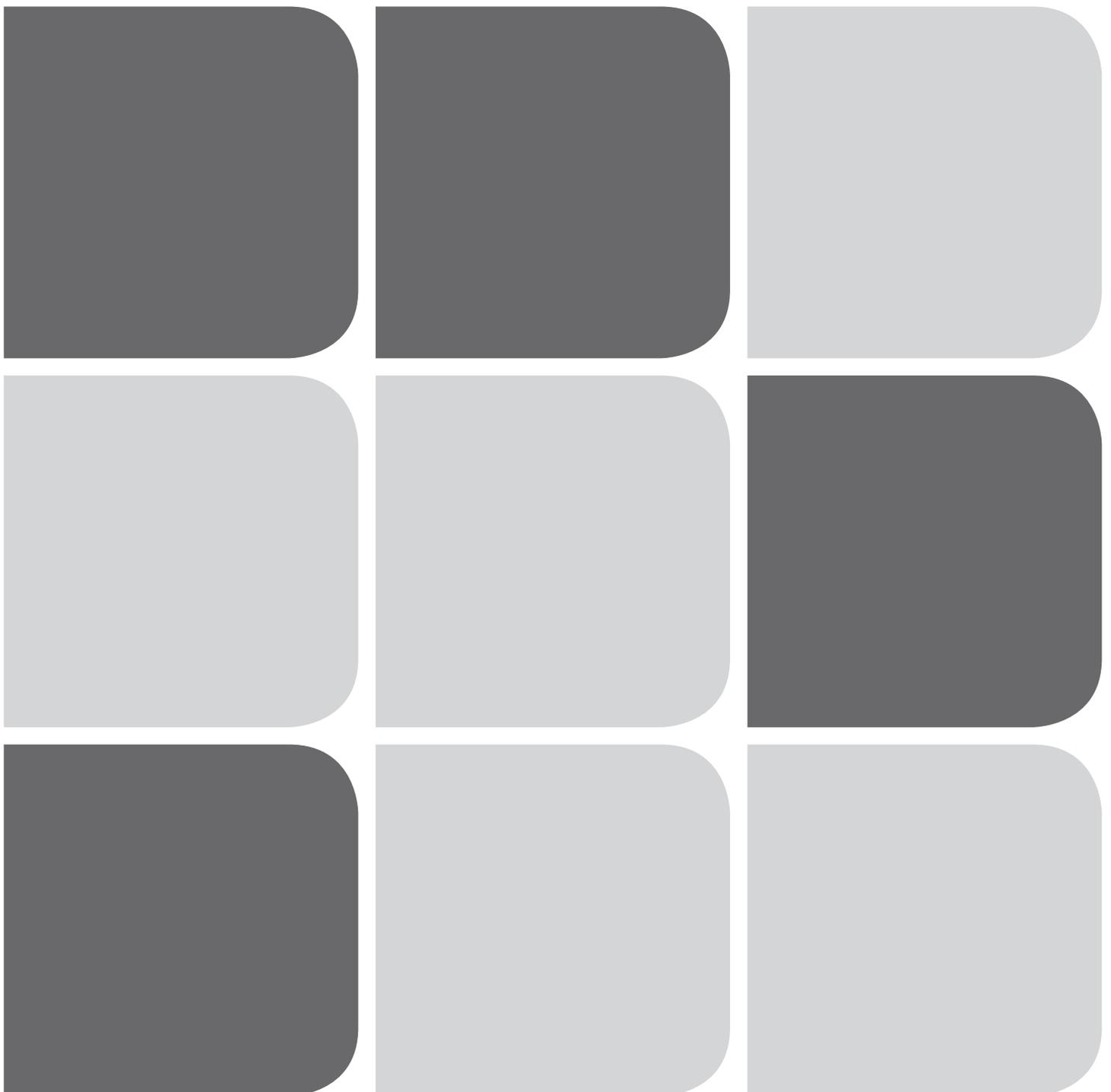


Welfare and duty of care in Armed Forces initial training

Ofsted's report to the Minister for Defence Personnel,
Welfare & Veterans



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Ministerial foreword

Training to join the front line in the Armed Forces is a tough but rewarding challenge for recruits and trainees and for those who look after their care and well-being. Over the course of a number of busy months spent in initial training, young people learn the core military, specialist, trade and professional skills they need to become members of their chosen Service.

In this report, Ofsted comments on inspection visits to 10 training establishments undertaken over a period of 12 months. The Armed Forces are committed to promoting the care and welfare needs of recruits and trainees. Ofsted confirms this view and reports the overall welfare and duty of care of recruits and trainees as satisfactory. Ofsted reports that where problems exist, they are not related to the quality of welfare and duty of care support, but to structure, management systems and staffing issues, and it is these aspects of provision that are judged as being 'inadequate' in two locations.

Given the current operational and resourcing climate, the challenge is to remain focused to ensure that leaders and managers use an incisive evaluation of strengths and areas for improvement to ensure that change plans continue to have a positive impact for recruits, trainees and staff.

This is the second report into welfare and duty of care commissioned from Ofsted which we must use to improve our self-assessment process and check on the impact of change. I am grateful to Her Majesty's Chief Inspector and her team for the detailed work they carry out on behalf of the Armed Forces.



Andrew Robathan MP
Minister for Defence Personnel, Welfare & Veterans

Preface

I am pleased to introduce the second Ofsted report regarding the quality of welfare and duty of care for recruits and trainees in Armed Forces training.

Last year, I highlighted the strong commitment from the majority of training personnel to promoting the well-being of recruits and trainees. This commitment remains a characteristic in most of the establishments inspected this year. Recruits and trainees report that they feel safe and well supported, particularly by their instructors and support staff. Some instructors have experienced active service and are, therefore, particularly well placed to prepare recruits and trainees for the challenges of front line operations. Good progress has been made, too, in establishing productive relationships with parents. There is now a more coordinated approach, between home and the training establishments, to supporting recruits and trainees, particularly during times of difficulty. Criminal Records Bureau checking is improved in most of the establishments inspected, in comparison with the findings from their previous inspections. However, this is an important area for improvement in one Royal Navy and two Army establishments. Overall, training establishments place a significant emphasis on managing risk.

The inspection of welfare and duty of care in Armed Forces training started in 2004 and was first undertaken by the Adult Learning Inspectorate. Since 2007, Ofsted has assumed this responsibility. There has been a marked improvement in outcomes for recruits and trainees over the six-year period. The basic elements of effective welfare and duty of care at the point of delivery are now intrinsic to the training and support in all the establishments inspected this year. However, there is a need to ensure that this momentum is maintained, as there are indications that the rate of progress is slowing; inspectors' judgements about the quality of welfare and duty of care systems and delivery this year are generally similar to each

establishment's previous inspection. In 2009–10, the grades for overall effectiveness ranged from good in four out of 10 establishments to inadequate in two. A key factor is consistency of the quality of leadership and management, especially at the time of a handover of command. Operational demands are also resulting in extra pressures on staff in phase 2 training establishments and this contributes to difficulties in providing staff cover at all times. The wastage rate, although lower than three years ago, is still too high, especially at RAF Honington where it is around 40%. The Armed Forces need to keep their selection procedures under constant review in order to ensure that those recruited can meet the physical and professional demands of their training.

The inspections of the last two years have focused on training establishments' progress in introducing and developing their self-assessment procedures and improvement planning systems. There are signs that training establishments are beginning to demonstrate a commitment to self-assessment and improvement, but progress is too slow.

There is scope now for establishments to assess the impact of initiatives to promote better welfare and duty of care, and to link professional development more closely with the improvement planning process. Such planning needs to be underpinned by rigorous self-evaluation to ensure that recruits and trainees have access to high-quality training, are well cared for and are well supported in order to meet their personal and professional goals. Retention and success rates are integral to measuring effectiveness. Where there is a lack of understanding about how to deliver effective and sustainable practice, it is important that professional development activity focuses on the skills required to lead and manage change while maintaining high levels of welfare and duty of care for recruits and trainees at all times.

Preface continued

A good organisation builds upon its strengths to address its areas for development. This annual report incorporates key findings and recommendations for the Armed Forces. These findings and recommendations provide a clear agenda for further improvement.

Finally, I should like to thank the Ministry of Defence, Training Headquarters and the training establishments inspected for their cooperation during this inspection cycle.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Christine Gilbert". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath.

Christine Gilbert
Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's
Services and Skills

Background

This is Ofsted's second report into welfare and duty of care in Armed Forces training, the first being in 2009.¹ It draws on evidence from the inspection of 10 training establishments between June 2009 and January 2010.

Ofsted's detailed inspection remit is specified in a Memorandum of Understanding and Schedule between the Secretary of State for Defence and Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills. This includes a requirement for Ofsted to:

- determine the extent to which progress has been made in addressing issues of care, welfare and support for recruits and trainees during initial training in the Armed Forces, including examination of self-assessment by the establishments
- evaluate the effectiveness of the strategic and operational management of the care, welfare and support for recruits and trainees during initial training in the Armed Forces
- take account of the national care standards and safeguarding where relevant.

