangerous conflict zone. The coping mechanisms within families are all individual but there is not one family that does not feel concern or have greater awareness of danger levels due to media coverage of conflict zones than was the case in 2002. Service schools provide support for families but many Army sons and daughters go to schools where there is no understanding of the impact dangerous deployments have on family life. The unpopularity of the Iraq deployment is felt by children in schools where staff do not sympathise with the present UK involvement in the conflict.

2.2 Hours of work and leave are unpredictable compared to many civilian roles and make employment difficult for spouses eg spouses try to work evening shifts or weekends so that the soldier can provide childcare. Unpredictable leave arrangements have a significant impact on family life—soldiers on duty at weekends cannot participate in family activities or socialising with non military friends. Leave is feast or famine—soldiers have no weekends, days off or holiday for months and then 30 day post operational tour leave which can be during the school term or when the non serving spouse cannot take holiday. The variable and unpredictable nature of military working hours increases the pressure on families. Holidays are difficult to plan in advance and cheap offers are either non-refundable or already sold out by the time holiday dates are confirmed.

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\(^8\) Units in Cyprus in 2006-07 had deployments in Falklands, Iraq and Lebanon.
\(^9\) King’s College London The Army as a Greedy Institution 2005.
\(^10\) 2007 MOD Partners survey.
\(^11\) Comment in CGS BT Spring 2007 report.
2.3 Separation due to operational military service is presently at a high level for all ranks. For single soldiers the concern is managing relationships during long absences, for families it is difficult to switch from being a family to being single, sometimes also as a single parent. Children have to adapt to changing family dynamics and understand, from an early age, complex emotions and responsibilities. The nature of present operational deployments means that the soldier who leaves home is not always the same soldier that returns, either due to injury or psychological impact of deployment.

Relationships with the wider community for both soldiers and their families are strained by separation and deployment which differ to the working patterns of other members of UK society. The opportunity to become part of the local community is limited—as volunteers Service families are absent for 6 months in every 18 months.

Management of family finances during operational deployments is proving difficult. Both partners spend exceptional sums—in theatre on “treats” due to being away and at home for respite—“a trip to the park to keep the kids happy”. The Operational Welfare Package should meet the costs of family entertainment within the Unit but this has proved challenging for all units to access and does not help TA or individual augmentee families.

Travel during separation is testing for the many Army families who do not drive or have access to a car yet live in remote barracks and “patches”. Routine grocery shopping has to be at expensive and limited local stores and access to all other amenities (including medical and dental care) can be limited.

Separation, as already mentioned, can limit spouse employment. If two parents work and have between them 30 working days holiday a year they can plan childcare during school holidays and breaks. Army spouses cannot rely on the second parent being available to help and are likely to be living away from extended family and friends who may assist in normal circumstances.

2.4 Turbulence is still a feature of Army family life. It should not be seen as purely negative—families enjoy the opportunity to live in different locations. However, individuals have little choice, control or ownership of this turbulence and it impacts on all areas of family life, particularly for those who are married with children. The impact varies according the life stage of individuals.

Low UK salaries. The latter bites hardest for professionals who then work alongside other professionals employed from the UK doing the same work at a higher salary.

Up to 11% of civilians in the UK move house in a year but only 2% move outside their Local Authority area.12 Up to 40% of Army families move every 12 months and many move from overseas or the devolved UK areas. This has a massive impact on expectations, social relationships and state provision. For example some areas provide high levels of support for children with additional needs (Cambridgeshire) whilst other authorities are reducing their provision (North Yorkshire) or IVF treatment where one Health Authority will provide two cycles of IVF (Shropshire) whilst others only provide one cycle (Wiltshire). Many families have to cope with this impact every two years.

Each move involves the family rebuilding social and support networks. Although X factor and disturbance allowance are designed to meet the additional costs of mobility it is difficult for families not to bear additional costs, especially if moving long distances. No two houses are the same and each one has to be an individual home, providing personal identity in the middle of conformity. Expectation of “home” has changed with increased media coverage of home improvement. The danger is that families “wait to live” and do not become established in their new area.

Spouse employment is particularly challenged by turbulence. Careers are almost impossible to develop since opportunities are difficult to match in new locations (whilst the serving soldier continues a career progression). Promotion opportunities within careers are limited if there is uncertainty about duration in one place and earning capacity is reduced with an impact on pension accrual, this reducing opportunities for home ownership. Spouse and family CVs are difficult to translate into the civilian sector. Overseas spouse employment is through the local garrison and pay scales are pegged to local salaries—generally lower than UK salaries. The latter bites hardest for professionals who then work alongside other professionals employed from the UK doing the same work at a higher salary.

Spouse training is forfeit if a posting is received during a training course as there is no recompense for loss of fees or opportunity to remain until the end of a course unless it is close to a critical exam stage. Interests and hobbies cannot be maintained if the facilities do not exist in the new location. Over time all these factors batter confidence levels of spouses to apply for work or opportunities.

Home ownership is the aspiration of the vast majority but turbulence, separation, low second income and lack of certainty about future mobility all make purchasing a house difficult to achieve, for many the main effort is to keep alive and afloat. One of the reasons families were turned down for Shared Equity Scheme home ownership was due to high debt levels. Some families suffer negative credit rating from high mobility and from living in MoD accommodation with a high number of previous occupants.

NHS dentists remain difficult for families to find although research is being carried out this autumn to assess to continuing extent of the problem. Accessing doctors does not seem to be an issue but it is stressful for families to constantly have to start a new relationship with doctors.

12 SP Pol figure in 2005.
Army children expect to attend many different schools. At early stages this often means not fulfilling a curriculum ie repeating subjects (doing the Romans four times!), in non-military schools social groups take longer to adjust to entrants at odd times in the school year, confidence is undermined through different schools and approaches.

UK state schools expect children to register 10 months before entry and attend trial days months before the start of the school year but this is generally before Army posting orders have been received. There has been an improvement as posting orders must now be accepted to register a child at a school although in reality it does not give enough information about the school catchment area where a family will live.

Parents have a difficult choice whether to try and afford a house somewhere and provide stability for children’s education, to continue high mobility as a family and apply for retention of SFA during critical periods (GCSE and A level) or send children to boarding school. The difficulty of this decision is agonising and difficult to quantify. With present high operational tempo families desperately want to live together when they can and this combined with high mobility makes boarding school the feasible option but the combination of boarding school fees and impact of mobility on spouse career make home ownership impossible. But now boarding school is becoming less feasible for those with a single military career as even with the substantial assistance from the MoD the cost of independent education is increasing faster than the continuity of education allowance.

3. Social Aspects of the Job

3.1 AFF questions whether the ethos of the Army community is changing. Army families have greater expectations from the Army than civilians do from their employers due to the nature of military service, especially an expeditionary Army with the high operational tempo. Army family life is a way of life, there is little space between work and home. In the past this closeness was offset by the influence of the local chain of command to deliver the best feasible solutions locally (eg housing allocation that matched family need).

Also social activities encouraged unit harmony, so activities in barracks and messes encouraged the sense of command to deliver the best feasible solutions locally (eg housing allocation that matched family need).

This is combined with intense media coverage of the Army and present deployments. Much of the coverage is negative and questioning the purpose and veracity of the deployment. At such times a close, well informed and trusting community is essential. However the ability of the chain of command to influence and provide for this community is diminished by efficiency and change programmes.

There is no hard data available on divorce rates and how they compare to civilians. Anecdotally the rate is presently high due to operational deployments. Unit Welfare Officers report spending a large proportion of their time on relationship issues, especially for young soldiers.

Health and education have been discussed in “impact of the job” above. The availability of medical and dental care for serving personnel is an advantage. Families’ difficulty accessing facilities and rights undermine confidence and sense of worth, especially when compared to that provided for those serving and the continuity civilians achieve.

Recent successes regarding social aspects of the job have been attaining Key Worker status for housing in the south of England and a change in social housing legislation that permits military service to qualify families for ‘local connection’. Although neither of these will make a major difference to the problem associated with home ownership they are positive in terms of improving how the military is seen by local authorities and politicians as well as for personnel themselves.

Regular Reservists called up for operational service leave behind families who may have no military experience or understanding. This situation is isolating and needs continuous monitoring to ensure any families are supported.

**Support to Personnel and their Families**

There is little flexibility in the package of benefits for military personnel. All benefits are based on need for continuity of service rather than offered as benefits. Since the majority of personnel are young the package is geared at those who are fit, able and deployable. As above the personal support is popular where delivered by the chain of command but has diminishing influence.
Support for families during operational deployments is variable. The primary concern is communication and whilst the additional 10 minutes telephone time per week in 2007 was welcome, 30 minutes per week is still significantly below the expectation of most people today, certainly in the civilian sector. This lack of telephone time impacts on the soldiers relationship with family and friends as well as an ability to fulfil any non-military obligations eg house purchase. Families become impotent to contact soldiers on operations, they have to wait to be contacted and spend hours worrying that precious calls will be missed.

Short travel distance to work and subsidised travel costs are an advantage of military service although an increasing issue is where SFA allocation is away from barracks the family need two cars. Civilians who travel overseas on business can return home for weekends and at regular intervals whereas military personnel are expected to remain in one place for months (on deployment) or a year (on posting).

**Summary**

Overall there is no doubt that military service has a major impact on family life for Army families. Not all of these are negative but there are significant changes since 2002 in the level of operational deployment for all ranks, the diminishing influence of the Army to support family life and the present high turbulence and associated costs.

18 March 2008

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**Memorandum from the WRVS**

Please find our response below, however I must point out that WRVS does not hold statistics on recruitment and retention as this is retained by the Chain of Command.

The comments below are based on conversations between WRVS Services Welfare Officers’ and recruits/service personnel and are in no particular order.

**Reasons for leaving/not enlisting in the Armed Forces**

1. Some young people are reluctant to sign up due to the amount of deployment they would have to undertake and the media attention highlighting injuries and loss of life.

2. There is a perceived loss of freedom, together with uncertainties over communal living, early mornings and missing family and home life.

3. Difficulties with the adjustment in culture/do not like Army life.

4. Issues with discipline—some young people have never experienced any discipline.

5. The Army enlist individuals on some occasions with a numeracy and literacy age of a seven year old. This is within the guidelines, however, when the recruit is in a classroom environment as part of their training, they then realise that they are unable to take notes etc which can lead to them becoming quite isolated from their peer group. Individuals can find this difficult to cope with. There is insufficient time for the permanent staff to give further education due to the rigorous training programme they have to deliver. In some cases therefore, the recruit falls behind and their motivation can be reduced.

6. Individuals not getting accepted onto their desired training course.

7. Reduction in adventure training.

8. If a soldier becomes injured, they sometimes have to wait months until they are fit to return to training, therefore morale becomes low and has an adverse effect on them and others.

9. Accommodation—within the UK especially. (Accommodation within Germany is considered good).

10. Permanent staff (those training recruits) have to work long hours to achieve the desired level of training for recruits. Some permanent staff join training regiments to get more stability in their lives then find themselves working 12/13 hour days—leaving very little time to spend with their families.

11. Individuals become too stretched with operational tours.

12. Injuries/compensation—this has always been an issue and is widely discussed within the media.

13. Family problems at home eg Grandparent raising children, of which the eldest joins the Armed Forces. Grandparent dies and eldest child has to return home to raise siblings/support them.

As an additional note, none of the staff spoken to noticed any particular increase in the numbers leaving.

I hope that this is of use to the Defence Committee. If WRVS can be of any further help, please do not hesitate to contact me.

18 March 2008
Memorandum from the Soldier, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association Forces Help (SSAFA FH)

REFERENCE


SSAFA Forces Help (SSAFA FH) have read the references with interest. Noting our expertise in and specialised knowledge of personal support to service personnel and families under its Royal Charter have not so far been consulted by MoD in the specific matters of recruitment and retention, we are pleased to share our observations with HCDC.

SSAFA Forces Help has experienced a significant rise in the number of cases involving emotional and relationship problems arising from the increased intensity and number of operational deployments over recent years. It must be emphasised that not only spouses are affected but also other individuals closely involved with serving personnel—partners, children, parents and grandparents. Although housing, education, healthcare in the UK and access to benefits are high on the list of service family concerns, and funding and or access to improvements in these areas would improve morale, we note that underlying emotional problems that are often hard to identify are sapping community morale overall. This also has an adverse effect on public perception which could discourage recruitment.

The turbulence associated with a highly mobile lifestyle for a relatively young population compared with other sectors in the UK, (and this is particularly the case for the Army), places heavy demands on both serving personnel and their families. Frequent moves and associated disruption to education and healthcare, accompanied by poor accommodation, all place the serving community under pressures and stress, which are exacerbated by the frequency of operational deployment.

SSAFA FH’s network of professional social workers, health staff and community volunteers work with and live alongside the serving communities in the UK and overseas. Through this network, SSAFA FH is able to offer professional relationship/emotional support as well as practical befriending assistance by its volunteers. It is their experience that the continued demands on the MoD budget are placing the welfare infrastructure under such pressure that official agencies are now turning to charitable and other agencies to meet unmet needs.

In the particular and high-profile case of wounded service people, it is clear that the co-ordination of welfare support for both patients and families as the former progress along the patient pathway to recovery needs to be clarified, particularly in relation to boundaries between the many agencies involved. MoD is reviewing the patient pathway but SSAFA FH through its network of professionals and volunteers is aware of cases where both patient and those close to them would still have benefited from more timely, integrated and proactive support. It is not practically possible or always appropriate for MoD to do all of this itself.

While the number of those seriously affected is quite small compared with other welfare cases, the high profile and publicity that shortfalls in MoD-provided welfare support have attracted could have a potential impact on the morale of not only the serving community but also of their wider families, with potential long-term, requiring a smooth, confidential transfer from one location to another such that individuals involved with serving personnel—partners, children, parents and grandparents. Although housing, education, healthcare in the UK and access to benefits are high on the list of service family concerns, and funding and or access to improvements in these areas would improve morale, we note that underlying emotional problems that are often hard to identify are sapping community morale overall. This also has an adverse effect on public perception which could discourage recruitment.

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The turbulence associated with a highly mobile lifestyle for a relatively young population compared with other sectors in the UK, (and this is particularly the case for the Army), places heavy demands on both serving personnel and their families. Frequent moves and associated disruption to education and healthcare, accompanied by poor accommodation, all place the serving community under pressures and stress, which are exacerbated by the frequency of operational deployment.

SSAFA FH’s network of professional social workers, health staff and community volunteers work with and live alongside the serving communities in the UK and overseas. Through this network, SSAFA FH is able to offer professional relationship/emotional support as well as practical befriending assistance by its volunteers. It is their experience that the continued demands on the MoD budget are placing the welfare infrastructure under such pressure that official agencies are now turning to charitable and other agencies to meet unmet needs.

In the particular and high-profile case of wounded service people, it is clear that the co-ordination of welfare support for both patients and families as the former progress along the patient pathway to recovery needs to be clarified, particularly in relation to boundaries between the many agencies involved. MoD is reviewing the patient pathway but SSAFA FH through its network of professionals and volunteers is aware of cases where both patient and those close to them would still have benefited from more timely, integrated and proactive support. It is not practically possible or always appropriate for MoD to do all of this itself.

While the number of those seriously affected is quite small compared with other welfare cases, the high profile and publicity that shortfalls in MoD-provided welfare support have attracted could have a potential impact on the morale of not only the serving community but also of their wider families, with potential long-term, requiring a smooth, confidential transfer from one location to another such that individuals involved with serving personnel—partners, children, parents and grandparents. Although housing, education, healthcare in the UK and access to benefits are high on the list of service family concerns, and funding and or access to improvements in these areas would improve morale, we note that underlying emotional problems that are often hard to identify are sapping community morale overall. This also has an adverse effect on public perception which could discourage recruitment.
perceptions about the provision of personal welfare support may impact on retention and, indeed, recruitment of service personnel. It may be argued that the resultant unresolved emotional and relationship issues will have an impact on these as well as on operational effectiveness of those who continue in Service.

18 March 2008

Memorandum from the Institute of Career Guidance

The following information has been submitted by members of the ICG in response to the following questions posted on the ICG website:

— Are young people interested in careers in the Armed Forces?
— Is interest increasing or decreasing? Why?
— Do you have any evidence (including case studies and anecdotes) that would assist the inquiry in their work?

School Based Career Adviser in SW England

Post 16 school leavers

Last year 2007—we had five or six students from year 10 taking part in Army residential courses as part of work experience. This was similar to the previous year 2006. This year we have two applicants for work experience with the RNAS and one for the Army. From last year two are still actively pursuing army careers and one is considering it. In 2006 three students applied to join up—1 or two were Students and their families are increasingly put off by the Iraq war, as they perceive there to be more danger/risk.

Another hurdle is the number of students listed with asthma and therefore unable to apply to the armed services due to ill health.

Post 18 school leavers

Slightly more interest this year in university sponsorships from the Armed Services particularly for medicine/nursing professions—two students at present intending to apply although competition is fierce.

A Year 13 student passed the selection interview for the RAF this year but pulled out after the commitment time increased from 12 to 18 years.

This increase may well be due to high cost of university qualifications and when students understand the long term commitment and what the package entails they may not prove so keen.

A Group of Careers Advisers in South London

There is a general consensus that, firstly the Armed Forces are less popular than they were. They think that this stems generally from the “macho” image, which is presented, especially from the Army, but also from the fact that schools promote them less because of a generally moral perspective about conflicts like Iraq or Afghanistan.

In one sense the provision of information is impartial because they are still invited to Careers Conventions etc but the subjective and indirect message is much more moralistic, not necessarily from Careers Advisers but from Teachers and Parents. They are considerably more influential with the average plus because of the role that Connexions have been asked to play with emphasis on the hardest to help. It means that the emphasis currently is on staying in education to the age of 18 or beyond for average and above average clients. All employers with traditional Apprenticeship approaches to employment and training are missing out on this not just the Armed Forces.

Careers Adviser in South Wales

I have been a careers adviser in education for seven years in south Wales and it is my impression that interest in the armed forces has remained pretty steady—and has perhaps increased slightly in recent years. Some young people express an interest in year 10/11 but if they stay on to do A levels, the interest tends to wane.

Many young people enter the forces because they want to be trained in a trade such as electrical work or motor mechanics and there are very few vacancies locally. Had they been able to find an apprenticeship, they would not have applied.
Careers Adviser in Scotland

From a Scottish Perspective there are may be two key areas to consider.

1. Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have brought it home to young people just how dangerous work in the armed services really can be.

2. In a Scottish level the decision to merge the infantry regiments in to one Regiment of Scotland has fundamentally weakened young people’s connection to their local infantry regiment. Reducing for example the Black Watch with all of its history to the 3rd/4th/5th Royal regiment of Scotland (Black Watch) has taken away the romance, the local connections and disconnected local people.

I interviewed a young Canadian man three or four years ago who had come to Scotland to join the Black Watch as his father and grandfather had all enlisted in this regiment in years gone by. I doubt if this young man from the Commonwealth would leave Ontario and his folks to join the 3rd/4th Battalion of the Royal Regiment of Scotland!

The British Army as has the German army has always encouraged young people to fight alongside their friends and local people. US army sources have always said this is strength of the British Army and it is something that the US army has always envied without being able to reproduce.

If the Army is able to reconnect with young people in Scotland by encouraging and celebrating attachment to local regiments it may see a pick up in recruitment.

Careers Adviser working with minority communities in South East England

I can confidently say that young people are more interested in armed forces as career.

Hence, the interest is highly increasing especially in the developed countries. You see some African youths joining armed forces without any body giving any courage or advise.

Careers Adviser in Scotland

In response to your query, I work in a school in a disadvantaged area of xxxxxxxxxx. I find a fair bit of interest in joining the Army with pupils I interview. Many have family tradition as a motive as they have parents or other relatives who have served, or are serving, in the Army. Many view the Army as an option to break the lack of other opportunities open to them due to expectations of poor academic qualifications. There is also an interest due to the Operation Youth Advantage scheme run in conjunction with the community police based in the school. This involves taking pupils who have or may be at risk of criminal activity for a week’s Army training course to improve their attitude, confidence, team working skills etc. Many pupils I interview in relation to Army careers have been involved in this initiative and enjoyed the experience. The school also encourages participation in Army days and the Army Careers are always in attendance at parent information evenings/careers events in school.

The main drawback for some applying directly to the Army can be criminality issues and they are encouraged to apply after completing courses such as Army Preparation under the Get Ready for Work training schemes for unemployed young people. Quite often young people who have participated on these programmes are inspired to join various branches of the Armed Services after completion.

I feel therefore that interest in Army careers is about the same despite awareness of current conflicts such as Afghanistan and Iraq and the fact that a young ex-pupil of the school was recently killed in Iraq.

Careers Adviser in Yorkshire

In my experience as a school-based adviser the armed forces has increased in popularity recently. The interest seems to across the ability range with more able students favouring the RAF. The interest is mainly coming from boys although some girls are also showing an interest.

The reasons for the increase in interest are difficult to say. Students usually give personal reasons, eg father/brother in the forces etc. I think that the TV advertising has had some impact and the higher profile of the forces in the Media due to the Iraq/Afghan conflicts. Having said this I have also come across clients who have dropped out of the Army recently. One client left because he felt unsuited to Army life. Another client was discharged after an incident involving drug use.

I think that the Armed forces are accepting clients who are not ready to cope with the life style. The client who was discharged for drug use had serious behavioural problems at school and had spent most of year 11 in special provision for students with emotional and behavioural problems.
Ev 144  Defence Committee: Evidence

CAREERS ADVISER IN THE WEST MIDLANDS

Q1. “Are YPs interested in the Armed Forces”?

