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Research and analysis

Welfare and duty of care in Armed Forces initial training 2020 to 2021

Updated 20 October 2021

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Ministerial foreword

This is the 13th Ofsted annual report into the welfare and duty of care of recruits and trainees as they carry out Armed Forces initial training. There has been significant disruption to the Ofsted inspection programme covered by this report due to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. As with all educational settings, the pandemic has had a significant impact on defence training in the last 12 months. This has been felt particularly in the Ministry of Defence's (MoD) ability to deliver the usual pipeline of training modules, without interruption, and consequently to manage periods of unprogrammed time experienced by our trainees.

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The 2020/21 inspection period ran from October 2020 until May 2021, in which a total of 14 inspections were carried out. These included: 9 inspections of Regular training establishments, 2 of Reserve forces units and 3 of University Service Units headquarters (USUs). Nine of the 11 units that were graded received good or outstanding grades, while the remaining 2, HMS Collingwood and RAF Cosford, received requires improvement grades.

I am delighted to note that Ofsted inspectors have highlighted that military training is being delivered by highly motivated and well-trained staff, who are working in a co-ordinated way to ensure the effective care and welfare of our recruits and trainees. The report also highlights many examples of the positive support provided throughout training, with some excellent examples of safeguarding of under 18s and care leavers.

We acknowledge that the quality of the infrastructure at some training establishments remains unsatisfactory, with some of the facilities, including accommodation blocks, in need of improvement. The MoD continues to support the investment in, and rationalisation of, training establishment infrastructure. In the last year, new and significantly improved accommodation has been opened at several of our training establishments; one of which has subsequently been awarded an outstanding grade within this inspection period.

I would like to thank the Chief Inspector and her team for their admirable efforts in delivering an annual report during a particularly challenging period in our nation's history. I look forward to continuing to work with Ofsted to ensure that we deliver the highest standards of care and welfare for our recruits and trainees as we continue to build on the lessons of the last 12 months.



The RT Hon Leo Docherty MP

Minister for Defence People and Veterans

Preface from Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills

This is Ofsted's 13th annual report on the effectiveness of care and welfare arrangements for recruits, trainees and officer cadets in the Armed Forces in initial training. It is the fifth report that I have presented as Her Majesty's Chief Inspector. This has been a most unusual year for all of us because of the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. Staff in Ofsted and the Ministry of Defence (MoD) have worked very flexibly to ensure that the programme of planned visits took place during the year. I would like to thank all involved, in particular the MoD, university service units' (USU) headquarters and training establishments, for their cooperation.

At the MoD's request, inspections were paused between December 2020 and March 2021. During this time, inspectors made their first remote visits to USU headquarters to provide support and assurance. These were not graded inspections. No on-site inspections to USUs themselves took place because students were not in residence at their universities, so were unable to attend USUs to train as cadets. Similarly, much planned Reservist training across the 3 Services was cancelled because of COVID-19 restrictions. Consequently, inspectors were only able to visit 2 Reserve units this year.

This year, inspectors applied a new framework and handbook for the inspection of care and welfare in Armed Forces settings. These were designed to align better with Ofsted's education inspection framework but are still contextualised for Armed Forces initial training. Inspectors graded the key judgement areas of training and support, personal and professional development, quality of facilities, infrastructure and resources, and effectiveness of leadership and management. An overall effectiveness grade for each establishment was reintroduced this year. Also, Reserve units received graded judgements this year for the first time.

Two of the 9 Regular establishments visited this year, the Army Foundation College, Harrogate (AFC(H)) and the Defence Fire Training Unit (DFTU) at Moreton-in-Marsh (previously the Defence Fire Training and Development Centre), were judged outstanding for all 4 key judgement areas and for overall effectiveness. This was a particularly remarkable achievement for the DFTU, which had recently moved from its previous location at MoD Manston in Kent, and where inspectors had judged the quality of welfare and care as requiring improvement at the previous inspection just 12 months ago. At AFC(H) commanders and staff had maintained the standards of excellence inspectors identified at the previous inspection. Inspectors were able to identify strengthened welfare and care arrangements, including in the safeguarding of junior soldiers, and improved resources to support training.

This year, senior officers and staff at both of these outstanding establishments provided recruits and trainees with high-quality training and impressive care and

welfare arrangements. They worked very closely with contractors to provide and maintain excellent facilities and accommodation. Military and civilian staff were rightly proud of the culture and environment they have created. As a result, recruits and trainees enjoyed their training and experience, made rapid progress in developing their military skills and knowledge, and truly reflected the high standards expected of their chosen Armed Force.

Five Regular and the 2 Reserve establishments were graded good for overall effectiveness and most key judgements. At 2 (Training) Regiment, Army Air Corps (2AAC), the effectiveness of leadership and management was judged outstanding. This was especially notable as it had been judged to require improvement for the quality of welfare and care at its previous inspection. Senior staff at 2AAC worked diligently to provide trainees with better leisure facilities and food options. They restructured training so that trainees spent less time out of training and were able to join their frontline units more quickly and better prepared for Service life. In all the good establishments, Regular and Reserve recruits and trainees benefited from well-coordinated care and welfare arrangements and highly effective training. Very few chose to leave early. These recruits and trainees were confident and prepared well for the next stage of their training, or to take up their first role in their regiment, ship or air station.

Two establishments were judged as requires improvement: RAF Cosford and HMS Collingwood. In both these establishments, failing infrastructure and poor accommodation were significant weaknesses. Such weaknesses often extend beyond the direct control of leadership teams in training establishments. Senior officers and their staff spend much time mitigating the impact of fix-on-failure maintenance contracts on their recruits and trainees, and/or attempting to secure funding for better infrastructure. This distracts them from their efforts to provide high-quality training, care and welfare. At HMS Collingwood, for example, staff were unable to maintain the quality of training and welfare in the face of overwhelming problems with facilities, resources and infrastructure.

Even where the quality of facilities, infrastructure and resources was judged good, some elements of weakness remained. At 2AAC, Royal Naval Air Station (RNAS) Yeovilton and the Royal Armoured Corps Training Regiment, some aspects of trainees' accommodation or infrastructure were not good enough. For example, hot water supplies were intermittent. It is hard for trainees and recruits to feel proud of themselves and their Service when they struggle with daily problems with accommodation and facilities.

Self-assessment reporting remains a weak area in the leadership and management of care and welfare. This has been the case over several years. Very few senior officers thoroughly analyse and evaluate the effectiveness of care and welfare arrangements or link such analysis closely to their quality improvement plans. Too often, self-assessment has the hallmarks of a cursory activity carried out just to meet MoD policy or external requirements.

While there is much to celebrate in the work of the strongest establishments this year, much remains to be done. I have reported persistent and serious

weaknesses in resources, infrastructure, accommodation, self-assessment and improvement planning for the past 5 years. Annual reports from my predecessors have described these same weaknesses over the past 13 years. If colleagues in Defence are serious in their commitment to the next generations of Armed Forces personnel, I urge them to deal with the recommendations from this report with speed and determination.

Background

Ofsted inspects the care and welfare arrangements for recruits, trainees and officer cadets at phase 1 and phase 2 training establishments for Regular and Reserve personnel. During 2020/21, military personnel in training establishments were affected by COVID-19. Consequently, at the request of the MoD, we paused inspections for 4 months between December and March 2021. Reserve training was particularly affected, and much training was cancelled or postponed, including in USUs. Because of this, we carried out just 2 inspections of Reserve units, which were graded for the first time this year. To support the efforts of those involved in managing the care, welfare and training of USUs during the pandemic, we visited all 3 USU headquarters remotely to provide some, albeit limited, assurance during the time that inspections were paused. These were not graded inspections.

Phase 1 training provides a general introduction to military life, while phase 2 covers the technical and professional skills required of members of the Armed Forces for their first professional roles. This report reflects the general trend of improvements in care and welfare in many Armed Forces establishments.

Ofsted's [terms of reference](#) are set out in a memorandum of understanding between the Secretary of State for Defence and HMCI. 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 examining establishments' self-assessment
- 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

Inspections and visits carried out

This report draws on evidence from 9 inspections of Regular training establishments, 2 inspections of Reserve units and 3 support and assurance visits to USU headquarters. Inspectors made the [11 inspections between October](#)

[and November 2020, and in April and May 2021](#). The remote support and assurance visits to USU headquarters took place in January and February 2021.