Ofsted inspects welfare and duty of care in phase 1 and phase 2 training. Phase 1 is the general introduction to military life. Phase 2 covers the more technical and professional training skills required to become a member of the Armed Forces. Six of the establishments inspected provide phase 1 training, of which two train only under-18s and two provide combined phase 1 and 2 training. One officer training establishment was also inspected.

Inspectors spent more time in Army training establishments, which reflects the larger size and scale of the service in comparison with the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force. All but one of the establishments had been externally inspected in a previous cycle; one establishment had not been inspected before.

Inspection focused on training for initial phase 1 and phase 2 training.

Each training establishment received no more than 24 hours' notice of their inspection visit. Inspections lasted two days. Overall, approximately 400 recruits and trainees, and 175 military and welfare staff were interviewed.

Inspectors applied the principles in Ofsted's Common Inspection Framework for Further Education and Skills to guide the inspection process.² Each inspection focused on:

- the impact and effectiveness of arrangements for welfare and duty of care for trainees
- the impact and effectiveness of management systems for welfare and duty of care for trainees
- the development and impact of the self-assessment process
- the progress made in the above aspects by each establishment since its previous inspection.

Inspectors identified strengths, satisfactory aspects and weaknesses and used the evidence to inform key judgements and grade:

- the overall effectiveness of welfare and duty of care
- the establishment's capacity to improve welfare and duty of care
- progress in self-assessment.

Inspectors used Ofsted's four-point grading scale of outstanding, good, satisfactory and inadequate.

¹ *The quality of welfare and duty of care for recruits and trainees in the Armed Forces* (080194), Ofsted, 2009; www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/080194.

² The Common Inspection Framework for Further Education and Skills (2009) sets out the principles applicable to the inspection of post-16, non-higher education and training and meets the requirements of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Key findings

- The vast majority of recruits and trainees interviewed by inspectors felt personally secure and professionally supported during training. Most were very well-motivated, thoughtful and confident individuals. Military and non-military welfare staff generally responded very well to recruits' and trainees' welfare and professional concerns. Non-commissioned officer instructors are instrumental in providing effective personal and professional support.
- The Armed Forces practise a nil-tolerance approach to instances of bullying and harassment during training, either between recruits or trainees or by instructor staff. Recruits and trainees interviewed stated that any instances of bullying or harassment are dealt with promptly and effectively.
- Mandatory, specialist training for instructors continues to improve the delivery of welfare and duty of care in practice. However some instructors are unable to attend this specialist training within the required timescale due to operational requirements.
- Parents and guardians provide good moral support and encouragement at times of uncertainty or unhappiness, such as homesickness. The arrangements for the care of recruits and trainees under the age of 18 are thorough, well established and effective, including routine contact with parents.
- Arrangements for the promotion and practice of equality and diversity in all the establishments inspected are satisfactory, and have improved in comparison with their previous inspections. Appropriate equalities training is provided for recruits, trainees and permanent staff during induction and annually. This includes explanations and discussions of service core values, standards and conduct, and the basic principles and practice of equality and diversity.
- In the majority of the establishments inspected there are well developed management systems for identifying and monitoring recruits and trainees deemed to be at personal or professional risk.
- Unit welfare officer teams in Army training establishments play an increasingly effective role in the coordination, monitoring and delivery of good welfare and duty of care for recruits and trainees and also for permanent staff.
- Recruits' and trainees' opportunities to undertake team or individual sports and use physical training facilities are a sustained strength in all but one of the establishments inspected.
- Further progress needs to be made in timely Criminal Records Bureau checking, although the general rate and number of checks for relevant staff have improved in comparison with the findings in the last inspection cycle.
- The effectiveness of welfare and duty of care systems has remained fairly static over two inspection cycles. Only one of the establishments inspected in this cycle had made further improvement in its overall effectiveness of welfare and duty of care since its previous inspection, and one had deteriorated.
- The wastage rate from training is high and efforts to reduce it on an establishment-by-establishment basis meet with varying success. While the Armed Forces generally support those they retain in training well, the dropout rate from training is between 20% and 30% in four establishments and as high as 40% in one. This high level of wastage is a long-standing issue and reflects ongoing problems with medical screening and maintaining rigorous physical standards at the recruitment and selection stage. Some new entrants have great difficulty in meeting the physical demands of the course, especially those in the younger age range.

- Basic skills support for those with low levels of literacy and language skills remains a key area for further improvement, primarily for recruits and trainees in the Army.
- Instructor workloads in phase 2 are high. By contrast, staffing levels and workload in the phase 1 training establishments inspected are better managed and now satisfactory, in comparison with the findings from the phase 1 establishments inspected in 2008–09.
- The pay as you dine system, as currently implemented in phase 2, is not suitable for phase 2 trainees in the younger age range. Pay as you dine is not well supported by many trainees despite the good efforts to promote its take-up. The phase 2 training establishments inspected have difficulty in ensuring that each trainee is receiving a sufficient nutritional intake in order meet the demands of physical and professional training.
- Self-assessment is only slowly improving in practice or impact. Although self-assessment is a cornerstone of continuous improvement practice and has been a requirement for all military training establishments since 2007, its development has been slow. Until recently, guidance from Training Headquarters has not been clear enough and the approach to continuous improvement practice has lacked consistency. Poor collation and analysis of data to monitor and improve welfare and duty of care are long-standing limiting factors in improving the quality of provision.
- Training establishment websites are not used well to inform potential soldiers about the trades on offer or for keeping parents, guardians and families informed about recruits' and trainees' progress. Sometimes training establishments experience considerable delays when updating their websites, as not all have direct control of them.

Key recommendations for improvement

In order to establish full confidence in the duty of care arrangements, the Armed Forces need to ensure that:

- all incoming and incumbent establishment staff in senior and junior command roles receive appropriate training which directly supports and further promotes the development, consistency and continuity of good welfare and duty of care practice
- specialist staff and management training are provided at establishment level in order to improve the range, collection and analysis of data on the impact of welfare and duty of care, and to help drive improvement
- the single services develop a consistency of approach to self-assessment, which has clear impact on the welfare, care and well-being of recruits and trainees, in order to achieve continuous improvement at establishment level
- there is a clear process for passing on information about trainees who have a specific support need to each trainee's new unit
- the management arrangements for the oversight of recruits and trainees deemed to be at some form of personal or professional risk are improved as a matter of urgency in two establishments
- where there is a backlog of Criminal Records Bureau checking, this is reduced as a matter of urgency
- welfare and duty of care staffing gaps, particularly in phase 2 establishments, are filled as a priority
- the underlying causes of persistently high dropout rates from some training establishments are identified, and effective strategies implemented to improve retention
- the effectiveness and consistent application of recruitment and selection standards are monitored and reviewed in order to ensure that appropriate recruits are selected
- minimum physical standards for entry to some Corps are reviewed to consider how younger applicants whose physique is still developing are not at particular risk of failure
- sufficient resources and timely support for all Army recruits who need to improve their literacy and numeracy skills are available at the very earliest opportunity in initial training.

Welfare and duty of care in training

Summary of progress

1 Progress in improving welfare and duty of care systems and delivery has slowed in the establishments inspected this year. Only one establishment, the Army Training Centre, Pirbright, had made further improvement in overall effectiveness of welfare and duty of care. It was judged to be good for overall effectiveness in this cycle, having been judged satisfactory in 2008.

2 Three establishments judged to be good at their previous inspection remained good in this cycle, and four remained satisfactory. One establishment, the Infantry Training Centre, Catterick, had deteriorated in its overall effectiveness and was judged inadequate. The Defence College of Police and Guarding, which had not been inspected before, was also judged inadequate for overall effectiveness. The inadequacies in both these establishments related to failings in the structure and implementation of management systems, and to staffing issues, rather than immediate concerns about the quality of welfare and duty of care support.

3 Although the overall welfare and duty of care regarding recruits and trainees remains satisfactory, the profile of judgements is uneven. A key constraining factor hindering progress is current operational requirements which are over-stretching staffing resources in phase 2 training. Low staffing levels in phase 2 welfare and duty of care roles are directly hampering establishments' ability to deliver a consistently high standard of cover at all times.

4 Judgements on training establishments' capacity to improve range from good to inadequate. The overall profile includes two establishments which were judged to be good, six which were satisfactory and two which were inadequate. Key issues are: highly variable levels of knowledge and expertise in implementing systems to support improvement, such as the use and analysis of data; and a lack of staffing resources.

Detailed findings

5 Where any improvement has taken place or good standards have been maintained, it is often the result of effective project management and action-planning. Some commanding officers of training establishments are appropriately qualified and skilled in these aspects. Factors underpinning a lack of progress, or a judgement of inadequacy, often include a lack of understanding of such practice and may be linked to changes in command and command focus, or a lack of leaders' understanding and knowledge of good welfare and duty of care practice.

6 Support and oversight of recruits and trainees in phase 1 and phase 2 training remain sound at platoon, squadron or divisional level, which is the most crucial and immediate point of delivery for a recruit or trainee. Practical support for trainees is good in six of the establishments inspected and satisfactory in the remainder. Recruits' and trainees' instructors and designated non-military welfare staff continue to provide appropriate and often good standards of support for those who need it. Such support is now largely integral to the training process.