Yes. However most Young people (mainly Lads) want the Army and never think of the other services. Girls often take up activities while at school with the Army but it never seems to develop in to a career choice when leaving. Equally the Army is far more proactive by offering activity days for schools, Work experience places and getting involved in PSE such as mock interviews etc. The Army update their careers information each year and staff from the Army Careers regularly give updates to Connexions staff on what is happening. Simply they are more willing, more proactive and visionary than the other Armed Services. I have contacted both the Air Force and the Navy and both where unable to offer placements. Last year for the first time the Navy contacted me to ask if they could help in PSE by doing mock interviews for those YPs interested in the Armed Forces. However they offered it too late in the year and there was no time in the timetable.

Q2. “Is interest increasing or decreasing”?

About the same numbers.

Q3. “Do you have any evidence”?

See question one.

Also I have grave concerns that the Army take YPs who should not be there and the Army recruitment techniques are questionable. Example there was as recently as 18 months to two years ago I had a YP who was Statemented for having specific Special Needs. The lad should in my opinion never have been taken on. He had lost two jobs because he was unable to cope with the work but the Army recruited him and he came to see me, proud in his uniform to tell me he was going to Iraq.

I had another lad last year did the same. He was not LDD but he was naive, immature in character. He too was going off to Iraq.

Neither of these lads should have been allowed to join and there should be a limit on taking YPs with limited ability. Some sort of test indicating ability to cope and understand what is expected of them. After all there are enough other Psychometric tests.

CAREERS ADVISER IN A MILITARY SCHOOL

Just a quick few thoughts. I work in a military school in xxxxxxxx and there is certainly a healthy interest in the Armed Forces (although I do appreciate these are children of current serving Army Personnel).

Most students appear to have a preference for the RAF. The RAF say they have no recruiting issues at all. Therefore most of our students are not successful with an RAF application. They are visiting our school next month and will be carrying out selection tests for approximately 10 students (this is not for Officer training). It will be interesting to see if any of them pass.

Reasons students are choosing RAF over Army is the perceived/real benefits such as better pay, better accommodation, better status, etc (even their parents are encouraging RAF rather than Army applications). Also the prospect of actually being on a front line at the age of 18–19 is not something young people of today necessarily are in tune with.

The job market is buoyant in the UK and I would suggest that young people have more opportunities to take qualifications and receive higher levels of support by agencies like Connexions etc which enable them to make more informed decisions.

Many of the Army personnel who I work alongside come from geographical areas where there has, in the past, had limited work opportunities, and many parent have left school with few, if any qualifications— which is not the case in 2008.

Perhaps the quality of careers guidance is also opening opportunities to young people who in the past thought they had little option to join the Forces.

Colleges are also offering a range of courses for students who have not enjoyed school and at varying Levels so further education is not just an opportunity for “clever” students.

Some of our students fail application due to lack of fitness, which is a sign of the times it seems.

Also the Army Foundation College limits access to those under the age of 17 (and a few months I think). This means students who want to stay on for a year in school are then too old to apply to the Army Foundation College at Harrogate . . . a bit shortsighted in my personal view.
CAREERS ADVISER IN A COLLEGE IN THE WEST MIDLANDS

I have the following feedback on Armed Forces recruitment. I was recently told by a Year 11 student who wants to apply to the RAF that the RAF Careers Office nearby had told her she should not apply for a BTEC National in Public Services at level 3, but to apply for A levels instead. This surprised me, as it seems contradictory to the government’s agenda and to Aim Higher guidelines?

CAREERS ADVISER IN A COLLEGE IN SE ENGLAND

I work in a busy FE college and can confirm that for the last seven years I have never been asked by anyone about joining the Army, however I have had a handful of enquiries about becoming a pilot with the RAF. This is despite the fact that the Army visit with information and DVDs etc which are available in our Learning Resources Centre.

Just for interest I personally have two nephews who are soldiers (on different sides of the family) both in their mid 20's and my own son did contemplate joining as an officer when he was 25 but after one interview did not pursue the application.

MANAGER OF CAREERS ADVISERS IN THE SOUTH OF ENGLAND

I’m now in management and so see far fewer clients than in previous years.

General impressions

Not what it was when I entered the profession in 1979. The Falklands gave the public a reality check about the potential challenges of such employment—a mother actually said to me at that time when seeing me with a younger child that she “didn’t encourage her (older) son to join the Royal Navy only to have him go and get killed” (He didn’t in fact get sent to the Falklands).

Until then, service life had been very attractive to many young people and their parents from across the ability range. I don’t think numbers have recovered since then.

Current hostilities are on the news and in the newspapers every day. The result is that a lot of parents are refusing consent for the under 18s. It is not helped by the fact that it is clear that the kitting out of staff is considered sub-standard by many service personnel and recent coroners’ enquiries have confirmed and publicised this fact.

CAREERS ADVISER IN A COLLEGE IN THE SOUTH OF ENGLAND

As the 14-16 co-ordinator at an FE college I know that we have considerable interest by students in years 9, 10, and 11 on the Uniformed Public Services course in joining the Army. The college offer 15 places a year for Public Services at Key Stage 4 and we have no problem recruiting to the programme.

CAREERS ADVISER IN THE WEST MIDLANDS

The level of interest in HM Armed forces of my current Y11 cohort is very much the same as in previous years, and that is low, but evidence indicates much of this interest evaporates during 6th form (I have almost no students who do not stay on for further education of some sort).

Over the last few years I have had more girls showing interest in, applying to and being accepted for Welbeck than boys.

The level of interest in the Armed Forces in my 6th forms has stayed much the same as ever. However when interviewed many of them seem oblivious to the UK’s commitment to Afghanistan and Iraq and seem very naive about the role of armed troops; most of my 6th form students progress to Higher Education so I cannot comment on their subsequent interest.

The Defence Committee might extend their enquiries to Higher Education to elicit attitudes there?

CAREERS ADVISER WORKING IN A COLLEGE AND WITH UNEMPLOYED YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE SW

Yes, young people are still interested in the armed forces. The more able are often looking for the opportunities for careers development. The less academic want good training eg construction and engineering or housing. Girls are more likely to see it as some thing for them once they have got past the influence of half their peers wanting to do beauty and hairdressing!

I believe that interest in the armed forces is decreasing. I feel that fewer young people are asking about military careers. This is mainly due to the wars in the Middle East and negative media coverage of military personnel in the media. Parents are defiantly less keen on their children joining the military especially the 16–17 year olds.
Some examples

A 16-year-old girl doing catering at FE College. Wants to join army as chef—her mother thinks she is perfectly suited to army life and would thrive. But her parents are not keen for her to join up. They wanted her to join the TA, as this was part time and therefore less risky. (within last three months)

Last month 18 year old on a level 3 Engineering course at college. Said he had considered it but felt that the services took the wrong sort of people. He wanted to work with people he could trust. A 19-year-old young man “D” came in wanting careers advice after having left the Navy. He had witnessed a shipmate throw/push a girlfriend (a fellow crew member) through a window. He felt that this had not been taken seriously by the Navy the crewmember in question only got a light punishment. D felt he should have been discharged or imprisoned. D did not want to work for an organisation that condoned this type of behaviour. (This was a year or two ago)

The Army experience activities are good at helping young people decide if the Army is for them although there are issues about providing chaperones for girls. Schools and colleges are being asked to provide them if they send any girls on these activities.

CAREERS ADVISER IN THE WEST MIDLANDS

At a recent Careers Evening held in the xxxxxxxxxx area I was surprised to see how interested young people were in the Armed Forces stand. They had the longest queue over the whole evening.

CAREERS ADVISER IN A COLLEGE IN NORTH WALES

The only way that I can judge is to say that I have observed a significant decrease in the numbers coming forward for interviews with the RAF and Army Services Liaison staff in the last six years-decreasing from six to eight enquiries each term to none at all, or the occasional one.

I can’t personally see why this might be, but suspect that when the economy is buoyant and there are other jobs, people may opt for these instead. The war in Iraq and Afghanistan and the reporting of casualties, news stories about bullying, unexplained deaths etc probably don’t help.

CAREERS ADVISER IN THE SOUTH OF ENGLAND

I have no case study to offer but I have seen a number of Y11 leavers at school who are interested in joining the armed forces, some immediately after Y11 and others after studying the Public Services Course at college. The majority seem to be thinking about the Army.

After checking that their decision is well researched and thought out, I usually advise them to speak to the Army Careers Officer based locally before making a final decision.

Many are attracted by the possibility of learning a trade especially where there are limited opportunities locally. Others are attracted by the possibility of a pension from the armed forces, while others simply want to join the fighting arm of the Army.

CAREERS ADVISER IN SCOTLAND

In my opinion young people are as interested as ever in joining the forces. Many still see it as a good career and in an economic black spot like xxxxxxxxxx one of the best routes into employment.

However of the record there seems to be some concern about armed forces representatives coming into careers centres to publicise their wares. As a careers adviser of many years standing I begin to despair!! Perhaps if the Government decided that careers advisers have a lead role in encouraging young people to consider the forces this will be hit on the head

CAREERS ADVISER IN THE EAST MIDLANDS

I have noticed a reduction in young people asking about careers in the armed forces. One young man told me he has been put off applying as he has now realised that he might actually have to go to war!! The realities of the services have been in the news much more recently. I feel in the past a number of my clients didn’t fully understand what being in the forces really meant and they are now making a more informed choice albeit from what they see on the TV.

19 March 2008
Memorandum from the Equality and Human Rights Commission

1. **Equality and Human Rights Commission**

1.1 This written submission sets out the evidence of the Equality and Human Rights Commission (the Commission) in relation to recruitment and retention of personnel in the Armed Forces.

1.2 The Commission was established on 1st October 2007 under the Equality Act 2006. It champions equality and human rights for all, works to eliminate discrimination, reduce inequality, protect human rights and build good relations, and to ensure that everyone has a fair chance to participate in society.

1.3 The new Commission brings together the work of the three previous equality commissions, the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE), the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) and the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC). The Commission’s remit now covers race, disability, gender, gender reassignment, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief and the application of human rights. Working across Britain, the Commission has offices in Manchester, London, Cardiff, Glasgow and Edinburgh.

2. **The Commission’s Work with the Armed Forces and the MoD**

2.1 The Commission welcomes the opportunity to provide evidence to the Committee on the issue of recruitment and retention in the Armed Forces. The Commission does note and echo the Committee’s concern that the Ministry of Defence (MoD) failed to achieve most of its diversity targets, particularly the recruitment and retention of people from ethnic minority communities. With that in mind the Commission does have concerns that limiting the focus of this Inquiry to the Armed Forces may be to take too narrow an approach. The Commission believes that there needs to be a holistic strategy which ensures fair recruitment across the board and an environment which welcomes all. For example tackling issues of retention for all strands should enable the MoD to create the diverse culture which is needed to meet its diversity targets.

2.2 The armed forces and the MoD are all subject to the statutory duties to eliminate discrimination and to promote equality on the grounds of race, gender and disability.13 The Commission would expect measures to improve the recruitment and retention of ethnic minority servicemen and women to figure prominently in the current and future equality priorities of the MoD and the individual armed forces, under the race and gender duties. The statutory equality duties require proportionate action to promote equality, and the armed forces and the MoD will have to address these significant issues if they are to meet their statutory legal obligations.

2.3 The Commission’s broad remit provides an opportunity to approach issues in a more co-ordinated way than was possible for the previous single issue equality commissions. However the evidence set out below is divided into separate sections relating to race (Section 3); gender (section 4); disability (section 5); sexual orientation, religion or belief and age (section 6).

2.4 There are two reasons for dividing the Commission’s evidence in this way:
— in practice, the work currently done by the Commission in relation to the Armed Forces derives from and continues the work of the three predecessor commissions (and in particular that of the CRE and EOC);
— though some issues, for example harassment, are common to all, others may have a greater or different impact on service personnel or potential service personnel who are, for example, of a particular ethnicity or gender.

3. **Recruitment and Retention of Ethnic Minority Personnel**

3.1 The terms of reference of the Committee’s Inquiry refer specifically to the need to identify the factors hampering recruitment of ethnic minority personnel. This section of the Commission’s submission to the Inquiry is divided into two parts. The first part of this section (3.2 to 3.15) briefly summarises the CRE’s work with the Armed Forces and MoD since 2001, when the Committee last heard evidence on this subject. The second part of this section (3.16 onwards) sets out the Commission’s views on the issues affecting the recruitment and retention of ethnic minority personnel in the Armed Forces, drawing on the experience and knowledge gained by the CRE in its work with the Armed Forces and the MoD.

The CRE’s work with the Armed Forces since 2001

3.2 In 1998, the CRE entered into a five year partnership agreement with the MoD and Armed Forces. This was as a result of a Formal Investigation into the Household Cavalry, which found evidence of direct and indirect racial discrimination in recruitment and selection of officers and soldiers and postings of other corps and regiments; racial harassment; and instructions or inducements to discriminate.

13 although for disability, not in relation to employment in the armed forces.
3.3 The terms of the partnership agreement were that the MoD would:
— improve recruitment, career progression and retention levels for ethnic minorities;
— aim to bring about cultural change through eliminating discrimination and harassment; and
— ensure leadership and corporate accountability to meet the terms of the agreement.

3.4 The Armed Forces reported annually to the Commission on performance. This was supported by regular detailed reports to and discussions with the CRE.

3.5 During the life of the first agreement, the CRE had concerns about the persistent failure of the tri-services to increase representation of ethnic minority nationals. The CRE was also concerned about the disproportionate rates of ethnic minority personnel leaving the services through premature voluntary release and dismissal; and their career progression. The services’ explanations for these failings were:
— difficulties with the IT system, which was unable to produce figures on selection;
— disproportionate drop-out rates for ethnic minority applicants, who tended not to turn up for testing (31% ethnic minority applicants compared to 20% white applicants);
— disproportionate failure rates in recruitment tests for ethnicity minority applicants; and
— disproportionate premature voluntary release (PVR) rates of ethnic minority ethnic personnel—which showed retention was an issue.

3.6 The CRE considered that the services needed to analyse the reasons for the disproportionality in drop out rates, test failures and PVR rates to enable them to identify obstacles to ethnic minority applicants in recruitment, retention and career progression.

3.7 In 2003, following the expiration of the first partnership agreement, the CRE and MoD entered into a second agreement for a three year period. The new agreement had a specific purpose “to achieve further progress with measurable outcomes in recruitment, retention, career progression, cultural change, complaints procedures and leadership and accountability”. The agreement set out the outcomes which the CRE expected from the services (see appendix 1).14

3.8 As part of the arrangement, the MoD provided documentary information annually to the CRE on progress against the expected outcomes. The CRE and the MoD met three times a year to discuss progress and actions for achieving outcomes.

3.9 In the three years of the agreement, the CRE, while acknowledging the steady progress made and commitment of the services, continued to be concerned about recruitment and retention of ethnic minorities. The Army appeared to have made progress in recruiting at lower levels but this was not repeated at officer level. The RAF and RN however, consistently had difficulty achieving the agreed outcomes for recruitment. For example, the target goal agreed by the CRE and the MoD was for each service to increase representation by 0.5% year on year. The recruitment goals for the RAF during the life of the agreement (2003—2006) were 2.6%, 3.1% and 3.6%. They achieved 1.8%, 1.7%, and 1.5%. The goals for the RN were 2.5%, 3% and 3.5%. They achieved 2.1%, 2.3% and 2.0%.

3.10 The CRE was particularly concerned about the achievements of the RAF and RN on recruitment. It was aware of a number of initiatives which both services were engaged in that were producing results but at a very slow pace. However, the problem was exacerbated when all forces were required to reduce their trained strength: the RAF had the highest reduction rate—8,000 until 2008, which it sought to achieve by restricting its intake.

3.11 The culture of an organisation is significant to how individuals see opportunities within that organisation. In the case of the Armed Forces, there was a perceived—real or actual—culture of racial discrimination and harassment in many areas such as career progression and day to day working practices. Continuous General Attitude surveys for all services, however, showed that perceptions of harassment and discrimination were greater than the reality. Lack of corporate commitment to equality also seemed to allow racial discrimination and harassment to pervade. Leadership and Corporate accountability was a very important term of the agreement for the CRE. It is notable, that with clear corporate commitment to equality that the services seemed to make relatively significant progress in all areas covered by the agreement.

3.12 Monitoring equality impact and outcomes is also highly important for identifying trends and patterns of inequality. Throughout the working relationship the services consistently had difficulty monitoring and capturing data on equality. On numerous occasions the services could not produce the data necessary to determine how successful they were at achieving the expected outcomes in the agreement.

3.13 The Commission notes that there did not seem to be any discernible improvements by the Armed Forces in recruiting ethnic minorities during the first and second cycle of the relationship.

3.14 The working relationship between the MoD and the CRE in relation to the second agreement came to an end in 2006. Both parties were in negotiations for a new arrangement but due to the closure of the CRE this was never finalised.

14 Not printed.
3.15 However, throughout 2007, the CRE’s enforcement team were also making enquiries with the MoD in an attempt to establish the extent to which the MoD as a whole, including the Armed Forces, was meeting the specific race equality duty relating to employee monitoring\textsuperscript{15} (known as “the employment duty”). The employment duty forms part of the MoD’s obligations under the race equality duty and requires it to carry out monitoring of employees and job applicants by racial group. This work followed the findings of the CRE’s Enforcement and Monitoring Project, which suggested that the MoD (as well as several other central Government departments) was not fully meeting the requirements of the employment duty. The Commission is continuing these discussions and some of the issues arising are set out in the following paragraphs.

Factors affecting recruitment and retention of ethnic minority personnel in the Armed Forces

3.16 The Commission considers, drawing on the work of the CRE, that some of the following factors might hamper recruitment to the services:

— Perception of discrimination and harassment within the services—continuous attitude surveys carried out by the services always showed that the perception of discrimination and harassment was far higher than the reality. Ethnic minority personnel often had a greater perception of discrimination and harassment compared to white personnel.

— Lack of robust monitoring data to identify specific problem areas eg what might be the obstacles for different services in recruiting? The MoD often failed to provide data which would be useful for analysing discriminatory impact. (see paragraph 3.18 below)

— Many of the positive action initiatives engaged in by the services seem to be slow burn and would not be expected to lead to sustainable change in the short to medium term. For example, all services undertake outreach programmes working with gatekeepers and local communities to raise awareness of the services. However, the Commission considers that such programmes would take time to build confidence in the local community that the services could be a career of choice.

— Tendency for the services to see themselves as monolithic thus relying on the same methods to deal with under-representation but not necessarily recognising their differences in terms of for example the types of work undertaken by each service and entry requirements.

External factors affecting recruitment and retention

3.17 The Commission is also aware that there are a number of external factors which could impact on the Armed Forces ability to recruit. These include for example:

— Foreign policy;

— Government cuts to all services especially the RAF;

— Public Service Agreement targets on equality means that many public services are seeking to attract ethnic minorities to work for them, providing increasing competition for the Armed Forces efforts to recruit.\textsuperscript{16}

3.18 Some of the factors mentioned above are also relevant to matters of retention eg perception, inadequate monitoring and data collection and positive action programmes which are slow burn. It should be noted that according to the information made available to the CRE that retention rates for ethnic minorities were comparable to white personnel. However, the caveat to this is that the inadequate monitoring and data collection by the services meant it was not possible to determine whether the rates were truly comparable. The CRE consistently asked that data systems should be given priority.

3.19 The Commission believes that a more rigorous and sophisticated approach to the collection and analysis of data about employee ethnicity could lead to better informed decisions about the steps needed to improve recruitment and retention in the Armed Forces. It would also ensure that the MoD complies with the requirements of the employment duty. The employee monitoring data provided by the MoD for 2005–06\textsuperscript{17} (which appeared to include the Armed Forces) was deficient in a number of areas, for example.

3.19.1 The MoD did not consistently collect data by racial group. For some areas 14 categories were used but for other areas only three categories (“ethnic minority”, “white” and “unknown”) were used.

3.19.2 Overall, 15% of staff were recorded as “unknown”, a proportion that the CRE regarded as significant and making it difficult to conduct meaningful analysis of the rest of the data. Of further concern was the high level of unknowns in particular areas, for example the proportion of leavers whose ethnic group was unknown was 34%. Such gaps in data can make analysis very difficult or render it meaningless.

\textsuperscript{15} Article 5, Race Relations Act 1976 (Statutory Duties) Order 2001. For further explanation see the information on the CRE’s website via the Commission’s website at: http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/forbusinessesandorganisation/publicauthorities/raceequalityduty/Pages/Specificdutiesemploymentduty.aspx

\textsuperscript{16} For example, many Police Forces and Fire Brigades are increasingly using positive action such as targeted open days to encourage applications from black and ethnic minority people.

\textsuperscript{17} The monitoring report for 2006/07 has not yet been provided to the Commission.
4. Gender

4.1 The terms of reference of the Committee’s Inquiry do not refer specifically to the need to identify the factors hampering recruitment and/or retention of women in the Armed Forces. However the EOC was concerned about these matters, particularly about retention rates for female service personnel. This section of the Commission’s evidence to the Inquiry is divided into two parts. The first part of this section (4.2 to 4.4) briefly summarises the EOC’s work with the Armed Forces and MoD since 2001, when the Committee last heard evidence about this. The second part of this section sets out the Commission’s views on the issues affecting the recruitment and retention of women in the Armed Forces, drawing on the experience and knowledge gained by the EOC in its work with the Armed Forces.

