

CRFCA

Council of Reserve Forces'  
and Cadets' Associations

THE UNITED KINGDOM RESERVE FORCES

# EXTERNAL SCRUTINY TEAM

ANNUAL REPORT 2018



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## FOREWORD

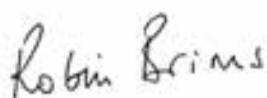
1. On the 31 July 2012, I was asked by the Secretary of State (SofS) for Defence to lead an independent team – the External Scrutiny Team (EST – as it has become known) – to scrutinise and report on the implementation of the Future Reserves 2020 Programme (FR20). It was put on the statute book via the 2014 Defence Reform Act, which mandated the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations (RFCA) to accept responsibility for the EST, and broadening its focus to report annually on the state of the UK's Reserve Forces, as recommended by the Independent Commission<sup>1</sup>. The FR20 programme is almost complete, ending on 31 March 2019, and after six years at the helm as the Chairman of EST, I have decided that now is a good time to stand down.
2. I will be replaced by Major General Simon Lalor, who is a member of the team and an experienced Reservist; his last appointment being the Assistant Chief of Defence Staff (ACDS) Reserves. At the same time, Colonel Tim Richmond will stand down and hand over to Colonel Gordon Straughan, another experienced Reservist who has held a wide range of appointments, his last being Colonel Career Management Reserves in the Army Personnel Centre, Glasgow. These changes to the team are all part of our efforts to keep the team relevant and bring fresh eyes to what is now a key part of defence capability.
3. There were many in 2012 that thought, and reported, that the FR20 programme would be a failure and a strategic error. But, I can report that it has been a success – this year's manning figures speak for themselves. The MOD and single Services are to be congratulated for all that has been done to achieve this. It has required much hard word work and effort. Not only have the Services achieved their planned FR20 targets, or are on track to do so, but, more important is the change in culture that has taken place within the Services in how the Reserves and Reservists are regarded. It is absolutely clear that the senior leaders and commanders in each of the single Services understand, value and embrace Reservists as a key element of their force. As an example, Air Officer Commanding 38 Group reported to us that she cannot deliver her outputs without the Reservists. They provide specialised trades otherwise not available within the Regulars and give relief to Regulars, bettering their work/life balance, hence aiding retention. We heard this from the other two Services as well.
4. As a consequence of regular exposure on operations and within training, we have seen that this appreciation is replicated at unit level. Nevertheless, there are still areas of needless frictions – single Service processes, training standards etc. – listed in the report, which penalise Reserve service. Most of these issues are within the gift of the single Services to resolve. Commanders and staff officers need to understand the impact of their decisions as seen through the prism of the Reservist so that these decisions, often made unknowingly and unintentionally, do not impact adversely on Reserve service.

1. Future Reserves 2020 – The Independent Commission to Review the United Kingdom's Reserve Forces. July 2011.

5. Against the bigger picture of success, these are relatively minor criticisms, but need to be said in order to maintain the progress made, and build on success to ensure that the Reserve is and remains an integral part of the 'Whole Force', as intended by the FR20 programme.
6. But, I would emphasise that we should not become complacent. There are some dangerous shoals ahead that are clearly visible, but easily navigable and avoided in order to sustain and enhance what has been achieved to date. I have been asked how we can build on this success and maintain it. The answer is relatively simple: success can be maintained by the simple expedient of delivering on 'the offer'. If Reservists are challenged by interesting and worthwhile training, have the opportunity to deploy on operations alongside their Regular counterparts, have the opportunity for personal development (to the benefit of the individual, unit and civilian employer) and the opportunity to have fun – adventure training – and, most importantly, feel valued by Defence, then they will join and stay. Units that we visited where this has been achieved were strongly manned across all ranks, with Reservists that had high morale; it was tangible and a tonic to the visiting team.
7. Too often, throughout my military career, I have seen how resources for recruiting have waxed and waned over time, and how huge effort and funds are applied to address manning shortfalls, only for those funds to be switched off just as success was being achieved, with consequent and predictable results. This must not be allowed to happen to the FR20 programme. The Reserve is a fragile beast in that Reservists can easily, and do, leave if the 'offer' is not realised. Reservists have to balance the needs of their civilian employment and their home life with their Reserve service. The latter is given up if not sufficiently worthwhile or rewarding, or it is perceived that their service is not valued.
8. Like any capability, funding has to be set aside. The additional £1.8bn over 10 years committed by Government in July 2013<sup>2</sup> to reverse the decline and revitalise the Reserves has been absolutely key to the success of the programme. Hence, while it was understandable and a consequence of the financial pressures faced by MOD, it was disappointing that both the Royal Navy (RN) and Royal Air Force (RAF) took funds from this programme as savings measures. We would expect that these funds would be added back to the programme. The Army found the saving through a small percentage cut in Reserve Service Days (RSD).

2. Ministerial statement to Parliament dated 3 July 2013 – White Paper: Reserves in the Future Force 2020: valuable and valued.

9. Set against the overall Defence budget, these savings were minor, but have created far greater damage that is disproportionate to the value of the savings delivered. It is as much the uncertainty that it creates in the minds of Reservists as to whether they are truly part of the Whole Force, or valued. Given the scale of the resource pressures faced by Defence<sup>3</sup>, it is accepted that the Reserves cannot be immune from savings that may have to be made. But I do caution against implementing them just as FR20 is delivering success. It would be a waste of the considerable investment made to date; steady progress requires less resources than those needed to arrest and correct decline. As I said at the start of this foreword, there were few that predicted the success of FR20. It would be a pity to undo it.



R V Brims  
Lieutenant General (Retired)  
29 June 2018





## INTRODUCTION

1. The FR20 Independent Commission identified a requirement for an annual report on the overall health of the Reserve Forces. The first two reports were provided at the request of the SofS for Defence<sup>4</sup> in 2013 and 2014. On 1 October 2014, the RFCAs had a statutory duty placed on them to report annually to Parliament on the state of the United Kingdom's Reserve Forces<sup>5</sup>. This, the fourth report these under statutory arrangements, builds on the earlier ones. As in previous reports and notwithstanding the wider reporting mandate specified in the Defence Reform Act, the context for this report remains heavily driven by the implementation of the FR20 Commission's recommendations, a digest of which is at Annex C.
2. The strategic environment continues to change across Defence since the Commission reported. Last year, the Government initiated work on a review of national security capabilities – the National Security Capability Review – in support of the ongoing implementation of the National Security Strategy and the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) 2015. The Review was concluded at the beginning of this year and its report was published on 23 March 2018. However Defence was separated from it and the Department is now undertaking a Modernising Defence Programme (MDP). Although the programme seeks to optimise how the MOD is organised and operates to identify further efficiencies, as well as examine the capabilities that defence requires to contribute to national security objectives, none of this alters the Government's intention to make better use of the Reserves as conceived in the FR20 Commission's report, or to grow the Reserves across the three Services to 35,000 trained strength. We remain confident that Ministers are determined to recognise and enhance the Reserves.
3. To this end, we welcome any initiatives to increase the utility and contribution that Reserves bring to and within the 'Whole Force', building on the undoubted success of the FR20 programme, which we report on below. But, we echo the uncertainty, commented on last year, caused by the significant pressure on the Defence budget, which remains unresolved, and the negative impact that short-term saving measures have on the FR20 programme as a whole.

## PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATIONS

4. We submitted our last report through the SofS for Defence on 22 June 2017; a digest of its recommendations (for completeness with recommendations from all earlier reports) together with our proposals for further work, are shown respectively at Annexes D and E. The SofS placed a copy of that report in the Library of the House on 20 July 2017. On 19 December 2017, he responded to our report, updating us on progress and commenting on our recommendations. It is at Annex F. We have been encouraged to note the positive manner in which most of the recommendations have been received and taken this into account in this year's work.
5. **Methodology.** This is the penultimate year of the FR20 programme. As before, we conducted a review of the continuing validity of previous recommendations and their implementation. It is heartening that our reports and recommendations are, in the main, accepted and recommendations implemented.

4. MSU 4/4/2/10 dated 31 July 2012; for convenience these Terms of Reference are at Annex A.

5. Defence Reform Act, 14 May 2014, Chapter 20 Part 3 Paragraph 47. Extract at Annex B.

6. In compiling this report, we again started the year visiting Headquarters and Establishments with Reserve responsibilities to determine what they believe they have achieved in the preceding year and their plans for the forthcoming one. We then visited a cross-section of units around the country to understand the situation 'on the ground' and to better understand some of the nuances of measures being undertaken, again using the RFCAs to coordinate our unit visits on a regional basis. We were able to meet many Reservists from all three Services (and from other nations) in a national joint exercise taking place throughout Britain – Exercise JOINT WARRIOR. This gave many opportunities to explore the benefits of Whole Force activities with both the Reserves themselves and their employing Regular commanders.
7. As before, this report looks back over the year and there will inevitably be an occasional phase lag between our observations and the ameliorative action being introduced by the Services following our end of year back-brief to them.
8. **Future Reserves 2020.** The headline for this report is the FR20 programme has been a success. Few would have predicted what has been achieved, given the poor state that the Reserves were in 2010, and there were many that forecast that the programme would not be successful. Across all three Services, we encountered Reservists who were upbeat, keen and enthusiastic; indeed, in the words of one senior Regular officer – *“unlike the Regulars”*. The changes in attitudes, recognition and value of and support for the Reserves was palpable, particularly from the senior leadership of the three Services.
9. This is reflected in the latest Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey<sup>6</sup> (AFCAS), where 58% of personnel report that the Reserves are well integrated, an increase on the 53% of 2017. This is most noticeable in the RAF, where 74% of personnel report that the Reserves are well integrated, followed by the RN at 67% and the Army on 48%, but the latter figure up from 43% last year. In addition, 67% rate the Reserves as professional and 65% rate their contribution as valuable. At time of writing, the 2018 Reserves Continuous Attitude Survey has not been published. There was little change in the statistics of the 2017 survey<sup>7</sup> when compared to those in 2016, but importantly, 77% were satisfied with life in the Reserves; 92% were proud to be in the Reserves; and 84% would recommend joining the Reserves.
10. Last year's report details the backdrop against which the Services set out how to recruit to the MOD's targets, which are at Annex G. These remain unchanged. Detailed figures on the actual strengths of the Services' Reserves are at Annex H. As at 1 April 2018, there were a total of 36,280 Reservists in the Armed Forces, of which 32,200 are trained. These are impressive figures when set against the backdrop of 22,220 trained Reservists in 2012.
11. **Royal Navy.** The Maritime Reserve fell 30 short of the end of Financial Year (FY) 2017 trained strength target of 2,790. The impact of the savings taken against recruiting, discussed below, appears slight, but was because recruits were already in the training pipeline. Nevertheless, it does cast doubt on the RN's aspiration to hit the 3,100 target at the end of the FR20 programme even though their current total strength figure of 3,600 exceeds their end of FY 18 trained strength target by 500. This is because the RN now take recruits on to their books once attested and before their medical in order that they can be nurtured through the system. A greater wastage rate is anticipated. Before

6. UK Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey Results 2018, published 24 May 2018.

7. UK Reserves Continuous Attitude Survey Results 2017, published 29 June 2017.

recruits only came on to the books once they started initial training. This mirrors the policy in the RAF. Interestingly, we picked up at unit level a desire to review this process amongst Royal Auxiliary Air Force (RAuxAF) squadrons, because of the frustrations of potential recruits being unable take part in fitness training and professional courses due to the lack of a medical.

12. **Army.** The Army was aware of the challenge of meeting the FR20 manning figures as the programme neared its end and issued Operation FINAL FURLONG to address this. Even so, numbers being recruited started to reduce towards the end of 2017. As at 1 April 2018, the Army trained strength was 26,957, some 860 above their end of FY 17 target of 26,100, although its total strength was 29,710, down 230 on the end of FY 16 target. Some of this can be laid at the failure of the Defence Recruiting System (DRS) – which affected all three Services – to allow units to identify and track their recruits through the system – more below. Trained strength held up because recruits were already in the training system. The Army anticipates that there is a ‘black hole’ of a lack of recruits moving through the system, which will not become apparent until the second half of this year. However, of more concern, what is known is that there is a 40% reduction in the number of application/enlistments for the period January – March 2018 compared with a three year average for the same period.
13. **Royal Air Force.** The RAF Reserves trained strength stood at 2,510 as at 1 April 2018 with a further 480 personnel under training. The FR20 target is 1,860. An analysis of the trained strength figure shows that:
  - a. There are 1,963 Part Time Volunteer Reservists (PTVR), with 480 under training.
  - b. There are 226 ex-Regulars on volunteer terms, but not on squadrons.
  - c. And, there are 320 Full Time Reserve Service (FTRS)/Additional Duties Commitment (ADC) personnel managing RAuxAF squadrons.

The recruiting environment remains challenging. The reduction in the number of PTVR applications to join continues – only 67% of the annual target was achieved end of year. The problems of DRS have not helped, but fewer enquiries for information would indicate that the challenge starts at the beginning of the recruiting pathway. One measure being planned to address the situation is to move some posts to squadrons that are located in candidate rich areas such as London and Cardiff.

## REPORT THEMES

14. **FR20 Funding.** The allocation of £1.8bn of additional funding has been crucially important to implementing FR20. Having ‘ring-fenced’ funds has made a material difference to the programme and demonstrated clear intent on behalf of the Government to address and turn around the dire situation that the Reserves found themselves in 2010. We acknowledged the significant financial pressures faced by the Department last year, but our judgement was that it was essential that the temptation to ‘raid’ the £1.8bn was resisted in order to carry through the programme to meet the set manning targets, and, more importantly, sustain the retention afterwards. It was, therefore, disappointing that savings were taken against the £1.8bn.