Of the 9 Regular single-Service training establishments inspected during 2020/21:

- 1 provided phase 1 training for Army personnel under the age of 18 (AFC(H))
- 2 provided phase 2 training for Army personnel (Royal Armoured Corps Training Regiment (RACTR) and 2AAC)
- 1 provided phase 1 and phase 2 training for Royal Navy ratings (HMS Collingwood)
- 1 provided phase 2 training for Royal Navy engineering ratings and officers joining the Fleet Air Arm (RNAS Yeovilton)
- 3 provided phase 2 training for RAF personnel (RAF Regiment Training Wing (RAF Regt TW) at RAF Honington, RAF Cosford and the DFTU)
- 1 provided phase 2 training to Royal Navy submariners (Royal Navy Submarine School (RNSMS) at HMS Raleigh)

Inspectors carried out graded inspections of 2 Reserve training establishments. Of these:

- 1 was an Army Training Unit that provides phase 1 training for Army Reserves from around the UK (Army Training Unit (West) (ATU(W)))
- 1 was a parent unit for Reservists in the Royal Marines (Royal Marine Reserve (RMR) Bristol)

This year, inspectors carried out ungraded, remote support and assurance visits to 3 USU headquarters. Of these:

- 1 was the headquarters of the University Air Squadron (UAS) (No. 6 Flying Training School (6FTS) at RAF College Cranwell)
- 1 was the headquarters of the Army University Officers' Training Corps (Royal Military Academy Sandhurst (RMAS) Group)
- 1 was the headquarters of the University Royal Naval Unit (UNRU) (Britannia Royal Naval College (BRNC))

The inspections of 2AAC and the DFTU were reinspections. These followed inspections in 2019 that resulted in a requires improvement grade for the quality of care and welfare. The visit to RAF Regt TW at RAF Honington was a full reinspection following a monitoring visit in November 2019 that identified high levels of early withdrawal by trainees. For these 2019 visits, inspectors used Ofsted's previous handbook for inspecting initial training for the Armed Forces, which was superseded in September 2020.

How we carried out our inspections and visits

During 2020/21, we based our inspections on a newly revised [handbook for](#)

[inspecting initial training in the Armed Forces](#). This handbook aligns more closely with Ofsted's [education inspection framework](#) but is contextualised for inspecting Armed Forces initial training. It contains new judgement areas that were not graded under the previous inspection framework. In the new framework, we have re-introduced a graded overall effectiveness judgement. Also, for the first time, we have graded training for Reserves.

Each Regular training establishment received no more than 48 hours' notice of inspection. Reserve training units and USU headquarters received around 2 weeks' notice.

Inspections lasted between 1 and 3 days, according to the size of the establishment and the numbers of recruits, trainees or officer cadets on site or attending courses.

At all establishments, inspectors identified strengths and weaknesses, and used the evidence to inform key judgements on:

- the quality of training and support
- personal and professional development of recruits and trainees
- the quality of facilities, infrastructure and resources
- the effectiveness of leadership and management

Inspectors used these to determine a graded summary judgement for the overall effectiveness of care and welfare.

Inspectors used Ofsted's 4-point judgement scale of outstanding, good, requires improvement and inadequate. They took the impact of COVID-19 into account when making judgements and arriving at recommendations.

Inspectors carried out remote visits to USU headquarters. They based their findings on specific themes rather than the key judgement areas used for inspections. They did not produce formal reports as a result of these visits.

Recommendations for improvement

All Regular and Reserve training establishments

We recommend that all Regular and Reserve training establishments:

- urgently deal with the continuing and repeated failures in infrastructure, in particular in the accommodation used by recruits and trainees, so that they live and train in good conditions; this will allow commanding officers (COs) and their staff to concentrate on the training, care and welfare of recruits and trainees

rather than maintaining and repairing their establishments

- provide all phase 2 trainees with improved living facilities in their accommodation blocks, such as social and study spaces and kitchen areas, so they can prepare healthy meals
- provide relevant, mandated training to all newly appointed trainers before they start their training role, so that they arrive ready and able to train recruits or trainees
- provide high-quality continuing professional development so that trainers improve their teaching and coaching skills
- reduce the numbers of recruits and trainees on holdover or in unprogrammed time from training; when recruits and trainees must spend time out of training, minimise this and provide them with meaningful and productive activities that help them develop their trade and military knowledge and skills
- provide prospective Regular and Reserve recruits with sufficient information about phase 1 and 2 courses, so that they can make fully informed choices
- ensure that trainees embarking on phase 2 training have been prepared fully for the academic and physical demands of their courses and chosen career specialisations
- improve the information that recruits and trainees are given about radicalisation and extremism, including potential online and local security risks, and discuss these with them often so that they know how to keep themselves and their peers safe
- analyse all available information to identify what works well and what needs to improve in welfare and training; use this evaluation to produce a rigorous and reflective self-assessment report (SAR) and connected quality improvement plan

University service unit headquarters

We recommend that USU headquarters:

- employ appropriate personnel to monitor the performance of USUs under their command and assure the quality of training, care and welfare effectively
- evaluate the impact of planned or new processes on improvements in care, welfare and officer cadet training across USUs
- routinely check compliance with MoD policies

Establishments' inspection history

The judgement areas that inspectors grade have changed this year under the new handbook. This table is therefore given as guidance only and does not provide a direct comparison of like-for-like grades from previous years.

Regular establishments

Establishment	Overall effectiveness (2020/21 inspection)	Key judgements (2020/21 inspection): quality of training and support; personal and professional development; quality of facilities, infrastructure and resources; effectiveness of leadership and management	Key judgements (previous inspection): outcomes; quality of welfare and care; leadership and management (date of previous inspection)
Royal Armoured Corps Training Regiment	2	2, 2, 2, 2	2, 2, 3 (29 November 2016)
2 (Training) Regiment, Army Air Corps	2	2, 2, 2, 1	2, 3, 2 (26 November 2019)
Royal Naval Air Station Yeovilton	2	2, 2, 2, 2	1, 2, 2 (17 October 2017)
RAF Regiment at RAF Honington	2	2, 2, 2, 2	Na, 2, Na (monitoring visit 27 November 2020)
Army Foundation College, Harrogate	1	1, 1, 1, 1	1, 1, 1 (17 October 2017)
RAF Cosford	3	2, 3, 3, 2	1, 2, 2 (14 October 2017)
HMS Collingwood	3	3, 3, 3, 3	2, 2, 2 (27 November 2018)
Royal Navy Submarine School	2	2, 2, 2, 2	1, 2, 2 (11 January 2013)
Defence Fire Training Unit	1	1, 1, 1, 1	1, 3, 2 (9 October 2019)

Reserve establishments

Establishment	Overall effectiveness (2020/21 inspection)	Key judgements (2020/21 inspection): quality of training and support; personal and professional	Key judgements (previous inspection): outcomes; quality of
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	inspection)	development; quality of facilities, infrastructure and resources; effectiveness of leadership and management	welfare and care; leadership and management (date of previous inspection)
Army Training Unit (West)	2	2, 2, 2, 2	First inspection
Royal Marine Reserve Bristol	2	2, 2, 2, 2	First inspection

Summary findings

Quality of training and support

Of the 11 establishments inspected, 2 were graded outstanding for the quality of training and support: AFC(H) and the DFTU. These establishments provided exceptional support for recruits and trainees.

Eight establishments were graded good for the quality of training and support: RACTR, ATU(W), 2AAC, RNAS Yeovilton, RMR Bristol, RAF Regt TW at RAF Honington, RAF Cosford¹ and the RNSMS based at HMS Raleigh. One establishment, HMS Collingwood, was graded requires improvement.

At the establishments given good or outstanding grades for overall effectiveness, there is a strong focus on the training, care and welfare of recruits and trainees. Senior commanders have continued to manage these aspects of training well during the pandemic. They have continued as much training as they could, including with some trainees working from home, while applying the required COVID-19 protocols to keep their on-site personnel safe. Recruits and trainees are cared for well by highly motivated and supportive staff, who work closely together to provide good, coordinated welfare arrangements. Recruits and trainees are confident that staff at all levels of seniority, as well as those outside the chain of command, such as padres, will provide them with appropriate support should they need it. Recruits and trainees in these establishments are highly appreciative of the efforts made by staff.

At AFC(H), DFTU and RNAS Yeovilton, the management of recruits or trainees considered at risk, including those with acute welfare, professional or personal difficulties, is particularly strong. Staff at every level, including the most senior, have a good knowledge of recruits' and trainees' circumstances and concerns. At 2AAC, staff take time and effort to get to know trainees well when they arrive. This means that staff can recognise early on if a trainee is struggling and can put appropriate support in place. The divisional officer system is instrumental in providing good support to trainee submariners at RNSMS.

At AFC(H), liaison with civilian agencies and authorities is thorough. For example, the establishment's designated safeguarding lead is part of the local children's safeguarding board. At RAF Regt TW, the staff responsible for welfare support have detailed knowledge of the support available for trainees. In both establishments, the expertise of these specialists makes sure recruits and trainees receive the help they need.

Staff provide recruits and trainees with good information and support on mental and physical health. For example, the senior command team at AFC(H) recently appointed a mental health nurse to improve support for recruits. Many establishments have staff who are trained as mental health first aiders. Welfare staff and chaplains/padres have referred an increasing number of trainees for specialist support with their mental health since the beginning of the pandemic. At RACTR, trainees told inspectors that troop staff frequently 'go the extra mile' to support them. In Reserve units, staff are appropriately sensitive to the fact that recruits juggle the demands of their civilian lives and jobs with military activity. They plan training flexibly and coach recruits individually if they miss any training because of work or domestic commitments.