The EOC’s work with the Armed Forces since 2001

4.2 Between 2001 and the end of 2002 the EOC held tri-service meetings with the Armed Forces and MoD at intervals of more or less six months. Those meetings discussed issues of concern to the EOC relating to retention and promotion of women in the Armed Forces, focussing in particular on the issues of combat effectiveness; flexible working; harassment and poor complaint handling. More informal contact at staff level continued after 2002, usually relating to specific issues such as the impact of sex discrimination law on fitness tests.

4.3 However, increasing concern about the number of servicewomen contacting the EOC for advice and/or assistance about sexual harassment resulted in the EOC in June 2005 launching and immediately suspending a Formal Investigation into Sexual Harassment of Servicewomen in the Armed Forces. The suspension was on terms set out in a three-year agreement between the EOC and the MoD (the FI Agreement). The agreement committed the Armed Forces and MoD to a three phase process, the third phase being the implementation of an action plan derived from diagnostic and planning work in phases one and two.

4.4 The FI Agreement is due to end in June 2008 and the Commission will shortly be assessing the Armed Forces’ compliance with the terms of that agreement and deciding what next steps are appropriate. Since the Formal Investigation is ongoing, though suspended, legal restrictions apply to the information received in relation to the Formal Investigation which can be disclosed to third parties. The information contained in this written evidence in relation to the outcomes of the FI Agreement is therefore confined to information which is already in the public domain.

Factors affecting recruitment and retention of women in the Armed Forces

4.5 As will be apparent from the EOC’s decision to launch a formal investigation into sexual harassment of service women in the Armed Forces the impact of harassment on women in the Armed Forces was viewed by the EOC as very significant. The Commission believes that the prevalence of sexual harassment does have a direct impact on the retention of women in the Armed Forces and indirectly on their recruitment. The most obvious and direct impact is where a service woman leaves the service as a result of suffering harassment. The indirect impact is on the perception of the Armed Forces by female potential recruits.

4.6 Under the terms of the FI Agreement there have now been two surveys of service women’s experiences of and attitude towards sexual harassment (reporting in 2005 and 2007 respectively) and a survey of service men’s attitudes and experiences of sexual harassment (reporting in 2007). All the survey reports are available from the MoD website. The surveys are available at: http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/AboutDefence/CorporatePublications/PersonnelPublications/EqualityAndDiversity/Gender/

4.7 Both servicewomen’s surveys suggest that a significant proportion of servicewomen have experienced some form of sexual harassment, with the 2007 survey reporting that 11% of servicewomen surveyed had experienced a particularly upsetting incident of sexual harassment in the preceding 12 months. The report notes, changes in the survey questions mean it is not possible to weigh the significance of this apparent decrease.

4.8 While the Commission cannot yet comment on the outcome of the FI Agreement it does acknowledge the efforts made by the Armed Forces to implement the action plan set out at Phase 3 of the FI Agreement. The Commission understands that the Armed Forces acknowledge that the steps taken to date will not in
themselves “solve” the problem of sexual harassment in the Armed Forces, but are intended to put in place the conditions for success in addressing the issue. That in turn is a step towards the MoD’s vision of an “environment free from bullying and harassment, where being a member of the Armed Forces brings with it the reality of being treated fairly and with dignity and respect”.

The role of women in the Armed Forces and combat effectiveness

4.9 The Commission acknowledges (as did the EOC) that nothing should be done to jeopardise the combat effectiveness of the Armed Forces. That principle is recognised by s85(4) of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (SDA) which provided that nothing in the SDA should render unlawful an act done for the purposes of ensuring the combat effectiveness of the Armed Forces.

4.10 The EOC in its engagement meetings with the Armed Forces prior to the launch of the formal investigation in 2005 did press the Armed Forces to ensure that any restriction placed on women’s roles in the Armed Forces was strictly necessary to ensure combat effectiveness. The EOC’s particular concern was that such restrictions should not be based on stereotypical views of the abilities of women to cope with pressures of frontline fighting or notions of “societal attitudes” being unwilling to accept a notion of women closing and killing with the enemy.

4.11 The Commission acknowledges that the majority of roles within the Armed Forces are open to women. Despite restrictions on roles involving “closing and killing” with the enemy endorsed by the 2002 report on Women in the Armed Forces women do play a frontline role in the Armed Forces. A vivid illustration of this was the award of the Military Cross to Private Michelle Norris in March 2007, the first time a Military Cross has been awarded to a woman.

4.12 However, the Commission believes it is important to constantly re-evaluate and vigorously test any restrictions on the role of women in the Armed Forces. The report of the 2007 Servicemen’s survey identified a need to address stereotypical views of the relative qualities of servicemen and servicewomen. The report suggested that one means of doing this would be to publicise the contribution of servicewomen on the frontline. The Commission believes that the report finding also points to a need for the Armed Forces to regularly re-examine restrictions to ensure they are not themselves rooted in stereotyped views of women’s capabilities.

Flexible working

4.13 Section 10.2 of the same report notes the evidence that greater experience of working alongside women “is linked with more positive attitudes towards working with women and less agreement that the stereotypical and biological differences between men and women pose challenges to mixed teams”. This underlines the “virtuous circle” that can be created by not only increasing the number of women recruited but ensuring that they work alongside servicemen. The findings suggest that the more this happens, the better the attitude of service men towards service women. This will, in the Commission’s view, contribute towards a decrease in the level of sexual harassment, which should in turn feed into encouraging more potential female recruits to apply to join the Armed Forces.

Flexible working

4.14 The Commission acknowledges that the Armed Forces have made great strides since the days when servicewomen were forced to leave the Forces when they become pregnant. The Commission acknowledges that the Armed Services have taken steps to ensure that servicewomen return to service after maternity leave, for example, by restricting their deployment for the period immediately after their return.

4.15 One area of concern identified by the EOC and raised in the tri-service meetings in the period 2000-2002, however, was the pressure faced by service women with families in reconciling the demands of their role and service personnel with their role as mothers. The statutory right to request flexible working does not apply to the Armed Forces, although in the tri-service meetings with the EOC the MoD indicated that it would approach any such requests in the spirit of that legislation.

4.16 Flexible working was not within the scope of the FI Agreement and the EOC did not engage directly with the Armed Forces about this issue after the discussion at the tri-service meetings. However, flexible working was the second most common issue raised by callers to the EOC’s Helpline in the period from January 2005 until the end of September 2007. Whilst stressing that operational effectiveness is obviously the priority, the Commission would urge the Armed Forces to scrutinise rigorously any policies which prevent flexible working to ensure that a requirement to work a certain work-pattern is necessary to ensure operational effectiveness rather than being rooted in the belief that service in the Armed Forces is of its very nature incompatible with flexible working.

22 http://www.mod.uk/NR/rdonlyres/A9925990-82C2-420F-AB04-7003768CEC02/0/womenaftreport.pdf
23 see in particular section 10.2 of the survey report.
24 See s.192 Employment Rights Act 1996 which omits the provisions in that act which apply to flexible working (part VIIA) from the list of provisions applying to service in the Armed Forces.
5. Disability

5.1 Employment in the Armed Forces is specifically excluded from the scope of Part II (the employment provisions) of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) by s.64(7) of that Act. The Commission believes that this blanket exemption is unnecessary and that the Act provides sufficient scope for sensible application in the Armed Forces, allowing justification of less favourable treatment where, for example, health and safety might be compromised.

5.2 The exemption mentioned in 5.1 above does not mean that disability-related issues are irrelevant, particularly given the need to retain and redeploy highly trained and skilled service personnel who have become disabled in the course of their duties. Equally, members of the Armed Forces may have partners or children who are disabled so for example, the design and maintenance of housing is highly relevant.

5.3 The MoD and Armed Forces are not exempt from the other provisions of the DDA. In particular, the DDA applies to the MoD in relation to civilian employees and applies to the MoD as a public authority and the Armed Forces as service providers and managers of premises.

6. Sexual Orientation, Religion or Belief and Age

6.1 The Commission has more limited information about the factors currently affecting the recruitment and retention in the Armed Forces of service personnel who are homosexual, of particular religions or beliefs or whose age differs from that of other service personnel or potential recruits. The main reasons for this limited information are:

6.1.1 Discrimination in employment on these grounds has been unlawful only since 2003 in the case of sexual orientation and religion or belief, and 2006 in the case of age. As yet there is not a body of case law equivalent to that in relation to race and gender in particular which would assist in highlighting particular issues of concern.

6.1.2 Prior to the creation of the Commission on 1 October 2007, there was no equivalent statutory body with a duty to ensure the elimination of discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, religion or belief or age. The Commission has not inherited a body of knowledge and experience such as it did from the EOC, CRE and DRC in relation to gender, race and disability.

6.1.3 In the case of sexual orientation discrimination, the Armed Forces’ prior policy of requiring homosexual service personnel to leave the Forces meant that there was no need for the Forces to seek to identify and address the issues facing gay men and lesbians in the Armed Forces.

6.2 Until further work is done it is difficult for the Commission to provide categorical evidence on the full range of issues which may impact in particular on service personnel or potential recruits who are homosexual, of particular religions or beliefs or whose age differs from that of other service personnel or potential recruits.

6.3 The Commission strongly believes, however, that the issue of harassment is one which affects gay men and lesbians in the Armed Forces. That view is derived both from information provided by individuals who have contacted the Commission and its predecessor bodies for assistance; cases in the public domain, such as the high-profile case of Lance Bombardier Kerry Fletcher; and information included in the 2007 Servicewomen’s Survey.25

6.4 Although the situation is less clear cut, the Commission and its predecessor bodies are also aware of cases of harassment which appear to be on grounds of religion.

31 March 2008

Memorandum from the British Medical Association

About the BMA and the Armed Forces Committee

The British Medical Association (BMA) is an independent trade union and voluntary professional association which represents doctors from all branches of medicine all over the UK. It has a total membership of over 139,000.

The Armed Forces Committee was established by the BMA “To consider matters relating to the medical branches of the armed forces and the medical branches of the reserve armed forces and so far as possible to ensure that medical officers serving in the medical branches of the armed forces are not disadvantaged in relation to their civilian counterparts”. The main focus of its work has traditionally been the production of evidence to the Armed Forces Pay Review Body. The Committee also represents civilian doctors working for the Defence Medical Services.

25 An example is cited at paras 12.2.3.7 of the 2007 Servicewomen’s report.
INTRODUCTION

1. The Armed Forces Committee of the BMA very much welcomed the publication of the Defence Committee’s report Medical care for the Armed Forces in February 2008 and would like to thank the Committee for its support and the acknowledgement of the high standard and quality of clinical care afforded to military personnel by doctors in the Defence Medical Services (DMS) both on the frontline and in the UK.

2. We also welcome this inquiry into recruitment and retention as we are concerned that the undermanning of fully trained consultants and GPs in the DMS deserves further consideration. Medical care for the Armed Forces acknowledged the effect of increased operational tempo on DMS activity as well as the need for an adequate pool of deployable personnel. Further to the evidence we submitted to the Committee in May 2007:

   — There remains a shortfall of 47% in fully trained, deployable doctors. The deficits in trained strength are felt most in crucial specialties such as surgery (50% shortfall), general medicine (45% shortfall), psychiatry (55% shortfall) and rehabilitation medicine (58% shortfall).

   — Fully trained doctors are needed for deployment. Retention problems occur largely at the stage when doctors have completed their training and have fulfilled any return of service required. Thus, although the training pipelines are full this will not necessarily address the problem of retention, one cause of which is repeated deployment.

   — Studies undertaken by the BMA in 2008 and the National Audit Office in 2006 show that the effects of increased deployment such as overstretch, turbulence, separation from family and the ability to plan a life outside work are all key drivers in decisions about whether to leave the service.

   — Immediate consideration needs to be given to incentives to retain DMS doctors, such as better pay that matches the recent benefits brought about by the new NHS GP and consultant contracts and better and more flexible working conditions.

   — Employer support for reservists is also vital at this time if we are to maintain a pool of deployable personnel ready to relieve and support the DMS on operations.

MANNING LEVELS

3. DMS manning levels remain significantly below requirements at a time of exceptional high operational activity. There is a shortfall of 36% against the total requirement for trained medical officers, with a 47% shortfall of deployable trained doctors.

   Table 1 shows the shortfall for key shortage specialties across the three services at April 2007.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Trained strength</th>
<th>Shortfall</th>
<th>Difference from previous year’s trained strength</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 April 07</td>
<td>770</td>
<td>495**</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 April 06</td>
<td>780</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 April 05</td>
<td>1,030</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

   *Baseline requirement—manning training margin (MTM) not included
   **Shows numbers of qualified doctors available. Not all will be deployable in their specialty as they may be medically downgraded, working out of specialty or in Command and Staff. The number of officers who, as of 1 April 07 were able to deploy in specialty is 407 with a shortfall, thus of 47%.

4. There are serious shortages in the deployable specialties crucial to the service, such as general surgery, general medicine, psychiatry and rehabilitation medicine. (Table 2 shows the shortfall for key shortage specialties across the three services at April 2007.)

28 Data supplied by MoD. Manning figures as at 1 April 2007.
5. The Army in the UK alone spent £4.7 million on locums in 2006–07. This does not include any overseas or operational commitments or locum costs incurred by the other two services. We believe this reliance on civilian locums to cover the manpower deficit is a false economy and that long-term investment is needed to redress the personnel shortfall. We also believe the dependence on civilian locums raises clinical governance issues around the specialised care of military personnel.

6. While the Defence Committee in its report *Medical care for the Armed Forces* found the quality of medical care of armed service personnel to be of the highest quality and second to none, the undermanning of DMS doctors is a risk and a concern.

**TABLE 2**

**MANNING AND REQUIREMENT FIGURES IN THE KEY OPERATIONAL PINCH POINT SPECIALTIES AT 1 APRIL 2007**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specialty</th>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Trained strength</th>
<th>Shortfall No.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anaesthesia</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General surgery</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency medicine</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General medicine</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychiatry</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rheumatology and rehabilitation</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neurosurgery</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General medical practitioners</td>
<td>321</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Retention of DMS doctors is key to redressing its problem of undermanning. Doctors who have completed their training are needed for deployment. Increasing the numbers of doctors in training is not the sole solution as many doctors leave once they have completed their training and fulfilled any return of service required in order to pursue attractive careers outside the DMS.

8. In 2008, the BMA’s Health Policy and Economic Research Unit undertook a survey which shows that almost two thirds of respondents planned to leave the DMS in the next five years. Among those respondents who are not retiring at the end of a full commission, the main reasons for leaving the DMS included family commitments and operational turbulence. 20–30% were dissatisfied with their degree of separation from their families and the impact of this on family life and 25–28% had considered or would consider leaving the services because of family and operational commitment/turbulence factors. DMS doctors are involved in a high level of active service with respondents spending an average of 34 days on deployment during the past year but with a range from 21 days for junior doctors to 51 days for GPs. The average number of days spent on military activities other than deployment was around 36 days in 2007. As many as 48% of respondents report that they were unable to take their full annual leave entitlement over the past year.

9. The 2006 National Audit Office (NAO) study also found that separation from family and the impact of a career in the services on family life and the ability to plan life outside of work were key drivers in the decision to leave the services. Where the operational pinch-points were concerned there was “little or insufficient trained strength to perform operational tasks while enabling guideline levels on the amount of time away from home to be met”. While a degree of separation from home and family life is expected in the services, substantial numbers of personnel have exceeded “harmony guidelines” within their respective service on the maximum time personnel should spend away from home in order to sustain a reasonable balance between time away and time at home.

10. The continued overstretch and increased operational tempo means that DMS medical officers in specialties experiencing shortages will continue to face a high rate of deployment. This will, in turn, impact on the retention of medical officers in these specialties.

11. While the undermanning of DMS personnel has not affected military medical care, the problems it causes at this time of increased operational tempo can be seen to have an effect on morale and motivation and thus on retention. Urgent consideration of how to break this vicious circle therefore needs to be given.

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29 Data supplied by MoD. Manning figures as at 1 April 2007.
Pay and Conditions

12. Better pay, benefits and working conditions would clearly be incentives for doctors to remain in the DMS. Our survey shows that 35–41% of respondents believed that pay and conditions are better in the NHS, the private sector or an alternative career. A DMS GP, for instance, stands to earn an average of 9.6% less than an NHS GP over the course of a career.33

13. 43% of respondents to the BMA 2008 survey were dissatisfied with the career development and career prospects within the DMS. Fully trained DMS doctors are also an attractive prospect for NHS and other employers.

14. Work/life balance is a key factor in retention and morale and better flexible and part-time working opportunities are needed. The increasing feminisation of the medical profession means that the ability to balance professional and domestic commitments are significant factors in morale and motivation.34 Doctors generally are also increasingly choosing career paths which allow greater flexibility and part-time working and the ability to combine varied professional as well as domestic commitments and such opportunities are more readily available in the NHS and outside the DMS.35

Reservists

15. As the Defence Committee found in Medical care for the Armed Forces, reservists provide a vital role and remain a fundamental element of operational planning, particularly at this time of increased operational tempo. The deficit of deployable doctors makes the DMS ever more dependent on the contribution made by reservists in the provision of care on the frontline as well as a relief for DMS doctors on deployment.

16. The reservist pool is finite and existing manpower shortages among the reserves will contribute to overstretch in DMS support. The availability of reservists to fulfil their intended roles depends on successful recruitment and consistent commitment to training.

17. There are two elements impacting on the morale and retention of reservists: the impact of active service and the attitude of employers both in terms of operational deployment and the need for reservists to meet their annual training requirement.

18. As we stated in our previous evidence to the Defence Committee, in the current climate of the NHS economic and service delivery considerations are likely to influence employers’ views of doctors’ professional commitments. Consultants who are reservists may thus be perceived as an encumbrance and a less preferable employment prospect than a consultant with no reserve liability. Non-reservist NHS GPs are also likely to be preferable to employ unless existing partners are sympathetic to the concept of reserve liability. NHS GP partnership agreements generally mention reserve liability and, for the practice, the need to cover the absence of deployed colleagues can represent a major financial commitment. Reserve liability may be considered a handicap and a disincentive to recruit. These situations are driven again by the medical workforce shortage coupled with the severe lack of contingency capacity in most NHS organisations and general practices.

19. The Department of Health (DH) reported to the Defence Committee that there had been no reports of specific employer discrimination against reservists. Apart from a few isolated cases, we have found it difficult to encourage those experiencing problems to come forward and therefore believe they would be reluctant to access employment grievance procedures as suggested by the DH. We are concerned that doctors may thus be more inclined to leave the reserve forces than to pursue formal complaints procedures against their permanent employers.

20. We were pleased with the Defence Committee’s recommendation of raising awareness of the contribution made by the reserve forces to the military and to society as a whole and believe that this should be emphasised to employers. Employers should be encouraged to appreciate the benefits and added value that can be gained from the additional skills and experience of doctors who have trained and been on active deployment on operations in the reserves. For example, in hospital foyers in the USA, photographs of staff who have served in the armed forces can be found on display. In the UK a change is needed in the culture and attitude of UK employers from one of reluctance to one of celebration of their staff who volunteer to train in order to provide medical care on the frontline. We would be happy to work together with the MoD, the Department of Health and NHS Employers towards fostering a culture among employers of support for reservists.

3 April 2008

35 Health Policy and Economic Research Unit, BMA Tripartite Cohort Study of Doctors in the DMS, 2006, BMA; London.
Memorandum from Stephen Wildridge

We have noticed an increase in personnel leaving the forces over the past five years. I would say that there are several main reasons for this.

1. People in combat roles feel they could move into a position with less risk after doing a major operational role for more money outside of the forces. They could look to move into different units than being forced to sign off.

2. It is becoming common practise and not just within the forces that after three to five years people move on to their next job to further their career.

3. This is coming from a more personal view that there should be more opportunity to move around within the forces to different departments.

For example I was in the Signals and wasn’t happy with my trade but some seniors would not allow me to change trades so I left. If when you were enquiring about signing off and were given a list of vacant positions within the tri services you may change your mind about leaving and commit to a new contract and new challenge. Although this may be expensive to keep retraining personnel into new sectors your retention will improve and you will have more highly skilled personnel.

4. The food and accommodation on camps is not up to a suitable standard and although this might seem an insignificant point, after time you start to feel that this isn’t good enough and you can do better especially as you are paying for the food and accommodation out of your wages.

With regards to new recruits although the careers centre’s and special teams visiting schools and universities are effective this can be seen to be a very bias approach. I have had many discussions with young people with different backgrounds where I have encouraged them to join the forces and being an ex military member they found it very encourage for them to see where I am now and for them to realise that it is an excellent way to set you up for the future and teaches you excellent qualities that civilian employers want to see. I would suggest that you put together an ex military recruitment team that visits schools, universities, rugby clubs etc giving presentations and one to ones with those that are interested and give a completely impartial advice on what the tri forces has to offer and the pros and cons of joining.

4 Ex Military

12 March 2008

Memorandum from Robin Short, Martin Kinsella and David J Walters

In oral evidence to the Defence Select Committee’s\(^6\) inquiry into Recruitment and Retention in the Armed Forces, a statement was made which suggests the existence of a much higher level of PTSD than has previously been admitted by MoD officials. We believe that the loss of personnel as a consequence of mental health problems will have a significant impact on the long-term retention of military personnel.

Mr Jenkins, in the course of a question directed to Professor Strachan, made the following statement: “We recently found in our report on the Annual Report and Accounts that the failure of the Army and the RAF to achieve their Harmony Guidelines was unacceptable, so what can the Armed Forces do to improve observance of the Harmony Guidelines?”