- a. **RN.** MOD imposed a £6m saving on the RN from the FR20 programme with a further £1.5m taken internally. The impact on the programme has been to put a stop to FR20 in-year money for recruiting; no uplift to planned RSDs to allow additional activity; and a delay to infrastructure projects – HMS KING ALFRED being an example. This latter measure, which we indicated might happen last year, is regrettable, particularly given the success of the RN’s infrastructure programme in support of FR20.
  - b. **Army.** The Army took an in-year 5% saving in RSDs, balanced by cancelling the requirement to achieve certain Military Annual Training Tests (MATT) without detriment to the Commanding Officer’s Certificate of Efficiency. While understandable given the significant in-year pressures, from our perspective, the saving did more damage to the morale of the Reserves than it was worth, particularly as it actually had very little impact on the ability of Reservists to train. Effective commanders and staff can manage their RSDs so that those who want and are able to train, can do so. At a micro level, the imposition of such savings measures resulted in behaviours perhaps not anticipated or meant by higher headquarters as it was translated down the chain of command. Not allowing a Reservist to parade on a Friday evening before a training weekend in order to save a quarter of a RSD resulting in a very early start on a Saturday, particularly if that Reservist has some distance to travel, impacts hugely on the perception of worth that the Reservists feels. The question of whether the value of this measure is worth the human cost has to be asked.
  - c. **RAF.** The RAF had a £5m saving imposed on them, but only took £3.8m from the FR20 programme, absorbing the rest within the overall RAF budget. The impact of each individual measure was relatively minor – delaying recruiting for squadron management posts; delaying the recruitment for the air element of the Information, Surveillance, Target Acquisition and Reconnaissance (ISTAR) squadron; and delaying some infrastructure projects – but the cumulative negative message that it sent out about the importance of the programme far outweighed, in our judgement, any financial benefit. This message would have been far worse if the remaining £1.2m had been taken from the programme resulting in a reduction to RSDs and a cancellation of an overseas exercise.
15. It is our assessment, the in-year savings measures, albeit small in overall Defence terms, had a disproportionate negative and damaging impact on the FR20 programme when compared the financial value saved. **Given the challenging recruiting environment encountered by the three Services and the failure of the DRS, we recommend that the MOD and the Services do not take further savings measures from the FR20 £1.8bn funding to manage FY 18 in-year financial pressures.** To this end, we echo Recommendation 12 in the Francois Report<sup>8</sup>:

*“After a difficult start and considerable effort, good progress has now been made on the Reserves agenda but it is vital that earmarked funding for the Reserves is maintained if targets in FR20 are to be achieved.”*

8. Filling the Ranks. A report for the Prime Minister on the state of recruiting into the UK Armed Forces by the Rt Hon Mark Francois MP – July 2017.

### Recruiting

16. Last year, we repeated our recommendation that a formal contract review of the Recruiting Partnership (RPP) be undertaken. This was not done. Instead, we were informed by the SofS that the Army would work closely with Capita on a RPP Improvement Plan to improve inflow in four key areas: attraction, process improvement, policy optimisation and improving training success<sup>9</sup>. To this end, the Chief of the General Staff (CGS) and the Chief Executive (CE) of Capita met on 12 April 2018 to conduct a strategic reset of the partnership and to agree four key outputs: the terms of the partnership, clarity on outcomes and timelines, accountability and reassurance to key stakeholders. The critical enabling capability to improving inflow is the DRS, which the CE of Capita is committed personally to fixing. More of which below.
17. The effort on engagement and advertising is having a very positive effect on the numbers of expressions of interest. But this is not translated into similar increase in the numbers that start initial training, or 'Load to Train', because of weaknesses still in the areas of process improvement and policy optimisation. The time of flight between application and Load to Train is too long, with the consequent wastage rate between an application and actual enlistment being too great.
18. A unit assessment of the recruiting process reinforces this point. It showed that it took 185 applicants to get 30 recruits to start Phase 1 training over an average of 12 months. Only 22 failed the medical appeal process. It is the unit's assessment that of the 160 that fell by the wayside, 100 were potentially eligible recruits that were fit for training, but 'gave up' due to the process. The unit's intake would be doubled if it could get 25% of this cadre to the start line for training.

### Medical Standards

19. On this latter point, in every report, we have highlighted the frustration expressed by potential recruits over the medical screening process and interpretation of required medical standards. The frustration remains and again we hear the same anecdotal stories of potential recruits being turned down on medical grounds for childhood ailments that are no longer present, or giving up because of the time it takes for deferrals/appeals to take place, because of the apparent lack of common sense being applied. But, we also have had hard evidence of individuals being rejected because of a leg broken in childhood, or a sportsman being rejected based on too great a Body Mass Index (BMI), despite obvious fitness levels. Of the 35% of potential recruits that fail because they are ineligible, 90% is due to medical reasons. This in itself would suggest that there is an issue with medical standards both in terms of assessment of what standards are required and then the interpretation of those standards. This was echoed in the Francois report and we support its recommendation for a comprehensive review of JSP 950.
20. The example of having differing medical standards for Reservists in cyber units could be widened elsewhere. As an example, it took some time for a serviceperson to be accepted on a Full Time Reserve Service (Home Commitment) contract because of a gluten allergy. The fact was the person prepared their own food at home for breakfast and supper and brought in a packed lunch, and the allergy did not affect their ability to deliver capability.

9. Secretary of State Response to EST 2017 Report dated 19 December 2017.



21. We acknowledge that the Services have advertised the use of medical waivers, but, they are applied differently by each Service and, as with every large organisation, it takes time to seep down to every level and can be held up by a blockage. We can report from our visits to units that knowledge of the waiver system is better, but remains sporadic.
22. We, therefore, welcome the Medical Symposium held at the end of April 2018, co-chaired by Chief of Defence People (CDP) and Surgeon General to address these problems. It is an issue that requires this high level interest to unlock the difficulties being created by current medical entry standards and how they are interpreted. Particularly helpful will be the actions to revise JSP 950 and streamline the process to amend policy with tight deadlines for reporting. **We would welcome an update on the proposed revisions to JSP 950 when these actions are completed.**

### Defence Recruiting System

23. DRS is the new IT system to replace TAFMIS-T<sup>10</sup> to support all four streams of Regular and Reserve officer and personnel recruitment. It has introduced the candidate portal where the candidate can log on to manage their application, with, at the other end, a recruiter portal where recruiters manage the candidate's application. It is supported by a WhatsApp style chat and email as well as SMS text messaging. Candidates can interact with their manager online and monitor the progress of their application. For Reservists, once the candidate has applied and passed the on-line medical, he/she should be visible to the unit to nurture through the enlistment process to 'Load to Train'. It should be an excellent system.
24. It went 'live' in November 2017, and fell over. We will not go into the detail as its faults and impact have been exposed in the media, but they include: lack of access to some recruiters; lack of visibility of sponsored candidates; assessment results not visible in real time; inability to create service numbers; and the attestation paperwork not being integrated. This has meant that recruiters at Reserve units have not been able to see their candidates to nurture them through the process, resulting in the latter 'giving up' and being lost, perhaps for ever. What has been particularly frustrating for units during the period November 2017 to February/March 2018 is that no one has any real idea of how many candidates were in the system or lost. Trained strength figures have held up in the first quarter of this year, because recruits were already in training. It is anticipated that a 'black hole' is moving through the system, but the actual impact on numbers will not be known for sure until the third quarter of 2018.
25. It was anticipated, as with any new IT system, that DRS would have teething problems and hence enhanced support was in place. However, the problems encountered were greater than expected. At time of writing, progress has been made, but DRS had not met all the criteria to allow it to exit 'Hypercare' on 31 May 2018, which has been extended to 29 June 2018. By then, it is hoped that all known RN and RAF defects will have been resolved. There will still be low impacting Army defects, but Capita have reiterated their commitment to retain sufficient development resource to resolve them.

10. Training Administration and Financial Management Information System -T, the old IT system used to manage recruiting.

26. The Scrutiny Team have visited where the system is located and run in Reading. If its faults can be corrected, it will be an impressive system, particularly as the Army is commissioning a mobile app. This will allow it to keep up with changing fashions amongst the population that it seeks its recruits; some now communicate only via app-based social media, rather than email. Nevertheless, the damage has been done to the MOD's reputation for competence, and the number of potential recruits that have 'given up' and have a negative view of the Services is unknown. **Given the criticality of DRS to the inflow of applicants to recruits, we recommend that 'Hypercare' is continued until all three Services are confident that DRS works as intended, reducing the 'time of flight' between application and being loaded on a Phase 1 recruit training course.**

### Operation FORTIFY

27. We commented last year on the positive effects of the Operation FORTIFY measures, in particular the Regimental Sub-Unit Support Officer (RSUSO) to nurture potential recruits through the recruitment process. In many units, the work of the RSUSO has been outstanding and absolutely key to helping potential recruits navigate this tortuous passage. It is particularly noticeable that there is a direct correlation between outstanding RSUSOs and better manned units. Although 'lived' for the FR20 programme, we have recommended that they are continued. The Operation FORTIFY Operation Order was re-issued on 26 February 2018 and, at time of writing, it is understood that funds will be found to retain a proportion of the RSUSOs. It is hoped that the decision is not made too late as the people in these posts are likely to become demoralised with the uncertainty and look to other employment. **Linked to paragraphs 16-26 above, until the frictions in the recruiting system are ironed out, whether induced by DRS or Service polices, we recommend that Operation FORTIFY measures, such as the RSUSO, are continued beyond FR20 until the Services hit their trained strength FR20 targets, and they are confident that manning is on an even plateau.**

### Officers

28. Officer recruitment has improved. The charts at Appendix 4 to Annex H show that the number of officers in all three Services increased in FY 17. In particular, it is noticeable that Army units that are either proactive in their recruiting or have established a positive relationship with their local University Officer Training Corps (UOTC), or both, are better manned. We picked up this latter point – the quickest and most efficient way to boost the number of young officers is to link in and establish strong ties with respective UOTCs – more than once during our visits. **We would recommend that this is an example of best practice that the other two Services might examine in order to encourage and increase commissioning within their Reserves.**
29. The innovative measures adopted by Sandhurst including sharing best practice, UOTC/Reserve unit pairing and probationary commissions have all had a positive effect. This latter initiative has had a particular positive impact. That said, there is still a requirement to validate the new system to remove any oddities. An example being that new commissioned officers who have not completed Phase D cannot go on operations – which is reasonable – but this constraint also applies to overseas exercises. There would seem to be little difference between an exercise on Salisbury Plain and Senelager apart from a longer bus journey. In a similar vein, Dhali-Blake<sup>11</sup> constraints mean that this same category of officers cannot undertake Phase 2 training courses.

11. Recommendations for the supervision of training following the review into the circumstances surrounding the deaths of four soldiers at Deepcut.

### Culture

30. We have reported previously on the improvement in the culture of how the Reserves are viewed by their Regular counterparts and how this is translated into policies that are 'Reserve friendly'. This year we are pleased to report on how significant it is – change has been on-going throughout FR20, but it is particularly noticeable this year. As indicated in the Foreword, there is no doubt that the Reserves have the full support of the senior hierarchy of the single Services. This year, it has been particularly noteworthy, but also that it is replicated at lower levels. There is growing confidence by the Reservists that the Reserves are appreciated/respected by the Regulars – *"I feel appreciated for what I am"* often came out unprompted at many visits we made to Reserve units. The integration of Reservists by the Army's School of Infantry on its courses is impressive. It was clear from our visit that this is truly embedded, rather than just being an add-on.
31. There should be no surprise here as much of this is a consequence of frequent exposure to each other on operations and training, particular amongst paired units or where Reservists are delivering capability on a daily basis, as exemplified amongst the RN's Carrier Strike Group (CSG) and Offshore Patrol Vessels (OPV), or in RAF logistic units. While this change in culture is being driven strongly from the top, we also have picked up instances, as illustrated below, where this message has not percolated down to ensure that all policies are Reserve friendly. On a number of occasions, we have come across instances where Reservists perceive that they are the poor relation to the Regulars, and to them, the Whole Force strap line is just that, a strap line, perhaps a reflection of a personal experience. It does emphasise that there can be no let-up in driving forward this change, even after the FR20 programme ends.

### Frictions

32. We have reported extensively in previous reports of the negative impact of single Service bureaucracies, processes and procedures on Reserve service by not being 'Reserve friendly'. Although, there has been much improvement, these frictions still occur, as much through lack of understanding as inflexibility to change. Outlined below are some of them:
- Late warning for Exercises.** Reservists require advance warning of exercises and communication within units in order to plan and agree the time off from their employers as well balance their family life. Reservists cannot react to short warnings; non-attendance does not imply unwillingness to attend. Exercise JOINT WARRIOR had been advertised to the Defence Augmentation Committee six months out and it was encouraging to see 80 Reservists attending, although only one Army Reservist.
  - Late Confirmation for Courses.** For the same reasons given above, Reservists can only plan attendance on courses if they have enough advance warning to agree time off with employers.
  - Cancellation of Exercises/Courses.** It is understood that exercises do get cancelled and can slip, but the effect for Reservists is far greater. Time off has been agreed with employers and often shifts reorganised. Regulars return to barracks, Reservists cannot always return to their civilian employment. The issue is exacerbated if the time off granted by the employer has had to have been taken as holiday, linking to the point above on managing their family life. The same applies to cancellation of courses.