7 The vast majority of recruits and trainees interviewed commented positively about the support that they received from their training teams and welfare support staff. Typically, they felt safe and personally and professionally well supported during training. A few expressed reservations about using their chain of command for support, based largely on personal concerns that it might jeopardise their career prospects.

8 The quality, skills and professional commitment of the large majority of instructors are good. Many give freely of their time to support recruits and trainees outside working hours. Recruits' and trainees' instructors are usually quick to spot anyone who has a problem and are equally quick to help, or refer them to those who are better placed to do so.

Welfare and duty of care in training continued

9 Instructors' professional commitment to producing the best possible graduate from training is generally strong. The instructors' morale is usually, but not uniformly, positive. The Army Foundation College's focus on the welfare and development of its permanent staff is particularly good. Permanent staff feel valued and they are well-motivated. Their workload is well managed and they are supported in attending appropriate courses to advance their careers. They regard their posting to the College as career enhancing.

10 Mandatory, specialist training for instructors continues to improve the delivery of welfare and duty of care in practice. However, not all instructors receive this training before or within three months of joining their establishment. Around 70% of military and civilian instructors at 11 Signal Regiment (phase 2), and around a quarter of Royal Naval College instructors, have not been able to attend an appropriate course. Those who have undergone training in coaching and mentoring skills during specialist training are generally more effective in supporting recruits and trainees than those who have not.

11 Staffing in phase 1 training has improved since the establishments' previous inspections. By contrast, the staffing levels are too low in almost all phase 2 establishments inspected. A lack of staff in critical welfare and duty of care roles in phase 2 training potentially weakens oversight and support for trainees: 11 Signal Regiment has 20% fewer corporals than its planned allocation; the Defence School of Transport is operating at a fine margin of effective oversight and support; staffing levels are inadequate in the Defence Police School at Southwick Park; only half of the established posts for leading hands at the Maritime Warfare School are filled; divisional officers' workload at Britannia Royal Naval College is high, typically with long hours and covering multiple

roles, caused by gaps in staffing. The establishments manage the situation as best they can, but there is no flexibility to accommodate unforeseen circumstances or additional trainee throughput.

12 Establishments value the support that parents and guardians give and are keen to generate productive relationships with recruits' and trainees' families. Parents and guardians help to provide good moral support and encouragement at times of uncertainty or unhappiness, such as homesickness. The introduction of open days prior to the start of courses, and family days during the course, is effective in developing links between families and instructional staff. All the establishments training recruits and trainees aged under 18 maintain good and routine contact with the parents and guardians.

13 Arrangements for the promotion and practice of equality and diversity are now satisfactory in all the establishments inspected, and have improved in comparison with their previous inspections. Appropriate equalities training in core values, standards and the fundamentals of equality and diversity is provided for recruits, trainees and permanent staff during induction and annually. Recruits, trainees and permanent staff in the establishments inspected have a satisfactory understanding of equality and diversity in principle and practice. Trained equality and diversity advisers play an important role in promoting their understanding.

14 The systems for managing 'at risk' recruits or trainees during training are increasingly well-established and broadly effective in all but two of the establishments inspected. The Army Training Regiment, Winchester, maintains a very effective online performance support register. A detailed, regularly updated narrative provides good insight into individual recruits' various welfare, training, domestic and personal issues. The register is the key discussion,

monitoring and action-planning component of formal monthly welfare meetings.

15 At the Army Training Centre, Pirbright, each of the two Training Regiments runs a very effective regimental review board which meets at least once a month. The boards bring together all appropriate personnel to monitor and respond to recruits deemed to be at some form of risk, for example on grounds of medical issues, welfare, discipline, training or, in some cases, potential self-harm. The Maritime Warfare School at HMS Collingwood has a good system in place to provide a clear and effective staged process to quickly identify trainees at risk of single or repeated failure.

16 Where further improvements can be made to 'at risk' recording and monitoring, the issues are sometimes quite minor, but in two establishments they are fundamental and structural. For example, there is inadequate oversight of some trainees in the critical first and last six weeks of phase 2 training at the Defence College of Police and Guarding (through its Defence Police School). During these two periods, training teams take responsibility for two training cohorts simultaneously and can provide only minimum levels of oversight.

17 The Infantry Training Centre, Catterick, which provides phase 1 and phase 2 training, does not have a thorough, fully functional, command-level 'at risk' recording or monitoring system. Senior officers' oversight of 'at risk' issues is incomplete. The quality and depth of 'at risk' recording in each of the eight Infantry Training Centre Divisions range from highly detailed to non-existent. The quality of welfare and duty of care data supplied to Battalion Headquarters is unreliable.

18 Unit welfare officers and support teams in Army establishments are now playing an increasingly important and effective role in the coordination, monitoring and provision of good welfare and duty of

care for recruits and trainees, and also for permanent staff. At the Army Training Centre, Pirbright, the roles and responsibilities of the unit welfare officer, which were unclear at the last inspection, are now well defined and fundamental to the efficient and effective function and delivery of the welfare system. Unlike other Army establishments, the Infantry Training Centre, Catterick, does not have a unit welfare officer role. The very large scale of Catterick requires a clear welfare structure and definition of responsibilities.

19 Recruits from current and former Commonwealth countries at Infantry Training Centre, Catterick, receive very good support for their particular training and personal issues from a dedicated support worker. Such recruits constitute around 15% of the total infantry recruits in training at Catterick. The support post was under imminent threat of disestablishment at the time of the inspection.

20 The WRVS continues to provide a valued non-military, confidential support role for recruits, particularly in phase 1 Army establishments. The WRVS's role in the welfare chain is integral and effective in the delivery of welfare and duty of care in phases 1 and 2. However, at the Infantry Training Centre, Catterick, the WRVS's capacity to provide welfare support is seriously compromised by understaffing, which creates severe restrictions in opening times, staff cover and opportunities for communicating with military staff in the units.

21 Recruits' and trainees' opportunities to undertake team or individual sports and use physical training facilities are satisfactory in all but one establishment. Physical training in phase 1 establishments is progressive, appropriately timed and provides recruits with a suitable development programme. Insufficient attention, however, is paid to encouraging recruits to take personal responsibility for their fitness in the future. Physical training instructors control and manage all aspects of physical training

Welfare and duty of care in training continued

during initial training, but many recruits and trainees have insufficient understanding of how to stay fit and to manage their personal fitness when away from the training environment.

22 Criminal Records Bureau checking at basic and enhanced levels for relevant training staff has improved in Army establishments compared with the pattern from previous inspections. Most Army establishments inspected had completed more than half of the required Criminal Records Bureau checks, with the remainder being processed. Normally, civilian instructor staff recruited through contractors are checked on recruitment.

23 There are still some establishments in each service where the level of Criminal Records Bureau checking, particularly of new instructors, is too low. Overall, the system for Criminal Records Bureau checking has struggled to cope with the volume and regular postings of military personnel. Few military staff had been Criminal Records Bureau checked at the Maritime Warfare School. At the Infantry Training Centre, Catterick, only around 32% of the required checks had been completed, although just over half were in process. At the time of inspection the Defence College of Police and Guarding had only just identified the posts that required basic or enhanced checking.

24 In the absence of Criminal Records Bureau clearance for those who require them in advance of their arrival at an establishment, Army commanders are expected to rely in the interim on military 'Red Cap' checks. These checks identify spent or present military convictions but they are only a stop-gap.

25 The overall wastage rate from training remains high in five establishments. This issue has been raised in successive inspection reports.³

26 In four Army establishments, mostly phase 1, the dropout rate is between 20% and 30%, and in one RAF establishment (Honington) it is around 40%.

Although there has been a reduction in dropout rates in some establishments compared with the previous three years, wastage remains high overall. Recruits and trainees aged between 17 and 18 are the most likely to leave before completing their training. Recruitment and selection needs to be more rigorous in order to improve the chances of recruiting those with the greatest chance of success.

27 Recruits' and trainees' stated reasons for leaving training can be grouped into distinct categories. Up to 25% of all leavers elect to leave of their own accord, citing reasons such as immaturity, homesickness and a dislike of service life. Others are assessed as medically unfit for training on or soon after starting training and are required to leave.

28 Recruits and trainees who leave the Armed Forces are enabled to do so quickly. Any individual who exhibits signs of actual or potential self-harm is generally dismissed from the service without delay. The services continue to provide good advice and other forms of support for those who decide or are requested to leave. In contrast, the time taken to discharge trainees with long-term injury or medical problems incurred in training is very slow and takes up to a year in some cases. Such trainees remain the responsibility of the training establishment even though almost all will have returned home. Effective support for such trainees is extremely difficult.

29 Recruits' and trainees' access to medical facilities and services is satisfactory in every establishment inspected, but some medical centres are located in unsuitable or cramped buildings.

30 Some recruits and trainees find it difficult to meet the physical demands of the training. This is often because they are inherently physically unsuited to such rigorous training, or standards differ between establishments. For example, injuries were disproportionately high among female RAF trainees at

³ *Safer training/better training* (20071020), Adult Learning Inspectorate, 2005; www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/20071020. *The quality of welfare and duty of care for recruits and trainees in the Armed Forces* (080194), Ofsted, 2009; www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/080194.

the Defence Police School who undertook their initial training at RAF Halton. The expectations of women's physical capability and fitness are higher at the School than at RAF Halton. Wastage rates from the School are particularly high among women and Army trainees.