Professor Strachan replied, “They can do very little while they are under the operational pressures they are under. One of the absurdities of the report is the expectation that Harmony Guidelines can be sustained”.\(^7\)

And Professor Dandeker added, “On Harmony Guidelines, I think there is some important contextual information that needs to be remembered, which is that something between 13 and 20% of personnel are in breach of Harmony Guidelines . . . . The second point is that the Harmony Guidelines, so far as our own research is concerned, show that if you keep personnel within them their mental health does not suffer. It does suffer if you go over those guidelines, so I think the point to recall is that the great majority are within the Harmony Guidelines. I think that the Harmony Guidelines have been well constructed because the evidence suggests that if you stay within them they do not suffer; if you go beyond there there is a 20–50% likelihood that they will suffer in terms of PTSD.\(^7\)

From the evidence offered by these two experts, we see that:

— The army and RAF have failed to meet harmony guidelines.
— There is little likelihood of achieving them with the present operational tempo.
— 13–20% of personnel are in breach of the harmony guidelines.
— 20–50% of those in breach of the guidelines suffer in terms of PTSD.

\(^6\) http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmselect/cmdfence/uc424-i/uc42402.htm Question 22

\(^7\)
According to the MoD factsheets, 7,800 personnel are deployed in Afghanistan and a further 4,000 in Iraq, amounting to a total of 11,800 personnel currently employed in theatre.

Army harmony guidelines state that individuals should not exceed 415 days of separated service in any period of 30 months. At unit level, tour intervals should be no less than 24 months. So soldiers can be deployed for a maximum of 5.5 months out of every 12. This means that 25,745 troops will need to be deployed each year to ensure that the harmony guidelines are not exceeded.

Based upon Professor Dandeker’s evidence, it is possible to calculate the minimum and maximum rates of PTSD that can be expected to arise from a required annual commitment of 25,475 service personnel deployed to Afghanistan and Iraq.

- The minimum in breach of harmony guidelines is 13%, which equates to 3,347 soldiers.
- The maximum is 20%, equating to 5,149 soldiers.
- From this group, between 20% and 50% will suffer in terms of PTSD.
- So, the minimum number of British service personnel who can be expected to develop PTSD each year is 669, while the maximum is 2,575.

In other words, at least 2.6% of British troops will develop PTSD, and in the worst case 10%. If we take the average of the maximum and minimum values, 6.3% of personnel deployed to Afghanistan and Iraq can be expected to develop PTSD. That equates to 1,605 new cases each year.

This figure is higher than the Kings College study cited in the Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine, which states that in a survey of 1,198 service personnel deployed in peacekeeping operations between 1991 and 2000, 3.6–5.5% developed PTSD. According to the NHS National Clinical Practice Guidelines for PTSD, “the risk of developing PTSD after a traumatic event is 8.1% for men and 20.4% for women”.

The US National Centre for PTSD reports “Numerous studies have since observed a dose-response relationship between trauma severity and PTSD” and the American Journal of Psychiatry states “History of any previous exposure to traumatic events was associated with a greater risk of PTSD from the index trauma. Multiple previous events had a stronger effect than a single previous event”. So, the greater the exposure to traumatic events, the greater the risk of developing PTSD. With 270 British fatalities since 2002 and the high intensity of the operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, the exposure to human death and life threatening experiences is much higher than would be experienced in a peacekeeping operation.

Although we are not aware of any research into the root cause of premature voluntary release from the services, there is a strong indication from amongst the PTSD casualties we have contacted that the onset of PTSD symptoms prompts them to leave the service, or at least not re-engage to complete a full career. Given military training, it is reasonable to deduce that a decision to seek voluntary release is derived from a sense of failure, or shame, when service personnel realise they are unable to self-manage their symptoms (generally through alcohol and other substance abuse); these feelings are exacerbated by the knowledge that they cannot fulfill their operational obligations to their comrades.

This then leads to a vicious circle—more personnel leave the service, which requires more frequent deployments for those who remain, placing more personnel outside the harmony guidelines and increasing their exposure to traumatic events. This in turn increases the probability of developing PTSD. So more choose to leave the service; thus the cycle continues.

Whether the actual figure for those with PTSD amounts to 3.6%, 5.5%, 6.3% or 8.1%, the lowest figure is still much higher than the 1:3,000 (0.033%) of personnel diagnosed as suffering from PTSD during the second quarter of 2007, according to statistics provided by the Defence Analytical Service Agency. We believe that the DFSA figure lacks credibility because it does not include data on PTSD identified in those who have left the armed forces. As has been indicated above, there is strong anecdotal evidence to suggest that servicemen and women will seek voluntary release rather than admit they have PTSD symptoms. In other words, the true level of PTSD is not picked up in DFSA statistics because sufferers leave the forces before such a diagnosis can be made.
In evidence to the Defence Select Committee’s recent inquiry into Medical Care for the Armed Forces, we stated that military personnel tend to present with PTSD 10–15 years after the exposure. A recent article in The Times on trauma suffered by war-zone journalists stated that there is an average of seven years between the traumatic event and the onset of PTSD. After six years of intense operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, Professor Dandeker’s figures suggest that the real number of service personnel and veterans becoming PTSD casualties is already in the region of 9,630 and rising at a rate of over 1,500 each year. Even if we assume a 50% margin for error, and that only 4,815 personnel have actually suffered from PTSD, the consequent loss of trained servicemen and women is having a significant, detrimental affect both on retention and on the operational capability of the armed forces. If these 4,815 personnel had been provided with effective support and treatment for their PTSD the MoD would not now have to acknowledge:

— That the British infantry is 1,280 men short of full fighting strength.
— That operational battalions were deployed with a shortfall of up to 100 soldiers.
— That the predicted trained strength of 99,300 is under the required level of 101,855 (a shortfall of 2,555, which is less than the number lost to PTSD).

As has been previously identified there is neither the capacity nor capability within the MoD or NHS to handle the 10,000 new PTSD cases which can be expected to occur over the next five years. Ongoing failure to address the real level of PTSD experienced by our service personnel will only place an ever-increasing number outside the harmony guidelines, increasing susceptibility to becoming PTSD casualties and further damaging retention and recruitment in the armed forces.

We believe, therefore, that the MoD needs to acknowledge the real rate of PTSD, as identified by Professor Dandeker, which will certainly have a negative impact on the number of Armed Forces personnel available for active service. The statistics supplied here clearly demonstrate that a failure on the part of the MoD adequately to deal with the forthcoming PTSD bow wave will have a significant adverse affect on the retention of military personnel.

3 May 2008

Memorandum from David Gee

1. I am the author of Informed Choice: Armed Forces Recruitment Practice in the United Kingdom, which was produced with financial assistance from the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust and released on 7 January 2008. The report assesses whether recruiters and recruitment materials enable potential enlees to make an informed choice about whether a forces career will suit them well. This is in view of the significant risks, difficulties and legal obligations entailed in a forces career, as well as the many potential benefits that it can bring.

2. The terms of reference for the Defence Committee’s inquiry focus on the significant practical difficulties of achieving recruitment and retention targets. I hope the committee will also consider the ethical questions involved, which are not only important in their own right but also have implications for the forces’ recruitment and retention goals.

3. The Informed Choice report shows that new forces recruits assume legal obligations, accept risks and face ethical challenges that are unfamiliar in civilian careers. The report asserts that the state has a duty of care to potential recruits that is not fulfilled as it should be: many recruits and their parents are not made aware of the risks, difficulties and legal obligations before enlistment, for example.

4. Most forces personnel report being satisfied with their careers (although satisfaction rates are not as high as in civilian life—see Informed Choice, pp.85–87). Dissatisfied personnel comprise approximately 17% of soldiers, 21% of airmen/women and 22% of navy ratings, according to the most recently published MoD Continuous Attitude Surveys (late 2006). The debilitating effects of job dissatisfaction are compounded by the legal obligations that debar personnel from leaving for four years or more from the date they enlisted. Informed Choice concludes that this long minimum term of service is the most serious ethical deficiency in armed forces recruitment and retention policy; it amounts to the forcible retention of personnel and would be unlawful in any other career.

5. Besides its ethical shortcomings, the minimum term of service may also be counter-productive. This is for two reasons. First, the minimum term may put off many good, potential recruits from enlisting. At the least, they may wonder why restrictive terms of service are necessary for a career that recruitment literature describes as uniquely rewarding. Second, forcibly retained, dissatisfied recruits may adversely affect morale and operational effectiveness while they wait to leave (the most recent MoD continuous attitude surveys

45 http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmselect/cmdfence/327/7061201.htm Questions 48 and 96
46 http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tolsitesearch.do?x=0&y=0&query=PTSD+Catherine+&hitPerPage=10nextOffset=0&offset=0&startIndex=1&refEndIndex=10&submitStatus=SearchFormSubmitted&mode=Simple&sectionId=674 Para 22
47 http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmselect/cmdfence/327/327we27.htm Para 28
48 http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmselect/cmdfence/327/7061201.htm Questions 48 and 96
found that 21% of soldiers and 24% of navy ratings wanted to leave; no equivalent data are available for the air force). Your predecessor committee’s Duty of Care report of 2005 agreed, criticising recruits’ legal obligations as “unnecessarily restrictive” and “counter productive”. (Duty of Care, pp.53, 54).

6. Besides the restrictive terms of service, Informed Choice identified four further ethical deficiencies in armed forces recruitment practice in the UK, any one of which amounts to negligence in the state’s duty of care to potential recruits. Recruitment literature and the application process:

a. largely fail to inform potential recruits of the serious personal risks that are peculiar to a forces career;

b. often fail to explain clearly to potential recruits the complex terms of service, and fail to inform recruits of certain further rights, privileges and restrictions, including the right of conscientious objection to military service, the privilege of discretionary discharge for under-18s, and the restrictions of civil liberties entailed in military law.

c. depend on large numbers of the socially and economically vulnerable joining as a last resort; and
d. capitalise on the impressionability of adolescents in order to attract large numbers of minors to a forces career, especially in the army.

7. In its 2005 Duty of Care report (p.40), your predecessor committee called on the MoD to improve information for potential recruits to ensure that they are aware of the commitment required of them. The MoD accepted this in its formal response (p.4) but no significant changes appear to have been made. For example, the Infantry Soldier brochure does not mention the terms of service at all and nowhere in any army recruitment literature (as of 2007) are the terms of service properly spelt out. The literature’s occasional, partial explanations of the terms of service often include inaccuracies (detailed in Informed Choice pp.36–37, 52–55). The Notice Paper for the army sets out the terms of service in more detail but this is not given to recruits until late in the recruitment process and is extremely complicated and difficult to understand.

8. Forces recruitment literature describes itself as briefing potential recruits about what life in the forces is really like. The Infantry Soldier brochure, for example, “[tries] to give you as much information as possible on a career in the Infantry…”. However, army recruitment literature: does not describe military operations realistically; avoids the words “risk” and “kill”; does not warn of the step-change from civilian life to the military training regime; and does not explain the difficulties of forces life such as long periods of separation from family and friends. This finding is supported by the Adult Learning Inspectorate’s reviews of all forces training establishments in 2005 and 2007, which found that recruitment materials “sometimes mislead” and do not portray forces life accurately (see Adult Learning Inspectorate, Safer Training (2005) and Better Training (2007) reports). Recruiters are understandably concerned that information about the “down-sides” of a forces career could put young people off enlisting. However, if this information were included in the briefing materials, the forces would recruit better-prepared personnel, while those unsuitable for a forces career would not join (only to leave during training or find themselves forcibly retained by their obligations). This change could benefit recruitment and retention targets, better protect the moral rights of potential recruits, and build public trust in the recruitment process.

9. Data obtained under the Freedom of Information Act show that the army discharged 2,775 soldiers (non-officers) for “Service No Longer Required” (SNLR) in 2006; this means that more soldiers are being discharged than SNLR that are being recruited at age 16 (2,005 16-year-old soldier recruits in the same year). In 2006, the navy and air force each discharged only 75 non-officer personnel for SNLR. Officers in Army Recruiting Group explained to me that the army discharges personnel who do not progress up the ranks personnel in their thirty are deemed unfit for front-line service (eg as an infantry rifleman). Senior officers in the MoD contradicted this, claiming that the large SNLR figure is due to the many types of discharge that SNLR includes (eg discharge for drug abuse, discretionary discharge etc.). The MoD’s reasoning does not explain why similar numbers are not discharged from the navy and air force, however. It seems possible that fit and motivated soldiers are being forcibly and needlessly discharged from the army. This would evidently be detrimental to retention targets, add pressure to recruiters, and put personnel at unnecessary risk of job insecurity.

10. The UK’s ratification of the Optional Protocol (OP) to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict has significantly improved protection for minors entering a forces career; however, recruitment of under-18s continues to put minors at risk. The policy is at odds with the national age of majority, and notably at odds with minimum recruitment ages for the police, ambulance and fire services (all set at 18 years). Minors recruited into the armed forces accept far-reaching legal obligations and face significant ethical choices while deemed by the state to be insufficiently mature as persons to vote, consume alcohol or nicotine, sign a contract or watch adult films. The armed forces’ dependence on under-18 recruitment cuts against the grain of a growing international consensus that minors should not be recruited into the armed forces. This emerging consensus is reflected in the general EU trend of increasing the minimum age of recruitment to 17 and 18 and phasing out conscription; the UK is the only EU state to recruit 16 year-olds. Army recruiters have told me that they usually do not meet or phone the parents of applicants to the armed forces, often because applicants do not want their parents involved; it is difficult to see how parents who sign their child’s consent form but do not meet with recruiters can be granting consent that is properly informed of the nature of military service and its legal obligations. The Informed Choice report notes your predecessor committee’s recommendation to the MoD, made in the Duty
of Care report, to “examine the potential impact of raising the recruitment age for all three Services to 18” (Duty of Care, p.7). In its formal response (p.1), the MoD claimed that this was not a practical option but it had not apparently conducted a study to support this position. The Informed Choice report indicates that the sustainable, phasing-out of under-18 recruitment may be possible and suggests how it might be achieved (see pp.25–26), beginning with measures to phase out 16-year old recruitment. The report recommends that the MoD or a body such as the National Audit Office conduct a full feasibility study into this in accordance with Duty of Care’s recommendation.

11. Finally, Informed Choice proposes a new Armed Forces Recruitment Charter, which would set out recruiters’ responsibilities to potential recruits (eg to give honest and balanced information about forces careers; to attempt to involve parents directly in the recruitment process where possible etc.). This would codify best practice; it would improve public trust in the recruitment process, thereby benefiting recruitment; it would better protect the position of potential recruits; it would help to ensure that new recruits were as aware as possible of the nature of a forces career and so reduce early drop-outs; and it would help to enhance the accountability of recruiters and the forces’ recruitment organisations. Minister for the Armed Forces Bob Ainsworth MP, as well as senior officers in the MoD, have indicated an interest in this proposal.

6 May 2008

Supplementary memorandum from the Institute of Career Guidance

The results were collated from members responses received over the last month. Please note there were no responses from Northern Ireland or South West England. Each section tables results from the regions followed by a series of the key comments received.

How often are schools visited by the Armed Forces?

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Comments

Scotland:
— Frequently—There are good communication links with the local Armed Forces Recruitment Office and that, in conjunction with the GRFW Army Prep Course, may be one reason why the Armed Forces do not see the need to visit schools on a more regular basis.
— Frequently—Attend any career events and career information parent evenings. School attend Army career events usually held on annual basis. Also seem to have contact through Operation Youth Advantage in co-ordination with community police in school—that involves one week course giving taster of Army life for pupils at risk of criminality/disengagement from school etc.
— Frequently—The Armed forces are almost always represented at annual schools careers convention and occasionally visit for example to help with interview practice.
— Rarely—However this is more to do with the schools and not the Armed Forces.
— Rarely—A lot of local authorities do not allow Armed Forces to visit schools.

Eastern England:
— Frequently—A new link has recently been made and the Army are making links with school locally via Connexions Personal Advisers, so this should be more frequent.
West Midlands:
— Frequently—But only at the invitation of the schools. I do 13–16 work in two secondary schools in Shropshire. The local Shrewsbury AFCO is active in both these schools and their inputs are well received and welcomed by pupils and the Head of Careers / Head of PSHE who both appreciate the enormous help they give in filling parts of the school’s careers curriculum. Individuals from the armed forces act as positive role models to young people in school, their professionalism, positive attitude must impact in a positive way on young people. It is surprising, to say the least, that the young men least likely to respond to the disciplined approach in school actively aspire to enter the even more disciplined environment of the armed forces, and go on to flourish.

London:
— Frequently—selective grammar school for boys. RAF and Army come once a year but are more than happy to come more frequently.
— Frequently—every year, relates to FE college in South London—student population mainly black and ethnic minorities.

South England:
— Rarely, this is my experience, but when they do come in, they are excellent. The Armed Forces also run some exceptionally good outdoor/off school site activities and I have the backing of my school to use them at any opportunity. When the Army come into school, they work with individuals or groups. When working with any group or individual, they offer a non-threatening and informative approach. The also offer some excellent offsite residential programmes, including the five-day Insight course—a great alternative to “normal” work experience!
— At least annually. All Services attend school careers event aimed at Y10 & Y11 students. Their stands usually have very long queues though afterwards students often say it does not mean they want to join, more that the stands and displays etc. are interesting. It does however sow a seed of interest for the future.
— Schools seem not to have time to allow students to access outside organisations during lesson times. It also depends on the pro-activeness of the Careers Coordinator who is able to invite employers and training providers to come into the school.
— Rarely, but they are generally good at responding to requests to attend events.

Which branch of the Services appears to be most active in links with schools?

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Comments

Scotland:
— Army, then Navy and Air Force.
— The Army does seem to recruit more actively than the other services. This is in evidence at recruitment fairs, higher education conventions, etc.
— We hold a careers convention annually in my school and all three branches always attend.
— We have run many types of careers fairs, jobs fairs etc and have invited the armed forces to take part. We would normally check with the school that they are happy for the services to be part of this (at least that is what we used to do when I was more involved and I presume we still do). Very few schools said no to such visits.
Yorkshire & Humberside:
— The Army clearly requires more recruits than the other services and is always keen to be involved in any event. All three services are regular exhibitors at the annual careers fair run by Connexions, and at other local events. They particularly welcome the opportunity to talk with parents.

West Midlands:
— We have inputs by all three branches, and enjoy good links with all three, but in my opinion the branch with the most involvement currently is the Army, then the Royal Navy, and finally of course the Air Force.
— We used to have regular visits from the Royal Navy but this seems to be very much dependent on the link person. The Army are certainly more active with their links—in particular the TA who had a very strong recruitment campaign recently. The TA seems to be in “competition” with the Army for attending events.

London:
— Air force and army frequently visit.
— Army always, navy rarely, air force never, also had events from Royal Army Medical Corps (relate to FE college in South London—student population mainly black and ethnic minorities).

South England:
— This is because there seems to be more interest in Army Careers by students and they contact schools more frequently than the Navy or Air Force with their activities.
— Some students take up Army work experience offers in Y10. I don’t think they have done so with other Navy or RAF. Also Army has a Careers Office in the neighbouring town whereas students have to travel 15 miles or more to the Joint Services Centre.

Are visits more frequent than, say, five years ago?

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Comments
Scotland:
— I have not worked in a school for just over two years but till then I did not see much of a change.
— In the past the Army visited local Opportunity Centres to advertise themselves but this has now been stopped, partly due to poor uptake.
— They seem to be about the same.

Yorkshire & Humberside:
— Too many constraints on the curriculum make it difficult for schools to find the time to insert presentations from outside agencies.
— We see the Army most regularly; we have to request the RAF as they are so busy. I request the Navy when a student asks me to.

West Midlands:
— No—but I think we have more effective links now than five years ago.
— No—I think is because I do not actively encourage then to visit more regularly—they would if this was permitted!
How often are career advisers and teachers invited on familiarisation visits by the Armed Forces?

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Comments

Scotland:
— The Army offers visits, usually annually or bi-annually, for Careers Advisers. The service also offers away days, etc for members of Activate Groups.
— Invited to Army Careers event along with schools. Will often see stands from other forces too at Jobs Fairs/ career events that Careers Scotland are involved with. Have also attended Navy events on ship when in harbour- we are always invited when this is organised. Have not attended any events from RAF- have mainly linked up with them at career events in school or at external careers events.
— I think they used to be more common

Yorkshire & Humberside:
— The Connexions Agenda has meant that our company focuses on reducing NEETS and reaching the hard to help. This is seen as more of a priority than attending visits to update our professional knowledge.
— I used to be asked frequently, but I am just too busy with my day job. These visits take two full days.
— Several years ago our careers service was one of those which signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the forces. This was intended to link their recruitment process to our system of advising and referring suitable and potential clients through a set of procedures. We did attempt to follow these, but the local AFCO tended to discourage our advisers from doing any more than “tell them to come down and see us”. Subsequently the forces may have felt that careers services were not helping to solve their recruitment problems. Perhaps for this reason, and other issues of logistics and cost, the invitations to military bases/camps/awareness days etc, dried up quite abruptly. As the named link to the Forces, I still receive the odd invitation to road- shows and publicity events, but the opportunities which the longer visits offered to actually speak with new recruits at different stages of their initial training no longer seem to exist, which is a pity.

Eastern England:
— Both the Army and the RAF have arranged a presentation to Connexions Personal Advisers recently so communication has been approved.

West Midlands:
— Rarely, however, that said when visits to military establishments have been arranged in the past for pupils, teaching staff will of course attend with the pupils. Both my schools have enjoyed visits to Portsmouth where the overnight stay on one of the naval training ships has been extremely well received by all concerned. It is a shame that due to Government cut backs this sort of liaison between the forces and the community no longer happens. I am sure that this will reduce / have reduced the bond of trust, understanding and support that exists between the British military personnel and ordinary members of the public.