- d. **Civilian Qualifications.** Again, we have come across instances where a Reservist's civilian qualification does not qualify him/her to carry out the same job on similar equipment in the Services. As an example, a highly qualified and experienced driving instructor on a number of different vehicles would still have to pass a General Service Conversion Course to drive a Landrover, but is not allowed to drive a military Landrover if this qualification has lapsed – more than 12 months of not driving one. This equally applies to Regulars.
- e. **Kit Issue.** We found that a number of units, both in the Army and RAF, do not have the full scales of personal kit – helmets, webbing, boots etc. – leading to the perception that Reservists are the 'poor relation'. In particular, the scaling for the two new infantry battalions – 4th Battalion The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment and 8th Battalion The Rifles – has not caught up with the numbers being recruited. This is a change to what we have found on previous visits and made in earlier reports where generally units were being equipped with full scales.
- f. **Equipment to Train.** Logistic transport regiments do not have Enhanced Palletised Load System (EPLS) vehicles on which to train for role or qualify for trade training.
- g. **Contractorisation of Courses.** A number of courses are delivered by civilian contractors. It is particularly disheartening for a Reservist if on arrival, an equipment or instructor is not available meaning that the course is cancelled, or later an examiner is not on hand. While Regulars return to units and can re-attend relatively easily, for the Reservist it is an opportunity lost and even more annoying if it is a trade or promotion qualifying course.
- h. **Centralisation of Training.** Many courses have been centralised in the spirit of efficiency. The impact for Reservists is that it often makes them more difficult to attend – finding the time when the course coincides with being able to get time off from work – and therefore it takes longer to become qualified for trade or promotion with consequent impact on retention. We believe that there is opportunity for more training courses to be run within units, as they once were. Training Schools still will have the responsibility for validation of quality.
- i. **Reserve Narrative.** In a number of Army units, we have picked up questions and a lack of understanding over the role and purpose of the Reserve and the training standards required to meet readiness notice. We commend the Executive Committee of the Army Board (ECAB) Reserve Narrative, which is a very good explanation and policy statement, which should be made clear to all. This will be complemented by a Reserve doctrine as a commander's guide to working with the Reserve.

There is nothing particularly new here, but it does emphasise our earlier recommendation that the senior leadership of the three Services maintain their efforts to change the culture of how the Reserves are regarded and inculcate 'Reservist friendly' processes and procedures in their policies. **We recommend that the three Services continue to examine that their courses – particularly those run by Training Schools – policies and processes and are adapted to take account of the needs of the Reservist.** Solutions to these frictions will aid retention and thereby reduce the pressures on recruitment.

### Cost and Use of Reserves

33. There is much debate over the cost of Reservists vis-à-vis their Regular counterparts; whether one is more expensive than the other, particularly when deployed on operations. This can have a negative impact because of the perception it creates in the minds of Reservists that somehow they are more expensive, and therefore this explains the perception why they are not used as much as they could be on operations. To this end, we have heard many Reservists, at all levels, express their frustration at the lack of, or the cancellation of operational deployments or overseas training due to the additional costs to the manpower budget.
34. Even so, although there has been a decrease in the number of Reservists being mobilised since the end of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, as at 28 February 2018, 280 Reservists from all three Services are deployed in every theatre alongside their Regular counterparts. This figure does not include Reservists delivering capability through RSDs on short-term tasks. The RAF make excellent use of their Reservists as 'auxiliaries' on 'Reserve Support Days'.
35. The perception that Reservists are more expensive than Regulars is not supported by independent research<sup>12</sup>. The fact is that the whole life cost of a Reservist is significantly less expensive when compared to his/her Regular counterpart since a Reservist is only paid when they are training; undertake less training than Regulars; are unable to claim a number of allowances; and are not housed in subsidised accommodation. Reservists are still less expensive even when used continuously over a short period on RSDs because their pay is less than a Regular. But, a Reservist can appear to be more 'expensive' than a Regular if consuming additional in-year resources, over those that are budgeted, since the costs of a Regular are already sunk.
36. A Reservist that is mobilised does attract additional costs – call out grant, additional expenses allowance, Reservist award and certain expenses incurred by the employer. But that does not necessarily make him/her more expensive. To this end, it is worth quoting some key sections of the DSTL research – first the assumption supporting the research, and then its key findings:

*"It is recognised that in order to deliver the same deployed time over a sustained period two Reserve Sub-Units are required for each Regular Sub-Unit. This is driven by Regular service personnel being able to deploy for a total of one year in five<sup>13</sup>, whereas Reserve personnel mobilise for one year in five, including a single six month deployment. Therefore to enable a fair comparison for a 'deployed year' two Reserve Sub-Units (one deployed and one non-deployed) must be compared to a single Regular Sub-Unit<sup>14</sup>, an underlying assumption which supports the analysis throughout the paper."*

### Key Findings

*When Reserves are used on an enduring basis, two Reserve Sub-Units have been compared with a single Regular Sub-Unit throughout the cost comparison. This analysis illustrates that:*

- a. Two Reserve Sub-Units are less expensive than a single Regular Sub-Unit when not deployed (26-51% of the cost); Reservists attending, although only one Army Reservist.*
- b. Two Reserve Sub-Units are generally more expensive than a single Regular Sub-Unit when deployed (85-155% of the cost);*

12. Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (DSTL) Report/TR80601 v6.6 dated 23 Mar 2015 - Cost comparison of Army Regular and Reserve Sub-units.

13. A six month tour every 30 months as per Defence Strategic Direction 13.

14. However it should be noted that both Reserve Units are at different points in their FORM cycle, the impact of this is explained in paragraph 18.

- c. When assuming the most stressing deployment pattern<sup>15</sup> (i.e. the most expensive), two Reserve Sub-Units are less expensive than a single Regular Sub-Unit (45-88% of the cost).*

**We recommend that MOD produce an agreed costing method to compare the cost of Regulars and Reservists, drawing on the above work and that done by the Land Environment Military Capability Output Costs (LEMCOC), and examine the opportunities to further increase their utility and value to Defence.**

37. Nevertheless, we regard this debate as largely nugatory and unnecessarily damaging. The Reserves are now a key component/capability of the single Services. At a time of under manning, particularly in the Army, but also amongst certain trades in the RN, the Reserves are there to be used to support and reduce overstretch in the Regulars. Thus it should attract a budget to ensure that it first has adequate numbers and training to perform its roles, like any other capability, and, secondly to be able to be mobilised and deployed. **We continue to recommend that MOD should consider the option to restore the FR20 Commission's proposal to establish a contingency reserve fund to be available for short notice and duration operations.** To this end, the Army's recent establishment of a funded pool of 5000 RSDs, separate from the routine allocation, specifically for UK Resilience tasks, is very much welcome. This is separate from the mobilisation budget, nominally £8m, but which was overspent to £14m in FY 17/18 to take account of operational imperatives that were met by mobilising Reservists. The RN and RAF manage and account for RSDs centrally, again separate from any mobilisation budget, which works well for them, particularly the RAF.
38. Being used on operations alongside their Regular counterparts is a key component of the 'offer' and a Reservists' worth and value placed on him or her by Defence. The sums are small in Defence terms, but is crucial to retention and therefore to maintaining the success of the FR20 programme.
39. As indicated above, Reservists are delivering capability on or in support of operations on RSDs. Examples are naval personnel with the Fleet Air Arm, soldiers and airmen in military intelligence units and airmen in logistic units at Brize Norton. Soldiers are also deployed on short term training tasks abroad on RSDs. In other areas, others have been mobilised. There has been a further increase in the commitment of the RN Reserve (RNR) and Royal Marine Reserve (RMR) to enduring tasks in support of the growing demand of the RN. The RNR and RMR Reservists are mobilised routinely to support key specialist areas and manning pinch points and provide enduring support to the CSG and OPV. Each Service approaches the issue differently to the extent that Reservists from the three Services will be deployed on Exercise SAIF SAREEA on both RSDs, as well as being mobilised.
40. In effect, Reservists are being used as auxiliaries and it does raise the question as to whether in these circumstances Reservists should enjoy the full protection given by being mobilised. This may be brought into sharper focus if the MDP emphasises the importance of, and perhaps increases the dependence on Reserves in the 'Whole Force' construct<sup>16</sup>. Therefore, we welcome and support the studies being conducted by ACDS Reserve Forces & Cadets to examine the greater utility of the Reserves, particularly whether RSDs should be enhanced to give more protection for short term, lower risk tasks.

<sup>15</sup> Deploying one year in five for Regulars and one in ten for Reserves.

<sup>16</sup> Minister of State for Defence speech to West Midland Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association Annual General Meeting.



## ESTATE

41. Last year, we assessed that the Reserve Estate:

- a. Remained in a sustained period of only just being kept viable in an increasingly degraded condition.
- b. Is consequently building up a bow wave of annually increasing maintenance requirement, with little to no confidence that funding will be available to address that growing need in the near term.
- c. And because no meaningful investment is being made in re-provision, life cycle replacement or condition improvement, alternative strategies for provision of a low-maintenance, appropriately located, fit of purpose estate will take a protracted period to implement.

We also recommended that the Reserves Estate Strategy be re-invigorated.

42. Taking this last point first, the Reserve estate optimisation is being taken forward, albeit slowly due to resources, with Greater London – Project STRATTON – being addressed first with a view to provide an improved fit for purpose and sustainable footprint underpinned by new ‘Super Reserve Centres’. We accept and agree that the Reserve estate is too large, underutilised and requires optimisation. But we would recommend that all receipts from disposal of sites or buildings are re-invested back into the Reserve estate; we assess that once lost, it will never be regained. To this end, we would caution against the dangers of over-estimation of receipts and under-estimation of the costs of re-provision, particularly if this is being written into budgeted programmes in future years.
43. We welcome, as do the RFCAs, the decision to re-allocate the funding for the estate from the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) to the single Services as this will bring the actual customer closer to the deliverer. An example of this is the formation of the Navy Command Volunteer Infrastructure Group, which is tasked with developing an Estate strategy and will work closely with the relevant RFCAs to implement it.
44. As part of the FR20 programme, the RFCAs have completed 16 of the 19 of the RN major projects and 10 of the 12 relocation projects. While one of the remaining major projects is funded and underway – a new RNR centre in Cardiff (HMS CAMBRIA), a partnership between Wales RFCA and Associated British Ports – the outstanding projects await funding.
45. Under Operation FORTIFY, many of the Army Reserve Centres were improved during the early years of FR20 though the single Services’ betterment programme. It was aimed to attract and retain Reservists and was focused upon approving the appearance (kerbside appeal) and improving welfare facilities predominantly heating and ablutions. It was not intended to address, and had little, or no impact upon long term planned maintenance tasks.
46. A further 16 sites, following the Army’s 2020 Refine, were added to the 53 Army sites announced for closure in July 13, now totalling 69 under review. Of these two have been disposed, 12 are available for disposal now, 13 can be disposed after funding is found to relocate or enclave off the Reserve or, more often the Cadet units, 20 are under review and 22 have been retained following the Commander Land Force's Darwinian ‘survive or die’ challenge to units in 2014.

Although the backlog of disposals remains considerable, this is largely due to the issues surrounding the funds for reprovision. What funding has been made available (generally through in-year underspends) has been prioritised by HQ Army and Regional Command for improvements to enable unit relocation and recruitment under FR20 and 2020 Refine; most of which will be completed by 2020.

47. It was noteworthy that the RFCAs were able to spend £3.3m additional funding that was made available by the DIO late in-year in January 2018. It was spent on low-cost maintenance tasks, reducing the bow wave that is normally carried forward from year to year, and on a number of larger projects. This agility, using 'oven ready' projects, to complete work is a unique feature of the RFCA management process and supply chain to the considerable advantage of Reserves and Cadets across the UK.
48. In summary, the Reserve estate has an unfunded Planned Preventative Maintenance programme with a 'fix-on-fail' approach. This is the least most cost effective method for maintaining the estate – reactive tasks are considerably more expensive than planned ones, and the long term additional cost is inevitable. This could lead to closures if appropriate funding is not provided, but has been avoided, in part, because of the agility of the RFCAs to spend late notice in-year underspends and judicious use of monies raised through Alternative Venues (AV). The delegation of funding to the single Services and emerging positive approach to link capability outputs to assets is welcomed and encouraged.
49. Our assessment above remains extant, as does the recommendation – **that the Reserves Estate Strategy be re-invigorated and accelerated, continuing to draw on local and regional expertise. We further recommend that priority is given to ensuring adequate funding is made available to sustain the existing Reserve estate until the new strategy is implemented.**

## RESERVIST HEALTH

50. Defence Primary Healthcare (DPHC) assumed responsibility for the delivery of universal occupational health assessments (OH), rehabilitation, dental inspections (prior to mobilisation) and treatment for operationally attributed mental health conditions to the Reserves on 1 April 2014. As in previous reports, we make the point that we are ill-equipped to report on mental health well-being and again asked MOD to comment on progress made.
51. In last year's report, we noted unsubstantiated observations from Reservists of concern about the incidence of mental illness and an assumption that it may be the same as for Regulars. The figures below would suggest otherwise, but noting that DPHC may not have complete visibility of all cases. Their comments to us on OH, rehabilitation, dental inspections and mental health are below.

**Occupational Health.** *The original intent was to recruit 65 additional staff to provide a bespoke Reserve Forces (RF) OH service. DPHC has managed to recruit sufficient administrative staff, but has and indeed continues to struggle to attract clinicians. At a time where there are more clinical posts in the NHS, private sector and the MOD than available professionals, DPHC has struggled to attract the required staff. Given the actual budget, this has proven to be beneficial as DPHC uses existing civilian staff and suitably qualified Reservists to provide the out of hours clinics. In FY 17/18, DPHC delivered 2423 evening or weekend clinics, up from 1203 the previous year and the expectation is for more still in FY 18/19.*

**Rehabilitation.** DPHC provides rehabilitation to all Reservists injured on duty; the White Paper requires that only those injured in training require treatment, but this was deemed to be both divisive and difficult to police as there are differing opinions regarding what constitutes training. As such DPHC amended internal policy and the 2017DIN01-096 to reflect the distinction that those injured on duty will be cared for. Realising that many of the RF do not live close to DPHC facilities and work full time; a contracted service to provide rehabilitation to the RF was commissioned, starting in April 2017. This allows the Reservist to be treated close to home or work and operates for 12 hours a day for 6 days a week. Although the number of referrals to rehabilitation has risen in FY 17/18, 1352 up from 1052 the year before, the RF personnel have preferred to utilise DPHC facilities; the contract was only used by 50 Reservists. As demand has been higher than expected at DPHC facilities, funding for an additional 18.3 rehabilitation staff has been approved and the recruitment process has been initiated.