31 Junior soldiers leaving the Army Foundation College, Harrogate, to join the Parachute Regiment at Catterick need greater support to meet the physical standards expected of a Paratrooper. In the potential gunner acquaint course for the RAF Regiment, insufficient attention is paid to applicants' body mass as an indicator of their ability to complete training. Data and information gained during the analysis of potential recruits undertaking the course have still not been used to establish criteria for body mass or gait in order to identify minimum physical standards for entry into the Regiment. Some younger soldiers entering the infantry are unable to reach the set standards, or suffer injury.

32 Although basic skills support for those who have low skill levels in literacy and language is satisfactory, it remains an area for further improvement, especially in the Army. While pass rates for those who receive support are generally high, not all receive the support when they need it. For example, at the Infantry Training Centre, Catterick, it is timed for the end of the course, which is too late. In contrast, support for RAF Regiment recruits with specific learning disabilities, such as dyslexia, is a continuing strength at RAF Honington.

33 Pay as you dine, as currently implemented, is not suitable for phase 2 trainees in the establishments inspected, particularly those in the younger age range. Many phase 2 trainees consider that this option does not provide sufficient quality or variety. They opt for more familiar and expensive fast food or low-quality options, or they miss meals entirely. Phase 2 establishments have difficulty in ensuring that each trainee is receiving a sufficient nutritional intake

to meet the demands of physical and professional training.

34 Not all of the training establishments have direct access to manage their websites in order to update or add new information. Requests for change are often directed to Training Headquarters, which can be very slow to respond. Training establishment websites are an under-used tool to inform potential soldiers about the trades on offer and for keeping parents, guardians and families informed about events and recruits' and trainees' progress.

35 The quality of the buildings and facilities in training establishments is much improved, although there is still some very poor accommodation for phase 2 trainees.

Self-assessment and continuous improvement

Summary of progress

36 In this cycle of inspections, one establishment was judged good, seven were judged satisfactory and two were inadequate for their progress in self-assessment. This profile is broadly in line with the judgements made in the establishments' previous inspections. All judgements are primarily about establishments' progress in implementing self-assessment rather than its impact, in accordance with the agreement with the Ministry of Defence.

37 Progress in developing and implementing the culture and practice of continuous improvement through self-assessment has been slow. Self-assessment and continuous improvement require further development in all 10 establishments inspected, for phase 1 and phase 2 provision. A few examples of positive impact are beginning to emerge, but such instances are isolated.

38 Poor collation, analysis and use of data about the quality of welfare and duty of care and related aspects are long-standing limiting factors in improving self-assessment practice.

Detailed findings

39 The training establishments have struggled since their previous inspection to introduce a culture of continuous improvement built on a systematic and thorough process of self-assessment. There is uncertainty and a lack of confidence about creating a culture of continuous improvement. Guidance from different Training Headquarters has, in the past, been unclear or contradictory, although there has been some recent improvement in content, clarity and consistency.

40 The strengths of the establishment judged good for self-assessment may help to illustrate how others can improve. The Maritime Warfare School's self-assessment report was concise, evaluative and based on the outcomes of a thorough analysis. The report identified effectively most strengths and areas for improvement, and drew upon those identified in previous inspection visits. A detailed action plan was produced and most areas for improvement were being, or had been, tackled effectively. The process was inclusive of all staff involved in the management of welfare and the delivery of training. However, following recent personnel changes, the self-assessment process had lost some focus and rigour. Critically, the self-assessment process operated in relative isolation from the wider establishment of HMS Collingwood of which the School is an integral part.

41 The self-assessment system currently in place at Britannia Royal Naval College represents a good, formalised evolution of past improvement initiatives but still requires development. The quality improvement action plan is underused by the College's improvement working groups, and is not central to their review and planning processes.

42 The Army Training Centre Pirbright's action-planning is good, and its approach to self-assessment is developing well, but there is a lack of consistency in planning practice within the establishment.

43 At the Army Training Centre, Pirbright, the Defence School of Transport, Britannia Royal Naval College, the Army Foundation College, Harrogate, and RAF Honington, staff views of what works well and what can be improved have been collected successfully using a simple strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats analysis. Staff in these establishments provided some useful insights into improvements. Nevertheless, some staff remain wary of expressing what might be seen as any implicit or explicit attributable criticism of senior staff at the head of the chain of command. This may be a key issue hindering development and needs to be addressed.

44 Self-evaluation and action-planning are not yet central to establishments' management and oversight. Many senior officers struggle with the concept and practice of self-assessment, which should be evaluative rather than descriptive. Establishments have been very slow to progress from an assessment of what is being done (and adherence to policy) to any critical evaluation of the impact of their actions on the care and welfare of recruits and trainees.

45 Action-planning needs greater clarity of purpose, and to be measured by the achievement of defined outcomes. Too frequently, action-planning is broad and aspirational, and is not timely or measurable.

46 Late in 2009, the Army's training establishments received better guidance and support with self-assessment. For example, the Army's Initial Training Group has recently produced some very clear guidelines for self-assessment and action-planning.

47 The Army Recruiting and Training Division has also produced some useful detailed guidance on data collection and analysis, but very few establishments have data specialists, or sufficient knowledge and understanding of how to make best use of the outcomes to drive improvement. Most establishments produce numerical, data-based quarterly reports for their Training Headquarters on specific training performance, such as pass rates and dropout rates, but none of this is routinely included in their wider self-assessment.

Maritime Warfare School, HMS Collingwood.

Inspection end date, 11 June 2009

Context

48 HMS Collingwood, Hampshire, is the location of the Royal Navy's Maritime Warfare School. Its previous inspection of welfare and duty of care was in 2006. Within the School, the Phase 2 Training Group provides training for mine warfare and warfare specialists; engineering technicians for submarines and surface, communications and information systems; communications technicians; seaman specialists; and divers. Courses last between 14 and 27 weeks depending on trainees' specialist training requirements. All trainees have previously completed their initial 10 weeks' training at HMS Raleigh. At the time of the inspection, there were 547 trainees on site, 20% of whom were women and 25% aged under 18.

The inspection

49 The inspection was carried out over two days by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Main findings

50 The overall effectiveness of the welfare and duty of care provision for trainees is satisfactory. Progress in developing self-assessment is good. The Maritime Warfare School's capacity to improve is satisfactory.

51 The chain of command works well to ensure trainees' welfare and duty of care. The various elements of the welfare chain work well together to provide support for trainees. Designated professional divisional officers, supported by leading hands, provide an immediate point of contact and support for trainees. Divisional officers maintain good and appropriate contact with parents and guardians of trainees aged under 18.

52 Professional divisional officers and instructors manage complaints and remedial training well. They use a clear process to manage complaints and identify any emerging issues for the Phase 2 Training Group.

53 The overall coordination of welfare and training is good. Professional divisional officers and instructors work well together to identify trainees who are progressing well, and those who require additional support. Formal, recorded communications between professional divisional officers and instructors have improved. However, staffing gaps among leading hands increase the risk that issues for trainees may not be identified, and support may not be put in place. Trainees waiting for a place on a training course do not have sufficient purposeful military or academic activity to occupy them.

54 Both the quality and quantity of food are good. Trainees have access to a very good range of additional facilities on and off site. The 'pay as you dine' contract has been managed well.

55 Instructors do not carry out sufficiently thorough diagnostic checks and assessments of trainees' specific and additional learning needs as they transfer from recruitment to phase 1, or when they arrive at the Maritime Warfare School. They do not plan the support sufficiently well or ensure that it is well informed by information about the trainees' individual needs.

56 Professional divisional officers still do not collate and use data as an effective tool to monitor or manage the effectiveness of welfare and duty of care for trainees.

57 Other areas for improvement include a lack of progress in completing Criminal Records Bureau checks on military staff who have been in post for more than a year.

58 The self-assessment process is good. The Maritime Warfare School aims to complete its second self-assessment report by September 2009. The process has a clear focus on improving welfare and duty of care for trainees. It is inclusive of staff involved in welfare and training. The report identifies effectively most strengths and areas for improvement. Improvement action-planning is good.

59 The Maritime Warfare School's capacity to improve is satisfactory. Most areas for improvement from the last inspection have been tackled effectively. However, following recent personnel changes, the self-assessment process has been less effectively managed, with few new areas identified for improvement.

Defence College of Police and Guarding, Southwick Park.

Inspection end date, 24 June 2009

Context

60 The Defence College of Police and Guarding was established in 2006, and is based at Southwick Park near Fareham, Hampshire. It is the single-service police training establishment amalgamating three single-service police schools into one college, under the auspices of the Army. The College provides most of its phase 2 and phase 3 training through the Defence Police School. In 2007–08 and 2008–09, the College trained 275 and 358 phase 2 trainees, respectively. These were split relatively evenly between the Army and the Royal Air Force. Royal Navy trainees are all phase 3. About 20% of phase 2 trainees are women, and most are over 18. Royal Military Police trainees complete a 21-week course, graduating as lance corporals, plus a further five weeks to acquire driving licences. RAF Police trainees complete a 23-week course.