London:
— I have been invited to Sandhurst and an RAF three day selection. Not sure that I can justify all this time off for this. They are very pro-active. Our head teacher attended a Sandhurst Selection when considering whether to set up an Army training corps unit here. The latter did not happen as it requires additional efforts from a teaching staff who already are heavily involved in school fixtures and sport.
South England:

— We are not often in a position to go as the visits tend to get rationed out between us.
— The Army, in particular, visits Connexions Centre and attends Team Meetings. Occasional visits offered.
— I attended an excellent RAF assessment exercise for potential recruits in July 2006.
— Normally the opportunity occurs annually however it is not practical for all staff to be able to attend.

Is this more or less frequent than, say, five years ago?

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Comments:

Scotland:

— Less Frequent—We use to get invites up to about 10 years ago but these seem to have dried up altogether.
— Less Frequent—There used to be regular trips for careers advisers to Army, RAF and Navy bases.

North East England:

— Less Frequent.

North West England:

— Less frequent than five years ago.

Yorkshire & Humberside:

— All those that responded said—less frequent.

West Midlands:

— Less frequently in view of reductions in funding for this by Government.

South England:

— Less frequent I feel. Many years ago it was quite common for Careers Advisers to be offered visits to Stations etc.
— More frequent.
— I have not noticed any more or less recruiting. I invite career liaison officers into our school to talk to interested young people about the armed forces. It is up to those young people to come to their own personal decisions, based around discussions with family and careers interviews.
— Has been the same for the 10 years I have worked in careers.

Channel Islands:

— It is less frequent.
Where do you think that young people get information about Armed Forces careers?

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<th>Media</th>
<th>Careers Adviser</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>North East England</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West England</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yorkshire &amp; Humberside</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern England</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>West Midlands</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>East Midlands</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South England</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Channel Islands</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments

Scotland:
- Many young people have forces connections through families and have gained a lot of information from that. They will often have visited the Army Careers centre too before coming for interview. I don’t get the impression that I am their first point of information about Army Careers but I will always direct them to relevant websites, if they have not already accessed them.
- Some young people have family links and gain information this way. They also gain information from Schools Careers Conventions and the local Armed Forces Careers Office.
- Many young people will get information from all these sources. Also they will get information from Careers events like conventions and fairs etc. The cinema seems to be a favourite way as well with high profile advertising.
- The armed forces careers teams do a good job of advising young people about such careers. While they are obviously keen to get any opportunity to engage with young people, the actual recruitment process is a very lengthy one and there is no way that the armed services want to fool pupils into thinking a career in the services has no element of danger (press ganging was abandoned in the 18th century I believe!). I think the recent spat in the media over armed forces recruiting is due to some extreme comments from some teachers who seem to equate talking to people about a career in the armed forces with propaganda and says more about their attitude to the armed forces than about the reality of armed services recruitment. Careers Scotland staff can discuss armed services careers with young people but would always refer them to the armed services careers teams if they seriously want to consider such a career. As an organisation, we would not want to discriminate against the services by not inviting them to careers / jobs fairs because they are an employer like anyone else and should have the same opportunities to raise awareness of their careers as others. Young people might be initially attracted by the glamour / excitement of armed forces recruitment materials but it would be impossible for them to go through a recruitment process of several months without being made aware of the realities of a career in the services.
- All of the above. In addition, young people who are members of Army Cadet Forces frequently report that the staff who run these groups encourage them to join the Army. This encouragement seems to be less persistent in the Air Cadets. I can’t remember how many years it has been since a youngster last told me that she was in the Sea Cadets.
- All of the above. Careers Advisers will give information when requested but most will not be proactive. Strongest influence is probably parents and family and tradition in certain parts of the country to join the Armed Forces.

North East England:
- A career in the armed forces has always been a popular option for school leaver in the North East. Whilst there does not appear to be much change in the number of young people who are interested the proportion of females to males has changed. There appears to have been an increase in the number of females who are interested. It has also been noted that these young people are more informed about the various career options available in the armed forces, with nursing being an area of particular interest. The current operations in Iraq and Afghanistan are having an influence although this appears not to be with young people themselves, but rather their parents and carers.
North West England:
— Careers resources eg in our library and also from tutors if studying a Public Services course.
— Usually from a combination of sources but clients are referred to the Armed forces careers team by advisers working in schools.
— Parents and Family, then Schools, then Armed Forces Careers Teams, then Careers Advisers and then Media.

Yorkshire & Humberside:
— The majority of young people who want to join the Armed forces have parents and/or grandparents who are in or who were in the Armed forces. This has been my experience through conducting vocational guidance interviews.
— Students who have family in the Forces are far more likely to want to join, and those who are friends with these students can be a little interested. Our CCF is also a factor.
— These are the approaches which are likely to engage directly with young people—whether via TV advertising into their homes, or careers teams who set up stands and caravans in shopping precincts where young people congregate. Schools have a variety of attitudes to the forces and will act accordingly. Career Advisers will act in accordance with the principles of objective guidance; but if working to Connexions contracts may be restricted as to who they see—though some of the more disaffected may show an interest in military life, they may not be regarded as suitable. Advisers also rely on the careers information supplied by the forces being up to date: if there is no named link adviser, this may well not happen.

Eastern England:
— The Army are now having a weekly surgery in the Connexions centre and the RAF are coming in monthly.

West Midlands:
— The three branches of the armed forces appear to have extremely smart / responsive web sites. In particular I am aware of the “FAQ’s”, and “Army Careers Adviser on line service” sections on the army web site. I personally do provide armed forces careers information when requested by young people, and this is always well received. Local school’s have packs of information for their school’s careers library, BUT under recent changes in the provision of IAG in schools the importance of the careers library has been much reduced, (if not altogether removed), and I am not confident that young people can easily access this information any longer. The careers professional, free to exercise his / her professional judgement in the school context is able to promote a balanced and realistic view of the armed forces with each young person they engage with. With careers guidance provision currently diluted and subsumed by “Connexions”, “a social exclusion” and “child protection” agenda the future outlook for impartial, professional careers guidance does not look good. Young people get their IAG from a variety of sources at the times they need it. There needs to be a known source of impartial, confidential and professional careers IAG maintained in schools and “patch localities” that young people can access. The careers guidance professional is that person. The current “social exclusion”, “child protection” models threaten the integrity of our professional approach and is leading to a situation where anyone seems free to promote themselves as a “careers professional”.
— As a 6th Form College I do not think we are targeted as much as school (in addition. the times they have been in they have not found much interest from students) I do feel that the Armed Forces should not be excluded from College events but their involvement should be as part of a general Careers awareness event/activity where other careers are also represented. We have a Careers Convention to which they are invited and this seems to work well.

London:
— I actively support people coming in to the school but many schools have the perception that the forces are not an option—poor equipment, poor living conditions (barracks) and that they may see active service too quickly—in the past it was join the army and you will see the world where as now it is more likely they will see active service quite quickly.
— Most of the young people in my school who are interested in Army/RAF careers have been involved with the relevant CADETs for some time.
— Responding as parent—Although not organised initially by the school, both boys have been on “work experience” programmes arranged by the military. Events such as Air Shows, “Meet the Navy”, Military Music programmes, and membership of the local ATC Squadron and Sea Cadets Corps have been very influential in helping them to make up their minds. Examples of media “On the front line”, “Navy News” and of course the Web.
— All of the above, but mainly influenced by peers and family not to join up (relate to FE college in South London—student population mainly black and ethnic minorities).
South England:
— All of the above. Sometimes it depends on a student’s background, information of which is not always correct. The Army jobs website is excellent. Having Armed Forces teams in school can really help students decide whether or not they want to consider a career in the forces. Armed Forces careers advisers have always been helpful, courteous and the work they offer to our students has always been outstanding. I would be very sad to see any opportunity cease.
— Probably their Careers Teams first. However we have a school in our area with a high intake of Service families from the nearby Army base so families will play a large role there. The Barracks in our town closed three or four years ago so the Army link has been lost to some extent.
— All of the above and also the Internet through the websites.
— Schools do not seem competent to give information on Armed Forces. Literature is from the Armed Forces is also not regularly updated by schools. This may be because the Armed Forces will not be sending the literature to schools.
— Huge range of sources for young people—I do not think that there is any one source of information that stands out. Peers are not mentioned in the list above—peers have often experienced activities at first hand and may be able to give very relevant and fresh perspectives on a particular career area. Peers in the armed services will clearly give honest opinions to their near contemporaries.
— They would probably get more info from Army Careers teams but they don’t always have easy access to these ie if they don’t come into school on a regular basis it relies on the young person going to them which is a journey of at least 15 miles, so you’ve got to want to find out more, hard to inspire the casual caller.

2 May 2008

Supplementary memorandum from the Ministry of Defence

1. This memorandum aims to provide the House of Commons Defence Committee with additional information in respect of their inquiry into Recruitment and Retention in the Armed Forces. It provides responses to the questions posed in the HCDC Clerk’s letter of 25 April 2008.

SCHOOLS

_How the MoD Plans to co-ordinate its recruiting and outreach activities in schools (Q233)_

2. MoD’s Youth Policy (2006) recognised three pillars supporting Defence non-recruiting Youth activity; Cadets, Partnership and youth work, and Curriculum activities. All three pillars engage with schools along side a considerable single Service recruiting presence. Engagements occur on site and outside school premises for instance as visits to MoD sponsored Museums and Agencies and Service establishments.

3. Our overall rationale for engaging with schools is to encourage good citizenship, provide an environment which raises awareness of the MoD and Armed Forces among young people, provide positive information to influence future opinion formers, and to enable recruiters to access the school environments. Our engagement demonstrates active support for Government Youth Policies and provides skill development for young people in schools.

4. The impact of not engaging schools is not easy to measure but would result in reduced awareness and understanding of the work of the MoD and Armed Forces, with potential implications for recruitment. There would also be wider negative implications relating to cross-Government policies by reducing communications with students in ethnic minority groups.

5. A short review of Defence engagement with schools in 2006 indicated that, whilst much was going on, there appeared to be insufficient co-ordination, lack of central management and little prioritising of those activities. Not enough had been done to distance “recruiting” from other “youth and cadet” activities. USoS therefore asked for a further survey to provide accurate information on the range of activity, assess the degree of co-ordination between activity providers, review the focus of the work and suggest future MoD school curricular policy to make best use of resources available.

6. In order to inform the review, schools and providers were surveyed to establish the extent of contact and value they derived. A wider range of activities than expected was identified across the whole range of types of schools and colleges. The principal providers of school activities, in order of volume (year 2006–07) were Single Service teams (mostly recruiters), Cadet organisations (Combined Cadet Force and Army Cadet Force principally), Defence Schools Presentation Team, MoD Agencies and Museums and PUS’s Outreach programme.

7. Feedback from teachers and activity providers identified a number of key elements which could allow MoD to achieve its aims. These include the provision of topical curriculum materials reflecting current activities, well-trained and motivated personnel to work in the school environment who can communicate Defence messages and act as good role models, good publicity, advertising and marketing materials with a
clear MoD educational brand, a central MoD information facility to advise schools on resources available, and also feedback and sharing of “best practise” among MoD providers. Schools desire longer term programmes and links. Greater co-ordination of activity across MoD, Agencies, Museums and Armed Forces with clearer policies and working strategies was also suggested.

8. The main points emerging from analysis of these findings were:

a. A commendably wide range and good balance of MoD activities was found, delivered by a broad range of providers, each with a different emphasis. They reflect many years of experience in schools: Highly committed and altruistic personnel provide an effective base from which recruiters can work.

b. The greatest single weakness appeared to be a lack of overarching policy for engaging schools through curricular activity. Whilst many schools can access all activities, some do not (or cannot) access any at all, often because teachers are not generally aware of the support available from Defence sources. Awareness (through curriculum work) needs to be separated clearly from recruiting. There are instances of lack of long term planning for activities and insufficient co-ordination in a number of areas (marketing, sharing experiences, communicating key Defence messages and evaluation of feedback).

c. There is potential to increase our engagement and effect. Increasing demand for more engagement from teachers and several new national curriculum initiatives could enable us to increase our footprint in schools. Wider use can be made of new media: websites, blogs, podcasts etc. Government initiatives would support increased communication with students from ethnic minority backgrounds.

d. The principal threat to engagement would be withdrawal or reduction of funding for activities and reduction in number of civilian or military staff to engage in schools. Lack of long-term commitment might also unbalance activities and lose goodwill. Unpopularity of operational activities might deter involvement of some schools or commitment by their teaching staff.

9. The school engagement survey has identified a number of areas where the MoD could get more effect from our engagement in schools. These can be incorporated in the revised curricular aspects of youth policy. Key proposals include establishing clearer MoD-wide governance of MoD school engagements and defining the accountability and responsibilities of providers, and better co-ordination between “awareness” programmes and “recruiting” activities to achieve a better separation of the two initiatives. Direct recruiting activity and recruiting oriented youth engagements should be distinguishable from curricular “awareness” and youth programmes. MoD will be considering this and other proposals in more detail shortly.

The number and the proportion of invitations to the Armed Forces by a) private and b) state schools (Q256)

10. The Services keep records of the number of school visits they make rather than the number of invitations. This information is provided in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Private</th>
<th>Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UK Secondary schools</td>
<td>6,400</td>
<td>2,400</td>
<td>2.6:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Navy visits (2006–07)</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>10:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army visits (2007–08)</td>
<td>3,982</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>13:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAF visits (Sep 2006–Sep 2007)</td>
<td>2,350</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>9:1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What consideration the MoD has given to conducting school visits on a tri-Service basis (Q312)

11. The MoD does undertake tri-Service visits to schools when invited to do so. However, whilst it may appear efficient to have tri-Service visits for similar Armed Forces elements that draw from the same interest groups eg medical, logisticians, infantry, in practice, experience indicates that the best recruiting results are achieved through separate visits which present a clear choice of Service/environment to the audience.

12. In addition, co-ordinated school visits involving representative from all three Service would tie up more staff and restrict our ability to engage with a greater number of schools. In turn this would reduce our opportunity to raise awareness of the MoD and the Armed Forces amongst young people and future opinion formers.

The relationship between the Forces and career guidance co-ordinators in schools, including details on:
— How the Services differ in their provision of support to schools; and
— How consistency in coverage and practice is monitored

13. Engagement with schools is common across the three Services. It takes the following form:

a. The development of effective working relationships between the single Service careers advisers in local schools and colleges through direct contribution to National Curriculum support through
the core subjects including Maths and Science and also Citizenship. This may take the form of the provision of presentations on human rights and humanitarian aid, or assistance with leadership development tasks, working with others and problem solving. Maintenance of these relationships is considered vital to encourage repeated invitations to visit.

b. Recruiting literature is made available on request and is also provided, with the schools permission, in the careers library. Teachers and pupils can download careers advice from the single Service Web or visit the Careers Office direct.

c. Formal MoD programmes through the Connexions Service and Jobcentre Plus. The Armed Forces Career Offices also support the Universities and Colleges Admission Service and Connexion stands at their events In return UCAS and Connexions are invited to run stands/ caravans at Armed Forces recruiting fairs.

d. The Pan-Defence initiative, Defence Dynamics which provides an online teaching resource that supports elements of the National Curriculum.

e. The RAF also offers support to the Teaching Awards Trust through “The RAF Award for Head teacher of the Year in a Secondary School”, securing visibility of the Service with key gatekeepers through television coverage.

14. The Armed Forces cannot guarantee consistency in respect of geographical coverage as some schools and Local Education Authorities are more supportive of the military than others. However, all three Services share best practice through normal communication at Armed Forces Careers Offices and at regular conferences.

Naval Service

15. Consistency is based on: local knowledge and experience of the Naval careers staffs, feedback received from schools and the teaching of careers doctrine at the RN School of Recruiting compliance with which is checked biennially by standards advisory visits. In April 2008, Captain Naval Recruiting commenced a six-month informal data collection process to gather additional information from all Armed Forces Careers Offices and Officer Careers Liaison Centres to inform measurement of effectiveness of school visits together with marketing success and recruits’ awareness of the Naval core values. It is too early to report results.

Army

16. The Army has a long history of engagement with educational authorities and establishments. The Local Education Authorities links are important to ensure that they can be made fully aware of Army activities and give their support to the Service’s direct engagement with schools and colleges. A new school/college link is initiated by a Careers Adviser writing to the head teacher. Existing links are maintained by personal visits and termly newsletters detailing curriculum support available, upcoming events and points of contact for further information and careers advice.

RAF

17. Although a standard presentation is used for general careers briefings to ensure consistency, the RAF also offer a bespoke service when requested by individual establishments for example where a school advises that a number of its students are interested in officer career options the Schools Career Liaison Officer or Armed Forces Career Office Officer Commanding will normally present and tailor the presentation accordingly. Quality Assurance is maintained through the normal command chain as external assessors are not employed although feedback is sought from each educational establishment following a visit.

Cadets

The numbers of Cadets in each Service, including:
1. data for the last 10 years; and
2. numbers of Cadets in schools in a) England, b) Wales, c) Scotland and d) Northern Ireland (Q 236–38)

18. The strength of the various cadet forces since 1997 is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Sea Cadets</th>
<th>Army Cadets</th>
<th>Air Cadets</th>
<th>Combined Cadet Force</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>15,161</td>
<td>39,827</td>
<td>32,918</td>
<td>Not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>15,237</td>
<td>40,692</td>
<td>33,499</td>
<td>Not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>14,497</td>
<td>42,114</td>
<td>33,943</td>
<td>40,012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>14,361</td>
<td>42,491</td>
<td>33,592</td>
<td>40,551</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>13,771</td>
<td>40,639</td>
<td>33,281</td>
<td>40,783</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Year | Sea Cadets | Army Cadets | Air Cadets | Combined Cadet Force
--- | --- | --- | --- | ---
2002 | 13,596 | 42,486 | 33,922 | 40,970
2003 | 13,310 | 44,471 | 34,099 | 41,267
2004 | 12,879 | 44,391 | 32,394 | 41,908
2005 | 12,280 | 44,793 | 31,101 | 42,461
2006 | 12,738 | 44,426 | 30,695 | 42,032
2007 | 12,438 | 44,604 | 29,981 | 42,593

There is no specific reason for the reduction in the number of Sea and Air Cadets other than young people exercising choice and the number have stabilised over the last couple of years. Overall, it is believed that Cadet figures hold up well as they are still relative to the size of the eligible population.

19. The numbers of Combined Cadet Forces in England, Wales Scotland and Northern Ireland are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>England</th>
<th>Scotland</th>
<th>Wales</th>
<th>Northern Ireland</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Regional breakdown not available</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>40,012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>36,278</td>
<td>2,694</td>
<td>530</td>
<td>1,049</td>
<td>40,551</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>36,551</td>
<td>2,544</td>
<td>601</td>
<td>1,087</td>
<td>40,783</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>36,579</td>
<td>2,651</td>
<td>596</td>
<td>1,144</td>
<td>40,970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>36,926</td>
<td>2,602</td>
<td>618</td>
<td>1,121</td>
<td>41,267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>37,624</td>
<td>2,536</td>
<td>629</td>
<td>1,119</td>
<td>41,908</td>
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<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>38,105</td>
<td>2,543</td>
<td>643</td>
<td>1,170</td>
<td>42,461</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>37,716</td>
<td>2,552</td>
<td>674</td>
<td>1,090</td>
<td>42,032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>38,300</td>
<td>2,565</td>
<td>645</td>
<td>1,083</td>
<td>42,593</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The improvements which the MoD would like to see in the co-ordination between Cadet Forces, including detail on how the MoD plans to achieve these improvements (Q 310)

20. Areas for improvements to cross-Cadet Force coordination range from the high level policy, governance and how the cadet experience is delivered (be it through Combined Cadet Forces, community based units or Schools partnering), to use of shared facilities, and easing the administration for Cadet Force Adult Volunteers (documentation, management systems and achieving a minimum of MoD policy, regulation, process and governance as applied to cadet forces).

21. MoD recognises the need for better co-operation at the working level. To that end, last year the first set of joint regulations were introduced with the intention of greater harmonisation and utilisation of assets at the working level. We continue to improve harmonisation; for example, use of a common driving permit across the Cadet Forces. This will be taken forward through the many forums that support the Cadet Force programme.

The numbers of Cadets from ethnic minorities over the last 10 years

22. No data is held on the number of Cadets from ethnic minorities. The Cadet Forces offer all young people regardless of their ethnic background the opportunity to have a positive impact on the local community, while developing personal skills and building confidence. The Cadet Forces are open to all races, creeds, religions, social classes, and degrees of ability and disability, therefore there has never been a requirement to collect data on any proportion or percentage of any minority group in any of the Cadet Forces.