**Dental Inspection.** The requirement to provide dental inspections only has been deemed to be untenable by DPHC Dentists, as it could put the Reservist in a predicament where a military dentist is telling them that they need to have dental work, but then to go back to the NHS to get it done. DPHC Dental have, therefore agreed to provide the required restorative work on any Reservist who is nominated to be mobilised (from up to 6 months prior to mobilisation), or are being held at high readiness (R5, 30 days notice to move, or less).

**Mental Health.** The original policy allowed treatment only of RF personnel who had experienced an operationally attributable mental health condition after mobilising. This policy, therefore, precluded treatment for any ex-Regular member of the RF if they were experiencing mental health conditions, attributable to operational service as a Regular. As they would not have been mobilised, they were excluded from care. This presented the possibility of two RF personnel, who may have experienced the same difficulties, even from the same operational incident, where one could be treated and the other could not. This policy has now been changed to ensure that all Reservists are eligible for treatment if they have an operationally attributable condition.

DPHC has seen very low demand for assistance, with only 62 referrals from April 2016 – March 2018, of which only 44 personnel required treatment. Over the same period there were approximately 15,000 referrals of Regular personnel to mental health services, so Reservists accounted for less than 0.5% of demand. As DPHC only provides care for operationally attributable conditions, there is very little data pertaining to other mental health problems. Treatment is delivered by the NHS, or the third sector for any other condition and, as Defence medical staff do not have access to Reservists healthcare records (they are the property of the NHS) it is entirely feasible that Reservists have mental health conditions which are not visible to the Defence Medical Services.”

52. Since April 2014, DPHC has been subjected to considerable change and turbulence: it has had to reorganise as part of the SDSR 15 requirements, reducing from nine regions to six; it has recently welcomed its fifth Commander; and is currently being reviewed by an external management consultant as part of Commander Joint Forces Command’s Defence Healthcare Delivery Optimisation Study, which in turn is the third review of DPHC in the past 12 months. Furthermore, it has had difficulties in recruiting staff and substantial reductions in funding have provided challenges for delivery. In spite of this, all services, less mental health, have seen an increased demand which, most importantly, has been met. DPHC is to be congratulated, but nevertheless acknowledge that there are still improvements to make, and plans to enable this are in train. These enhancements, however, do not change the fact that the NHS is the principal provider of healthcare to Reservists.

## ASSESSMENT

53. The FR20 programme is a success story, but there is still one year to run. We assess that the manning targets set out in 2014 are achievable if the 'offer' is delivered. We have seen in units that success breeds success. The interest to join is there. But it will require a smooth and seamless recruiting process to reduce the time of flight from application to starting training in order to reduce unnecessary wastage. As reported above, just capturing 25% of potential recruits that 'give up' because of the process would make a significant impact.
54. It is heartening that cultural convergence between the Regulars and the Reserves is taking place. However, this upward trajectory will be slowed or flatlined if the foot is taken off the 'gas pedal'. There is still work to be done to scrutinise single Service policies, processes and procedure to ensure that they are 'Reserve friendly' and do not needlessly put barriers in the way of Reserve service.
55. The financial pressures faced by the MOD are understood, but we warned last year that savings taken from the earmarked £1.8bn to fund FR20 would be unhelpful, if only for the message that this sends. It is now clear that these savings, small in overall defence terms, have had a disproportionate damaging effect of the FR20 programme and the Reserves. This combined with the difficulties encountered with introduction of DRS has, we anticipate, knocked back the manning trajectories, but by how much will not be clear until the latter half of 2018. What this does emphasise is that there can be no let-up in effort in the final furlong of this course. If further savings are imposed, we assess that this will compound the damage experienced in 2017 and cast doubt on the Services' ability to achieve their FR20 manning targets.

**Annexes:**

- A. FR20 Implementation External Scrutiny – Council of Reserve Forces’ and Cadets’ Associations External Scrutiny Team Terms of Reference.
- B. External Reporting Provisions of the Defence Reform Act 2014.
- C. Summary of the FR20 Independent Commission's Main Recommendations.
- D. Previous Report Recommendations.
- E. Previous Proposals for Further Work.
- F. Secretary of State for Defence Response to 2017 EST report.
- G. MOD Targets for Strength and Recruitment.
- H. Defence Statistics – Reserve Manning Achievement & Trends.
- I. 2018 Report Main Recommendations.
- J. Summary of Priorities for 2018/19 Work.
- K. External Scrutiny Team – Membership.

## FR20 IMPLEMENTATION EXTERNAL SCRUTINY COUNCIL OF RESERVE FORCES' AND CADETS' ASSOCIATIONS SCRUTINY TEAM TERMS OF REFERENCE

### INTRODUCTION

1. The FR20 Report<sup>17</sup> was commissioned by the Prime Minister in October 2010 in recognition of the relative decline and neglect of Reserve Forces. The Independent Commission concluded that the state of some elements of the Reserve was so fragile that resources and action were required immediately to arrest their decline; also, it sought to promote a wider vision to be realised over several years.

### PURPOSE

2. The Commission identified<sup>18</sup> a requirement for an annual report on the overall health of the Reserve Forces. It recommended that the Council of Reserve Forces and Cadets Associations (CRFCA) was best placed to meet this requirement given its existing provision by (non-discretionary) statute to provide independent advice to the Defence Council and Ministers on Reserve Matters.

### ROLE

3. The CRFCA External Scrutiny Team is to report to the Secretary of State for Defence on implementation of the Future Reserves 2020 (FR20) Programme and provide independent assurance to Parliament.

### MEMBERSHIP

4. Lt Gen (Retd) Robin Brims CB CBE DSO DL is appointed to chair the CRFCA External Scrutiny Team to provide external assurance on the implementation of the FR20 Programme.
5. Membership of the External Scrutiny Team should comprise no more than six, to be decided by the Chair after consultation with the MOD through VCDS. It should provide representation from the three single Services, appropriate Regular and Reserve experience and independent expertise. Whilst its composition may change over the course of the five years, the External Scrutiny Team must retain the expertise that enables the Chair to perform his duties effectively.

### SCOPE

6. The External Scrutiny Team's work is to be set in the context of the ability of the Reserves to deliver capability required by Defence, and is to assess:
  - a. Progress against delivery of the FR20 Mandate<sup>19</sup>and in the context of the Recommendations of the FR20 Report:
  - b. The condition of the Reserves.

17. Future Reserves 2020: The Independent External Scrutiny Team to Review the United Kingdom's Reserve Forces. July 2011.

18. Para 104 (p. 43).

19. DCDS Pers/RFC/FR20/5/09 dated 5 Jun 12.



## **BASELINE AND METRICS**

7. 1 April 2012 is to be taken as the baseline date from which progress will be assessed, and anniversaries of this date thereafter, to baseline their findings.
8. The FR20 Programme Management Office (PMO) will undertake coordinating activity with the single Services to ensure that the External Scrutiny Team has the assistance it requires to enable them to assess trends based on monthly manning and demographic information (such as age). Metrics to be routinely monitored are to be agreed in consultation with the MOD but may include:
  - a. Outflow rate and return of service;
  - b. Fit for Employment; Fit for Role; Fit for Deployment;
  - c. Percentage achieving bounty;
  - d. Gapping levels of Regular, Reserve, FTRS and Civilian Permanent Staff who support the Reserve community.

## **ASSESSMENT**

9. The External Scrutiny Team's report should assess the state of the programme including:
  - a. Progress against the Plan and milestones;
  - b. Risk management and corporate governance;
  - c. Definition of benefits and progress in delivering them;
  - d. Communication with key stakeholders;
  - e. Effectiveness of application of resources under the Programme.
10. CRFCA will be involved in the development of the Plan through the Reserves Coordination Group and the FR20 Programme Board.

## **ACCESS**

11. The FR20 PMO will assist in facilitating access to serving military personnel, sites and furnishing additional data as required.



## EXTERNAL REPORTING PROVISIONS OF THE DEFENCE REFORM ACT 2014

The Defence Reform Act 2014 placed a responsibility on Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations to submit an annual report on the state of the UK's Reserve Forces under the following provisions<sup>20</sup>:

### 113A Duty to prepare report on volunteer reserve forces

- (1) An association must prepare an annual report on the state of the volunteer reserve forces so far as concerns the area for which the association is established.
- (2) A report on the state of the volunteer reserve forces is a report that sets out the association's assessment of the capabilities of the volunteer reserve forces, having regard to the duties that may be imposed on members of those forces by or under this Act or any other enactment.
- (3) The assessment referred to in subsection (2) must, in particular, include the association's views on the effect of each of the following matters on the capabilities of the volunteer reserve forces:
  - (a) the recruiting of members for the volunteer reserve forces;
  - (b) the retention of members of those forces;
  - (c) the provision of training for those forces;
  - (d) the upkeep of land and buildings for whose management and maintenance the association is responsible.
- (4) A report under subsection (1) must also set out the association's assessment of the provision that is made as regards the mental welfare of members and former members of the volunteer reserve forces.
- (5) An association must send a report under subsection (1) to the Secretary of State –
  - (a) in the case of the first report, before the first anniversary of the day on which the last Future Reserves 2020 report prepared before the coming into force of this section was presented to the Secretary of State, and
  - (b) in the case of subsequent reports, before the anniversary of the day on which the first report was laid before Parliament under subsection (6).
- (6) On receiving a report under subsection (1), the Secretary of State must lay a copy of it before Parliament.
- (7) The duties under this section may, instead of being performed by an association, be performed by a joint committee appointed under section 116 by two or more associations in relation to their combined areas.
- (8) Where by virtue of subsection (7) a joint committee has the duty to prepare a report –
  - (a) references in subsections (1) to (5) to an association are to be read as if they were to the joint committee, and
  - (b) section 117(1)(a) (power to regulate manner in which functions are exercised) has effect as if the reference to associations were to the joint committee.
- (9) In subsection (5)(a), 'Future Reserves 2020 report' means a report prepared by the External Scrutiny Group on the Future Reserves 2020 programme.

<sup>20</sup>. Inserted in Part 11 of the Reserve Forces Act 1996 (reserve associations), after section 113.



## SUMMARY OF THE FR20 INDEPENDENT COMMISSION'S MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

**Stabilisation and Betterment.** Resources are needed immediately to arrest the severe decline in the state of the Reserves. Included in this is the need for a revised Proposition which provides the challenge and reward that makes Reserve service worthwhile and sustainable. This will require enhancements to individual, collective and command training. It will also require increased command opportunities, in peacetime and on operations. The Reserve will require new roles, more viable structures and better mechanisms to integrate with the Regular component. We estimate that a betterment package, when coupled with the need to abate other savings measures against Reserves, will cost £590m over four years.

**Revised Roles.** The National Security Council should examine the breadth of roles which Reservists undertake. We recommend that Reservists should play a greater part in Homeland Security (for example maritime coastal protection) and UK Resilience. We are not advocating a third force, rather that Reserves should have a more formal role in support of specific security tasks and their local civil communities. More widely, specialist tasks should expand, specifically in areas such as cyber, stabilisation and medical roles in humanitarian crises. Beyond individual operational augmentation, Reserves should be able to meet some operational tasks as formed sub-units and units. And our Reserves must form the framework around which military regeneration can be effected.

**Enablement.** The availability of a larger and more usable Reserve has to be guaranteed. Such a guarantee has to be underpinned by legislative changes which permit greater ease of mobilisation, better employee protection and greater recognition of employers, perhaps through a nationally endorsed Kitemark. We should exploit the potential for innovative partnerships between Defence, Education and Industry to optimise the sharing and development of human talent. And we need modern administrative systems for enlistment, processing and transfer between the Regular forces and the Reserves.

**Adjusting the Regular/Reserve Balance.** Defence should adopt a Whole Force Concept which optimises the most cost-effective balance of Regular, Reserve, Contractor and Civilian manpower. Within this, the Reserve element should proportionately increase. By 2015, the trained strength of the Reserves should be: Royal Navy Reserves/Royal Marine Reserves 3,100; Territorial Army 30,000 and Royal Auxiliary Air Force 1,800. Thereafter the size of the Reservist component should increase further to maximise the cost effectiveness of having a larger Reserve component within the Whole Force. The Commission's view is that, in the future, the trained strength of the Army – Regular and Reserve – should be about 120,000.

**Force Generation.** In order to improve the efficiency of Force Generation, the Reserve estate should be rationalised in a way that is sensitive to maintaining geographically dispersed local links whilst providing access to training. Once we have rebuilt the officer and non-commissioned officer structures, and in the context of more effective Regular:Reserve twinning, the requirements for Regular Permanent Training Staff should be reviewed. And the overall Force Generation ratio within the TA should be optimised so that, if required, a 1:8 ratio of mobilised to non-mobilised Reservists could be sustained.

**Governance.** A revised governance structure for the Reserve is recommended to: first, oversee the implementation of recommendations arising from this Review; second, to provide an independent mechanism to report to the Ministry of Defence and Parliament on the state of the Reserves; and third, to help ensure the appropriate influence of certain Reserve appointments. The Commission believes that, if these recommendations are carried through, then the overall capability, utility and resilience of our Armed Forces will be enhanced, in a way that meets the security, financial and societal challenges of the day, and in a way that maintains continuity with historic British practice.







## PREVIOUS REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

### SUMMARY OF 2013 REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

**Recommendation 13.1** ([Link to the Commission's recommendations 3, 4 & 8](#))

As a matter of priority the Department should issue a plain-English narrative which sets out the Reserves proposition: a narrative which is commonly adopted across all the Services and, as a minimum, covers the purposes of the Reserves; the manner in which they are likely to be used; and individual levels of obligation.

**Recommendation 13.2** ([Link to the Commission's recommendations 6 & 12](#))

FR20 manpower metrics should be more granular for the period to 2018 to demonstrate changes within the recruit inflow pipeline and should not concentrate solely on the achievement of Phase-2-trained Reservists.

**Recommendation 13.3** ([Link to the Commission's recommendation 26](#))

Priority must be given to fund and introduce quickly an effective management information system which accurately captures Reservists numbers; states of training, preparedness; availability; attendance; and skill sets.