The inspection

61 The inspection was carried out over two days by three of Her Majesty's Inspectors. This inspection focused on the welfare and duty of care of phase 2 trainees in the Defence Police School, which had not previously been inspected.

Main findings

62 The overall effectiveness of welfare and duty of care provision for trainees is inadequate. Progress in developing self-assessment is inadequate, as is the Defence College's capacity to improve.

63 The immediate and direct welfare and duty of care arrangements for individual trainees are generally satisfactory. However, there are significant areas of risk arising from understaffing, insufficient support from Training Headquarters and insufficient Criminal Records Bureau checks on instructor staff.

64 Some aspects are positive. For example, the Defence Police School training teams are a particular strength of the establishment. Most trainees have very good working relationships with their training team.

65 Basic arrangements for trainees' individual welfare and duty of care are satisfactory. Trainees are generally very well looked after and most feel personally and professionally well supported. Staff and senior officers effectively identify and monitor trainees who are at any form of risk. An adequate range of additional welfare options is in place. Physical training facilities, holdover arrangements and accommodation are all satisfactory. However, many RAF trainees do not have a clear understanding of the out-of-hours welfare contact points such as duty corporal, guard room and padre. Arrangements for basic skills support are satisfactory.

66 Oversight of trainees in their first and last six weeks of training is inadequate due to understaffing. Training teams have to take responsibility for two course cohorts simultaneously at these critical periods and can provide only minimum levels of oversight. Many members of training teams are also relatively inexperienced and new to rank. Dropout rates from the Police School are high, particularly among Army trainees. The wastage rate from training is around 20%, and has increased since 2007–08.

67 Criminal Records Bureau checking is inadequate. The College could not confirm the Criminal Records Bureau check status of 222 staff on site. The checks for a large proportion of staff have not been processed or cleared.

68 Strategic support, direction and policy-making at Training Headquarters level are inadequate. Police School staffing levels are inadequate. The College has no on-site business manager to enable civil service staff to liaise directly with the school or provide effective local management. Insufficient specialist staff are available to cover and manage physical training sessions.

69 Most trainees and non-commissioned officers interviewed have a low regard for the quality and quantity of food currently available at the establishment, particularly evening meals.

70 The self-assessment process is inadequate. A number of quality improvement measures are in place but the very brief self-assessment report, produced in June 2009, did not reflect the areas for improvement highlighted in a recent internal inspection report by the Ministry of Defence, or those found by Ofsted inspectors during this inspection.

71 The College's capacity to improve is inadequate. The Training Headquarters does not provide sufficient support for progress. There is no single approach to policy-making or to monitoring and improving the provision. Staffing levels are inadequate, although staff work hard to mitigate the shortages. Overall, the monitoring of, and support for, the welfare and duty of care for all trainees at all times are inadequate. Much operational management focuses on dealing with problems as they arise, with little opportunity for planned, properly resourced action.

Army Training Regiment, Winchester.

Inspection end date, 23 September 2009

Context

72 The Army Training Regiment, Winchester, is based at the Sir John Moore Barracks just outside Winchester, and was last inspected in 2008. Junior soldiers (recruits) enter the regiment aged between 16 and 17 years. At the time of inspection two squadrons were in training, comprising 324 recruits, all men and with about 1% from minority ethnic groups. Female recruits were due to muster in the forthcoming week. The current common military syllabus for junior soldiers lasts 23 weeks. The establishment trains soldiers destined for most corps and regiments in the British Army. The commanding officer and the second in command were both recently in post.

The inspection

73 The inspection was carried out over two days by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Main findings

74 The overall effectiveness of the welfare and duty of care provision for recruits at Army Training Regiment, Winchester, is satisfactory. Progress in developing self-assessment is inadequate. The regiment's capacity to improve is satisfactory.

75 The arrangements for recruits' welfare and duty of care are a strength. The chain of command has a thorough knowledge of each recruit in training. Recruits interviewed comment that training teams and welfare staff respond very well to their welfare and general needs.

76 Army Training Regiment, Winchester maintains a very effective online performance support register which records individual recruits' welfare, training, domestic and personal issues, and staff use this effectively in monthly welfare meetings to plan support for recruits. Staff mainly have a good understanding of the concerns that should be recorded. Arrangements for the rehabilitation and remedial support of recruits are good.

77 The selection, training and support for instructors have improved and are now good. Most of the instructors want to work in a training environment. Almost all instructors have completed the relevant specialist training programmes. A well-structured and effective instructor monitoring and support process is now in place. Instructor staffing levels are satisfactory, and their workload, while still high in the first six weeks of training, has reduced and is now satisfactory. The establishment is now effectively at full strength. Criminal Records Bureau checking has improved since the previous inspection and is now satisfactory.

78 Basic skills support is satisfactory. Some improvements have been made to the programme since the previous inspection. However, data are not used effectively to identify recruits' progress, improvement or the added value from basic skills tuition.

79 The quality and quantity of food available to recruits remain satisfactory. However, long queues often occur at the recruits' mess and food choices can be very restricted for those at the end of the queue.

80 Some aspects of recruitment and selection are areas for improvement. Incorrect kit lists issued at Armed Forces Careers Offices still identify items that do not need to be purchased in advance. A few recruits maintain that they have been steered into inappropriate trades or corps and wish to change.

81 The unsociable behaviour database remains an area for improvement. It continues to have poor local functionality and reliability. Data on equality and diversity issues in the database are unreliable, and staff do not understand the criteria for entries. The promotion of equality and diversity during training is satisfactory.

82 Progress in developing self-assessment is inadequate, and has not progressed since the previous inspection. Self-assessment is not integrated with the establishment's quality improvement plan. Improvement actions tend to be short term. The quality improvement plan does not include sufficiently specific action points, outcomes and timescales. Staff do not use available data to inform the self-assessment process or to monitor performance routinely.

83 The capacity of the Army Training Regiment, Winchester, to improve is satisfactory. Many of the improvement initiatives identified at the previous inspection have been effective. The general attitude to welfare and duty of care is proactive, and the experience of recruits at Army Training Regiment, Winchester, is positive. However, despite improvements, the capacity to improve is limited by the inadequacy of self-assessment and poor use of data to identify priorities for improvement.

Army Training Centre, Pirbright.

Inspection end date, 30 September 2009

Context

84 The Army Training Centre, Pirbright, was previously inspected in 2008, and comprises two regiments which deliver training and the headquarters support unit which manages welfare-related functions, among other aspects. The Centre has an average of 1,200 phase 1 recruits on site, and a planned annual throughput of 4,700 trainees. About 20% of the total annual intake are women. Female soldiers are trained and accommodated separately from male soldiers. Around 13% of recruits are from current or former Commonwealth countries. The majority of recruits are aged 18 to 24. Basic skills support to Level 2 is provided by Birmingham Metropolitan College. Phase 1 training lasts 14 weeks and follows the common military syllabus, standard entry.

The inspection

85 The inspection was carried out over two days by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Main findings

86 The overall effectiveness of the welfare and duty of care provision for recruits at the Army Training Centre, Pirbright, has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. Progress in developing self-assessment is satisfactory. The Centre's capacity to improve is good.

87 The management of welfare for recruits is good; the padres and WRVS personnel make a significant contribution to the welfare chain. This illustrates successful development since the previous inspection.

88 The management, coordination and overall development of the Centre have improved and are now good. An effective commanding officers' council ensures coherent and well-planned outcomes. The collection and analysis of data, which were previously areas for improvement, are now good.

89 The overall arrangements for recruits' welfare and duty of care are good. The chain of command has a thorough awareness of the performance of recruits in training. Feedback to recruits by instructors is effective and motivates them well. The management of 'at risk' recruits is very effective. Detailed, written reviews of all recruits deemed to be at some form of risk are produced by monthly regimental review boards. Risk categories include issues related to medical, welfare, discipline or training matters, or in some cases potential self-harm. The review board assesses the likelihood of further risk and puts in place appropriate control or support measures. Arrangements for recruits' rehabilitation and remedial training are good. Staff create individualised programmes for injured recruits or those who are struggling to master aspects of training, which are thoroughly monitored.

90 The selection of instructors and their quality and training are good. Staffing is at established levels. Staff have a very positive attitude towards welfare and duty of care support, and recruits' experience is good. Instructors' workloads remain high during the first six weeks of training, although this is offset over the remainder of the programme. Criminal Records Bureau checking of staff is satisfactory. The majority of staff have been checked and the outstanding checks are in progress.

91 The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Relevant briefings are provided for staff and recruits. Complaints are managed and recorded appropriately. The quality and quantity of food are good. New recruits continue to purchase unnecessary equipment and clothing, based on incorrect information in kit lists distributed by Armed Forces Careers Offices.

92 Literacy, language and numeracy support is an area for improvement. There is insufficient provision for the many recruits with skills above Level 2 to develop them further. Data are insufficient to provide a clear picture of performance and the value added for each recruit.

93 Insufficient accommodation is available on site for permanent staff, especially non-commissioned officers. Many are billeted off site and have to commute daily. The subcontracted maintenance work in the families' accommodation is poorly monitored.