At all good or outstanding establishments, recruits and trainees benefit from well-planned training programmes that develop their military and specialist trade knowledge and skills very effectively. They are prepared well for their full- or part-time careers in the Armed Forces. In these establishments, experienced trainers use their considerable expertise well. They ensure that recruits and trainees can remember the new knowledge they gain and that they practise their skills until they are proficient. Trainers who have received the relevant training themselves coach and mentor their recruits and trainees well so that they make good or better progress.

Staff at a number of establishments, in particular RNAS Yeovilton and DFTU, provide good support for an increasing number of trainees with specific learning difficulties. This vital support helps trainees with the written and numerical aspects of their work and increases their confidence. Trainees without GCSEs in English and mathematics who are also apprentices, for example at RNSMS and HMS Collingwood, undertake short courses in these subjects early in their phase 2 training. However, these courses are of variable quality and not enough trainees gain their level 2 functional skill qualifications in mathematics.

In most establishments, training resources used by recruits and trainees are very good. At RAF Cosford, for example, trainees work on aircraft systems in well-equipped hangars where they develop good practical engineering skills. At DFTU, trainee firefighters benefit from the excellent fire and rescue resources at the establishment incident ground, which are also used to train local authority firefighters. The trainees also enjoy the use of a bespoke, newly built training fire station with brand new fire appliances.

Aircrew officer cadets at RNAS Yeovilton benefit from well-structured training and use simulators and live flying practice to hone their skills. Trainee submariners at RNSMS use technology such as sonar equipment that is identical to the hardware

installed on submarines in service. At RAF Honington, there are good-quality training facilities, including firing ranges and excellent exercise and simulation areas. Trainee gunners (TGs) improve their marksmanship skills rapidly and know how to protect aircraft in hangers. Army Reserve recruits training with ATU(W) at Wyvern and Maindy Barracks benefit from decent training facilities, including classrooms and firing ranges. However, too often ATU(W) staff book the facilities they need but end up running courses with too few recruits because Reserve parent units do not send enough recruits to start the course. This means that resources go unused.

At HMS Collingwood, training is not good enough, especially for phase 2 trainees. Training lacks structure and is not well planned or delivered. Trainers do not get the opportunities for development that they need to improve their skills. Trainees make slower progress in developing their military and technical skills than they should. Some trainees find technical training sessions too difficult and others find training boring or mundane because trainers are not skilled enough to identify their previous knowledge or teach them well enough. Submariner trainees who had previously completed courses at HMS Collingwood were not prepared well enough for their next phase at RNSMS. Similarly, trainees at RNAS Yeovilton were poorly prepared for the second part of their phase 2 training.

Training staff at several establishments make useful adjustments to training programmes when they identify a need for improvements. For example, at RACTR, a review of training has resulted in the introduction of practical low-level tactical skills training, such as rigging vehicle camouflage under field conditions. Senior staff at RAF Regt TW introduced a modular programme and ensured that trainees could retake assessments where needed. At 2AAC, staff included time in the programme for trainees to study for their driving theory test, which they need for their training, rather than trying to learn this in their own time. At RMR Bristol, staff recently introduced a Reserve recruit orientation phase to improve recruits' understanding of the demands of their training.

In most establishments, physical training instructors provide trainees with progressive physical training programmes that are structured well to ensure that trainees develop their fitness at an appropriate pace. Trainees attend enough physical training sessions each week to support this. Although many sports and leisure facilities in establishments were closed because of the pandemic, most were reopening as soon as permitted to provide access so that trainees can take responsibility for their own personal fitness levels.

At DFTU, the physical training programme is functional, so that trainees do exercises that emulate the activities they do while firefighting, such as hauling and pulling heavy hoses. The physical training instructors carefully balance these sessions with the physical demands of the firefighting elements so that trainees are not overburdened. At 2AAC, physical training instructors use heart-rate monitors and specialist software to provide virtual training sessions and individual training plans, which have helped to reduce injuries. These were particularly helpful during COVID-19 restrictions, or when trainees were self-isolating. At RNSMS, trainees learn how to do limited-space exercise in preparation for their

life at sea in submarines.

Recruits and trainees who are recovering from injury are looked after well at all establishments. They attend rehabilitation sessions with well-qualified staff using good facilities. These staff provide recruits and trainees with individualised programmes that help them to recover and return to training quickly. Recruits at AFC(H) who experience injury get superb support to return to full fitness. Staff here adapt the theory and practical elements of training so that injured recruits catch up quickly and do not have to wait to complete their training. At RNSMS, physiotherapists use well-equipped facilities and the on-site swimming pool to help trainee submariners recover quickly.

Across establishments, staff were generally successful in attempts to mitigate the impact of lockdown restrictions. As a result, most training continued during the pandemic. But because of COVID-19 restrictions, increased numbers of trainees had time out of training in several establishments during the year. Time that trainees spent waiting for courses to start, or on periods of unprogrammed time during their training courses, was not always well managed. Too many trainees on such holdovers were not given useful or varied activities to help them develop their military and professional skills and knowledge. At HMS Collingwood and RNSMS, trainees with GCSEs in English and mathematics were placed on a 2-week holdover while their peers without these qualifications studied for functional skills qualifications. Those on holdover did very little useful activity during this time because training staff had not planned useful programmes for them. Often there were insufficient staff or resources to plan and run such meaningful activities. At RACTR and RNAS Yeovilton, trainees similarly lacked productive or stimulating programmes while they waited for courses to start.

In contrast, staff at AFC(H), 2AAC and DFTU worked diligently to reduce the need for trainees to be in holdover, including by re-structuring training. Those very few trainees from DFTU who did need time out of training, most often through injury or illness, returned to RAF Halton so that they could join the holdover flight there. DFTU staff stay in frequent contact with these trainees so that they are prepared fully to return to training as soon as they have recovered. RAF Regt TW staff had planned and improved the range of purposeful activity for trainees on holdover, but COVID-19 restrictions meant that this plan had yet to be implemented at the time of inspection. There were very few trainees on holdover at RAF Cosford, and none in the 2 Reserve units.

The number of recruits and trainees who succeed in training is high in almost all establishments. At 2AAC, RAF Cosford, DFTU and RNSMS, because of very good training and coaching, a very high proportion of trainees and recruits complete training. At AFC(H), the proportion of recruits who succeed has been increasing steadily over the past 3 years and is now high. Most of those who chose to leave AFC(H) did so early in their course because they did not feel well prepared to join the Army. At RAF Honington, the number of TGs who pass their course has increased because of changes to the training curriculum and better coaching and mentoring. However, at HMS Collingwood, too many phase 1 recruits leave training early because they are not prepared well enough for the

requirements of their training. At RMR Bristol, a high proportion of recruits choose to leave this very demanding part-time training.

Trainers in all establishments are enthusiastic, highly motivated and keen for their recruits and trainees to succeed. However, at HMS Collingwood, staff did not always understand how to turn enthusiasm and good pastoral care into effective and successful training. In the better establishments, trainers are selected for their expertise and personal qualities. Many command teams now hold selection boards and/or interviews to choose the most suitable military trainers. Once selected, most trainers carry out their mandated defence trainer courses (DTc)² before taking up their role as a trainer. Where this has not been possible, trainers are mentored and/or supervised until they have completed such training, which is usually within their first few months in post. At RMR Bristol, most specialist trainers have not completed DTc, or the basic online Care of Trainees (COT) course. This placed additional burdens on permanent staff, who had to spend time supervising their work. Civilian trainers always complete either the DTc or equivalent, and many are qualified to higher levels. Trainers who require it also complete their Disclosure and Barring Service checks. After such mandatory training, there are variations across establishments in the quality of continuous professional development that trainers receive to improve their teaching and coaching skills.

At RACTR, RNAS Yeovilton, RNSMS and AFC(H), trainers benefit from effective development programmes. They use their considerable specialist knowledge to teach and coach trainees well. At RACTR, staff use their skills to align training closely to trainees' needs. At RAF Cosford and AFC(H), trainers take additional courses that improve their training and military skills and knowledge. Reserve staff at ATU(W) return to their parent units after their trainer tour better qualified than when they left. At 2AAC and DFTU, although trainers and mentors maintain their technical skills effectively, they have limited support to develop and improve their teaching skills. At HMS Collingwood, there is little in place to support trainers to make training interesting or enjoyable, or to successfully teach trainees who have vastly different starting points and previous experiences.

Personal and professional development

Two establishments were graded outstanding for personal and professional development: AFC(H) and DFTU. These establishments went beyond what was expected so that recruits and trainees gained wide experience that prepared them exceptionally well for life in the Armed Forces.

Seven establishments were graded good for personal and professional development: RACTR, ATU(W), 2AAC, RNAS Yeovilton, RAF Regt TW, RMR Bristol and RNSMS. Two establishments were graded as requiring improvement: RAF Cosford and HMS Collingwood.