**Recommendation 13.4**

More analysis is undertaken to determine the causes of 'manning churn', to better inform how retention measures could be better targeted.

**Recommendation 13.5** ([Link to the Commission's recommendations 2 & 21](#))

In parallel to development of pairing/parenting responsibilities, further analysis is needed for scaling of equipment and vehicle holdings at Reserve unit level, including the provision of low-tech simulation alternatives.

**Recommendation 13.6** ([Link to the Commission's recommendations 5, 6, 17, 18 & 23](#))

FR20 Army basing should take account of regional capacity to recruit, not just to facilitate proximity, and should also be phased to initially preserve current TA manpower until such time as alternative inflow is more fully developed.

**Recommendation 13.7** ([Link to the Commission's recommendations 8, 22 & 23](#))

That work is initiated to look at the potential to employ Reserves with critical skills, where their employment was best served in a reach-back rather than deployed role; and that their TACOS be examined for appropriate adjustment.

**Recommendation 13.8** ([Link to the Commission's report, Annex C, paragraph 8](#))

That senior military and political leadership initiate a comprehensive information campaign with the Services' middle management to address the cultural change necessary to secure FR20, drawing on the narrative we recommend above.

## SUMMARY OF 2014 REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

**Recommendation 14.1** Further work on Whole Force and the New Employment Model, coupled with the desirability of easier transfers between Regular and Reserve service, suggest that the necessity of merging the Armed Forces' Act and the Reserve Forces' Act should be kept under review.

**Recommendation 14.2** The narrative developed for the White Paper should be updated to take account of FR20 delivery to date and used more extensively to market the value of Reserve service and the recruiting offer. It should also be used more extensively cross-Government.

**Recommendation 14.3** FR20 measures which seek to bring down the average age of Reservists should be phased to follow those measures which will rely heavily on Reservist knowledge and experience for their introduction.

**Recommendation 14.4** The single Services should examine the scope to apply a 'special measures approach' to turning round those units and sub-units most in need of assistance in reaching FR20 targets.

**Recommendation 14.5** The single Services should examine a range of measures which better preserve the corporate memory of their Reserve components, including procedures for recording whether and how savings measures are planned to be restored during programming.

**Recommendation 14.6** Recruiting processes should be subject to continuous improvement measures, with recognition that central marketing and advertising campaigns must be complemented by appropriately funded local/unit activity to nurture and retain applicants through the process.

**Recommendation 14.7** Final decisions on Reserve Centre laydown and unit/sub-unit closures should be re-tested against local recruiting capacity and retention factors.

**Recommendation 14.8** In order to ensure that necessary differences between Regular and Reserve service are appropriately managed, the single Services should consider the reintroduction of a dedicated Reserve career management staff branch (predominantly manned and led by Reservists) within their Personnel Headquarters.

**Recommendation 14.9** Command appointments of Reserve units should continue to provide opportunity for part-time volunteer officers. When part-time volunteers are appointed, command team manning of the unit should be reviewed to ensure that the commanding officer is fully supported with no gapping in key headquarters posts.

**Recommendation 14.10** The MOD should consider the option to restore the FR20 Commission's proposal that a contingency reserve fund should be established to be available for short duration domestic operations making use of Reserves.

## SUMMARY OF 2015 REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

**Recommendation 15.1** The MOD give further consideration to how it will safeguard the ability of Reserves to play a proportionate part in resilience operations, especially once the Reserves are at full manning and would otherwise have to dilute funds for annual training to offset costs.

**Recommendation 15.2** Working within the existing governance system, build more inter-Service cooperation on experimentation and best practice on recruiting and retention, whether or not initiatives are universally adopted.

**Recommendation 15.3** The three Services should review the separate roles played by the national call centres, the Armed Forces Careers Offices, the recruiting field forces and Reserve units to ensure that they are clearly optimised for Reserve recruiting.

**Recommendation 15.4** The MOD and the Services should review the medical entry standards required of recruits and ensure that the screening contracts are appropriately incentivised and assured to achieve success.

**Recommendation 15.5** The Services should initiate work to determine the recruiting resources necessary to ensure steady state manning of the Reserve beyond the FR20 period.

**Recommendation 15.6** The Services should examine what more could be done to enhance manning through retention-positive measures, at least in the short-term, including bespoke extra-mural activities targeted at the Reserve.

**Recommendation 15.7** FR20 planning and risk mitigation should increasingly turn more attention to the growth of capability within the Reserve component, rather than a slavish pursuit of numerical growth.

**Recommendation 15.8** Army Reserve basing requirements should be revisited as a consequence of availability of funds to deliver the original basing concept and on the evidence of other FR20 achievement; link to Recommendation 15.10.

**Recommendation 15.9** DIO and the Services should review their multi activity and support contracts and, where relevant, explore ways in which they can be amended to ensure that they are Reserve-friendly.

**Recommendation 15.10** The Services should conduct a command-led stock-take on all aspects of FR20 implementation by the end of FY 2015/16 and share lessons learned; link with Recommendation 15.8.

## SUMMARY OF 2016 REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

**Recommendation 16.1** An urgent contract review of the Army Recruiting Partnership.

**Recommendation 16.2** The Services undertake more granular analysis within their data gathering, to reduce the risk of specialist manning gaps in the final years of FR20 and beyond.

**Recommendation 16.3** The high incidence of medical deferrals and time to resolution remain under close scrutiny in order to reduce both.

**Recommendation 16.4** The Royal Navy and Army absorb recent innovations in officer Phase 1 training into their core officer development activity, as the issue will require sustained attention well beyond the timeframe of FR20.

**Recommendation 16.5** Consideration be given to greater cross-pollination, shared practice and coordination between the three Services in the officer recruiting environment, particularly in the area of achieving greater penetration of the Higher and Further Education recruiting hinterland.

**Recommendation 16.6** The Services keep under review the impact of losing Op FORTIFY enhancements (or Service equivalents) and, where appropriate to sustain recruiting beyond 2019, bring relevant elements into their core activity.

**Recommendation 16.7** The Services examine units which have a significant young officer deficit to determine whether a poor proposition might be the cause and, if so, to assess whether it can be legitimately improved.

**Recommendation 16.8** The Army consider how the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force use their Reserves in order to develop a better understanding of potential use of Auxiliaries in the Army Reserve; and that such analysis helps shape policies for the future employment system.

**Recommendation 16.9** The Army revisits the decision to withdraw LADs from Reserve units to create REME battalions.

**Recommendation 16.10** The manner in which Reserves can be routinely employed on national operations or for back-fill be revisited.

**Recommendation 16.11** The Reserve narrative be reviewed to ensure it cannot be interpreted as intent to prevent use of Reservists for routine mobilisation and on national operations.

**Recommendation 16.12** Work on defining the Army Reserve officer career pathway be re-invigorated.

**Recommendation 16.13** Defence reviews whether a more flexible range of employment terms should be considered, to better incentivise recruitment and to provide more agility within a Whole Force approach to employment.

**Recommendation 16.14** As options are considered for disposal of Regular estate, decisions are not taken before current or potential usefulness to Reserve capability-building has also been taken into account.

**Recommendation 16.15** MOD and the Services recognise incomplete cultural change will be the main impediment to FR20 delivery and long-term Reserve sustainability, and introduce specific measures to inculcate cultural change.

**Recommendation 16.16** The importance of localism for effective sub-unit command be addressed by simplifying systems where possible; providing adequate permanent staff support; and keeping training requirements at practical levels.





## SUMMARY OF 2017 REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

**Recommendation 17.1** A repeat recommendation that a formal contract review of the Recruiting Partnership be undertaken. (Paragraph 19)

**Recommendation 17.2** That the continued employment of RSUSOs is revisited. (Paragraph 20)

**Recommendation 17.3** That the use of medical waivers during recruiting should be better advertised to RN and Army units, and other relevant participants in the recruiting chain. (Paragraph 21)

**Recommendation 17.4** That the Army should examine where the medical waiver authority is best lodged. (Paragraph 21)

**Recommendation 17.5** That the single Services should review their recruiting medical contracts to ensure assessments are carried out with a greater degree of consistency and common sense. (Paragraph 23)

**Recommendation 17.6** That the Services identify which units have experienced the most successful officer recruitment and explore the best means by which their successes can then be exported to less successful units. (Paragraph 24)

**Recommendation 17.7** The Army should revitalise work to create a Reserve officer career pathway. (Paragraph 28)

**Recommendation 17.8** That the Army develop and implement a policy to support appropriately Reserve unit commanding officers when the incumbent is a part time volunteer. (Paragraph 30)

**Recommendation 17.9** That the MOD, Joint Forces Command and the single Services review the terms under which Reserves are included on or in support of operations, in order to develop protocols which make their inclusion easier. (Paragraph 35)

**Recommendation 17.10** That the Services resist short-term in-year budgetary palliatives which directly or indirectly reduce routine Reserve activity. (Paragraph 37)

**Recommendation 17.11** That the Services now initiate work to determine optimum return-of-service/retention rate(s) for their Reserves and put in place measures to achieve them, with the same vigour that they have applied in their recruiting effort. (Paragraph 39)

**Recommendation 17.12** That work on the Reserves Estate Strategy be re-invigorated and accelerated, continuing to draw on local and regional expertise. We further recommend that priority is given to ensuring adequate funding is made available to sustain the existing VE until a new strategy can be implemented. (Paragraph 48)

**Recommendation 17.13** That the MOD update the work on mental health in the Services that it has undertaken with King's College and commission fresh work to look specifically at the current situation for Reserves. (Paragraph 51)

## PREVIOUS PROPOSALS FOR FURTHER WORK

### 2013/14 WORK

- Medical Reserves, to ensure coherence with single Service plans.
- Manpower metrics.
- Manpower MIS.
- Unit and sub-unit leadership and management.
- The recruiting & training pipelines and process effectiveness.
- Development of integrated training and (where relevant) pairing mechanisms.
- Harmonisation of training directives and resources.
- Enhanced measures for engaging with employers.
- Improved relationships with employers.
- Families' welfare.
- Terms and Conditions of Service.
- Cost of Reserves.

### 2014/15 WORK

- Terms and Conditions of Service for Reserves.
- Medical screening process and regional performance.
- Maritime Reserves pipeline improvement pilots.
- Reserve officer recruiting, training and development.
- The Reserve recruiting and training pipeline to Phase 2.
- Concepts of employment and manning for the Medical Reserves.
- Contractual constraints.
- Single Service arrangements for personnel and career management of Reserves.

### 2015/16 WORK

#### Review

- An assessment of the conclusions and implementation of adjustments arising from the Army Reserve Stock-take; parallel reviews within the other Services; and arrangements to share findings.
- Progress with the Reserve Footprint Strategy.

#### Funding

- Costing and cost comparison modelling.
- Governance and assurance arrangements for the £1.8bn FR20 funding.

#### Capability

- Development and growth of Reserve capabilities. Initial points of interest:
  - › Joint and single Service progress with Medical capability.
  - › Arrangements for Reserves use within employing formations.
  - › Development of defence engagement and resilience roles for Reserves.
  - › Refinement of the proposition, with particular attention to officers.
  - › Achievement of mandated collective training at unit and sub-unit level.

#### Manning, Recruiting and Training

- Progress towards FR20 manning levels.
- Sustainability of long-term support arrangements for Reserves, particularly to maintain inflow once measures such as Op FORTIFY have run their course.

- Effectiveness of retention positive activity.
- Capacity of Phase 2 and 3 training arrangements.

#### **Management**

- Progress with personnel management change implementation.

#### **Betterment**

- Provision and availability of unit equipment.
- Provision and availability of individual and collective training opportunity.

#### **Infrastructure**

- Progress with FR20 basing.

### **2016/17 WORK**

#### **Policy Review**

- An assessment of the impact of Army 2020 Refine work on the Army Reserve.
- Progress with the Reserve Footprint Strategy.
- Applicability and application of the Reserves narrative.

#### **Funding**

- Costing and cost comparison modelling.
- Arrangements for final programme reconciliation of the £1.8bn FR20 funding.
- Impact of post SDSR 15 efficiency measures and budget pressures.

#### **Capability**

- Development and growth of Reserve capabilities; points of interest:
  - › Joint and single Service progress with Medical capability.
  - › Arrangements for Reserves to be routinely mobilised and used.
  - › Development of defence engagement and resilience roles for Reserves.
  - › Refinement of the proposition, with particular attention to officers.
  - › Achievement of mandated collective training at unit and sub-unit level.
  - › Impact of efficiency measures on capability development.

#### **Manning, Recruiting and Training**

- Progress towards FR20 manning levels.
- Sustainability of long-term support arrangements for Reserves, post Op FORTIFY.
- Effectiveness of retention positive activity.
- Entry Medical deferrals and rates of resolution.
- Training output standards and provision for progression from Phase 1 to Phase 3.
- Coherence of statements of training requirements (SOTR) with future employability.
- Policies for establishing and maintaining the training and manning margin.

#### **Management**

- Progress with personnel management change implementation.
- Progress creating an Army Reserve officer career pathway.
- Measures to build on initiatives such as the Engineer Staff Corps.
- Arrangements for professional development for young officers and SNCOs.

#### **Infrastructure**

- Progress with FR20 basing and coherence with the Basing Strategy.

#### **Cultural Change**

- Measures to effect cultural change and measurement of their effectiveness.

**2017/18 WORK****Policy Review**

- Progress with the Reserve Footprint and Basing Strategies.
- Progress with the Future Employment System.

**Funding**

- Attribution and final programme reconciliation of the £1.8B FR20 funding.
- Impact of post SDSR 15 efficiency measures and budget pressures.

**Capability**

- Development and use of Reserve capabilities (all Services):
  - › Joint and single Service progress with Medical capability.
  - › Arrangements for Reserves to be routinely mobilised and used.
  - › Integration with employing formations.
  - › Arrangements for Reserves to support 'other formation' exercises.
  - › Progress with skills mapping.