How the Sea Cadets £8.3 million grant was spent during the last financial year (Q314)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marine Society &amp; Sea Cadets Analysis of MoD Grant 2007–08</th>
<th>Pre-audit</th>
<th>Prepared 1/5/08</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>£</td>
<td>£</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Supporting Sea Cadet Activity and infrastructure**

- Area staffing—logistics, inspections & admin | 1,244,987 |
- MoD recharged items (clothing, vehicles etc) | 429,630 |
- Volunteer registration, CRB and support for units | 316,104 |
- Project Westminster development & support costs | 305,528 |
- Project Westminster Unit grants | 100,379 |
- Stores | 146,700 |
- Grants to cover unit electrical inspections | 123,033 |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marine Society &amp; Sea Cadets Analysis of MoD Grant 2007–08</th>
<th>Pre-audit</th>
<th>Prepared</th>
<th>£</th>
<th>£</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uniform allowances</td>
<td>87,185</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>60,721</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2,814,267</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sea Cadet Corps training**

- Onshore schools running costs & allowances: 2,049,404
- Area event costs and direct training support: 1,140,292
- National Events: 964,330
- HQ and area training support: 534,462
- Area supported training: 120,060

Total: 4,808,548

**Offshore Fleet**

- TS Royalist: 436,982
- Offshore support costs & travel: 282,361
- TS John Jerwood: 208,961
- 2 Yachts: 81,211

Total: 1,009,515

**Promoting Sea Cadet activity**

Total: 204,170

**Support costs & governance**

- HQ salaries (Chief Exec/ Finance/ IT/Co Sec/ Personnel/ Premises/ Print/ Reception): 587,095
- VAT: 122,081
- Buildings maintenance and depreciation: 100,790
- IT: 70,732
- Utilities & telephone: 60,341
- Staff training and recruitment: 33,800
- Other: 167,090

Total: 1,141,929

**MoD grant received**

Total: 9,978,429

**Balance of funding**

Funded through donations, grants received, fees charged and other income: 1,342,454

**RESERVES**

**The numbers of Reserves from ethnic minorities over the last 10 years**

23. The most recent work conducted by the Defence Analytical Services Agency on ethnicity was in July 2006. The following ethnic proportions were calculated as a percentage of those personnel for whom records of ethnic origin were held:

- Royal Navy Reserve: 2.8%
- Royal Marine Reserve: 2.7%
- Territorial Army: 4.7%
- Royal Auxiliary Air Force: 3.1%

24. The ability to analyse Reserve data held on the Joint Personnel Administration system is in its infancy and Defence Analytical Services Agency is not currently be able to answer this question as the ethnicity data held on the pre-Joint Personnel Administration legacy systems was not fully populated. However Joint Personnel Administration provides the ability to record ethnicity and the MoD is working closely with Defence Analytical Services Agency to ensure in the future that we can meet our obligation to monitor ethnic minorities.

**What measures have the MoD put in place to improve the leadership in the Reserves, following the National Audit Office’s 2006 study into the Reserve Forces**

25. The National Audit Office report into the Reserve Forces noted that in focusing on retention the Department should ensure that the leadership of Reservists at all levels is of a high quality. This Recommendation, aimed at strengthening and developing retention within the Volunteer Reserves, has been taken forward vigorously. Specific actions from within the single Services are as follows:
Royal Navy

26. A Command Leadership and Management team is working with the Royal Naval Reserve, and the aspiration is to deliver identical Command Leadership and Management training as the Royal Navy—but constrained by the practicalities of Man Training Days limitations and funding. As part of the Reserves Integration Project, all Career Management of both the Royal Naval Reserve and the Royal Marine Reserve has been brought under the control of the Regulars, with promotion boards run in a similar way to the same criteria and timelines.

Royal Naval Reserve:

a. Since 2006 all Royal Naval Reserve Leading Hands and Petty Officers are required to successfully complete the Command Course for their respective ranks. This is a two week Command Leadership and Management Course delivered with and alongside their Regular colleagues.

b. Royal Naval Reserve Junior Officers conduct their New Entry Training at Britannia Royal Naval College Dartmouth in the same environment as their Regular Service colleagues.

c. Each Reserve Training Unit has a nominated Command, Leadership and Management Officer whose responsibility is to conduct training serials and provide development opportunities within their Unit.

Royal Marine Reserve:

a. All Royal Marine Reserve Corporals and Sergeants are required to successfully complete the Command Course for their respective ranks. These two week Command Courses are run by the lead school—Command Training Centre Royal Marines. In 2008 a modularised version of the eight week regular course will be implemented. This course will be tailored to the Royal Marine Reserve requirement but reflect the regular syllabus. The two week exercise will remain as a test exercise. This revised course will significantly increase the amount of command training at the respective ranks.

b. Royal Marine Reserve Warrant Officers’ attend the regular Royal Marine Warrant Officers’ course.

c. All Royal Marine Reserve Young Officers attend the Territorial Army Commissioning Course. This was implemented in 2007 as the optimum training solution to cater for the small numbers of New Entry Officers. On successful completion Royal Marine Reserve Officers follow the Royal Marine Reserve Officer Career Development Syllabus.

Army

27. The following measures are intended to contribute to improving leadership within the Territorial Army:

a. The Review of Soldier’s Career Training and Education included a Leadership Workstrand, under which scoping work on a Command Leadership and Management (Volunteer) package for the Territorial Army has been completed. Further work is required before the proposal can be implemented.

b. An improved Officer Career Development scheme has been introduced.

c. Improvements have been made to promotion and command selection boards to ensure they are impartial, fair and open.

d. Four additional Territorial Army One Star officers have been appointed as assistant commanders of the regional divisions and Theatre Troops specifically to improve Territorial Army leadership within the chain of command.

Royal Air Force

28. The following measures are intended to improve leadership levels in the Royal Auxiliary Air Force:

a. An overhaul of the Reserve Officer Initial Training course is complete and the first delivery of this new learning solution is underway. Reservist officers will be expected to demonstrate the same leadership competences as their regular colleagues in order to graduate.

b. Command Leadership and Management training for Non Commissioned Officers, on each successive promotion, has been delivered alongside Regulars at the Airmen’s Command School at RAF Halton for over 10 years.

c. Formal, prioritised access for Royal Auxiliary Air Force officers to the RAF’s staff training process was authorised in 2006. This permitted access to Individual Staff Studies Course, Junior Officers Command Course and Advanced Command Staff Course (Air). However, recognising that the four week duration of Individual Command Staff Course (Air) would prevent many Volunteer Reserve officers attending, the RAF has designed a 15 day Initial Command and Staff
Course (Air)-Reserve course to deliver the key objectives of Individual Command Staff Course (Air). A pilot version was run in 2007, and annual deliveries are now scheduled in the Defence Academy, RAF Division Programme.

d. Provision of Professional Military Development for Reservists has been fully embraced within the Review of Officer and Airman Development Integrated Project Team; this will enable all reservist officers to attend/achieve exactly the same training objectives as their regular colleagues—at the same time and same venue—up to the rank of Squadron Leader.

RECRUITING

Army recruitment figures in Scotland, before and after the merger of the Royal Regiment of Scotland (Q 264)

29. The table below shows the figures recruited into Scottish Regiments for the four years prior to amalgamation and for the two years afterwards\(^{46}\). Recruits are enlisted into the Regiment and assigned to Battalions during training therefore the figures in the tables below show those numbers that have completed training.

### Scottish Entrants from 2002–03 to 2005–06

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Battalion</th>
<th>02/03</th>
<th>03/04</th>
<th>04/05</th>
<th>05/06</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Royal Scots</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Highland Fusiliers</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kings Own Scottish Borderers</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Watch</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highlanders</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>427</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>293</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### From 28 Mar 2006 to 2006–07 to 2007–08 (3rd Quarter) SCOTS Formed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Battalion</th>
<th>06/07</th>
<th>Apr-Dec 07</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 SCOTS</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 SCOTS</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 SCOTS</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 SCOTS</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 SCOTS</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>259</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The final column cannot be compared with other figures because it does not represent a full year.

30. The number of individuals recruited to the Army as a whole through an Armed Forces Careers Office or Army Careers Information Office in Scotland in 2006–07 was 1,073 compared with 1,108 during 2005–06.

**Armed Forces position on recruiting and retaining gay men and lesbians, including numbers of Service personnel discharged because of sexual orientation over the last five years**

31. Sexual orientation is regarded as a private life matter and Service personnel are free to choose whether or not to disclose their sexual orientation. However, individuals who choose to disclose their sexual orientation can do so without risk of discrimination or harassment.

32. The Armed Forces have adopted a number of strategies to attract potential lesbian and gay personnel. These include membership of Stonewall’s Diversity Champions Programme for the RN and RAF; participation by Service personnel in Gay Pride events and establishing working relationships with other public and private sector organisations. Advertisements for recruitment into the Armed Forces have also been placed in the Gay press and in recruitment guides aimed at students. Articles about life in the Services have appeared in Gay lifestyle magazines including “Pride Life” and “Startingout”.

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\(^{46}\) Source: HQ Infantry. As single Service estimates these figures are not directly comparable with Defence Analytical Services Agency figures.
33. Measures to retain serving gay and lesbian personnel include holding Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender forums and tri-Service conferences. Improvements have also been made to equality and diversity training and this has helped to tackle inappropriate attitudes and behaviour towards gay and lesbian personnel.

34. Armed Forces personnel who register a partnership under the terms of the Civil Partnership Act are afforded the same status category as married personnel and entitled to the same range of allowances and benefits as married personnel, including entitlement to occupy Service Family Accommodation.

35. In the last five years no Service personnel have been discharged because of their sexual orientation.

Work of the religious advisors from Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh faiths and the civilian chaplains from those communities

36. The Armed Forces are engaged in top level communications with religious leaders (for example, in 2007 the Chief of the Defence Staff met with Dr Muhammad Abdul Bari, Secretary General of the Muslim Council of Britain and with Dr Khalid Ahmed, the High Sheriff of London). In addition, the Armed Forces again sponsored an award at the annual Muslim News Awards for Excellence and all three Services were well represented at the Awards dinner. Another positive venture was the Department’s “We Were There” exhibition which aims to inform young people of the part played by soldiers of ethnic minority origin in the UK’s military history. It has been a resounding success as it has been rolled out across the UK.

37. The Armed Forces have appointed Religious Advisers from the Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh faiths. They are not MoD employees, but act on a voluntary basis providing faith-specific advice on matters of religious requirements and ensuring that personnel from minority faiths receive appropriate pastoral and spiritual care. They assisted with the writing of our Guide on Religion and Belief, published in 2004 and in 2005 advised on the recruitment of the first Buddhist, Hindu and Sikh Civilian Chaplains to the Military. The position of the Jewish Religious Adviser is unusual in that, under long standing arrangements, he also acts as honorary officiating Chaplain for the Jewish faith.

38. The Civilian Chaplains to the Military provide faith specific spiritual, moral and pastoral advice and support to personnel and their dependants, including conducting or arranging for appropriate ceremonies/rites of passage, leading communal prayers and providing group teaching to members of their faith. Their role includes representing the faith-specific interests of Service personnel to the chain of command and fostering the spiritual life and identity of their own faith community within the Armed Forces. They also support the Ministry of Defence and Armed Forces by developing the relationship between their faith community and the Armed Forces. They are not, however, attached to particular units and do not deploy on operations.

39. The Armed Forces are committed to giving all individuals the opportunity to practise their faith whenever possible. Every effort is made to allow personnel to celebrate religious festivals and holidays, to comply with specific religious dress codes or dietary requirements, and to fast when required. Members of the Armed Forces are normally allowed to fast and pray in circumstances where this would not jeopardise operational effectiveness or health and safety. Where practical, areas of worship are made available in all Service establishments, including ships and submarines and, in most circumstances, arrangements can be made for daily prayer. The Armed Forces cater for the religious dietary requirements of all Service personnel. Halal, Kosher and vegetarian meals can be provided by Service messes and are available in Operational Ration Packs for operations and exercises.

Voluntary Outflow for Ethnic Minority Personnel

40. Ethnic minority representation in the Armed Forces (UK and Commonwealth) has increased year-on-year since 1998, the year of the first partnership agreements with the Commission for Racial Equality and, as at 1 January 2008, stood at 6%.

41. Retention rates for ethnic minority personnel are broadly comparable to those of their white counterparts for both officers and other ranks. During 2006–07, the last financial year for which figures are available, ethnic minorities comprised 1.2% of overall officer voluntary outflow and 5.1% of overall other ranks voluntary outflow. However, care must be taken when making comparisons, particularly in the case of ethnic minority officers, where the numbers leaving are small.

42. A cohort analysis, which tracks retention of white and ethnic minority personnel, was developed as a more sophisticated means of measuring comparative ethnic minority retention and career progression. This involves identifying and tracking ethnic minority and white personnel who joined in 1997–98 and 1998–99 (the “cohorts”) and comparing the number who leave or are promoted over time. The ethnic minority cohort used so far is small and may not be typical, but analysis to date has not revealed any major discrepancies in retention rates for ethnic minorities. In the longer-term, analysis of this cohort will provide a more sophisticated means of comparing promotion rates.

50 This is the Regular forces and excludes FTRS, Gurkhas, the Home Service battalions of the Royal Irish Regiment and mobilised reservists.
MoD plans to reduce voluntary outflow rates for women

43. Overall representation of women in the Armed Forces is increasing steadily if slowly and there are some positive signs, for example, the RAF female voluntary outflow rate is down over past year.

44. The higher rates of female departure reflect the trend in employment market generally. The Armed Forces offer a generous maternity package to provide supportive arrangements to enable women to accommodate pregnancy and maternity absence in their Service careers, however, women may choose to leave the Service prematurely on pregnancy and some do so.

45. The MoD aim is to remove barriers to longer female service and MoD is working to embed significant cultural change in Armed Forces. Our agreement with the Equal Opportunities Commission (which carries forward with Equality and Human Rights Commission) is an important agent for change. Work for the Equal Opportunities Commission outlined the existence of high levels of inappropriate or upsetting sexualised behaviour. Our action plan sets out our response. Awareness, training, monitoring and leadership are all being improved. This effort is being led from the top with personal commitment from the Chiefs of Staff all the way down command chain.

46. We are also looking to improve terms and conditions to enhance opportunities for career flexibility and work-life balance. A Terms and Conditions of Service project within the Service Personnel Plan is examining a range of options. It is recognised that access to childcare is a key element and we are about to complete an audit of childcare in MoD. This will compare provision across the Services and identify best practice models for subsequent implementation. We also introduced salary sacrifice arrangements to pay for childcare vouchers at the turn of the year, allowing Service personnel to avoid tax and national insurance payments on the cost of childcare. This can be worth up to £1,000 and over 1,800 military personnel are already on scheme.

Retention

The arrangements and practices for transferring within a Service or between the Services, including detail about uptake rates

47. The three Services recognise that where it is in the interests of both the Armed Forces and the individual it is logical to facilitate the transfer of individuals either between trades within a Service or between Services.

Royal Navy

48. Officers are able to request to transfer into another Branch/Specialisation. Each request is considered on its merits, in particular the state of the donor and receiving Specialisations (whether in balance/surplus/deficit), the individual’s suitability, competences and likely employability, and any particular circumstances such as medical considerations which might, for example, mean that an individual cannot remain within the donor Specialisation. If the request is approved by both donor and receiving Specialisations then approval is given and appropriate action taken; if not then the individual will remain in their original Specialisation. Such transfers are seen as retention-positive and are used to manage Manning deficits where it is practical to do so and to retain individuals who might otherwise leave the Service.

49. For ratings there are two different types of transfer which apply to transfers within the Royal Navy: Branch Transfers—transfers into a Main Trade that is primarily filled by New Entry recruits, and Sideways Entry Transfers—transfers into Main Trades which are solely recruited from within the trained strength and usually have a first trained rank of Leading Hand or above. These Main Trades tend to have a higher Educational requirement and often have a longer training period.

50. Ratings can request to transfer into another Main Trade provided they meet the specific Educational and experience or skillset requirements. Each request is considered individually and consideration is given to the state of the donor Main Trade (whether it is in balance/surplus/deficit) and ultimately whether the rating can be spared from their current Main Trade. Consideration is then given to whether there is a requirement for another recruit in the receiving Main Trade. If the request is approved by both donor and receiving Main Trade approval is given and appropriate assignment action is taken. If the request is not approved a timescale to re-apply is usually given and the initial request will be taken into consideration when reviewing the application.

Statistics for 1 April 2007 to 31 Mar 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Approved</th>
<th>Not Approved</th>
<th>Grand Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Branch Transfer</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sideways Entry</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>347</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
51. Transfers between Services (including between the Royal Navy and Royal Marines) are based on similar principles but follow a Premature Discharge process. Each Service has differing terms and conditions of service therefore, before an individual signs up for the terms and conditions of service of the new Service, they must end the term for which they are serving with the first Service (prematurely, if necessary) and cease to be subject to the conditions of that Service before committing to a further term of service, under different conditions of service with the new Service. A letter of application is submitted by those wishing to transfer which, providing manning clearance is granted by the donor Service, is forwarded to the gaining Service. Providing the applicant satisfies the receiving Service’s entry criteria (and successfully passes any selection procedure) and the receiving Service is accepting recruits, the transfer is approved.

52. The transferee will complete his existing engagement, there being no break in service and will remain subject to his current Pension scheme. He will retain a “Discharge As Of Right” (Premature Voluntary Release) but with no automatic right to return to the donor Service should he be found unsuitable during training.

Statistics for 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transfers out of the Naval Service</th>
<th>Transfers into the Naval Service</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RN to RAF</td>
<td>RAF to RN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RN to Army</td>
<td>RAF to RM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RM to RM</td>
<td>Army to RN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RM to Army</td>
<td>Army to RM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

53. In the same period there were 35 transfers from the RN to the RM and 11 from the RM to the RN.

Army

54. Officer applications for transfer within and between Services are welcome. Individuals are required to write to respective heads of both the losing capbadge and the gaining capbadge, requesting permission to transfer. This is done in conjunction with the career manager. Once approval is given from each capbadge, Army Personnel Centre Deputy Military Secretary Occurrence Wing submits the application to the Arms Selection Board for internal transfer prior to subsequent endorsement by the Army Commissions Board and directly to the Army Commissions Board for inter-Service transfers.

55. For the year 2007–08 there were 13 inter-Army Officer transfers, four transfers from the Royal Navy, three transfers from the RAF and three transfers into the Army from the Australian Army. These statistics are extracted from the Army Commissions Board database but do not include all transfer statistics. The Army Commissions Board approves transfers of officers holding Regular Commissions between Arms and Services, transfers into the Army from the RAF and RN, and transfers in from Commonwealth Armed Forces. The authority to approve the transfer of officers holding Short Service and Intermediate Regular Commissions is delegated to Arms Selection Boards.

56. Soldier transfers are encouraged at unit level and are mainly aimed at those that have elected to discharge. Personnel interested in transfer or in leaving the Army are encouraged to attend a Transfer Fair, held twice a year by each Division and by the British Army in Germany. Uptake rate from these events is good, with over 500 successfully applying for transfer in the last financial year, and the process works effectively. At these Fairs all capbadges are represented along with the Other Services. Internal transfer timelines have been refined and an applicant could now be “re-badged” in as little as two months from applying. As soon as the applicant has been accepted for transfer, they are re-badged and sent on the appropriate trade training. On successful completion of that training, he/she is permanently changed to their new capbadge and posted to a unit. Unsuccessful applicants on any trade training are either given a second chance at their first choice of trade or offered transfer to another capbadge.

57. For the year 2007–08 there were 550 successful Soldier transfer applicants, 426 were rejected and 511 withdrawn. A full breakdown is shown in the following table:

Transfer Statistics 1 Apr 07—31 Mar 08

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corps</th>
<th>Successful</th>
<th>Rejected</th>
<th>Withdrawn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AGC (RMP)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGC (SPS)</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGC (MPS)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SASC</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R Signals</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intelligence Corps</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RE</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>28</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corps</td>
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<td>----------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAMC</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REME</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAVC</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RADC</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QARANC</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REME</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAVC</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RADC</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAC</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H Cav</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APTC</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RA</td>
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<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAC</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R Irish (GS)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inf—Guards Div</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inf—Kings Div</td>
<td>6</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inf—Light Div</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inf—Para</td>
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<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inf—PoW Div</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inf—Queens Div</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inf—Scotts Div</td>
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<tr>
<td>R Marines</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R Navy</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAF</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>426</td>
<td>511</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each Arms and Service Director sets the entry requirement for his Arm/Corps which includes a trade test. These standards cannot be lowered and therefore there will always be a relatively high level of rejected transfer applicants. However, this does not prevent them being offered the chance of applying to transfer to another capbadge.

58. Officer applications for branch or specialisation transfer within the RAF are considered subject to manning circumstances at the time with clearance taking into account the aspirations of the individual and any other contributory factor. Other Rank Ground Trade branch transfers are encouraged subject to suitability and manning circumstances, with each application being considered on its own merits. Transfers are seen as retention-positive and are used to manage Critical Manning where it is practical to do so. Uptake is relatively low; in the last financial year, 36 applications were received, 21 were unsuccessful, 10 were successful and five remain ongoing. Unsuccessful applicants were due to individuals’ not meeting educational, aptitudinal, medical or Service requirements.

59. Personnel wishing to apply for transfer to or from the RN, RM or Army apply to transfer under Single Service guidance. Applications are processed at unit level before being forwarded to their respective Manning Agency staffs for processing under tri-Service administrative procedures. The facilitation of the transfer is carried out by the Joint Personnel Administration Centre resulting in no break in reckonable Service.

60. Joint Personnel Administration does not record inter-Service transfers and so we do not have precise historical data of the number of transfers out of the RAF. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that between 50–60 other ranks transfer out per year (a similar figure transfer in), and a trawl of officer records for the past 12 months show that six ground branch officers and three aircrew officers transferred out. The RAF has gained 34 RN and Army aircrew and there are a further 52 applications waiting to be processed.