The vast majority of recruits and trainees enjoy their training and develop the characteristics, confidence and resilience they need to become successful

Service personnel. Because of the training they receive and the culture in which they train and live, almost all recruits and trainees demonstrate core military standards and values early in their service. Recruits learn quickly what standards are expected of them in the Armed Forces and know how to achieve these standards so that most move on to phase 2 successfully. Most trainees continue to demonstrate strong values and ethics throughout phase 2 training.

Recruits and trainees work extremely well together to support one another to achieve high standards of skills and behaviour, often under arduous conditions. Most strive to uphold the responsibility of being a member of the Armed Forces. At AFC(H), staff act as strong role models and encourage recruits to live and breathe Army values. RMR Bristol recruits show a high level of integrity, which is expected by staff.

Command teams in most establishments build strong cultures of tolerance, inclusion and diversity. They provide an environment free from bullying and harassment, or act quickly if incidents occur. Commanders use an effective network of staff to support this, such as equality, diversity and inclusion advisers, welfare teams and training staff. At 2AAC, improved training in diversity and inclusion gave trainees the confidence to report incidents that they witnessed or experienced elsewhere. At RAF Honington, staff provided considerable reassurance to trainees and their families, after media coverage concerning inappropriate behaviour at another RAF unit.

Most recruits and trainees are highly respectful of one another and of their staff. They thrive in the camaraderie of their peers. Almost all recruits and trainees believe their training is carried out fairly. Recruits and trainees feel safe at their establishments. They know how to report concerns and most are confident to do so. Recruits at AFC(H) and HMS Collingwood, and trainees at RNAS Yeovilton, DFTU and RNSMS, reported that bullying and harassment were not tolerated and that they were confident that staff would deal swiftly with anything that did arise. Male trainees at RAF Cosford reported a similar position. However, the few female engineering trainees interviewed told inspectors that there was a lack of respect from their male peers. They said they were the recipients of frequent inappropriate language and actions, which they had not reported to staff. In contrast, the relatively few female trainees at DFTU, RNAS Yeovilton and RNSMS were clear that there is no such prejudice evident at their establishments.

Most trainees are confident and highly motivated. They are clear on their progress towards their chosen career and know what options are available to them. Trainee firefighters at DFTU train alongside more experienced military and local authority fire and rescue services, so that they can see at first hand the sorts of knowledge, behaviours and skills they will acquire as they go through their careers. At RNAS Yeovilton and RAF Cosford, trainees and officer cadets have a good understanding of their career pathways in aircraft engineering, as air traffic control or as aircrew.

During inspections, almost all recruits and trainees were carrying out some training online because of the pandemic and subsequent restrictions. Most had a basic

understanding of steps they should take to stay safe online. However, training staff had not developed recruits' and trainees' knowledge much beyond using safe passwords and locking down privacy settings on social media. DFTU trainees knew little about the increase in online fraud, for example. Similarly, recruits and trainees had just a basic awareness of 'Prevent' duty measures, and of ways to stay safe from extremism and radicalisation, because training staff covered these topics during their induction. Staff do not expand recruits' and trainees' knowledge or reinforce what knowledge they do retain from induction. For example, they do not inform them about extremist groups that may be operating in their locality, or about the potential threats connected with the nature of the work they do, such as in the aviation sector. At RMR Bristol, trainers had not completed any 'Prevent' duty training.

Because of the pandemic, many activities that develop recruits' and trainees' wider skills and attributes well, such as adventurous training, visits to other units or ships, or visiting speakers, were curtailed or cancelled. Command teams planned to reinstate these as soon as COVID-19 restrictions allowed. Recruits and trainees were able to continue with their fitness training during this time. Staff worked hard to ensure that recruits and trainees had frequent contact with families and friends throughout lockdowns. Recruits and trainees were permitted to travel home to visit families and friends once restrictions were eased between lockdowns. Many trainees spent at least some of their phase 2 training time learning at home. Most passing out parades and graduation ceremonies were cancelled or held as live-streamed events where this was possible.

Quality of facilities, infrastructure and resources

Two establishments were graded outstanding for the quality of facilities, infrastructure and resources: AFC(H) and DFTU. Recruits and trainees at these establishments benefited from exceptional quality facilities that vastly enhanced their experience of Armed Forces training.

Seven establishments were graded good for the quality of their facilities, infrastructure and resources: RACTR, ATU(W), 2AAC, RNAS Yeovilton, RMR Bristol, RAF Regt TW and RNSMS. Two establishments were graded as requiring improvement: RAF Cosford and HMS Collingwood.

While facilities and resources are often good, at too many locations infrastructure has continued to suffer from long-term neglect and underfunding. The Army Aviation Centre, where 2AAC is based, RAF Cosford and HMS Collingwood all need substantial improvements. As in many previous years, accommodation in too many establishments is not good enough. Too often, there are problems with hygiene, electricity, heating, hot water and plumbing that are not rectified quickly enough, if at all. Recruits, trainees and staff are frustrated by living in these conditions and by the slow pace of improvement, which negatively affects their morale, well-being and training.

At HMS Collingwood and at RAF Cosford, accommodation for recruits and trainees requires urgent improvement. Heating and hot water at both establishments are unreliable and several blocks suffered from sewerage failures. Too often at HMS Collingwood, recruits and trainees must use toilet and shower facilities in other accommodation blocks, which are then over-used. At RAF Cosford, trainees are moved from one block to another as heating systems fail, which is disruptive. Some trainees' rooms were too cold when external temperatures fell below zero.

At RNAS Yeovilton, hot water and electricity supplies are intermittent and trainees are frustrated by the time it takes to get problems fixed. The standard of the bedrooms for phase 2 aircrew officer cadets here is good, but there is mould in the bathrooms. At RACTR, trainees live in mostly decent accommodation, but some of their furniture needs replacing and there are rust marks on walls and ceilings. Faults are usually rectified promptly. Trainees at 2AAC have warm and dry accommodation, with plentiful hot water, but it is dated and in need of refurbishment. Senior staff at RAF Honington have improved the accommodation for TGs and supervise continual upgrading, depending on funding. There is now enough hot water, although some showers do not afford enough privacy to trainees.

In stark contrast, recruits at AFC(H) and trainee firefighters at DFTU live in high-quality, clean and modern accommodation which is very well maintained. They have excellent amenities available and plenty of space and privacy. Contractors responsible for these facilities are proud of the standards they maintain and are quick to make improvements. Relationships between contractors and military staff are productive and constructive.

Many accommodation areas in phase 2 training establishments are equipped with laundry facilities, kitchen areas and spaces to relax, which trainees really value. These vary considerably in quality and quantity between establishments. At DFTU, all facilities are excellent, equipment is new and any defects are rectified very quickly. Facilities for trainees to wash and dry their clothes and kit are suitable and sufficient, for example at 2AAC and RAF Honington, but at RNAS Yeovilton the hygiene standards in trainee officers' utility areas are not good enough. At RACTR and DFTU, trainees can relax with their peers in comfortable common rooms, whereas trainees at RAF Cosford or RAF Honington have no such spaces to relax or study.

Kitchen facilities at RAF Cosford vary between blocks and are insufficient for trainees to cook anything healthy. Such facilities are minimal for phase 2 trainees at HMS Collingwood, and at RAF Honington there are no kitchen facilities at all. Trainees at RACTR and DFTU can use well-equipped shared kitchen areas to prepare meals should they choose.

Gymnasium and sports facilities are almost universally good, and at DFTU, AFC(H) and RNAS Yeovilton they are particularly impressive. Physical training staff make very good use of these facilities to improve recruits' and trainees' fitness, which continued throughout lockdowns. Some sports facilities that were

closed to trainees for leisure use due to COVID-19 were re-opened as restrictions allowed. While RAF Cosford has mostly good facilities, the sports hall roof has been leaking for some time, which puts it out of action after heavy rain, and the swimming pool is currently inoperable. At HMS Raleigh, where RNSMS is based, senior staff have secured funding to improve infrastructure and recreational facilities. The leaking gymnasium roof has been fixed and the swimming pool plant room serviced.

Most recruits and trainees can make use of good leisure facilities on site. At RAF Cosford, the small shop, takeaway facility and social club were refurbished recently. At RNAS Yeovilton, there is a cinema and coffee shop, although access was restricted in national lockdowns and trainees had little to do at weekends. Senior staff at 2AAC have made significant improvements to leisure and welfare facilities since the previous inspection. 2AAC trainees now have better access to the WRVS social facilities to enjoy activities in their own time, such as games and music. At DFTU, excellent leisure and social facilities are provided for the trainee firefighters' sole use. Army Reserve recruits at the ATU(W) site in Wyvern Barracks, Exeter have comfortable social amenities where they can relax after a busy training day.