**Manning, Recruiting and Training**

- Steady state support arrangements for Reserves.
- Effectiveness of retention positive activity.
- Entry Medical deferrals and rates of resolution.
- Phase 2 and Phase 3 training (including establishment visits).
- Progress to establish and maintain training and manning margin.

**Management**

- Progress with personnel management change implementation.
- Progress creating an Army Reserve officer career pathway.
- Arrangements for professional development for young officers and SNCOs.

**Infrastructure**

- Progress with FR20 basing and coherence with the Basing Strategy.

**Cultural Change**

- Measures to effect cultural change and measurement of their effectiveness.

**Specific Visits**

- RFCA-arranged Reserve Centre visits in and around: Leeds, Greater London, South East England, East Anglia and East Midlands.
- Headquarters CGRM, RN Capability Directors, Headquarters 1 Division, Headquarters 1 and 38 Group.
- Exercise Joint Warrior.



## SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DEFENCE RESPONSE TO 2017 EST REPORT



Ministry  
of Defence

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4.4.2.10

15 December 2017

Thank you for providing us some time to consider in detail the recommendations made in the External Scrutiny Team's 2017 report. Specific comments on each of the recommendations are at the Annex to this letter but I should also like to respond to some of the other observations the team has made.

I welcome the Team's conclusion that the Reserves are on a far healthier footing now than in previous years and the recognition of the hard work and commitment that has brought this about. The Reserves are a key element of our military capability and we are determined that they will not be allowed to fall back into the decline that was so evident to the Independent Commission six years ago.

The growth in the strength of the Reserves is plain for all to see. Numbers increased by more than 4% during the period the report covers, with officer numbers growing by around 6% in the same timeframe. The total strength of the Future Reserves population now exceeds 36,500, including more than 30,000 Army Reserves.

And our reservists are being used, albeit not in the same numbers as in previous years, due to a reduction in our overall levels of operational commitment. However, reservists continue to make significant contributions to operations around the world, including our efforts to counter Daesh (Op SHADER), our support to the UN peacekeeping mission in South Sudan (Op TRENTON) and our continuing mission in support of Afghanistan (Op TORAL).

Maintaining the capability of the Reserves does present a challenge, but not an insurmountable one. At a time of intense pressure on our resources, we must ensure that we make the best possible use of all our assets. This means carefully weighing the costs of our activities against the benefits they can deliver. We want to protect our ability to train and deploy our reservists, so that we can continue to offer

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them the opportunities that will motivate them. But we need to balance that desire against the imperative to maintain our standing Regular forces. They, too, need to see that we are not undermining our offer to them. There may be difficult decisions to be taken and reserves are not immune from them, but with reservists now increasingly involved in decision-making processes across the three Services, Reserves' views are now being factored into major decisions.

I note that you have reported before about the recruitment process, and particularly the medical aspects. The Services do recognise that many candidates prefer to speak with people at a local level when they have questions or concerns that need to be addressed. I understand the team's view that a common-sense approach could be applied to medical standards, but using common sense also includes taking account of risk. We will look again at the medical processes and standards, as the team has recommended, but I should caution against any expectation that this will lead to large-scale changes. Reserve training and duties can be demanding, physically and mentally; the Services must be confident that the vast majority – and preferably all – of those that they accept for enlistment will be able to withstand those rigours. If we are to use Reserves alongside their Regular counterparts, we must expect them to meet the same medical standards as the Regulars, in order that our Reserves can be used anywhere that Defence sees fit. We will, of course, continue to apply medical waivers where this is sensible in the context of an individual's skills and the role they are required to fill. And we will certainly look to see what more we can do to increase awareness of the waiver process among medical assessors and in the chain of command. But we will not grant an increased number of waivers unless we can be confident that doing so will not adversely affect the capability of the Reserves.

This brings me on to the subject of mental health. I am delighted that we have launched a partnership with the Royal Foundation, which aims to improve the mental health of current and former Service personnel, including reservists. This partnership will build on our own mental health and wellbeing strategy and will give access to advice and resources to improve training, education and information-sharing for the entire Armed Forces. The Foundation's partnership with veterans' charities and experts will greatly help with awareness-raising activity and support for those who are recovering from both physical and emotional challenges. I am hopeful that this will lead to better visibility of any issues that may be present among ex-Regular personnel in particular, so that we can ensure they get the support and advice they need.

Looking ahead, it may be timely for us to consider again whether we can remove any more barriers or obstacles that may be preventing us from making the very best use of all of the Reserve talent that is at our disposal. This could be by encouraging more ex-Regulars to consider joining the volunteer reserves, or perhaps by widening the range of opportunities that we can offer. We already employ reservists in a significant number of specialist roles, largely because they have skills that can more easily be maintained in civilian employment. But we might also consider increasing

the use of reservists to deliver routine military outputs, such as base support duties. Using reservists for these kinds of routine tasks, whether alongside or in place of Regulars, could also help address the cultural differences that the team has continued to observe. I am firmly of the view that the more reservists are seen as a part of our everyday operation, the faster we can address the attitudinal issues that may still persist in some places. But even if we do nothing fundamentally different, I am certain that we will still be able to offer interesting and challenging opportunities for reservists; in turn, we will have the very best people available to take up these roles and opportunities.

I should like to thank you and the team once again for the report. The independent scrutiny that you are able to bring to the Reserve Forces and the delivery of the Future Reserves programme is most welcome and highly valuable to the MOD.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gavin Williamson', with a large circular flourish below the name.

THE RT HON GAVIN WILLIAMSON CBE MP

## Annex to SofS letter

**RFCA EXTERNAL SCRUTINY TEAM  
RESPONSE TO SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS****17.1 A repeat recommendation that a formal contract review of the Recruiting Partnership (RPP) be undertaken.**

The RPP contract was reviewed earlier this year, resulting in its realignment. The Army has been working closely with Capita on an RPP Improvement Plan, which aims to improve inflow through implementation in four key areas: attraction, process improvement, policy optimisation and improving training success. Initial signs are promising: since April applications to join the Regular and Reserve Army are more than 20% higher than the same period last year. We now expect Capita to deliver on improvements in converting these applicants to enlistees and will be monitoring progress closely in the coming months. The Army has also increased its expenditure on marketing.

**17.2 That the continued employment of RSUSOs is revisited.**

Regimental Sub-Unit Support Officers (RSUSOs) have proven to be highly successful in enabling recruitment and retention. These roles are currently lifed until 2019; retention beyond this is being considered.

**17.3 That the use of medical waivers during recruiting should be better advertised to RN and Army units and other relevant participants in the recruiting chain.**

For all the Services, the policy on waivers of medical standards during recruiting is communicated to the chain of command, including Reserve Commanding Officers. Maritime Reserve units are believed to be well aware of it and have used waivers to varying degrees. Nevertheless, the Maritime Reserve will be re-apprised of the medical waiver process and the option available to challenge decisions. In the Army, current Reserve applications exceed those for Regulars, which suggests the system is well understood; the Army is, however, considering how it might improve its guidance, particularly to clarify the difference between an appeal and a waiver.

**17.4 That the Army should examine where the medical waiver authority is best lodged.**

Recruiting individuals who do not meet the normal medical entry standard is a Command, not a medical, decision and the Army owns the risk. The Employment Branch in the Army Personnel Directorate currently authorises waivers. We do not believe that it would be appropriate to move this responsibility elsewhere.

**17.5 That the single Services should review their recruiting medical contracts to ensure assessments are carried out with a greater degree of consistency and common sense.**

The medical assessment system has to balance the requirement to recruit people who are able to undertake the full range of military tasks with a system that can accept individuals with medical limitations if their capability matches specific employment. Entry medical policy is owned by the Surgeon General. Policy updates are staffed through the Medical Employment Standards Military Judgement Panel, a tri-Service committee. Where possible, they seek to align standards across all three Services.

**17.6 That the Services identify which units have experienced the most successful officer recruitment and explore the best means by which their successes can then be exported to less successful units.**

The Maritime Reserve-wide Accelerated Officer Programme (AOP), previously the HERMES initiative, drew on selected units' best practice which has now been incorporated into the new normal business for the Maritime Reserves. This process and its wide advertising to new recruits has significantly improved the inflow of RNR Officers, with substantial increases already noted.

The Army continues to work to improve communication and access to information on Reserves and Reserve issues. The Army Reserve Manning Delivery Board, chaired by the Commander Field Army, has highlighted unit best practice to the Divisional Assistant Commander community so that successful measures can be replicated across the Field Army. Deputy Commander Field Army conducts an annual Op FORTIFY Mission Exploitation Symposium to identify and share best practice amongst stakeholders. Concurrently, 'sharing best practice' is a standing agenda item at the tri-Service Reserves Co-ordination Group.

The RAF Reserves do not conduct officer recruitment on a large scale. Their officer cadre is, by design, small and tends to exist in areas where officers are 'producers' such as in the Intelligence and Medical cadres.

**17.7 The Army should revitalise work to create a reserve officer career pathway.**

Work has already been initiated on a number of fronts and will continue into 2018. A review of Reserve officer training was started in Jun 17 and will report to the Army Reserve Executive Group shortly. Priorities are the coherence of Reserve officer staff training and the streamlining of officer commissioning. Concurrently, the Reserves Directorate has been engaged in the Joint Force Development Defence Education Pathway Review which is looking at the provisions for Staff Training at Colonel rank and beyond. Further work includes a check on Reserve staff establishments and consideration of better communication of career pathways to officers.

**17.8 That the Army develop and implement a policy to support Reserve unit commanding officers appropriately when the incumbent is a part-time volunteer.**

Unit prioritisation of manpower already occurs across Regular and Reserve units, driven by operational commitments and readiness. As a result, the Army considers current policy as sufficient. The Army selects Reserve Commanding Officers of the requisite quality that are capable, willing and able to assume a Command appointment. The Army recognises that part-time Reserve Commanding Officers need to be supported by a full complement of quality Regular/full-time staff to be successful and it is manning policy to ensure this is the case.

**17.9 That the MOD, Joint Forces Command and the single Services review the terms under which Reserves are included on or in support of operations, in order to develop protocols which make their inclusion easier.**

We acknowledge that the opportunity to provide support to operations through mobilised service is a defining element of Reserve service. In general, fewer reservists have been called into permanent service in recent years than in the

past, but this reflects changed operational tempo rather than any change of policy. The Army is working to refine the process by which mobilisation opportunities for Army Reserves are forecast and managed. The aim is to establish an accurate demand signal, a greater understanding of the available supply and to secure enduring funding for Reserve mobilisation. Mobilisation can cost additional resources and there is always a tension between short-term finance and long-term value for money. We are also examining whether there may be different models for reservist employment for some lower risk operations that would reduce the cost and administration burden to Defence and therefore make the use of reservists easier and more attractive.

**17.10 That the Services resist short-term in-year budgetary palliatives which directly or indirectly reduce routine Reserve activity.**

All areas of Defence must ensure that we are making best use of the resources we have. This means that we have to routinely examine how we prioritise our funding. Reserves are not exempt from this process. However, before we take any decisions to alter Reserves funding we will conduct a full assessment of any impact.

**17.11 That the Services now initiate work to determine optimum return of service/retention rate(s) for their Reserves and put in place measures to achieve them, with the same vigour that they have applied to their recruiting effort.**

Volunteer Reserve service does not attract any Return of Service obligation. It is, therefore, difficult to see how a truly scientific optimum rate of return could be derived – or how useful it would be. One of the attractions of the Reserves is that reservists can leave relatively easily should their circumstances change. That said, retention is a fundamental consideration in FR20 and retention-positive measures are at the heart of our routine activity. We will continue to promote excellent training and good administration, which are the principal drivers for high retention.

**17.12 That work on the Reserve Estate Strategy be re-invigorated and accelerated, continuing to draw on local and regional expertise. We further recommend that priority is given to ensuring adequate funding is made available to sustain the existing Volunteer Estate until a new strategy can be implemented.**

We are committed to moving towards a smaller, but better situated, better quality estate for our Regulars and Reserves. In taking this forward, we will continue to draw on local and regional expertise, principally through the RFCAs. The Maritime Reserve has already delivered substantial betterment of the Volunteer Estate and plans to do more. The Army Reserve Basing Strategy is under development and will address estate challenges. In the meantime, FR20 funding for improvements to Army Reserve Centres has been committed under Project NEWBURY.

**17.13 That the MOD update the work on mental health in the Services that it has undertaken with King's College and commission fresh work to look specifically at the current situation for Reserves.**

We acknowledge the importance of medical support to Reservists, from recruiting through to becoming a Veteran. Reservists are often overlooked because they are not constantly under the chain of command's eye in post-operational periods when mental health issues may arise. Indeed, many may have left the Reserves

and will not automatically be considered as veterans when symptoms present themselves. The recommendation to update the work on mental health in the Services and to look specifically at the current situation for reservists will be included in both the Defence Mental Health and Well-being Strategy and the Surgeon General's 'Defence Priorities for Health and Health Services Research'.







## MOD TARGETS FOR RESERVE STRENGTH AND RECRUITING

The table shows trained strength targets for the Maritime Reserve, Army Reserve and Royal Auxiliary Air Force up to FY 2018.