94 The self-assessment process has improved significantly and is satisfactory. Data are being used well to inform improvement actions. Staff views on the Centre's strengths and weaknesses have been sought across the establishment using a simple evaluation tool. A full, cross-establishment, self-assessment reporting process is not yet central to evaluation and improvement planning, but some aspects are in place, including quarterly reporting. Action-planning is good, and includes the identification and improvement of key aspects of performance, through measurable, achievable and time-based actions. Although there is a lack of consistent practice between the three units, a common action-planning database is being developed.

95 The Army Training Centre's capacity to improve is good. It was satisfactory at the previous inspection. Several aspects previously identified as areas for improvement are now strengths. The three commanding officers collaborate productively to improve provision. Improvements in the use of qualitative and quantitative data are now fundamental in driving improvement. A detailed database and central monitoring function are being developed to correlate data across the establishment. Recruit dropout has been reduced from 21% of starters at the previous 2008 inspection to 14.5% at present.

11 Signal Regiment, Blandford.

Inspection end date, 7 October 2009

Context

96 11 Signal Regiment, part of the Royal School of Signals, was last inspected in 2006. The Regiment is located at Blandford Camp and is responsible for the command and management of phase 2 and phase 3 trainees. Each year, approximately 800 phase 2 trainees pass through the school in one of six trades; most of the trainees become communication systems engineers or communications systems operators. At the time of the inspection there were 604 phase 2 trainees on site, of whom 74 were under 18, 50 were women and 39 were from minority ethnic groups, predominantly from overseas. Depending on the specific trade training being undertaken, phase 2 training can take between nine and 49 weeks.

The inspection

97 The inspection was carried out over two days by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Main findings

98 The overall effectiveness of the welfare and duty of care provision at 11 Signal Regiment is satisfactory. Progress in developing self-assessment is satisfactory, and the capacity to improve is also satisfactory.

99 The arrangements for trainees' welfare and duty of care are satisfactory overall. The welfare and duty of care provision is not quite as comprehensive in some aspects as it was in 2006, although still sound.

100 The highly motivated permanent staff are a particular strength of 11 Signal Regiment. The large majority of trainees cite that they receive very good welfare and professional support from their immediate chain of command and military instructors. Staff do not highlight sufficiently the services of the WRVS and padre to trainees after induction, and these resources are underused.

101 The commanding officer has generally very good oversight and knowledge of trainees' welfare and duty of care issues at all times. At squadron level, oversight and supervision of trainees' welfare and related issues are satisfactory, but there is a lack of consistency in the recording of welfare issues between squadrons.

102 The central unit welfare officer and team deal very effectively with many complex and wide-ranging welfare issues. The trainee wastage rate has much reduced. It is now extremely low, at below 1% a year, compared with around 7.5% in 2006. The time taken to discharge trainees with long-term medical problems is very long; over two years in one case.

103 The Regiment continues to maintain an effective register of all trainees judged to be 'at risk', in line with common practice in similar establishments. A formal welfare review board meets monthly, but does not include the WRVS. The quality of recording is satisfactory, although records mainly cover health and discipline matters only and do not now record trainees' training, personal or domestic problems. Monitoring and action-planning are good.

104 The Regiment now makes better use of data related to welfare and duty of care to monitor and track trends, but this is not yet fully developed.

105 Criminal Records Bureau checking is satisfactory. Around 92% of military personnel have now been checked at an enhanced level.

106 Trainees and permanent staff conform to appropriate standards of discipline. The coordination and management of trainees during training is satisfactory. Awareness and understanding of equality of opportunity are satisfactory and have improved since the previous inspection.

107 Trainees have adequate opportunities for physical training and sport. Maintenance and accommodation remain satisfactory. Trainees are accommodated in reasonably modern, purpose-built accommodation blocks. 'Pay as you dine', introduced since the last inspection, is not suitable for phase 2 trainees.

108 11 Signal Regiment is under-staffed in the critical areas of welfare and duty of care support. For example, it has 20% fewer corporals than its establishment's quota.

109 Access to specialist training for instructors remains a significant area for improvement. Only around 28% of military and civilian instructors have been able to attend the appropriate instructor training course run by the Army Staff Leadership School.

110 11 Signal Regiment does not have sufficient control over its website. It wants to use the website as a key information tool but has no direct access to add or update content to keep parents, guardians and families informed about military trades on offer, or events and trainees' progress.

111 Progress in self-assessment at 11 Signal Regiment is satisfactory. Staff views on what is working well and what can be improved have identified a number of strengths and weaknesses. These have been summarised in a clear and useful self-assessment report and used in the quality improvement action plan. While the action plan is comprehensive, there are numerous actions which are too broad and not time-related. There are insufficient resources for the collection, analysis and dissemination of data about the provision, or to ensure its impact.

112 11 Signal Regiment's capacity to improve is satisfactory. The impact of an ongoing restructure of the organisation cannot be gauged at this point although it is based on a clear understanding of the structural, oversight and delivery mechanisms that need to be improved. Self-assessment is satisfactory, but the use of data does not yet support improvement of the provision.

Britannia Royal Naval College, Dartmouth.

Inspection end date, 14 October 2009

Context

113 Britannia Royal Naval College, Dartmouth, was last inspected in 2006. Its primary role is to provide initial officer training for Royal Naval Officers. Academic aspects of the programme are delivered by staff from the University of Plymouth. The current annual target for officer cadets attending the College is 625, an increase of 500 against 2007–08 numbers. Most officer cadets are between 18 and 28 years old and join from outside the service. At the time of the inspection there were 205 cadets on site, with about 223 at sea. Of those on site, 24 were women and 17 were from current or former Commonwealth countries or from overseas. None was aged under 18. The core initial officer training programme comprises two 14-week terms for all Navy and direct graduate entries. Each entry has approximately 144 starters. The course includes a 10-week combined initial sea training and common fleet time. Officer cadets spend time on board a commissioned ship to experience and understand life and command at sea.

The inspection

114 The inspection was carried out over two days by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Main findings

115 The overall effectiveness of the welfare and duty of care provision at Britannia Royal Naval College is good. Progress in self-assessment is satisfactory. The capacity to improve is satisfactory.

116 The divisional system provides a robust support network that covers all aspects of the officer cadets' experience at the College. Formalised systems to monitor officer cadets are well-developed and used particularly well for identifying and supporting those at risk of failure or with a welfare issue. Support for officer cadets with specific learning support needs is satisfactory.

117 Most officer cadets are mature, self-aware and have strong motivation to be in the Royal Navy. Many have lived independently either at university or previously in the Service. They have clear ideas of what is expected of them as officers in the Royal Navy. Good use is made of full-time reserve service personnel as squadron chiefs in the two training squadrons. They provide high-quality expertise, support and guidance.

118 Divisional officers have a very heavy workload, exacerbated by gaps in staffing. This increases the risk of a lack of oversight of officer cadets at squadron level. Divisional officers do not always have specialist training prior to arrival at the college, or soon enough after their arrival.

119 The College's progress in self-assessment is satisfactory. The system now in place represents a good, formalised development of appropriate structures, processes and systems for quality improvement. Performance assessment and evaluation are thorough. A detailed self-assessment report produced in June 2009 includes input from all the departments and aspects of delivery at the College. It includes grades and judgements which are structured in line with the Common Inspection Framework. The range and depth of judgements are extensive, although many need to be more evaluative and specific.

120 The College recognises that self-assessment needs to improve further. Moderation has not been rigorous enough to produce an honest appraisal of strengths and areas for improvement. The quality improvement plan lacks measurable and timely actions and targets. Senior commanders do not regularly review progress on the action plan or ensure links to established planning systems, such as the improvement working groups. Data are not used sufficiently well to set targets or measure success.

121 The capacity of Britannia Royal Naval College to improve is satisfactory. Improvements have taken place at the College and much of the provision is now in line with current welfare and duty of care standards in similar establishments. However, gaps in staffing have had a significant impact and some staff are having to undertake multiple roles.

Infantry Training Centre, Catterick.

Inspection end date, 4 November 2009

Context

122 The Infantry Training Centre at Catterick in North Yorkshire is the only establishment that trains standard entry infantry recruits. It was previously inspected in 2008. It comprises two training battalions and the Headquarters of the School of Infantry: 1 Infantry Training Battalion trains line infantry; 2 Infantry Training Battalion trains Gurkhas, Parachute Regiment and Guards, and runs the short course unit, Anzio company. Infantry recruit training combines phase 1 and phase 2 training. Recruits move directly to the field army when they leave the centre. At the time of the inspection, there were 2,586 recruits on site, all of whom were men. Twenty-six per cent of recruits were aged under 18 and 10% were from a minority ethnic background. Recruits intending to join the Foot Guards and the Parachute Regiment undertake 28-week courses to meet the needs of those regiments. Gurkha recruits undertake a bespoke 37-week course which includes English language training.

The inspection

123 The inspection was carried out over two days by three of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Main findings

124 The overall effectiveness of welfare and duty of care provision for trainees is inadequate. It was judged satisfactory at the previous inspection. Progress in developing self-assessment is satisfactory. The Centre's capacity to improve is inadequate.