The very large majority of recruits and trainees have 24-hour access to good medical and dental facilities on site. At RAF Honington and HMS Collingwood, these are of a high standard and include dedicated physiotherapy and pharmacy services. The medical centre at RNAS Yeovilton is well equipped to deal with the needs of a large air station. Although there are no on-site medical or dental centres for firefighter trainees at DFTU, staff provide transport to RAF Brize Norton for routine appointments and quick access to the local NHS hospital for any emergencies. The medical and dental centres at RACTR are not of the same standard as those in other establishments and require refurbishment.

Medical and physical training staff in all establishments work very closely together to rehabilitate recruits or trainees who become injured. During the year, staff managed any cases of COVID-19 effectively to reduce transmission and provide relevant medical care. Staff in most establishments also provide recruits and trainees with good health and well-being education, including how to avoid common injuries in training and how to improve sexual and mental health.

As reported in previous years, the quality and quantity of food vary considerably and, in some establishments, need improvement. Staff teach recruits and trainees why they should eat healthily, including sustaining themselves through arduous training. In most establishments, nutritional information is displayed on food counters, although recruits and trainees pay this little heed. No such information is available at Wyvern Barracks for Reserve recruits training with ATU(W). At DTFU, trainees are given very good menu choices and ample quantities. At 2AAC, staff have improved the quality and choice of food available since the previous inspection and these are now good. Contractors have extended the times that the junior ranks' mess is open. The standard of food at RAF Cosford is generally good, although choices are limited for vegetarians and vegans. ATU(W) Reserve recruits based at Maindy Barracks in Cardiff pay more for their food than other

phase 1 recruits. Trainees at RNAS Yeovilton and RNSMS prefer to prepare their own food, as they consider the quality or quantity of food available in the main galley to be poor.

Recruits and trainees at HMS Collingwood do not get enough good-quality food and at times are hungry. Meal portions can be small, and there is less choice at later meal sittings. The additional meal supplement provided for phase 1 recruits is given to them too early in the day and is not of sufficiently high nutritional value. At RAF Honington, senior staff listened to trainees' concerns about the quantity of food they need because of the nature of their training. Consequently, nutritional specialists are now reviewing this.

Almost all recruits and trainees have good access to reliable Wi-Fi so that they can study and keep in contact with friends and family. It is less good at HMS Collingwood and RNSMS because of patchy coverage. For the vast majority, Wi-Fi access is free, but TGs at RAF Honington are charged to use it in their accommodation blocks.

Effectiveness of leadership and management: Regular and Reserve training establishments

Three establishments were graded outstanding for the effectiveness of leadership and management: AFC(H), 2AAC and DFTU. Six were graded good: RACTR, ATU(W), RNAS Yeovilton, RAF Cosford, RAF Regt TW, RMR Bristol and RNSMS. The effectiveness of leadership and management at HMS Collingwood requires improvement.

COs and their senior teams continue to demonstrate a clear and ambitious vision. They have high expectations for the training, care and welfare of recruits and trainees, and of the staff under their command. They communicate their vision and expectations well so that all personnel know what is expected of them. They implement systems that oversee the welfare of recruits and trainees well and monitor individual cases closely to ensure that appropriate support is in place. Staff are highly motivated and work diligently to train and support recruits and trainees. At HMS Collingwood, though, there are insufficient experienced staff to fulfil the CO's vision.

In many establishments, staff still spend too much time trying to get contractors to do the work required or attempting to mitigate the impact of failing infrastructure on recruits and trainees. Senior officers spend too much time trying to secure funding to improve outdated, non-functioning or poorly maintained infrastructure, because of the 'fix-on-failure' approach adopted in MoD maintenance contracts. As reported in previous years, the persistent difficulties in managing contractors draw commanders' attention away from their proper concerns with the quality of training, care and welfare.

Staff in most establishments listen carefully to what recruits and trainees tell them

about what would improve their experience. Senior staff use internal and external feedback from a range of personnel and activities to identify improvements needed. Most establishments have made improvements since their previous inspections, most notably DFTU and 2AAC. At 2AAC, commanders made considerable changes to training, to trainees' access to leisure facilities and to the management of contractors. These improvements have made life better for trainees. Senior staff at DFTU used the move from MoD Manston as a fresh start, and, critically, set up contracts that put the training, care and welfare needs of trainees at the forefront.

While commanders often know what improvements are needed, they rarely capture these effectively in SARs. As in previous years, SARs are too often descriptive rather than evaluative. Most commanders fail to use all the information they have at their disposal, including how well different cohorts perform. Too often, key improvements, such as fixing infrastructure failures, are excluded completely from self-assessment and improvement planning. Frequently, there is little, if any, connection between the weaknesses identified in self-assessment and the actions for improvement captured in quality improvement plans. As a result, most SARs are cursory and unhelpful as documents for command handovers.

Most COs produce comprehensive and detailed supervisory care directives that clearly guide staff on the standards expected for the care and welfare of recruits and trainees. They analyse risks carefully and capture these effectively in their commanders' risk assessments.

As reported last year, commanders do not make sure that recruits and trainees have a good enough understanding of the risks from extremism and radicalisation. Too often, the only training recruits and trainees have is at induction, when they are also receiving much other new information. Commanders do not check that trainers reinforce this early learning sufficiently, or that trainers explore with recruits and trainees the potential risks in the locations where they are based.

Support and assurance visits to USU headquarters

USU headquarters provide headquarters support to the 49 USUs across UK universities. During lockdowns, USUs provided online training to officer cadets.

Staff at all 3 headquarters maintained good communications with the COs of USUs throughout the pandemic. During lockdowns, USU staff contacted officer cadets frequently to ensure that the cadets had the support they needed. BRNC and RMAS staff established thorough risk management systems, which gave them good oversight of the care and welfare of officer cadets by USUs.

Staff at RMAS and BRNC have established systems to provide them with useful information, such as the attendance of officer cadets at USUs. RMAS staff analyse and evaluate such data to make improvements, for example by reducing a

backlog of medical checks on cadets. BRNC lacks the staff capacity to carry out meaningful evaluation of the data it collects. 6FTS commanders collect operational information from USU staff but have no means of methodically analysing and evaluating data from their USUs.

Headquarters staff worked with USU staff to review how training was carried out during the pandemic. They are now reviewing the content of officer cadet training. Communication and sharing of training materials and resources between USUs has mostly improved. For example, University Officer Training Corps (UOTCs) can join online central activities, or those of another UOTC.

All 3 headquarters teams have amended their recruitment processes because of the pandemic. They are developing better oversight of the recruitment of officer cadets by USUs and are at varying stages of making the process more efficient and rigorous. BRNC and RMAS have improved their online application process. RMAS has improved the medical risk assessment of potential applicants, although BRNC and 6FTS report that there are still lengthy delays for medical assessment due to COVID-19. As a result, UAS recruitment declined and URNU recruitment was delayed.

RMAS commanders ensure that staff across UOTCs complete their required training, as stated by MoD policy, including the COT and safeguarding; they monitor this appropriately. Most URNU staff have completed the COT, and headquarters staff at BRNC have recently implemented a continuous development plan that will help URNU staff develop the skills they need to train officer cadets. 6FTS has not yet implemented a staff training programme.

Inspectors found that commanders at all 3 headquarters lacked the resources to monitor and assure the quality of training, care and welfare effectively, or meet MoD policy requirements, across USUs. Consequently, they did not know the strengths and weaknesses of USUs, or what actions they needed to take to make improvements. Headquarters' own SARs were either non-existent or did not contain enough detail to be useful.

Reports in date order: Regular establishments

Royal Armoured Corps Training Regiment

RACTR is part of the Armour Centre (ARMCEN) based in Bovington, Dorset. The CO is responsible for all initial trade training (ITT) of Household Cavalry, Royal Armoured Corps officers and soldiers, and soldiers of the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers who are assigned to armoured units. ITT courses take

between 22 and 25 weeks, depending on role and vehicle type. In practice, because of different intake dates from initial training group establishments, trainees typically spend at least 2 additional weeks on holdover. Training courses are provided by the Armoured Fighting Vehicle Schools Regiment under a separate chain of command, which also sits under the command of headquarters ARMCCEN.

Trainees are taught military skills and personal development activities by Centurion Troop staff. RACTR has an annual intake of around 450 trainees.

Main findings

RACTR's commanders manage the quality and content of trainees' ITT well. Commanders are building a strong culture of tolerance and inclusion. Trainers and troop staff pay close attention to trainees' welfare and care throughout their training. Trainees report that troop staff regularly 'go the extra mile' in their support.

Staff keep commanders well informed of trainees' welfare concerns. The CO chairs routine formal meetings involving the whole welfare team. Welfare, troop and instructor staff work together effectively to provide coordinated, multi-layered welfare arrangements. Troop staff hold weekly welfare meetings and maintain useful and frequently updated records.