Table 1	Target	End FY 13	End FY 14	End FY 15	End FY 16	End FY 17	End FY 18
Maritime Reserve	Trained Strength	1,780	1,790	1,900	2,320	2,790	3,100
Army Reserve	Trained Strength	18,800	19,900	20,200	22,900	26,100	30,100
Royal Auxiliary Air Force	Trained Strength	1,200	1,400	1,600	1,860	1,860	1,860
<b>Total</b>	<b>Trained Strength</b>	<b>21,780</b>	<b>23,090</b>	<b>23,700</b>	<b>27,080</b>	<b>30,750</b>	<b>35,060</b>



## DEFENCE STATISTICS - RESERVE MANNING ACHIEVEMENT & TRENDS<sup>21</sup>

### Headline Figures

**Table 1.** Total and trained strength of the Future Reserves 2020 (FR20).

	2014 1 Apr	2015 1 Apr	2016 1 Apr	2017 1 Apr	2018 1 Apr	Change 2017/2018
<b>All Services</b>						
<b>Total strength</b>	28,150	30,810	34,760	36,220	36,280	+ 60
<b>Trained strength</b>	<b>23,360</b>	<b>24,630</b>	<b>27,270</b>	<b>31,360</b>	<b>32,220</b>	<b>+ 860</b>
<b>Maritime Reserve</b>						
<b>Total strength</b>	2,850	3,160	3,540	3,560	3,600	+ 40
<b>Trained strength</b>	<b>1,870</b>	<b>1,980</b>	<b>2,350</b>	<b>2,560</b>	<b>2,760</b>	<b>+ 200</b>
<b>Army Reserve</b>						
<b>Total strength</b>	23,580	25,440	28,670	29,940	29,710	- 230
<b>Trained strength</b>	<b>20,060</b>	<b>21,030</b>	<b>23,030</b>	<b>26,660</b>	<b>29,960</b>	<b>+ 300</b>
<b>RAF Reserves</b>						
<b>Total strength</b>	1,720	2,220	2,540	2,730	2,980	+ 250
<b>Trained strength</b>	<b>1,440</b>	<b>1,620</b>	<b>1,890</b>	<b>2,150</b>	<b>2,510</b>	<b>+ 360</b>

Source: Defence Statistics (Tri-Service)

### Appendices:

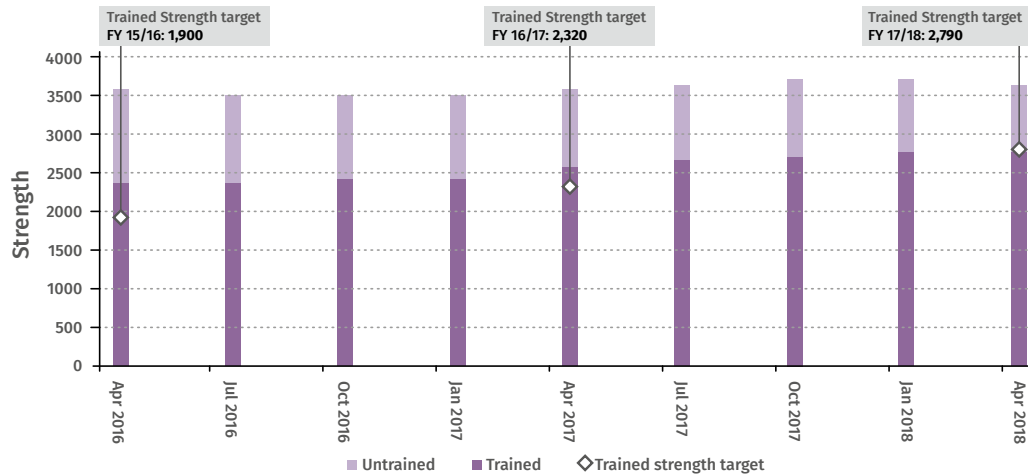
1. Maritime Reserves
2. Army Reserves
3. RAF Reserves
4. Officer data
5. Qualifying notes

21. Data is drawn from the Defence Statistics Report as at 1 Apr 2018.

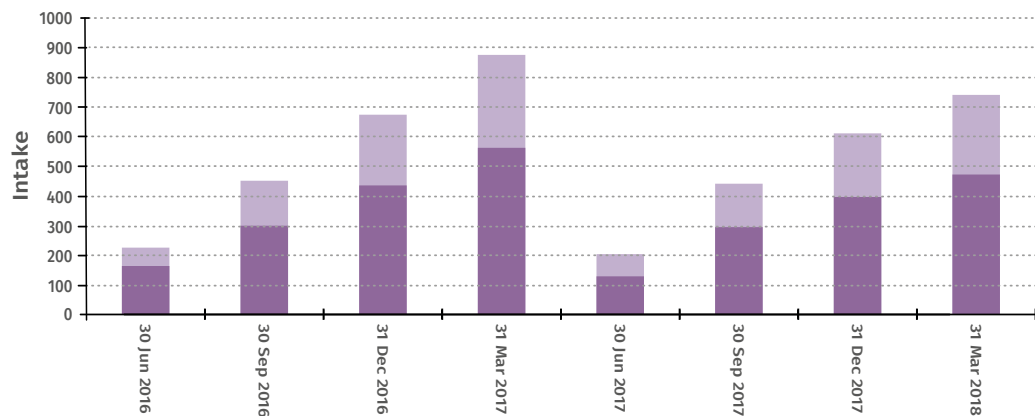


## Maritime Reserve

Maritime Reserve Strength



Maritime Reserve cumulative financial year to date Intake

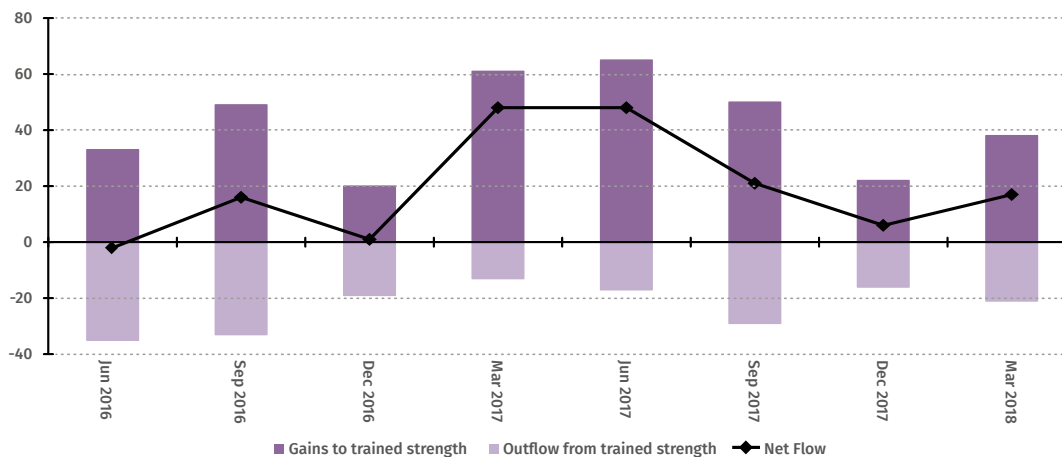


**Note:**

**New Entrants** comprises of all intake into untrained strength. It includes new recruits, untrained ex-Regulars (either direct transfer or following a break in service), and untrained Reserve re-joiners (following a break in service or transferring from another Reserve Force)

**Trained Direct Entrants** comprises all intake into the trained strength and includes trained ex-Regulars (either direct transfers or following a break in service), and trained Reserve re-joiners following a break in service.

Maritime Reserve Quarterly gains to Trained Strength and Trained Outflow

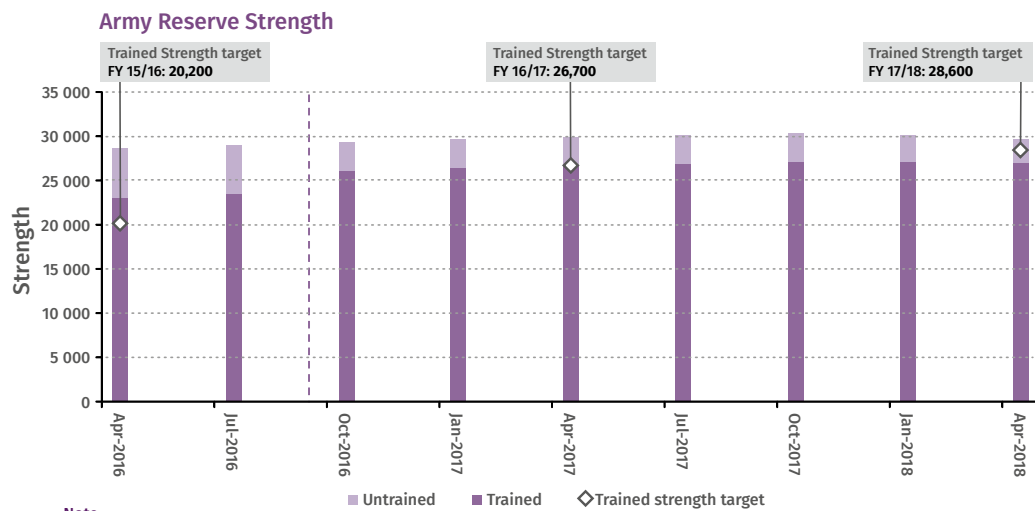


**Note:**

**Gains to trained strength** figures comprise personnel who complete Phase 2 training and personnel who enter directly onto the trained strength of the Maritime Reserve.

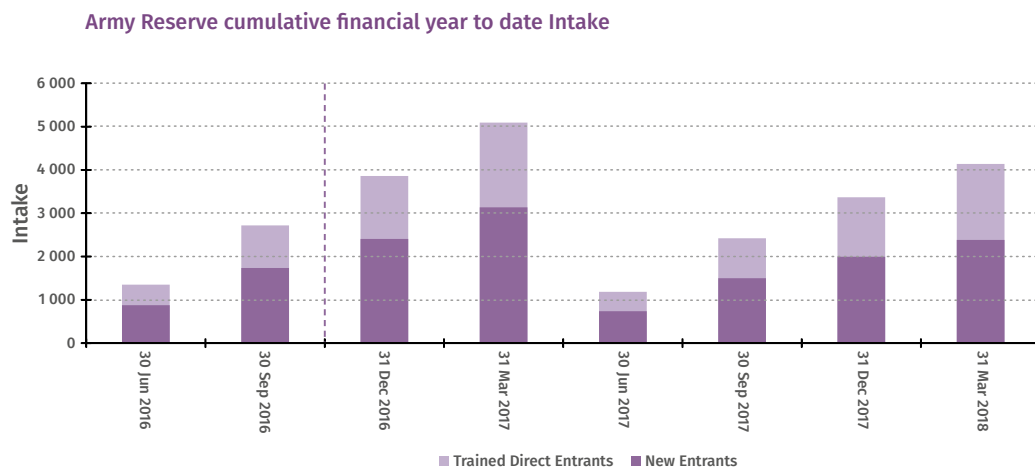


## Army Reserve



**Note:**

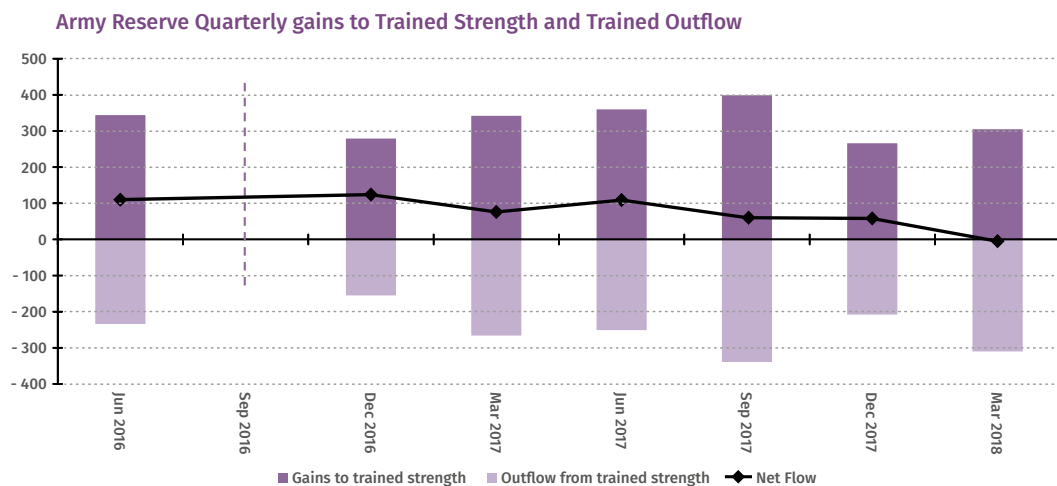
Break in series represents the change in definition of Army Trained Strength in October 2016 from Phase 2 to Phase 1 trained.



**Note:**

**New Entrants** comprises of all intake into untrained strength. It includes new recruits, untrained ex-Regulars (either direct transfer or following a break in service), and untrained Reserve re-joiners (following a break in service or transferring from another Reserve Force).

**Trained Direct Entrants** comprises all intake into the trained strength and includes trained ex-Regulars (either direct transfers or following a break in service), and trained Reserve re-joiners following a break in service. Break in series represents the **change and definition of Army Trained Strength** in October 2016 from Phase 2 to Phase 1 trained.