125 The quality of welfare and duty of care arrangements at company and division level is satisfactory. Training teams are highly committed to maximising each recruit's potential. Instructor training and development is a strength. A very high proportion of new instructors have had appropriate training for the role prior to arrival at the Centre. A specialist programme devised and delivered at the Centre encourages instructors to apply their leadership skills and core values effectively to provide recruit-centred learning. Recruits are very positive about the support they receive from instructors. Training teams demonstrate a good understanding of problems faced by recruits during training.

126 Recruits from current or former Commonwealth countries and overseas receive very good support for their often complex personal and training issues, but the post of support worker was under threat at the time of the inspection.

127 Basic skills assessment and support for recruits are satisfactory. There has been little discernible progress in improving the quality and management of provision. The timing of basic skills support at the end of a course is particularly unhelpful in enabling trainees and recruits to make maximum progress. Some of the recruits interviewed had very low levels of literacy and language and were already struggling with the basics of training. A few were leaving as a consequence.

128 Senior commanders' oversight of 'at risk' issues is inadequate. The 'at risk' recording and monitoring systems are weak. The quality and depth of 'at risk' recording in the Centre's eight divisions are inconsistent, and the data supplied by divisions and companies to Battalion HQ are unreliable. The recording of formal and informal complaints is also poor.

129 Few staff have received clearance from the Criminal Records Bureau prior to taking up their appointment; only around 32% of these checks had been completed at the time of the inspection.

130 There is a critical lack of key welfare staff. The Centre does not have a unit welfare officer in a coordinating and delivery role. Such a post and/or team is now commonplace, and fundamental, within most other Army training regiments. This is particularly critical given the scale of the Centre.

131 The WRVS provides good informal, confidential support to recruits. However, its ability to provide such support is seriously compromised by understaffing. It struggles to respond to all those who seek advice or support. The facilities are sometimes closed in holiday periods. Understaffing reduces the WRVS team's opportunities to liaise and network with staff in platoons and companies.

132 The quality of all the following aspects is satisfactory: the rehabilitation programme for injured recruits; arrangements for recruits who request or are required to leave the army; the application of remedial training discipline; physical training; medical and dental facilities and resources; the quality and quantity of food; recruits' accommodation; general maintenance and repair.

133 The wastage rate is high, standing at 28% at the time of inspection. Variations in wastage between the divisions and companies remain significant. The Centre has no clear and specific targets or action plans for the reduction of wastage rates.

134 Progress in developing self-assessment is satisfactory. The Centre has a much improved understanding of the process, practice and value of self-assessment. It has successfully developed the quality of its self-assessment process, reporting and improvement planning. The Centre recognises that there is scope for self-assessment to be more evaluative and target-setting more detailed. The use and analysis of data are not sufficiently well-developed.

135 The Infantry Training Centre's capacity to improve is inadequate. There is a lack of specialist staff and a lack of knowledge of how to develop and implement an effective risk management system. While there has been progress in self-assessment, it is not yet sophisticated enough to identify key issues and focused action-planning.

Army Foundation College, Harrogate.

Inspection end date, 18 November 2009

Context

136 The Army Foundation College, Harrogate, was last inspected in 2006. It provides phase 1 training to junior entry recruits aged 16 and 17 for all Arms and Service directorates except the Royal Military Police and the Intelligence Corps. The total annual intake is around 1,330 recruits. One cohort comprising approximately 850 recruits joins in September, and a January intake comprises approximately 480 recruits. The 42-week course is divided into three 14-week terms during which the common military syllabus is combined with education, leadership and initiative training.

137 Approximately 10% of each intake are women. The vocational programme is subcontracted to a civilian contractor, which also provides individual learning assessment and support. Recruits leave the College to progress to their phase 2 establishments.

The inspection

138 The inspection was carried out over two days by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Main findings

139 The overall effectiveness of the welfare and duty of care provision for recruits at the College is good. Inspectors' assessments of strengths, satisfactory aspects and areas for improvement at the last inspection are in broad alignment with the judgements made during inspection in 2006. Progress in developing self-assessment is satisfactory. The Army Foundation College's capacity to improve is good.

140 The provision and management of welfare and duty of care were strengths at the last inspection and remain strong. Management systems are coordinated and thorough and provide senior staff with very clear oversight. Senior staff make well-informed responses to issues regarding recruits. The arrangements for risk-assessing and monitoring recruits are sound, although the records kept in registers are not sufficiently well organised by theme and priority.

141 The College is successful in achieving its aim of providing recruits with a good experience of training. College staff at all levels have a good understanding of the needs and behaviour of young people aged 16 to 17 and respond constructively and positively to them. All recruits interviewed felt secure and well-supported. Most recruits respond very positively to the education programmes. They recognise the value of training and the opportunity to gain qualifications.

142 Communications and liaison within the welfare chain are good. The College has also developed some productive links with recruits' families and carers. A particularly effective independent advisory panel provides very good support and insight to senior staff in the delivery and planning of welfare and training.

143 A series of working groups provide senior staff with effective solutions to improve varied aspects of the College's work. The groups assist smooth working between the broad range of military activities, private finance initiatives and contractor-delivered activities at the College.

144 Sports and physical training facilities are a strength of the provision at the College. The range and use of the facilities to develop the skills of recruits are particularly good.

145 The College's focus on the welfare and development of permanent staff is good. Morale is very high among the instructors interviewed. Permanent staff feel valued and are well motivated. Instructor selection and development has improved and is now satisfactory. All new staff in training teams identify and plan their development needs in an initial interview.

146 The extent of Criminal Records Bureau checking of military staff is satisfactory: 59% of military staff have completed checks, another 29% are in the system awaiting completion and the remaining 12% are unfilled staff posts.

147 Arrangements for the understanding and promotion of equality and diversity are satisfactory. Equality and diversity are promoted appropriately during inductions for staff and recruits. Recruits understand and use the complaints system. The incidence of recorded equality- and diversity-related complaints is low. The unsociable behaviour reporting system is used effectively.

148 The quality and quantity of food are satisfactory. Medical and dental facilities are satisfactory. The quality of recruits' accommodation, previously a strength, is now judged satisfactory overall.

149 The wastage rate among recruits is high. It is historically around 30% but currently running at about 20%. A significant number of recruits leave the College in the first few weeks of training, and although these are replaced from 'reserves', this is more of a remedy than a cure.

150 Progress in developing and implementing self-assessment is satisfactory overall, but self-assessment is not yet fully integral to the quality improvement process. The College has made some good use of a basic strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats analysis at departmental level to gather the views of staff. While there is a way to go in this process, it is helping to encourage staff to express their views on improvement in ways which are not seen to imply criticism of the chain of command or senior leadership. The quality improvement action plan is satisfactory although targets are not specific enough. The College currently lacks a sufficiently broad range of data to identify and monitor trends or measure improvement.

151 The College's capacity to improve is good. Senior staff have directed and coordinated effective change and improvements. Management systems are very sound. Staff at all levels support the vision and mission of the establishment. The College recognises that there are improvements still to be made. Although emergent, a continuous quality improvement cycle is being constructed. College leaders are receptive to new ideas and constructive criticism. The application of policy is effective, practical and pragmatic.

Defence School of Transport, Leconfield.

Inspection end date, 14 January 2010

Context

152 The Defence School of Transport is located at Normandy Barracks, Leconfield, near Beverley in Yorkshire. It was last inspected in 2008. The School provides training at phase 2 and 3 for all three Armed Forces and other selected government departments related to national defence. Around 90% of students are from the Army. The School is divided into three elements: Headquarters manages training and provides the support function; the Driver Training Wing focuses on phase 2 training; and the Advanced Training Wing focuses on phase 3 trainees.

153 The annual intake of trainees has increased from 13,000 to over 16,000. During the week of inspection a total of 697 phase 2 trainees were on site, 57 of whom were from the RAF and the remainder from the Army. Of the 697 trainees, 10% were women and 11% were from minority ethnic backgrounds. Trainees range in age from 17 to 32 years, with the majority at the younger end of the age range.

154 Training programmes are of differing durations. Phase 2 trainees first complete a course to gain a car licence. Some then progress to large goods vehicle categories.

The inspection

155 The inspection was carried out over two days by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Main findings

156 The overall effectiveness of the welfare and duty of care provision for trainees at the School is good, as it was in 2008. Progress in developing self-assessment is satisfactory. The Defence School of Transport's capacity to improve is satisfactory.

157 The provision and management of welfare and duty of care are strengths. Management systems for welfare and duty of care at the School are good. Senior staff have effective and clear oversight of trainees who require personal or professional support. The arrangements for risk-assessing, monitoring and supporting recruits with personal or professional issues using 'at risk' registers and a watch register are good.

158 The overall management of trainees through training remains a strength. Staff track trainees' progress and performance effectively, so that most of them complete training as quickly as possible. However, some trainees wait for too long between courses. The facilities for trainees waiting between courses are poor.

159 Specialist training for military and civilian staff is satisfactory with most personnel completing the required training prior to or very early in their posting to the School. Welfare and duty of care arrangements for trainee supervision in and out of hours are satisfactory, although the current staffing for duty of care staff is frequently stretched, and the welfare and duty of care system as a whole is fragile.