Trainees learn their chosen Royal Armoured Corps trade in a logical and well-sequenced order. Staff review how well trainees are developing and retaining the skills and knowledge they will need in the Field Army. Staff make changes to courses as necessary. Commanders are currently planning to introduce practical low-level tactical skills training, such as rigging vehicle camouflage under field conditions. They are also planning to reinstate a machine gunnery course to develop trainees' military skills further. They are planning to request an increase in staffing, having identified a shortfall in trainers against a large intake of trainees expected next year.

Trainers receive a systematic and progressive learner-focused programme of professional training and development. As a result, training is highly effective, and trainees enjoy it. Trainees benefit from effective individual coaching and mentoring support from trainers and troop staff. They are motivated and feel well equipped for their chosen careers. They have access to very good teaching and learning resources. They feel safe. Trainees are confident about their ability to be effective in the Field Army. Very few trainees decide to leave their course or to leave military training altogether. Trainees' overall pass rates are very high for all ITT courses. Trainees are well prepared for the move to their Field Army units. The CO liaises informally with Field Army COs to gain their views about the quality of RACTR trainees passing on to the Field Army. No formal measures are in place to gather Field Army views.

Trainees receive progressive and developmental physical training, structured to provide them with fully functional fitness. Trainees recovering from injury are looked after well. Injured trainees in holdover attend appropriately supervised rehabilitation sessions and follow individualised programmes.

Trainees in holdover receive military skills and professional development training, although this is not a formal part of their training schedule. The programme for trainees who spend a long time in holdover is not varied enough.

Trainees' accommodation is generally of good quality and well resourced, but some furniture, such as personal lockers, is old and worn. Heating and hot water are, for the most part, reliable. Faults are usually rectified promptly. Most trainees spend their leisure time in their accommodation blocks and have good-quality free Wi-Fi. Most trainees leave the unit at weekends. Those who stay have very limited leisure facilities and activities.

Trainees have a choice of food outlets in, and immediately outside, the camp. Many trainees complain about the quality and quantity of food in the main cook house, but inspectors judged that the quality there was reasonable and provided value for money.

Most of the current senior command team joined in summer and early autumn 2020. The CO and senior staff have revised the RACTR supervisory care directive and made it a practical reference document for permanent staff. The CO has developed and distributed a one-page 'ethos' document that explains very clearly how training will be carried out in the context of trainees' welfare and care. The ethos is highly inclusive and communicated well. For instance, it is used to preface the very practical summary information contained in a trainers' handbook that was recently distributed.

Most new trainers arrive fully trained, with Disclosure and Barring Service checks, and ready to work. A very small minority do not, which causes a disproportionate diversion of resources while they are prepared for training. This can take between 3 and 6 months.

The previous self-assessment process led to a report in June 2020 that was strong on description but weak on evaluation. The new command team has joined since that time. They recognise that a wholly evaluative approach is required for the next self-assessment process, which begins in November 2020. Commanders have already refined quality improvement planning successfully to make it an effective means of identifying and tackling areas for improvement.

Commanders now make much better use of the regular Ipsos MORI survey of recruits and trainees to analyse trainees' views on what is working well and what is not. However, staff do not gather trainees' views on their own account. For example, they do not determine whether trainees believe they learn subjects sequentially and complementarily in order to make swift progress towards achieving their training objectives.

Too many trainees come from basic training without their provisional driving licences, and then wait months at RACTR for their licences to arrive. This is particularly the case for trainees arriving from AFC Harrogate. This problem is acute and has yet to be resolved. A small number of trainees are waiting far too long for a medical discharge. They remain a responsibility for RACTR long after

they signal their intention to discharge.

Commanders are concerned that they are currently unable to run a full programme of compulsory drug testing. Although individual testing kits are available, staff say they have difficulty getting them processed because of COVID-19 restrictions.

Trainees with urgent medical or dental problems get appointments on the same day or within 24 hours. The dental centre is in a poor state of repair and does not have the required central sterilising facility. The medical centre, while functional, is also in need of refurbishment.

Recommendations

We recommend that RACTR:

- gathers and analyses trainees' views about their training to provide first-hand evidence of the quality and impact of the training programme
- ensures that every new trainer arrives fully trained, and ready and able to work
- ensures that trainees arrive at RACTR with their provisional driving licences
- provides those trainees in holdover for lengthy periods with a more varied and developmental programme
- reinstates a full programme of compulsory drug testing
- refurbishes the medical and dental centres
- improves the medical discharge process so that it provides a speedier exit for those leaving on medical grounds

2 (Training) Regiment, Army Air Corps

2AAC is part of the Army Aviation Centre based at Middle Wallop in Hampshire. It provides all training for Army Air Corps ground crew, which includes phase 2 ITT and phase 3 specialist trade training. 668 Squadron provides phase 2 and phase 3 training and 676 Squadron looks after the administration and well-being of all phase 2 trainees. Trainees follow a common syllabus for the first 6 weeks of training before specialising as either ground crew or communications specialists.

The Army Aviation Centre carries out training for officers and soldiers in both the air crew and ground crew role. It is home to 2AAC and 7 (Training) Regiment Army Air Corps.

Main findings

The regiment's relatively new senior command team has worked with speed and determination to improve the quality of the experience for trainees and the effectiveness of their phase 2 training. It has made considerable improvements to trainees' leisure facilities, the range of food options available, the quality and consistency of food and the speed with which maintenance staff complete

requests.

The command team has made useful changes to the order that training staff teach the different components of the phase 2 training. Trainees now have structured time available to study for their driving theory test rather than trying to learn this in their own time after a busy training day. The proportion of trainees who now pass this test first time has increased markedly, and the proportion of those who complete their overall phase 2 training remains high. Trainees who need to take their goods vehicle driver training and assessment move to their Field Army units while they are waiting for training places. These trainees then return to training when places become available. This arrangement has kept the time trainees are in holdover to a minimum.

All staff place the highest importance on trainees' welfare. They take time to get to know trainees well in their early days with the unit. They recognise early on if a trainee is unhappy, worried or struggling, and intervene swiftly to provide appropriate support.

Physical training instructors, who are mostly civilian, work very effectively to improve trainees' physical fitness and stamina. They use heart-rate monitors and specialist software to provide virtual training sessions. These have been particularly helpful during COVID-19 restrictions and when trainees have been self-isolating. Staff use information from heart-rate monitors to motivate trainees and to provide them with individual training plans.

Training is of a very high standard, and the mentors who provide the training are highly experienced in their military specialist areas. However, they have received very little training in how to develop their teaching skills to a high standard. Command staff have recently developed an action plan for mentors' training.

There have been recent improvements in the speed at which the maintenance contractor completes essential repairs and maintenance. The regiment staff also complete self-help projects. Despite these efforts, the infrastructure at the Army Aviation Centre remains aged and in need of substantial improvements.

The command team has developed a new monitoring system recently to evaluate the effectiveness of each component of the ground crew and communications training pathways. Staff are starting to use this data to improve the quality of the training in each module, where data indicates that this is required. However, it is too early to measure the effectiveness of this.

Trainees feel safe at the base. They understand how to keep themselves safe while on and off the base and while online. They value highly how quickly staff get to know them at the start of their training and how staff take an interest in each trainee's welfare and well-being. Trainees are emphatic that bullying is not tolerated. They are confident that officers would take swift and decisive action should any bullying occur.

Trainees develop a high standard of personal and professional behaviour. The team responsible for diversity and inclusion has worked effectively to raise

awareness of these topics with trainees and staff. Training in diversity and inclusion has led several trainees to develop the knowledge, confidence and values to raise incidents they have witnessed or experienced elsewhere, including in phase one establishments.

Staff and trainees are very aware of the impact that the current COVID-19 pandemic has had on the operation of the base. Staff have put plans in place to keep themselves and trainees safe. While trainees are sometimes frustrated by the restrictions they are required to follow, they respect, understand and comply with these requirements.

Recommendations

We recommend that 2AAC:

- helps mentors who provide training to trainees to develop their teaching and instructional skills to a high level through suitable training and development
- continues the pace of infrastructure improvements at the base
- ensures that plans to bring essential facilities up to date are implemented without undue delay
- improves the quality of the training components of the ground crew and communications pathways through the collection and evaluation of trainees' performance data

Royal Naval Air Station Yeovilton

RNAS Yeovilton is situated a few miles north of Yeovil in Somerset. Yeovilton is home to the Royal Navy's Wildcat helicopters, as well as the Royal Navy's Commando Helicopter Force, which is equipped with Merlin and Wildcat helicopters. The station's principal role is to provide and sustain trained and capable squadrons and flights while providing aviation support to the fleet globally. Around 4,500 military and civilian personnel work across the air station.

In this inspection, we focused on phase 2B trainees undergoing training in the Engineering Training School, together with phase 2B trainees and aircrew officer trainees in 825 and 846 Naval Air Squadrons. Phase 2B trainees complete their phase 2A training at HMS Sultan before beginning their phase 2B training. At the time of the inspection, 124 phase 2B trainees were in training. All but 3 of these were men. Seventy-one aircrew officer trainees were in training, of whom 14 were female, and 36 aircrew were in holdover.