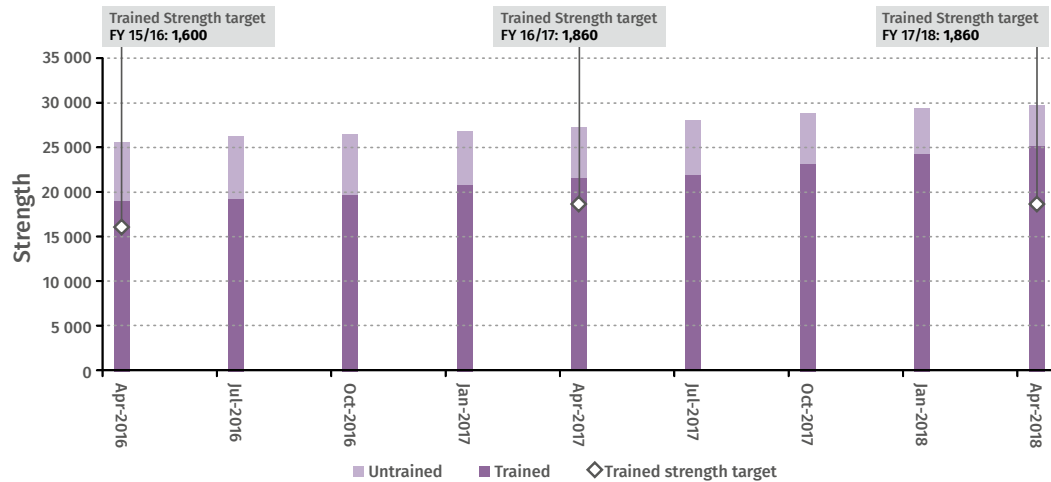


**Note:**

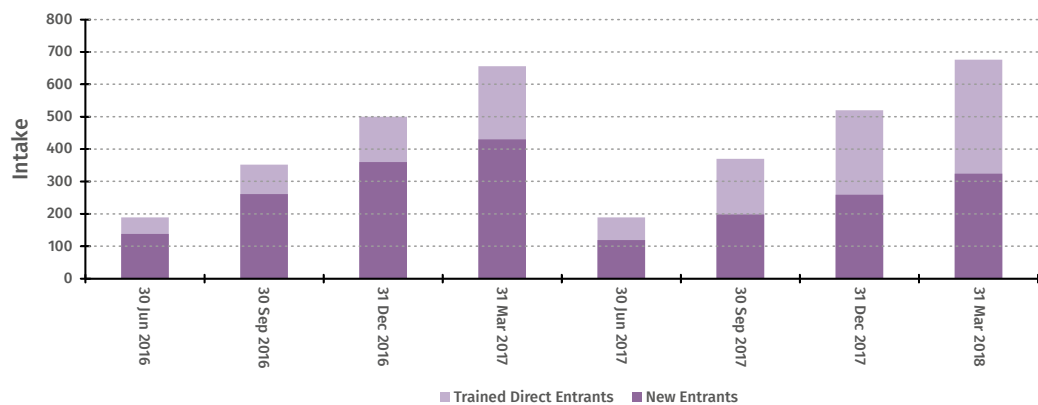
**Gains to trained strength** figures comprises personnel who complete Phase 1 (post-October 2016) training and personnel who enter directly onto the trained strength of the Army Reserve. Break in series represents the **change in definition of Army Trained Strength** in October 2016 from Phase 2 to Phase 1 trained. Gains to trained strength and outflow from trained strength data are unavailable for the month of September 2016 as a result.

## RAuxAF

### RAF Reserve Strength



### RAF Reserve cumulative financial year to date Intake

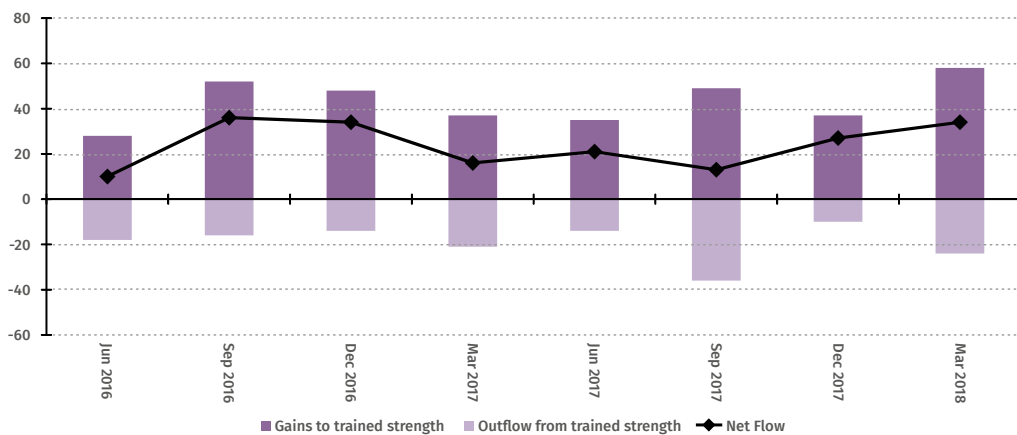


**Note:**

**New Entrants** comprises of all intake into untrained strength. It includes new recruits, untrained ex-Regulars (either direct transfer or following a break in service), and untrained Reserve re-joiners (following a break in service or transferring from another Reserve Force).

**Trained Direct Entrants** comprises all intake into the trained strength and includes trained ex-Regulars (either direct transfers or following a break in service), and trained Reserve re-joiners following a break in service.

### RAF Reserve monthly gains to Trained Strength and Trained Outflow



**Note:**

**Gains to trained strength** figures comprises personnel who complete Phase 2 training and personnel who enter directly onto the trained strength of the RAF Reserves.

## Officers

**Table 2a Intake to and Outflow from Officers in the Maritime Reserve (Trained and Untrained)**

	1 Apr 2014 to 31 Mar 2015	1 Apr 2015 to 31 Mar 2016	1 Apr 2016 to 31 Mar 2017	1 Apr 2017 to 31 Mar 2018
<b>Officers strength at start of period</b>	<b>840</b>	<b>900</b>	<b>1,040</b>	<b>1,120</b>
<b>Intake to Officers</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>150</b>
from another part of the Armed Forces of which	140	210	180	140
Rank to Officer in the Maritime Reserve	30	80	50	60
Regulars	80	80	100	70
University Service Units	10	10	10	-
No previous service	10	10	20	-
<b>Outflow from Officers</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>120</b>
to another part of the Armed Forces of which	30	20	20	20
Regulars	10	~	10	10
Left the Armed Forces	60	60	100	100
<b>Officers strength at end of period</b>	<b>900</b>	<b>1,040</b>	<b>1,120</b>	<b>1,160</b>

Source: Defence Statistics (Tri-Service)

**Table 2b Intake to and Outflow from Officers in the Army Reserve (Trained and Untrained)**

	1 Apr 2014 to 31 Mar 2015	1 Apr 2015 to 31 Mar 2016	1 Apr 2016 to 31 Mar 2017	1 Apr 2017 to 31 Mar 2018
<b>Officers strength at start of period</b>	<b>4,350</b>	<b>4,490</b>	<b>4,840</b>	<b>5,100</b>
<b>Intake to Officers</b>	<b>620</b>	<b>760</b>	<b>680</b>	<b>750</b>
from another part of the Armed Forces of which	550	640	600	670
Rank to Officer in the Army Reserve	80	100	100	120
Regulars	250	320	300	290
University Service Units	140	170	140	140
No previous service	70	110	90	80
<b>Outflow from Officers</b>	<b>470</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>430</b>	<b>440</b>
to another part of the Armed Forces of which	140	120	170	140
Regulars	60	70	100	80
Left the Armed Forces	340	280	260	300
<b>Officers strength at end of period</b>	<b>4,490</b>	<b>4,840</b>	<b>5,090</b>	<b>5,410</b>

Source: Defence Statistics (Tri-Service)

Table 2c Intake to and Outflow from Officers in the RAF Reserve (Trained and Untrained)

	1 Apr 2014 to 31 Mar 2015	1 Apr 2015 to 31 Mar 2016	1 Apr 2016 to 31 Mar 2017	1 Apr 2017 to 31 Mar 2018
<b>Officers strength at start of period</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>390</b>	<b>430</b>
<b>Intake to Officers</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>170</b>
from another part of the Armed Forces of which	70	90	80	150
Rank to Officer in the RAF Reserve	10	20	10	-
Regulars	40	60	60	110
University Service Units	..	-	~	-
No previous service	10	~	~	20
<b>Outflow from Officers</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>50</b>
to another part of the Armed Forces of which	10	20	10	10
Regulars	..	~	~	~
Left the Armed Forces	20	30	30	30
<b>Officers strength at end of period</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>390</b>	<b>430</b>	<b>560</b>

Source: Defence Statistics (Tri-Service)

## Accompanying Notes to Tables

1. Future Reserves 2020 (FR20) includes Volunteer Reserves who are mobilised, HRR and Volunteer Reserve personnel serving on ADC or FTRS contracts. Sponsored Reserves provide a more cost effective solution than Volunteer Reserves are also included in the Army Reserve FR20. Non Regular Permanent Staff (NRPS), Expeditionary Forces Institute (EFI) and University Officer Cadets and Regular Reservists are excluded.
2. Trained Strength comprises military personnel who have completed Phase 1 and 2 training for Maritime Reserve, the Army Reserve (prior to 1 October 2016) and the Royal Air Force Reserves. Following the change in definition of trained strength from 1 October 2016, trained strength for the Army Reserve comprises of personnel who have completed Phase 1 training.
3. Intake and outflow statistics are calculated from month-on-month comparisons of officer strength data. There has been a minor change in the methodology used to produce Reserves statistics from 1 April 2017. This now allows us to capture individuals who intake and outflow within the same month. For example, if an individual joins on 3 March and leaves on 29 March they are now counted as an intake and an outflow under the new methodology, whereas previously this would not have been identifiable. The net effect of this change on our Statistics is negligible and the figures above would not differ from that calculated previously by greater than ten personnel. This change does, however, improve both the accuracy and efficiency of our processes by, for example improving identification of those Officers who previously served in University Service Units.
4. Intake to the FR20 shows the most recent previous service recorded on JPA including those serving in another Reserve Service. Personnel may have had a break in service and may have served in more than one role. Intake from University Service Units figures just show that someone has been in a University Service Unit at some point in our data; they may not have moved straight into the FR20 directly after leaving. Only ex-Cadets are counted as an intake from University Service Units. Army Officers include Army Officer Cadets.
5. Outflow from the FR20 includes those personnel moving to another part of the Armed Forces within the calendar month. 'Left the Armed Forces' may include those who have a break in service before joining another part of the Armed Forces.
6. Intake and outflow from the Regular Forces includes transfers from/to another service.
7. University Service Units includes University Royal Navy Units (URNU), University Officer Training Corps (UOTC), University Air Squadrons (UAS) and Defence Technical Undergraduate Scheme (DTUS). Individuals counted ex-Cadets with a prior assignment type of one of these on the JPA system. Note that an individual does not have to have been serving in the University Service Unit associated with their future Reserve Service e.g. an individual may have joined the Army Reserve after serving in the URNU.

### Rounding

Figures have been rounded to the nearest 10, though numbers ending in '5' have been rounded to the nearest multiple of 20 to prevent systematic bias. Totals and subtotals have been rounded separately and may not equal the sum of their rounded parts.

### Symbols

- r Figure revised since last publication
- ~ 5 or fewer
- Zero
- .. Data not available
- || Discontinuity marker

## 2018 REPORT MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- 18.1** Given the challenging recruiting environment encountered by the three Services and the failure of the DRS, we recommend that the MOD and Services do not take further savings measures from the FR20 £1.8bn funding to manage FY 18 in-year financial pressures. (Paragraph 15)
- 18.2** We would welcome an update on the proposed revisions to JSP 950 when these actions are completed. (Paragraph 22)
- 18.3** Given the criticality of DRS to the inflow of applicants to recruits, we recommend that 'Hypercare' is continued until all three Services are confident that DRS works as intended reducing the 'time of flight' between application and being loaded on a Phase 1 recruit training course. (Paragraph 26)
- 18.4** Linked to paragraphs 16-26 above, until the frictions in the recruiting system are ironed out, whether induced by DRS or Service policies, we recommend that Operation FORTIFY measures, such as the RSUSO, are continued beyond FR20 until the Services hit their trained strength FR20 targets, and they are confident that manning is on an even plateau. (Paragraph 27)
- 18.5** We would recommend that this is an example of best practice that the other two Services might examine in order encourage and increase commissioning within their Reserves. (Paragraph 28)
- 18.6** We recommend that the three Services continue to examine that their courses – particularly those run by Training Schools – policies and processes are adapted to take account of the needs of the Reservist. (Paragraph 32)
- 18.7** We recommend that MOD produce an agreed costing method to compare the cost of Regulars and Reservists, drawing on the above work and that done by the Land Environment Military Capability Output Costs (LEMCOC), and examine the opportunities to further increase their utility and value to Defence. (Paragraph 36)
- 18.8** We continue to recommend that MOD should consider the option to restore the FR20 Commission's proposal to establish a contingency reserve fund to be available for short notice and duration operations. (Paragraph 37)
- 18.9** That the Reserves Estate Strategy be re-invigorated and accelerated, continuing to draw on local and regional expertise. We further recommend that priority is given to ensuring adequate funding is made available to sustain the existing Reserve estate until the new strategy is implemented. (Paragraph 49)



## SUMMARY OF PRIORITIES FOR 2018/19 WORK

In addition to the formal requirements set out in the Reserve Forces Act, the following themes will be examined during the 2018/19 reporting period:

### Policy Review

- Optimisation of the Reserve Estate

### Funding

- Impact of saving or efficiency measures on the £1.8bn FR20 funding

### Capability

- Deployed medical support to the Reserves
- RAF's Force Protection

### Manning, Recruiting, Retention and Training

- Manning targets on the completion of FR20 Programme
- Medical entry standards and rates of resolution
- Effectiveness of DRS
- Delivery of the 'Offer'
- Delivery of Phase 2 and 3 training and training by Defence Training Schools, such as at Leconfield
- Newly established Army 2020 Refine battalions and paired units on training
- Arms/Trades/Specialist sponsors of Phase 3 training – both at the training establishments and staff within Service headquarters

### Specific Visits

- RFCA arranged visits to units in: North West England, North East England, Scotland, West Midlands, Northern Ireland
- Headquarters RN, Army, RAF, Headquarters 3 Division, Headquarters 77 Brigade
- Headquarters Surgeon General and 2 Medical Brigade
- Land Information Assurance Group, Joint Cyber Unit and Joint Services Signal Unit – Corsham
- Exercise JOINT WARRIOR



## EXTERNAL SCRUTINY TEAM – MEMBERSHIP

### Chairman:

Lieutenant General (Retd) R V Brims CB CBE DSO DL

### Members:

Major General (Retd) S F N Lalor CB TD

Brigadier P R Mixer (Retd) OStJ QVRM TD DL

Captain I M Robinson (Retd) OBE RD RNR

Colonel T S Richmond (Retd) OBE TD DL FCA

C N Donnelly CMG TD BA

Air Vice-Marshal (Retd) P D Luker CB OBE AFC DL

### Clerk:

Major General (Retd) J H Gordon CB CBE







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