Whether any consideration has been given to raising the retirement age for certain Armed Forces personnel where compatible with operational considerations, and what the department’s current position is on this issue

61. Although the Armed Forces require an age profile focused on youth and physical fitness, consideration has been given to raising the retirement age for Armed Forces personnel. There is existing flexibility to employ individuals beyond age 55 and at 1 January 2008 330 Regulars, 295 Full Time Reserve Service personnel and 30 mobilised Reservists were serving beyond age 55.
Royal Navy

62. The current compulsory retirement ages will remain under scrutiny for both Officers on Full Term Commissions and Other Ranks on Second Open Engagements to determine the viability of increasing one or both to a retirement age of 55; there is no intention to consider a retirement age of 60. Any changes may be implemented at trade level rather than across the Naval Service in order to avoid a significant bulge in manpower figures as an increase in the retirement age for all would commit to an excessive number of man-years leading to manpower surplus and a significant reduction in career prospects.

Army

63. The Army now commissions officers on length-based terms of service, based on a 34-year career structure. The compulsory retirement age for officers commissioning into the Army now is no longer 55, but is now 60. Officers who complete their regular commissions will retire between the ages 55 and 60, depending on when they complete their 34 years service. However, the Directorate of Manning (Army) retains the authority to grant service beyond the normal retirement age if it is in the interests of the Army. This allows the Army flexibility to make use of talent beyond the normal run out date this manning mechanism is used regularly for officers still on age based terms of service who would normally retire at age 55.

64. For soldiers, the Versatile Engagement was introduced on 1 Jan 08. Under the Versatile Engagement, recruits will be enlisted for a term of 12 years service from the date of enlistment (Versatile Engagement Short), unless they are joining a Corps which is authorised by the competent military authority to enlist recruits for a term of 24 years (Full) or 30 years (Long). Under the Versatile Engagement, it will be possible for a soldier, if selected, to opt to undertake further service beyond the term for which he enlisted. In exceptional cases, which are expected to be rare, a soldier may be selected for service beyond the age of 55, subject to an upper age-limit of 65. In all cases, selection for further service will depend on the soldier’s skills and performance and on the needs of the Service at the relevant time.

RAF

65. Delivery of RAF operational output is focused at junior levels with sufficient and capable leadership, management and supervision at more senior level. The majority (but not all) Branches and Trades carrying shortfalls do so at or near base rank level (hence the targeted Financial Retention Incentives). Consequently, simply increasing the retirement age would not tackle the specific problem of operational and manning pinch points. Continuance beyond age 55 is offered on a case-by-case basis where there is a clear Service need. This occurs across many Branches and Trades, including aircrew, for example to match manning profiles to aircraft Out of Service dates (including the VC10 and latterly the Canberra), or where the required individual skills cannot be found elsewhere. As for the Royal Navy, a widespread increase in retirement age would require adjustment to the structure of the Branches and Trades to reflect reduced promotion flows.

Recruitment Age

66. All three Services keep the age limit criteria for entry under regular review; for example the maximum age limit for soldier entry was increased to 33 in December 2006. Maximum age limits in all three service vary according to branch and trade and are imposed in order to maintain a balanced age/rank structure, with individuals benefiting from a visible career structure, and because the Services wish to recruit individuals who are operationally fit and likely to give a good return of service. When considering upper age limits, the length and cost of training an individual is also taken into consideration, for instance, the Royal Navy recruits trained Medical Officers up to the age of 55.

Financial Retention Incentives

The long term plans for Financial Retention Incentives, including details on whether FRI’s have an impact on the morale of those not eligible

67. Financial Retention Initiatives are designed to be targeted, time-limited, discrete measures to address short-term critical manning shortages. Therefore, by definition, there is no long term plan for Financial Retention Initiatives. Each one is unique in approach, usually for Service personnel with bespoke skill-sets, and they form part of a wider package of financial and non-remunerative measures where an urgent operational requirement to stem outflow of personnel is identified. Financial Retention Initiatives provide the Armed Forces with a period of guaranteed service from personnel during which they can resolve the underlying manning and retention issues.

68. The potential divisiveness of Financial Retention Initiatives is recognised by MoD and the Armed Forces. As with any incentive, there will always be some who fall just outside the eligibility criteria. However, each Financial Retention Initiative originates with the chain of command, is carefully targeted to maximise its effect and all proposals are accompanied by detailed evidence of the requirement. As part of the Financial Retention Initiative package, the Services produce an extensive Internal Communications
package to explain the incentive and its rationale. Additionally, as part of the Financial Retention Initiative evaluation process, the Services are required to carefully monitor any impact on the morale of those personnel not eligible.

**Support for Service Personnel and their Families**

*The support the MoD gets from other Government departments to assist Service families in accessing doctors, dentists and schools*

**Health**

69. The Department of Health, and other UK Health Departments, engage with us. Both the Secretary of State and Under Secretary of State for Defence have discussed with their opposite numbers in the Department of Health, on several occasions in the past year, issues relating to medical and health care for Service personnel, veterans and Service families and dependents.

70. The Department of Health’s Operating Framework document for the NHS (2008–09) advises Private Care Trusts and providers to take account of the special circumstances that apply to Service families. This includes making certain that processes are in place to ensure that, when Armed Forces families move around the country or move back to England, they are not disadvantaged as a result of their move; for example, they must be able to access NHS dental services. In addition:

a. The MoD/UK Departments of Health Partnership Board, and its subordinate working groups provide a forum to resolve issues facing Service families in accessing NHS care.

b. Discussions to resolve the continuity of certain specialist treatments, such as IVF, across the UK are ongoing.

c. The Armed Forces primary healthcare centres and Primary Care Trusts are increasingly engaging at the local level to address issues of mutual interest, including Service family access to NHS dental services.

**Education**

71. There is considerable liaison between MoD and Other Government Departments on the education of Service children; this includes, at the UK level, the MoD children’s Board (with Department of Children, Schools and Families representatives), the Service Children’s Education Forum and the Service Children in State Schools meetings. Links also exist at local level and, for example, at the national level such as the Northern Ireland forum to discuss the education of Service children. The links inform both MoD policy makers and the MoD education specialists, Service Children’s Education and Children’s Education Advisory Service. This co-operation has led to the sharing of best practice on dealing with Service children and a number of initiatives:

a. The new, statutory, Department of Children, Schools and Families admissions code covers specific elements to take the requirements of Service children into account.

b. The Department of Children, Schools and Families has introduced a Service child marker on the Annual School Census in order to gather authoritative data on the relative performance of Service children in comparison to their peers. This will inform wider research into how best to support them, in concert with the outputs of the joint MoD/Department of Children, Schools and Families project “Mitigating Mobility”.

c. There is ongoing work to address issues of transportability of Special Educational Needs provision.

**MoD’s position on the establishment of an Armed Forces Federation**

72. The MoD considers that the representation and safeguarding the well-being of Service personnel is a vital function of the chain of command. However, the establishment of an Armed Forces Federation is not supported for the following reasons:

a. Individuals have the right to complain about any matter relating to their service, ultimately to the Defence Council. The Armed Forces Act 2006 introduces improvements to the complaints process, including the establishment of a Service Complaints Commissioner.

b. There are other mechanisms through which the views of Service personnel can become known. Service personnel may join trade and professional associations, as well as organisations representing their interests, ranging from the Armed Forces Pension Society to the Armed Forces Lesbian and Gay Association.
c. We remain unconvinced that an Armed Forces Federation is consistent with the ethos and traditions of the British Armed Forces, nor is there evidence of widespread grass roots desire for such a development.

73. MoD will engage with any organisation which represents individual service personnel interests such as the Forces Pensions Society, the Combined Armed Forces Federation (UK).

_What measures the MoD has considered/is considering to provide Service personnel with greater stability—like giving personnel more notice of postings or increasing the length of tours_

74. Mobility is an inevitable and necessary part of Service life, because of our geographical spread and the requirement to post people to achieve career development and generate military capability. We already do what we can to minimise it and its impact for example through the RN base porting policy and elimination of the Army Arms plot. In addition, the RAF will increasingly concentrate on fewer main operating bases and Army aims in long term to achieve greater coherence through the super garrison concept.

75. Examples of policies undertaken to mitigate mobility include:
   b. Provision (and new investment in) public accommodation wherever people serve.
   c. Maximum possible notice of postings, making every effort to take personal preference into account.
   d. Families moving during a key educational stage are permitted to retain Service Family Accommodation at their old duty station to provide continuity.
   e. Children’s Education Advisory Service—advice and assistance to parents with UK schools admissions which is demonstrating high success in appeals rates.
   f. Continuity of Education Allowance—5,000 recipients, 8,000 children.
   g. Housing purchase support—Long Service Advance of Pay, the Key Worker Living Program, bespoke commercial shared equity schemes, new MoD shared equity pilot announced in March 2008.
   h. Access to social housing on retirement (removing the provisions in the Housing Act 1996 which prevent military service being accepted for purpose of establishing a local connection.)
   i. Discussion with NHS through the Partnership Board to facilitate easier access to NHS services when moving in UK: specific guidance to NHS on supporting Service families, identification of best practice through Primary Care Trusts serving large service populations.
   j. Comprehensive information services for families via 165 HIVE outlets.

76. The MoD recognise that there is more to be done here, especially in harnessing the efforts of other Government Departments to provide a better service for personnel, families and veterans. This is a central focus of the ongoing work taking place with the Service Personnel Command Paper.

_Royal Navy_

77. For the Royal Navy, Service Personnel Functional Standards mandate a minimum notice for postings (variable according to circumstances); this approach acknowledges the exigencies of service at sea, Operational Tours and other Augmentation posts, or of career development. Personnel Functional Standards provide a good steer for our Career Managers, our Service people and their immediate families, as evidenced by the reasonably small number of Personnel Functional Standards assignment notice breaches reported.

_Army_

78. For the Army, a target of a minimum of four months notice of assignment is required. In some cases, more notice than this can be achieved. The historical figure for notice of posting was six months but, over time, this has proved largely unattainable particularly as operational tempo has increased. For Operational Commitment Establishment assignments, which historically have seen many individuals assigned at short notice, notice periods of four months are now also being achieved for a large number of posts.

79. Tour lengths vary from two to three years. Requests for tour extensions are looked at by the Army Personnel Centre on a case by case basis and will always take into the consideration the needs of the employer and the individual and the impact on the individual’s career of any extension in post.
RAF

80. The RAF is continually working towards providing its personnel with as much stability as possible, and reductions in the basing footprint have assisted in this. The average time in location for Ground Tradesmen is between 2.4 to three yrs, while for officers it is between two and three yrs. Extensions will be considered by Career Managers on a case-by-case basis, but must take into account the needs of the Service as well as the individual. However, while we continue to optimise stability as far as practicable, difficulties associated with Critical Manning, wide-spread gapping, OOA commitments, and the need to continue to develop the breadth of experience necessary for our officers and Senior Non Commissioned Officers means that the movement of personnel continues to be as important and as relevant as ever.

81. Recognising that mobility remains a key aspect of service with the RAF, the career managers therefore aspire to providing a degree of predictability to future moves in order that servicemen and women, and their families, have as much time as possible to prepare. The Service has recently gained approval to augment its Manning staffs in order to improve career management. In recent years, the period of notice has improved markedly and is now set at a minimum of 90 days, although there will be times when this period of notice cannot be achieved owing to Service circumstances at the time.

12 May 2008

Memorandum from the Naval Families Federation

Having read the transcript of evidence, I would like to register the following points for you to consider.

— Re Armed Forces Day, I would again draw attention to compassion fatigue. We have Remembrance Day and Veterans Day, we don’t have Firefighter Day, Teacher Day or Nurses Day. We are in danger of generating compassion fatigue amongst the general public and public sector workers in particular. The impact on the Serving person should be considered also. For many, time at home is precious, would an Armed Forces Day require personnel for parades, services etc?

— Serving personnel do have a voice and it is being heard. The NFF has contact from Serving personnel on a regular basis. Our remit is very much a diplomatic two way communication approach as opposed to hard lobbying. This has worked very well on both sides to date.

— Whilst being mindful of the good work of SSAFA, I would like to highlight that for Naval Service families in need, the first port of call for the NFF would not be an agency such as SSAFA. We would approach the individual Naval Service charities, smaller more intimate organisations with a specific knowledge of RN circumstances and need.

— Historically the old adage Recruit the Man retain the Family has been promoted. I believe that today in order to keep a Serving person engaged you must now Recruit the family to retain the man.

— With regard to Welfare I believe that one size does not fit all. For example, I would not like to see any other organisation other than the RM Welfare Service look after the needs of Royal Marines and their families. The Members of the Welfare Team have all had to undergo training as Royal Marines in order to understand the demands placed upon them. Their role within the Corps is valued and respected, and as a direct result as an organisation we get little contact from Royal Marines and their families.

— The process for people leaving the Service is an area open to criticism by Veterans. I believe we need to look at this process and make it a more formal event. Having an ID card cut in half and being handed a piece of paper to exit the gate of establishment after 30 years Service is humiliating and disappointing and leaves many with a poor view of the Service. The introduction of Veterans ID cards should be considered also. The people leaving are potentially our “recruiters of the future generations”. They’re the ones who go into pubs and talk, as far as possible lets make sure they are saying the right thing.

— I would like to urge a note of caution on the emphasis placed on focusing on welfare provision for Service personnel who are just joining. For many the Forces offer a step up in terms of benefits— pensions, job security and subsidised housing. Some young people have had input from “Welfare” all their lives and they see joining the Service as a way of moving up and on and doing better than their families did.
— I would like to see an emphasis on money management and debt avoidance introduced as a way of encouraging Serving Personnel to plan towards a future. Gratuities do not buy houses any more. The ambition to buy a house is still there. We should be encouraging personnel and creating ways and means of making this possible.

— Free food, and as much as you wanted, was always seen as an acknowledgement of the exigencies of Service life, we have introduced Pay As You Dine, albeit as a direct result of serving personnel asking for such a scheme. To date I have had little positive feedback on the subject.

— In the age of “Easy Jet”, “Join the Navy and see the world” doesn’t quite have the same ring to it. There are those who join with an aspiration to travel and are repeatedly disappointed because of repetitive operational tasking.

— The effect of the negative Press, poor housing as an example, may not encourage senior family members to, in turn, encourage their young people to join the Service, this may be exacerbated by a lack of experience or knowledge about the service from senior members of the close family.

— Those people who choose to be in long term Partnerships may find it a challenge and an unattractive option, as accommodation and some allowances, are only provided if you are married or in a Civil Partnership.

— Advertising for the services: we should be careful how and where we do it (compassion fatigue and misinforming people on what to expect from Life in the Forces).

— Recruiters: what are they telling potential recruits? How do they engage with them in the build-up to them joining the Service (we have anecdotal evidence of some youngsters withdrawing their applications to join because it is taking too long, and they feel that the Service has lost interest in them). The recruiters must also give a true picture of what the branch or specialisation offers. We spoke to a young lad who wanted to become a medic and was persuaded he should be a stoker! Not quite the same thing. I acknowledge that this is a complex area and that much of the evidence is anecdotal, but I believe it is an area of concern that should be considered.

— Youngsters new to the Navy must be kept busy and engaged after Phase 2 training as this is potentially the time they can lose interest. When they actually start their first job and find they aren’t going to sea as they expected, but remain alongside paying food and accommodation charges and doing less than desirable jobs to keep busy.

— We must be aware that in some cases we may be setting people up to fail where RT scores are too low for the job training and job specification or fitness is a problem. What message does this send back to local communities when youngsters who don’t even manage to complete training return home?

— No mention was made of engaging with parents. A considerable amount of contact with the NFF comes from parents. Often they are the driving force behind young people joining the Service, and also staying in when things become tough. I believe we need to think about how we engage with the wider family of prospective recruits and new joiners.

— The RN has a disparate community with families spread across the country. Data Protection prevents the Services from contacting families directly, something a significant percentage of families said they would welcome (Families Attitude Survey). We are currently hoping that a JPA compliant method of communicating with families directly will be in place by November 08. It is important that this should be an opt out facility not opt in or we are back to relying on the Servicing person to get the message home, which is far from ideal. The internet, families’ days and events on board ships and in establishments go some way towards making direct contact with families, but only work if the family know an event is on.

— Family members of Single personnel have expressed dissatisfaction on not being able to make use of their serving family members’ warrants in order to join them at family orientated events. For example a ship based in Portsmouth holds a families day at sea, and the family live in Scotland— how are they to get the message home, which is far from ideal. The internet, families’ days and events on board ships and in establishments go some way towards making direct contact with families, but only work if the family know an event is on.

— Free food, and as much as you wanted, was always seen as an acknowledgement of the exigencies of Service life, we have introduced Pay As You Dine, albeit as a direct result of serving personnel asking for such a scheme. To date I have had little positive feedback on the subject.

We asked a cross section of families the question “What one change in policy would make you and/or your partner recommend the RN/RM as a career to others?”

Some of the answers we received are as follows:

“For Royal Marines drafts to last a more sensible length of time—three to five years in order to allow families to settle and for children not to have to change schools so often.”

“Family included in medical and dental provision currently offered to Serving personnel.”

“Better standard, and more accommodation.”

“Housing is poor, sort out the housing process.” (Comment from the West country)

“Shorter deployments”.

“Pay the serving person enough so they don’t have to claim benefits (child tax credit)”

“More money, better promotion and prospects.”

“More money for educational qualifications.”
“Bring back military hospitals which can then care for families.”
“The educational authority should take into account the needs of Service families when allocating school places.”
“The erosion of ‘perks’ over the years which had previously engendered an esprit de corps eg sports facilities.”
“More consideration of the family and not just to the Service, a supportive family is essential.”
“More manpower so personnel are not so stressed.”

13 May 2008

Further supplementary memorandum from the Ministry of Defence

1. This memorandum aims to provide the House of Commons Defence Committee with additional information in respect of their inquiry into Recruitment and Retention in the Armed Forces. It provides responses to the questions posed in the HCDC Clerk’s letter of 25 April 2008 and email of the 6 May 2008 following the Committee’s visit to the Armed Forces Recruiting Office at St Georges Court.

An update on the discussions between the MoD and the Department for Children, Schools and Families on the development of the Cadet Movement (Q250)

2. MoD is working closely with the Department of Children, Schools and Families to identify ways of achieving greater exposure of State Schools and State School pupils to the cadet experience. They are attempting to develop plans to build on existing schemes in three areas:
   a. Academies. The intent is to establish additional Cadet units in new academies. It is hoped that the Department of Children, Schools and Families will assist with funding capital costs where they are required and the prioritisation of suitable Schools/Academies and pursuing “partners” to assist with the start-up and continued mentoring for new Cadet units. MoD intends to discuss how to develop this programme further with the devolved assemblies of Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales.
   b. Independent/State School Partnering. The intent is for a nationwide rollout to be based on the London Challenge Pilot, assuming it is successful, after a year. In the meantime, a Cadet Ambassador (facilitator/coordinator) has been established to facilitate partnering between London Independent schools with Combined Cadet Forces and neighbouring State schools.
   c. Community-Based Cadet Forces. There will be an expansion of community-based cadet units; moreover, MoD intends to seek closer links between state schools and Community-based units.

3. MoD and the Department of Children, Schools and Families are working on establishing more detailed plans for expanding the Cadet Forces, which will be driven by the availability of additional Government funding.

The latest position regarding Manning Balance for each service (Q272)

4. At 1 April 2008 the Armed Forces were outside the Public Service Agreement Target Manning Balance with the Trained Strength standing at 173,960\(^{51}\) against a liability of 179,270\(^{p}\), representing 96.8\(^{p}\) against the Requirement. The Trained Strength of the Armed Forces is 5,310 short of the Requirement. This represents an increase in the deficit against the Requirement from 3.0\(^{p}\) to 3.2\(^{p}\) since 1 April 2007. A comparison by Service against the statistics provided for 1 January 2008 and 1 April 2007 is at Annex A.

5. Voluntary Outflow exit rates remain relatively stable overall. They are up for Naval Service Officers, slightly down for RN/RM Other Ranks, slightly up for RAF Officers and up for RAF Other Ranks. Due to JPA data shortfalls, Army data will not be available until December 2008.

RN Manning Situation

6. At 1 April 2008, the RN strength stood at 96.7\(^{p}\) of the Requirement. The deficit against Requirement (3.3\(^{p}\)) has improved compared with the same period in the previous year (5.1\(^{p}\)). Continuing restructuring is expected to reduce the Liability further, although not as rapidly and extensively as originally envisaged. Initiatives to grow Strength through improved recruiting and retention should also help to reduce the deficit but the RN is not now expected to achieve manning balance in the foreseeable future. Critically, within this headline some pinch points Branches/Trades will continue to have significant sustainability problems.

\(^{51}\) Where figures are annotated with a “p” the figure is provisional and subject to review.
Army Manning Situation

7. At 1 April 2008, the Full Time Trained Strength of the Army was 96.5% of Requirement and between 1 April 07 and 1 April 08 the deficit against liability increased by 1.1% from 2.4% to 3.5%. Manning the Army remains the Army’s highest priority after sustaining operational success. Army Manning Plans delivered in 2006 and 2007 have added back around 1,800 personnel between April 2006 and April 2008 (comprising rejoins (net increase 630), Extended Service (net increase 610), Full Time Reserve Forces (net increase 340) and Foreign and Commonwealth gains to trained strength (net increase 220)). The Army is working hard on a Retention Action Plan comprising some 70 measures, which is reviewed quarterly.

RAF Manning Situation

8. At 1 April 2008, RAF strength stood at 98.6% of the Requirement. The deficit against Requirement has decreased from 3.2% to 1.4%, helped by the planned drawdown of the Requirement by 8.5% between 1 April 2007 and 1 April 2008. The RAF is currently in Manning Balance but is likely to fall outside again within 12 months.