The CO of RNAS Yeovilton has command responsibilities and takes the lead in security, disciplinary and welfare matters. The executive officer's department manages this work on a day-to-day basis. The care of trainees officer manages the station's duty of care policy.

Main findings

The station's commodore provides a strong focus on welfare and care, which is demonstrated by all staff. Welfare and care are ingrained in all aspects of training. Trainees have complete confidence that they will receive the support they need if they have personal or professional difficulties. They have no concerns about approaching anyone in their chain of command, or a designated person outside it, for assistance.

The senior leadership team responsible for supervising and coordinating the training and welfare of phase 2B trainees and officer aircrew is relatively new in post. The team has focused quickly on reviewing and revising key welfare and care-related documents and procedures to ensure that they are fit for purpose. The commander's risk assessment and the supervisory care directive are new. They are now practical and easily understood guidance documents.

The foundation of welfare and care is the establishment's highly effective divisional officer system. This system ensures that the provision of welfare and care is consistent with Royal Navy core values. Provision extends to involve all staff in the trainees' chain of command and includes the chaplaincy and medical staff. In the past year, commanders have also increased their focus on identifying and providing support for an increasing number of trainees with specific learning difficulties. This support is helping trainees to complete written and numerical aspects of their training.

The management of trainees 'at risk', including those with acute welfare, professional or personal issues, is a particular strength of the establishment. Commanders have a good knowledge of trainees' circumstances and concerns.

Commanders recognise that they need to manage and coordinate holdover more effectively and they are putting plans in place to improve this. Most officers on holdover feel very well supported while they wait for the next part of their training and are happy with the support that they are receiving. However, a few of these officers need more stimulating activities. Although the number of phase 2B trainees on holdover is small, a few of these are not expecting to return to their course before the end of the current year.

The quality of training, resources and support at Yeovilton for phase 2B aircraft engineering trainees and phase 2 aircrew officers are very good. As a result, phase 2B trainees have developed substantial new knowledge, skills and confidence at a much greater pace and depth than they had expected. A very high proportion of phase 2B trainees who complete their aircraft engineering course pass at the standard required. Trainees are less positive about aspects of the 14-week squadron stage, where their on- and off-the-job training is compromised by a lack of structure and a shortage of supervisory staff. This aspect of training requires improvement. The phase 2B trainees that we interviewed felt poorly prepared for phase 2B training at Yeovilton. They were highly critical of their phase 2A training.

Aircrew officers receive well-structured training, including the use of simulators

and live flying, which blends theory and practical aspects of training successfully. They receive extensive and useful feedback from their trainers. Training staff monitor the structure of the programme and make adjustments if required. For example, most navigation training is being moved to a later stage so that aircrew are trained just before they need it. All aircrew officers who have completed their courses successfully in the past 3 years have done so within their expected timescale.

The aircrew instructor monitoring, development and qualification programme is highly developed and very effective. Overall, trainers are trained well and use their substantial operational knowledge to ensure that trainees receive up-to-date and relevant training to become effective members of the Fleet Air Arm.

Trainees are confident and well-motivated individuals who are clear about why they have chosen the Royal Navy and their particular career. They understand the range of career progression and qualification options available to them, whether in, for example, aircraft engineering, air traffic control or as aircrew. Trainees are respectful and tolerant towards others and enjoy the camaraderie they develop with their cohort through teamworking and training. Most do not yet think of themselves as fully embodying all 6 of the Royal Navy core values, but they recognise and understand what they are.

Trainees have a reasonable understanding of equality and diversity, although these and other themes, such as the 'Prevent' duty, are not developed enough during their training. Almost all trainees believe their training is carried out fairly. The relatively few female trainees are unequivocal in their belief that their training is carried out without prejudice.

Trainees' physical training is well resourced and provides them with a developmental training programme. Trainees attend enough structured physical training each week to develop and take responsibility for their personal fitness.

Phase 2B trainees' accommodation is adequate and fit for purpose, although many trainees say that services such as hot water and the electricity supply are too intermittent. They are frustrated by the disproportionately long time they say it takes to get problems fixed. The standard of accommodation for phase 2 aircrew officers in the Wardroom at RNAS Yeovilton is good. Trainees are billeted in well-decorated en-suite cabins, although these are let down by mould on the bathroom ceilings. Well-equipped utility areas include drying rooms, washing machines, cooking hobs and refrigerators. Hygiene standards in these areas require improvement and are not being monitored well enough.

The on-site medical and dental facilities and facilities for rehabilitation from injury are very good. Trainees can get medical support quickly. The gymnasium and other facilities are excellent.

Trainees have access to a small range of food outlets, including the main galley. The galley is not used by all trainees and, in surveys, the majority do not rate the quality and quantity of food highly. Trainees complain that there is too little for them to do on site at weekends. This is largely because the options are currently

restricted by COVID-19. Travel to and from the station, for example by taxi, is too expensive.

Commanders have successfully tackled all the recommendations for improvement identified at the previous inspection in 2017. Commanders pay close attention to the outcomes of Ipsos MORI's survey of recruits and trainees and other methods used to obtain trainees' feedback and make improvements as a result. Their recently produced SAR is evaluative, concise and clear. Key judgements about strengths and weaknesses are supported by specific and relevant evidence. The overall judgements within the SAR are accurate, although they do not reference all the less positive judgements that we identified during inspection. Self-assessment judgements link effectively to quality improvement actions. Each quarter, commanders review progress towards achieving the actions.

Recommendations

We recommend that RNAS Yeovilton:

- implements plans to improve the management and coordination of trainees' activities in holdover
- ensures that phase 2B trainees in the squadron phase receive a carefully structured and consistent blend of on- and off-the-job training
- ensures that trainees are better prepared for phase 2B training
- ensures that facilities in trainees' accommodation, such as hot water and electricity, are reliably available and minor faults are rectified swiftly
- provides trainees with cheaper alternative travel options from RNAS Yeovilton to nearby facilities, such as train stations

RAF Regiment Training Wing at RAF Honington

RAF Regt TW provides phase 2 training for gunners and junior RAF Regt officers. RAF Regt TW is based alongside the RAF Force Protection Headquarters, operational RAF Regiment Squadrons and other lodger sub-units, at RAF Honington in Suffolk.

RAF Regiment gunners provide ground-based force protection for the RAF. TGs take a minimum of 20 weeks to complete their phase 2 training before joining the Regiment as a gunner. At the time of the inspection, there were 178 TGs, of whom 15 were aged under 18. Two women were in training, one was on holdover and one was waiting to start training. There were no junior regiment officers in training at the time of the inspection.

Main findings

Officer Commanding Training Wing and the command team have worked closely with Force Protection Headquarters and the Station Commander to set a clear

vision for the future of training and support for trainees. This includes setting high expectations for staff and TGs to help TGs develop the skills, knowledge and behaviours that service in the RAF Regiment demands. These high expectations have led to a range of improvements since the previous inspections. These include an increase in pass rates, which are now good, and upgrading TGs' living accommodation, including providing reliable heating and hot water.

Senior officers have created a fair and inclusive environment. Trainees clearly feel supported by their peers and staff. Staff took swift and very effective action to reassure trainees and their parents or carers following the media coverage of an alleged incident at a different unit that was previously based at RAF Honington. They also reinforced the importance of high standards of behaviour throughout the Service. Trainees develop more responsible and professional behaviours as a result of the training they receive and strive to uphold the responsibility of being a member of the Armed Forces.

TGs are extremely well cared for and supported by staff at the station. Staff responsible for welfare support have a thorough understanding of the support available for trainees, both within the RAF and from civilian services, and they signpost trainees to these where necessary. Staff provide trainees with good information and support on mental and physical health. Trainees enjoy good facilities to support their well-being. For example, they have access to high-standard medical and dental facilities, including on-site physiotherapy services and a pharmacy. Trainees who are injured are supported well to recover quickly. Senior staff responded well to TGs' concerns about the quantity of food they need, and this is now being reviewed by defence nutritional specialists.

Staff put effective measures in place to minimise the incidence of COVID-19 infections. The station COVID-19 cell responded well to an outbreak in early January 2021 and rapidly broke the transmission cycle. With the third UK lockdown easing, commanders plan to re-open closed facilities such as the gymnasium and restart activities such as team sports as soon as it is safe to do so.

Senior officers have recently enhanced the potential gunner selection course. This valuable initiative welcomes the selected TGs to the RAF Regiment and gives them a clearer understanding of the demands and rewards of their chosen career before they start their phase 1 training. Training Wing staff routinely visited phase 1 training at RAF Halton to brief TGs on their phase 2 training, stressing the physical aspects of the course. This was paused during the COVID-19 lockdowns. Consequently, TGs coming from phase 1 were not fully prepared for phase 2, which resulted in an increase in the numbers of TGs who struggled to meet the required physical standards early in their phase 2 course.