160 The process for Criminal Record Bureau checks and their coverage is satisfactory. Most civilian and military personnel have now been checked.

161 Wastage rates are around 10%. The majority of leavers are aged 17 to 18. Most trainees recognise the opportunity and importance of learning to drive.

162 Complaints recording is satisfactory. The School uses the Army Recruiting and Training Division's unsociable behaviour recording database effectively to log and record complaints.

163 Trainees' attendance at structured physical training sessions is satisfactory. It is now well managed. Pass rates on very recent fitness tests are particularly positive. The staff to trainee ratio for structured physical education sessions is good. The gymnasium is fully staffed.

164 Accommodation for most trainees is at least satisfactory. A minority are accommodated in very poor pre-fabricated buildings which are long past their planned life.

165 Website communication is inadequate. The Defence School of Transport has very little control over the website. Information, such as updates, has to be forwarded to Training Headquarters to manage and upload the information. Revision and updating are slow.

166 Progress in self-assessment is satisfactory. The School has made satisfactory progress in developing self-assessment and quality improvement systems, although the impact to date is modest. For example, the strengths and weaknesses identified are not yet comprehensive.

167 110 Squadron at the School has developed a sound, ongoing approach to continuous improvement, although this is based more on assessments of, and responses to, immediate-term operational activity than on longer-term strategic evaluation of impacts. The Driver Training Wing and 110 Squadron have completed individual assessments and quality improvement plans which feed through to the School's overall quality improvement plan.

168 Progress has been made in the use of data to measure and monitor the quality of delivery, although there is little evaluation of outcomes other than pass rates. The actions in the quality improvement plan are not sufficiently incremental, time-bound or measurable.

169 The School has so far placed too great a reliance on using second- and third-party assessments as evidence of strengths and areas for improvement and too little focus on its own self-assessment.

170 The Defence School of Transport's capacity to improve is satisfactory. The school has made satisfactory progress in developing its processes for the welfare and duty of care for trainees and has successfully tackled the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. The number of trainees has increased significantly; this is placing severe strains on the duty of care staff, as staffing levels have not increased proportionately.

RAF Honington (RAF Regiment).

Inspection end date, 20 January 2010

Context

171 The RAF Regiment, based at RAF Honington, provides recruit training for trainee gunners at phases 1 and 2. It was last inspected in 2008. The training is conducted by Regimental Training Squadron (Basics) based within the Training Wing. The squadron has only male trainees. At the time of inspection, 126 trainees were on site out of a total of 203 in training, and 25 trainees were aged under 18. Over the past three years there has been a one-third increase in trainee numbers.

172 Training runs seamlessly from phase 1 recruit stage, to trainee gunner in phase 2 and field gunner in phase 3. Phases 1 and 2 last 11 and 12 weeks, respectively, and the combined training lasts for 32 weeks.

The inspection

173 The inspection was carried out over two days by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and focused on phase 1 and 2 training provided by the Regimental Training Squadron (Basics).

Main findings

174 The overall effectiveness of the welfare and duty of care provision for trainees at the Regiment is satisfactory, as it was in 2008. Progress in developing self-assessment is satisfactory, as is the Regiment's capacity to improve.

175 The provision of welfare and duty of care support was previously a strength but is now judged satisfactory. Support for trainees remains sound and reliable at flight level. The trainees interviewed were confident, secure and complimentary about the support they have received. Instructor teams are professional and thoroughly committed to their roles. Support for trainees with learning difficulties, such as dyslexia, is comprehensive and remains a strength.

176 The effectiveness of the management systems and general arrangements for assessment, monitoring and support of trainees or any permanent staff who are at risk is broadly satisfactory. Criminal Records Bureau checking of staff is satisfactory.

177 The overall development and coordination of the training programme is now satisfactory, having previously been a strength. Under-staffing and stretched physical resources create problems in maintaining consistent standards of care, support and oversight. It is only with some difficulty that these are being managed.

178 The management of trainees who require rehabilitation from injury, or remedial training, remains satisfactory, with some improvement. The quality and quantity of food available are satisfactory. The quality of trainees' accommodation, corrective and remedial training, and the management of complaints are all satisfactory.

179 Wastage rates remain a significant area for improvement. The trainee dropout rate is high at around 40%, and is anticipated by the establishment to remain so for the foreseeable future.

180 The strategic and operational overview and management of welfare and duty of care have improved and are now satisfactory overall. However, some aspects remain areas for improvement. These include minor elements of 'at risk' recording and some improvements to liaison within the welfare chain.

181 Instructors' working hours are exceptionally long. Insufficient staff are available in training teams to ensure that the workload is spread consistently and there is no flexibility. Excessive working hours are having a negative impact on instructors' morale.

182 Trainees' opportunities for leisure and leisure activities are extremely limited. The main recreational leisure facility is small and poorly equipped. Trainees interviewed commented that they were often bored and found life very monotonous once duties had been completed. Several cited this as a possible consideration in dropping out of a course.

183 Progress in self-assessment is satisfactory. It was previously inadequate. The squadron has made very recent improvements to the arrangements for self-assessment and continuous improvement, although there has been little impact as yet. The officer commanding the Training Wing has encouraged extensive and honest evaluation by staff using basic strengths and weaknesses assessment. A comprehensive, new, continuous improvement plan has been created. However, the actions matrix to which it is linked is too broad in scope and the targets are not sufficiently specific, measurable or time-bound.

184 The squadron's capacity to improve is satisfactory. This was also the judgement of the 2008 inspection. Some aspects have improved since the last inspection, such as physical training and aspects of communications. Others have remained static. A few have deteriorated slightly and some new areas for improvement have been identified.

Annex A:

Summary of overall inspection judgements

The outcomes of the individual inspection visits are summarised in the following table. The judgement related to self-assessment primarily indicates progress made to date rather than overall impact.

Establishment	Service	Overall effectiveness	Capacity to improve	Self-assessment
The Defence College of Police and Guarding	Army	Inadequate	Inadequate	Inadequate
Infantry Training Centre, Catterick	Army	Inadequate	Inadequate	Satisfactory
Army Training Regiment, Winchester	Army	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Maritime Warfare School, HMS Collingwood	Navy	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Good
11 Signal Regiment, Blandford	RAF/Army	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Britannia Royal Naval College	Navy	Good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Army Training Centre, Pirbright	Army	Good	Good	Satisfactory
Army Foundation College, Harrogate	Army	Good	Good	Satisfactory
Defence School of Transport	Army	Good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
RAF Honington	RAF	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Annex B: Descriptors used in report text

Proportion	Description
97–100%	Vast/overwhelming majority or almost all
80–96%	Very large majority, most
65–79%	Large majority
51–64%	Majority
35–49%	Minority
20–34%	Small minority
4–19%	Very small minority, few
0–3%	Almost no/very few

Annex C:

Ofsted's terms of reference

The Inspectorate will:

- determine the extent to which progress has been made in addressing issues of care, welfare and support for recruits and trainees during initial training in the Armed Forces, including examination of the self-assessment process
- evaluate the effectiveness of the strategic and operational management of the care, welfare and support for recruits and trainees during initial training in the Armed Forces
- use the Common Inspection Framework (the national framework for inspection of post-16 education and training) to comment on the standard of initial training in the Armed Forces
- take account of the national care standards and safeguarding where relevant
- make judgements on the strengths and areas for development of the initial training
- visit training establishments, Armed Forces Careers Offices, Acquaint and Selection Centres and service training headquarters as required
- inspect establishments identified by the Director General Training and Education (DGTE) and/or Training, Education, Skills and Resettlement (TESR) as priorities
- liaise with TESR on the schedule of visits to optimise inspection effectiveness
- provide a bi-monthly oral progress report on inspection outcomes to TESR
- publish a report, subject to security considerations, by April 2010 to include the observations and findings from individual units in respect of the self-assessment process and findings from inspection of the recruitment and selection process.

The Ofsted inspections and related activity follow up on the work previously carried out by the Adult Learning Inspectorate on welfare and duty of care.

Related activity will include the following:

- inspection of training establishments including some not previously inspected
- inspection preparation workshops for military personnel
- participation in senior level briefings and dissemination events
- assistance in the development of good practice
- a programme of training events for appropriate staff from the Ministry of Defence
- provision of a report which comments on the care and welfare provision in place to support those joining and undergoing initial training in the Armed Forces.

The Ministry of Defence seeks to achieve the following:

- the implementation of quality assurance arrangements which guarantee high standards, meet the requirements of the Ministry of Defence and add value to the expenditure of public money and at least match the quality of comparable civilian learning programmes
- the ability to have access to the national learning community to share good practice and benchmark Defence Training and Education
- the ability to maintain and update professional skills through continuous professional development activity in order to support the lifelong learning agenda and skills development in the Ministry of Defence

- the introduction of independent inspection, reinspection and oversight of Defence learning provision, including the duty of care and welfare provision, within an agreed programme, to complement the internal quality assurance and improvement procedures of the Armed Forces and the Ministry of Defence.

To these ends the parties will work together to develop appropriate working arrangements to facilitate a suitable training and inspection programme that will complement existing audit against the Defence Systems Approach to Training Quality Standard.

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