9. The full set of 1 April manning statistics is attached (TSP 4).

Details on the process for assessing the medical fitness of a potential recruit for each service

10. The single Services are responsible for determining the processes for screening and assessing the medical fitness and suitability of potential recruits. The fitness standards required vary according to the Service and occupation within the Service that the recruit has applied for.

11. The detailed process for each of the single Services is as follows:

**Royal Navy and Royal Marines**

Potential applicants are asked screening questions when they first apply to the RN by Careers Advisers in the Armed Forces Careers Office. All applicants then complete a medical form obtained from the Armed Forces Careers Office. Currently Potential RN officers are medically examined at the Institute of Naval Medicine (INM) after passing the Admiralty Interview Board. Potential RN Ratings, Royal Marine (RM) other ranks and RM officer candidates are medically examined at a location close to their home by Armed Forces Careers Office Medical Examiners, who are civilian General Practitioners contracted to provide the service. If they consider it necessary, the Armed Forces Careers Office Medical Examiner will also liaise with the candidate’s General Practitioner. It is planned that in the near future all potential non aircrew RN officers will be examined by Armed Forces Careers Office Medical Examiners before attending the Admiralty Interview Board. Any atypical medical cases are followed up with the individual’s GP and referred to the Institute of Naval Medicine.

**Army**

All applicants complete a medical form obtained from the Armed Forces Careers Office. Potential recruits are subsequently provided with a detailed questionnaire designed to gather pertinent information about the individual’s medical history from themselves and their General Practitioner. The individual takes the form, after completing the relevant sections themselves, to their General Practitioner who completes it and sends it to an Army Development and Selection Centre, where it is screened for disqualifying conditions. If the applicant is suitable, they will then be called forward for medical examination at the Army Development and Selection Centre by a Medical Officer (military or civilian) trained in selection medicals. If either the examination of documents or the individual indicates that further information is required it will be sought from the General Practitioner. The Army considers the initial questionnaire a crucial factor in reducing the risk involved in training, especially for vulnerable young people.

If an individual needs a specialist assessment with respect to an ongoing or past medical condition they will be referred from the Army Development and Selection Centre to an appropriate military consultant. Cardiology referrals occur in such volume that there is a standing contract with a civilian provider. Medical examination may lead to deferrals for a specified amount of time, which may include conditions ie “remain free from symptoms and treatment for three years”.

**RAF**

All applicants complete a medical form obtained from the Armed Forces Careers Office. Potential officers and airmen aircrew attend the Officer and Aircrew Selection Centre at Cranwell at which they are examined by civilian Medical Examiners and Service Medical Officers. Other ranks are medically examined by Armed Forces Careers Office Medical Examiners in their local Armed Forces Careers Office after they have passed aptitude testing and an interview. If any medical issues are identified these are followed up by contacting the individual’s General Practitioner and, if necessary, referred to the RAF Inspectorate of Recruiting Occupational Medicine consultant at RAF College Cranwell.
Conversion rates for information seekers to enquirers to enlistments for each of the services

12. The table below details the conversion rates for information seekers to enlistments during the Financial Year 2007–08 for the three Services.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Information Seekers</th>
<th>Enquirers/ Applicants</th>
<th>Forwarded to Training</th>
<th>Success as a % of information seekers</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RN Officers</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1,300</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>RN Other Ranks</td>
<td>45,360</td>
<td>9,960</td>
<td>3,552</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army Officers</td>
<td>6,920</td>
<td>1,473</td>
<td>716</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army Other Ranks</td>
<td>124,762</td>
<td>21,804</td>
<td>13,129</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAF Officers</td>
<td>14,635</td>
<td>3,983</td>
<td>638</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAF Other Ranks</td>
<td>20,854</td>
<td>8,849</td>
<td>2,314</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes
1. This is a comparison of the number of information seekers in 2007–08 and the number forwarded to training in the same period. Of those applying or forwarded to training in 2007–08 some will have sought information before the start of the year. Therefore the numbers in the three columns are not directly comparable.
2. Information Seekers and Applicants data for RN Officers are an approximation due to the long lead in period over which requests for information are made. Applicants reflect the number of people attending AIB plus 10% for sift and Recruit Test failures.
3. This includes Non-commissioned Aircrew.

Details about the numbers of recruits who dropped out of Phase 1 and Phase 2 Training, if possible for the last 10 years

13. National Statistics data on the outflow of Untrained UK Regular Forces produced by Defence Analytical Services and Advice are at Annex B. Further information on the Phase 1 and 2 wastage rates will be provided in MoDs subsequent memorandum alongside the additional evidence requested on the reasons for wastage during new entry training.
### Strength and Requirement of Full Time UK Regular, Full Time Reserve Service and Gurkhas

*(TABLE 19 UPDATED TO 1 APRIL 2008)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>RN/RM</th>
<th>Army</th>
<th>RAF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 April 2008</td>
<td>1 January 2008</td>
<td>1 April 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variation</td>
<td>-1,190p</td>
<td>-1,280p</td>
<td>-1,880p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total UK Regs¹</td>
<td>39,110p</td>
<td>39,110p</td>
<td>39,440</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. The Trained Strength, Untrained Strength and the Trained Requirement comprise UK Regular Forces, Gurkhas, Full Time Reserve Service personnel and Nursing services. They do not include the Home Service battalions of the Royal Irish Regiment or mobilised reservists.
2. Due to ongoing validation of data from the new Personnel Administration System, Army statistics from 1 April 2007, and Naval Service and RAF statistics from 1 May 2007 are provisional and subject to review.

*Figures are rounded to ten and may not sum precisely to the totals shown.*
### Outflow of Untrained UK Regular Forces—National Statistics

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<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Services</td>
<td>5,960</td>
<td>8,450</td>
<td>8,560</td>
<td>7,350</td>
<td>6,770</td>
<td>7,250</td>
<td>6,950</td>
<td>5,830</td>
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<tr>
<td>Officers</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>370 p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Ranks</td>
<td>5,720</td>
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<td>8,230</td>
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<td>6,900</td>
<td>6,640</td>
<td>5,490</td>
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<tr>
<td>Naval Service</td>
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<td>1,680</td>
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<td>Officers</td>
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<td>690</td>
<td>680</td>
<td>680</td>
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<td>570</td>
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<td>40</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Ranks</td>
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<td>640</td>
<td>640</td>
<td>570</td>
<td>580</td>
<td>530</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>280</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** DASA (Quad-Service)

**Notes**

- Figures are for UK Regular Forces and therefore exclude Gurkhas, Full Time Reserve Service personnel, the Home Service battalions of the Royal Irish Regiment and mobilised reservists.
- Due to ongoing validation of data from a new personnel administration system, Army statistics for 2006–07 are provisional and subject to review.
- Figures have been sourced from Table 2.20 in UK Defence Statistics 2007–08 information will be available once TSP4 is published on 29 May 2008.

6 June 2008
Further supplementary memorandum from the Ministry of Defence

1. This memorandum aims to provide the House of Commons Defence Committee with additional information in respect of their inquiry into Recruitment and Retention in the Armed Forces. It provides responses to the questions posed in the Committee Clerk’s letter of 28 May 2008.

How many Service personnel were paid late last year? (Q365)

2. No Service personnel were paid late during the 2007–08 financial year.

When Service personnel do get paid late what costs do the MoD reimburse (eg bank charges)? (Q368)

3. If an individual has incurred an actual financial loss such as bank/building society charges or interest charged against a loan which would have been cleared if the payment had been made correctly, the department will compensate the individual on production of documentary evidence of the loss.

Details of the joint personnel administration inaccuracies and difficulties and the measures that have been/will be put in place to resolve them (Q368)

4. In January 2008, the MoD provided the Committee with a Memorandum on Joint Personnel Administration which explained problems being experienced, including pay inaccuracies. At that time MoD identified areas where more work was required before Joint Personnel Administration could be considered to have delivered its Vision, as endorsed by the Defence Management Board. Further to this, we can report the following progress against these areas:

- **Improvements in the provision of Management Information**—The Management Information capability has not yet fully met the user expectations or needs. The programme of work to meet these challenges is prioritised through the Joint Personnel Requirement Steering Group. The Service Personnel and Veterans Agency and the Services are working closely together to establish a common basis for future development which will also align with the MoD wide initiative to develop improved corporate Management Information capability.

- **JPA Control Framework**—In January MoD reported that a control framework would be put in place around the Joint Personnel Administration processes to ensure that the processes are being followed correctly and that the processes themselves do not allow opportunity for fraudulent behaviour. A control framework programme has commenced and the initial output has been agreed with the MoD finance community and the National Audit Office. The intention is to ensure that all the key controls are in place by December 2008.

- **Improvements to the Enquiry Centre and back-office functions**—Implementation of a revised management procedure (the Service Request Management Group) and additional training for enquiry centre staff has resulted in a significant improvement in customer satisfaction.

- **Reduced “cost of ownership” through further harmonisation and simplification**—A series of process reviews is being driven forward under the auspices of the Joint Personnel Administration Business Optimisation Plan. This provides a mechanism for looking at each of the processes and determining a priority for further work, in particular that required to harmonise, simplify and modernise policies and processes where initial progress to support Joint Personnel Administration roll-out was insufficient to achieve optimum business benefit.

5. Joint Personnel Administration is an ambitious change programme. All key outputs have been delivered without interruption throughout the implementation process. However, as indicated in earlier memorandum, there have been a number of data quality issues which have impinged on the ability of Defence Analytical Services and Advice to report Army Manning Statistics and there are still a number of gaps affecting manpower reporting. The Service Personnel and Veterans Agency Data Management and Information Group continues to work closely with Defence Analytical Services and Advice to improve the quality of data held within Joint Personnel Administration. This joint work has led to the identification of data issues in some systems which pass data into Joint Personnel Administration or with the way the data transfer is operating.

6. MoD are continuing to look at all aspects of the training of personnel in connection with Joint Personnel Administration to ensure that this is fit for purpose. This will focus on the provision of training and processes, primarily for self-service users and unit Human Relations staff, but including, where appropriate, Career Managers and specialist Joint Personnel Administration administrators, to ascertain whether all users are appropriately trained and sufficiently aware to exploit the full potential of Joint Personnel Administration.
Details of other wastage statistics for Phase 1 training and Phase 2 training for each of the Services (Q432) and the number and percentage of recruits who discharge as of right during Phase 1 training in each of the three services and how this compares with our major allies

7. Details of Phase 1 training wastages rate by cause are provided at Annex A for the UK Armed Forces. This data is derived from the single Services sources and is not necessarily derived from the employment of identical methodologies, therefore, direct comparison between the Services may not be wholly appropriate.

8. Different countries employ different methods of wastage calculation and other factors, including selection processes, entry standards, the handling of injury during training and their policy on back-classing will affect exit rates. Therefore a direct comparison of Other Rank losses during training between countries is difficult to achieve. Therefore, the two tables provided below aim to provide a broad comparison of wastage rates only. In all cases the statistics provide the total wastage rates.

### Percentage Wastage Rates for 2006 from UK Phase 1 and US Boot Camp

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Navy</th>
<th>Marines</th>
<th>Army</th>
<th>Air Force</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UK¹</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:**
2. Excludes Infantry for which there is no separate Phase 1 wastage rate (see Annex A).

### Percentage Wastage rates from UK Phase 1 and 2 training and at the 12 month point in Canada, the USA and Australia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>UK¹</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navy</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RM</td>
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<td>41%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>45%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Army</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAF</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<td>Canada</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navy</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
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<td>13.0%</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>21.3%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>7.2%</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navy</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marines</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air Force</td>
<td>11%</td>
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<td>13%</td>
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<td>Australia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navy</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army</td>
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<td>21%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Air Force</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:**
1. UK data is single Service sourced and has not been not validated by Defence Analytical and Statistics Advice.

The Armed Forces recruitment process in Foreign and Commonwealth Countries for example Ghana, Fiji and Jamaica

9. With the exception of Army recruitment of Gurkhas, except when visiting a Commonwealth country at the express invitation of government concerned, the Armed Forces do not actively recruit overseas. However, individuals can access the Armed Forces websites in order to see the range of opportunities open to them, and how to apply from overseas. Commonwealth or Irish citizens residing overseas who wish to apply to join the Armed Forces must travel to the UK at their own expense to undergo the selection process. They normally arrive on a six month tourist visa and are usually handled by the Armed Forces Careers Office at St Georges Court or, for the Army, the Careers Office on the Strand, both are which are highly experienced in handling the complexities associated with processing overseas candidates.
Since 1997 the RN has visited St Vincent on two occasions at the invitation of the Island’s government. As a result of the first visit in 2002, 154 individuals joined the Service (126 Royal Navy and 28 Royal Marine). A second visit took place in 2005 as a result of which 71 completed training and entered the Royal Navy.

The employment of foreign nationals in those branches directly related to operations is restricted on security grounds. As a result the Royal Navy Logistics Branch has a higher than average number of ratings from overseas, with enough candidates in the selection process to provide the branch with sufficient manpower until 2009. Therefore, although Royal Navy recruiters have been invited to return to St Vincent, there is currently no requirement to recruit more overseas personnel.

As a result of reports back home to family and friends from those already serving, a steady flow of candidates is making their own way to the UK with a view to joining the Royal Navy and the Royal Marines.

In recent years the Army have sent selection teams to some Commonwealth countries at the specific request of the government concerned where evidence suggests that there is sufficient interest amongst the local population to merit a visit. These teams screen out those not thought capable of meeting the full entry standards to save them the cost of an abortive trip to the UK to undergo the recruitment selection process. Selection teams will only see those who have already made an application to the Army’s Recruiting Group Overseas Cell which has passed the initial sift.

Since 1997 Army Overseas Selection Teams have visited Fiji 10 times, St Vincent and the Grenadines three times and St Lucia twice. In addition a team has this month just commenced a visit to St Lucia and Belize.

Applicants through the Overseas Cell are the biggest source of enquiries (some 30,000 per annum). Those that enquire do so via telephone, email, letter and On Line Enquiry Forms. Each enquiry is screened for eligibility and if everything is in order, the candidate is invited to attend a careers office in the UK.

Individuals from Commonwealth countries can apply through Broadsystems, a response-handling company, whose job is it to handle responses resulting from national advertising and direct marketing activity, via telephone, online enquiry and interactive TV. Any resulting “live” queries are passed to the field force in the Armed Forces Careers Office.

The Retention Action Plan is a matrix of measures and actions, currently consisting of some 73 serials, which are being progressed to either examine or improve retention in the Army. It is owned by the Army Retention Executive Committee chaired by Director General Personnel (Army) and the Plan is reviewed at each meeting and updated on a quarterly basis. The Retention Action Plan serves to coordinate effort and enable a more holistic approach to retention.

The Retention Action Plan has been operating in its current form for about 12 months, although a similar document had previously formed part of another Action Plan. Key areas include the formulation of Financial Retention Incentives, coordinated retention estimates and plans by Arms & Service Directors, establishing and prioritising research requirements to better inform balance of investment decisions and better ways of communicating the problems and what is being done.

Annex:

A. Loss of Recruits during Phase 1 and 2 Training.

18 June 2008
RAF Flying Trades

**Phase 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FY</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>No in to</th>
<th>VW</th>
<th>Prof</th>
<th>Med</th>
<th>Total %age</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>04/05</td>
<td>Pilot</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>44.4</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>05/06</td>
<td>Pilot</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13.5</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>47.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weapon Systems Operator</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06/07</td>
<td>Pilot</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>18</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>27.8</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07/08</td>
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<td>133</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>88</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* Since this pipeline has been up to two years long (because of backlogs), the number being withdrawn in any year does not necessarily correlate with the number-in in the same year.

**Phase 2**

<table>
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<th>FY</th>
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<th>Prof</th>
<th>Med</th>
<th>Total %age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>04/05</td>
<td>Pilot</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>44.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weapon Systems Officer</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>46.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>83</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05/06</td>
<td>Pilot</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weapon Systems Officer</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>47.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weapon Systems Operator</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06/07</td>
<td>Pilot</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weapon Systems Officer</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>27.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>73</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07/08</td>
<td>Pilot</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weapon Systems Officer</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weapon Systems Operator</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Notes:* FT—Flying Training  
VW—Voluntary Withdrawal  
Prof—Professional Failing (Airwork)  
Med—Medical Withdrawal

1. Withdrawal—removed from course but often cascaded from Fast Jet to Rotary Wing or Multi-Engine; or Rotary Wing to Multi-Engine for pilots; Weapon Systems Officers withdrawn from trianing are sometimes cascaded from Fast Jet to Multi-Engine (there are no longer Rotary Wing Warfare Systems Officers) and Weapon Systems Operators can also be cascaded within their various specialities. It is not possible to define those that are ultimately successful or otherwise.
2. The pipeline can be up to four years long therefore the number being withdrawn in any year does not necessarily correlate with the number-in in the same year.
3. Weapon Systems Operators are Non Commissioned Officers.

Further supplementary memorandum from the Ministry of Defence

1. This memorandum aims to provide the House of Commons Defence Committee with additional information in respect of their inquiry into Recruitment and Retention in the Armed Forces. It provides responses to the questions posed in the Committee Clerk’s letter of 3 June 2008.
Army Short Service Limited Commission/Gap Year Commission

2. The Short Service Limited Commission was introduced around 30 years ago at a time when many units were short of young officers. It was relatively simple to introduce as the manpower numbers and costs were contained within existing manpower ceilings and budgets. The scheme started as a paid gap year scheme before the term “gap year” had been coined and the name was changed to the Gap Year Commission in 1999 to reflect what was by then the common nomenclature for such activities. A complementary Undergraduate Army Placement scheme, introduced to fill a requirement for placement years in some degree courses, also proved successful. The Scheme was discontinued in mid-2007, with the emphasis moving to people programme measures which would have wider recruitment and retention benefits.

3. Numbers fluctuated over the years with a peak of over 80 a year early in this decade. About a third subsequently converted to a commission in the Regular Army and a few into the TA. Other benefits were: access to high achieving schools which otherwise were lukewarm to encouraging careers in the Forces, the positive message given by recent graduates of the scheme in universities and the long term benefit of influencing quality individuals who later excel in their respective spheres.

Royal Marine Scheme

4. The Short Service Limited Commission was a nine month pre-university commission which ran from October until July in the year of university entry. The scheme ran from 1981 to 1995 and enabled three or four individuals a year who express an interest in a commission in the Royal Marines but were unwilling to commit themselves for a lengthy period to experience a short, intensive introduction to the Corps which they could take forward into civilian life. It has been assessed that the scheme did not bring noticeably more strategic influence than that already achieved through retired officers and the scheme was terminated on cost grounds.

5. The course comprised three months initial training at Commando Training Centre Royal Marines, three months with a Commando unit and three months completing the All Arms Commando Course. On receiving his Green Beret, the Short Service Limited Commission Officer would end his commission & leave the Service. Some of those completing the course subsequently transferred to a regular commission.

Gains to Trained Strength for each Service during 2004–05

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Achieved</th>
<th>% Achieved</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RN Officers</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>410</td>
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<td>RN Other Ranks</td>
<td>2,700</td>
<td>2,310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army Officers</td>
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<td>8,700</td>
<td>9,080</td>
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<tr>
<td>RAF Officers</td>
<td>665</td>
<td>550</td>
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<tr>
<td>RAF Other Ranks</td>
<td>3,826</td>
<td>2,870</td>
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</table>

Note:
1. All targets set by single Services.
2. All achieved statistics, other than for Army, provided by Defence Analysis and Statistical Advice. Army achieved statistics are provided by the single Service: Army officer figures comprise Direct Entry and Professionally Qualified Officers only; Army Other Ranks represent output from Phase 2 training only. Statistics for RN and RAF Officers include those promoted from the ranks.

Clarification of Number of Pinch Point Trades between 2003–04 and 2005–06 for each Service

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Royal Navy</th>
<th>Army</th>
<th>Royal Air Force</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003–04</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004–05</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005–06</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Volunteer Reserve Requirement since 2004

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>April 2007 Provisional</th>
<th>April 2006</th>
<th>April 2005</th>
<th>April 2004</th>
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<td>Royal Navy and</td>
<td>2,360</td>
<td>2,940</td>
<td>3,040</td>
<td>3,740</td>
<td>3,820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Marine Reserve</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Territorial Army</td>
<td>30,270</td>
<td>30,270</td>
<td>30,270</td>
<td>30,270</td>
<td>30,270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Auxiliary Air Force</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>2,100</td>
<td>2,210</td>
<td>2,215</td>
<td>2,220</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note:
1. Following introduction of the Joint Personnel Administration system all data from April 2007 is provisional and subject to review.
2. Strengths rounded to the nearest 10.

Regular Reserve Strength since 2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>December 2007(^1)</th>
<th>April 2007</th>
<th>April 2006</th>
<th>April 2005</th>
<th>April 2004</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Naval Service</td>
<td>10,330</td>
<td>9,600</td>
<td>10,400</td>
<td>10,530</td>
<td>10,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army</td>
<td>33,650</td>
<td>33,800</td>
<td>32,100</td>
<td>31,420</td>
<td>31,220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Air Force</td>
<td>6,685</td>
<td>7,300</td>
<td>7,800</td>
<td>8,440</td>
<td>9,520</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note:
1. Latest available data.
2. Following introduction of the Joint Personnel Administration system all data from April 2007 is provisional and subject to review.

Data Discrepancies

6. Whilst some discrepancies result from the subsequent refining of provisional data, some of the apparent discrepancies also result from the use of different terminology. It is therefore not possible to directly compare the figures between the tables provided in the different annual reports, for example, individuals liable to recall is not the same as trained strength and strength refers to all personnel whilst trained strength refers to those personnel that have completed prescribed training.

23 June 2008