Senior staff have made changes to the structure of TG training. They introduced a modular programme and assessment strategy. Staff analyse each aspect of the training to identify how they can improve trainees' outcomes. They have built in opportunities for trainees to retake assessments, where needed, without falling behind. These changes to the training curriculum, linked to the development of

trainers' skills as mentors and coaches, have increased the proportion of TGs who pass their course. This has led to increases in first-time and overall pass rates for phase 2 training.

Trainers use a range of techniques skilfully to develop trainees' skills, knowledge and behaviours. They teach in good-quality training facilities that include well-equipped classrooms, appropriate firing ranges and excellent exercise and simulation areas. As a result of their training, TGs improve their marksmanship skills rapidly and know how to protect an aircraft in a hangar that is being prepared for flight.

The Station Commander's supervisory care directive is based on a comprehensive risk assessment and provides a strong framework for welfare and care. The well-integrated station-wide effort prioritises the training, care and welfare of those in phase 2 training.

Senior staff have evaluated the quality of care and training reasonably well, using a wide range of data, although they have not included the views of staff and TGs. The resulting SAR describes most of the strengths and areas for improvement identified by inspectors but is not evaluative enough. The report requires simplification so that all staff can understand and use its content. The quality improvement action plan is detailed and links well to the areas for improvement identified in the SAR.

TGs awaiting training benefited from a wider range of purposeful activities due to improvements made by senior staff following the reinspection report in 2020. These activities included organised sport and assisting staff to develop facilities such as the heritage centre. These activities have been reduced during COVID-19 restrictions. Senior officers should reinstate the improved programme as soon as it is safe to do so in order to prevent TGs becoming bored.

Trainees now have access to Wi-Fi in their accommodation but must pay for this. Their free access to Wi-Fi is limited to the leisure facility. TGs would benefit from wider access to free, good-quality Wi-Fi so that they can contact their families and friends easily and access the increasing volume of online training material that training staff provide.

Senior staff select trainers carefully for their roles, but not all have completed the DTc before they arrive in post. Training managers and supervisors ensure that trainers improve their skills rapidly in their training roles.

Recommendations

We recommend that RAF Regiment Training Wing:

- following the restrictions required to reduce COVID-19 transmission, improves the range of purposeful activities for trainees waiting to start their phase 2 training. It should also reopen facilities, such as the gymnasium, for all trainees as quickly as it is safe to do so
- provides TGs with the information they need during their phase 1 course to

- prepare them for the physical fitness requirements of their phase 2 training
- makes the SAR more easily understood by all staff, and evaluates the quality of training and care more deeply to further identify strengths and areas for improvement
- provides TGs with wider access to free, good-quality Wi-Fi
- provides new trainers with the mandated training they require, including the defence training course, before they arrive

Army Foundation College, Harrogate

AFC(H) is the only junior-entry phase 1 training establishment in the British Army. The college provides basic military training and develops future leaders. It offers a mix of military training, personal development and education for under 19s to provide them with the skills to succeed in the Armed Forces and in their lives beyond the military.

Each course is divided into companies. The 20-week course recruits are in Waterloo company and the 40-week course recruits are divided between Alamein, Burma, Peninsula and Cambrai companies. Each company has between 4 and 7 platoons of 48 junior soldiers.

The 40-week course is for those joining the infantry, Royal Armoured Corps/Household Cavalry, Royal Artillery and some Royal Logistic Corps roles. The 20-week course is for those joining courses with longer phase 2 ITT. These are the Corps of Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, Corps of Royal Engineers, Royal Corps of Signals, Adjutant General's Corps, Royal Army Medical Corps, Army Air Corps, Royal Corps of Army Music and some Royal Logistic Corps roles.

Recruits who are under 18 years old are not deployed on operations that would expose them to hostilities and they are not subject to a notice period should they choose to leave the Army after they have signed up.

This inspection covered the phase 1 training of junior soldiers at AFC(H). At the time of the inspection, there were approximately 1,100 recruits in training, of which around 280 were on the 20-week course.

Main findings

Since taking up his post in July 2020, the CO has set out clearly a new vision for AFC(H). He has communicated this openly and widely to his team. The ethos of emotional and psychological safety, inclusion and teamwork is firmly embedded in the work and life of the college. The CO's ambition for recruits is shared by his team, including military, civilian and contractor staff, at all levels.

Recruits receive very good training from highly experienced and enthusiastic trainers and teachers. Recruits make excellent progress with the development of

their military, professional and personal skills as a result of the high aspirations and standards that college staff set and aspire to. The training curriculum at AFC is ambitious and enables recruits, where needed, to improve their English, mathematics and information technology skills, and to achieve functional skills qualifications in these subjects.

Recruits live, work and learn in immaculate facilities and surroundings. Accommodation blocks are clean, modern and well maintained. Breakages are fixed quickly, and improvements made by the contractors' staff where appropriate or necessary. Classrooms are modern and well equipped. Physical training facilities are extensive and used extremely skilfully by physical training staff to develop recruits' fitness, stamina and resilience.

Contractors' staff are proud of the site they maintain and the standards they achieve. They are very quick to put in place improvements, both on their own initiative and following suggestions from permanent staff and recruits. Contractors, Army and civilian staff work seamlessly to provide a well-maintained, attractive and fully functioning campus for recruits to use.

Recruits are fed well, with a wide range of nutritious foods. Recruits are not always satisfied with the quality of food and the portion sizes. Occasionally, they consider that they do not get sufficient carbohydrates for the amount of physical activity they are doing. Additional servings are usually available, but a few catering staff do not always provide these. Recruits' understanding of healthy eating and the importance of a balanced diet is not consistently good. They often choose the less healthy options available in the mess in preference to more wholesome dishes.

The command team has accurate and extensive oversight of the quality of training. Team members use this knowledge to evaluate training frequently and make improvements. For example, as a result of their analysis of injury rates in female recruits, they changed the structure of the training programme, which has reduced such injuries. Changes to the structure of marksmanship training, following an evaluation of first-time pass rates for this assessment, have led to a higher proportion of recruits developing high levels of skills and passing this course on their first attempt.

The chief instructor, as the designated safeguarding lead, has a very good understanding of safeguarding. He is a member of the North Yorkshire Children's Safeguarding Partnership. He uses his extensive links with partner agencies to make sure that the few safeguarding incidents that are reported are investigated thoroughly and the recruits involved get the help, support and guidance they need. Senior staff maintain comprehensive oversight of the welfare and care of recruits. Recruits are emphatic about the high standards of care and welfare at AFC. They report that there is no bullying at the college and that they are confident that permanent staff would deal firmly and promptly with any incidents that may arise.

High-quality, modern and well-staffed medical and dental facilities ensure that recruits get prompt help for any such matters during their time at the college. A

recently appointed new member of staff supports recruits with any mental health problems they may encounter, augmenting the high levels of support for recruits already available. Due to the working practices necessary as a precaution against the spread of COVID-19, dental staff have not been able to see as many recruits as usual for treatment. As a result, a small proportion of recruits are going to their phase 2 establishments not fully dentally fit.

Recruits who experience injury get superb help, support and rehabilitation from specialist staff. This helps them quickly return to full fitness. Because of the careful and meticulous planning of the training curriculum for each platoon, staff are able to adapt the theory and practical elements of training so that those who are injured and unable to participate catch up quickly and are not held over to a future intake to complete their training.

Recruits speak consistently of fair and respectful treatment from all staff, whether military, civilian or contractor. Staff recognise the importance of high-quality training and the modelling of appropriate behaviours as a way of instilling good conduct and attitudes in recruits. When they do have to use discipline, permanent staff use this fairly and proportionately. Recruits know they should challenge any permanent staff's actions that they believe are unfair or disproportionate and are encouraged to do so.

Welfare and support for recruits have a very high profile at the college. Very good links between the chain of command, the unit support team and external specialist agencies result in highly effective support for recruits' welfare. The unit welfare team is trusted by recruits and provides bespoke support for those who need it. Commanders keep detailed records of concerns identified and actions taken. Staff review recruits of concern in monthly welfare agency meetings, where they identify the best actions to support the recruits' welfare and progress.

The proportion of recruits who pass their phase 1 training has improved over the past 3 years and is high. The large majority of recruits who leave training before the end of the course do so in the early weeks. One of the command team interviews every recruit who leaves early to find out why and to make changes to the training to reduce the numbers who leave early. Most commonly, recruits cite poor or inaccurate recruiting information about the demands of training and Army life as the reason for leaving.

Those recruits who choose to leave the Army before the end of their training receive comprehensive support to return to civilian life. They have access to careers guidance for up to 2 years after they are discharged. Most use this facility well. Those recruits who were in the care of their local authority before joining the Army are monitored very closely. Officers make sure that social services staff in the area to which they are returning arrange accommodation and ongoing support for discharged recruits.

The command team manages risk diligently. They review risks to training, welfare and care frequently and put measures in place to reduce or eliminate risks when they are identified. To minimise the risk that the COVID-19 pandemic posed to

training, the team constructed an isolation facility on a remote part of the site to reduce the spread of the virus among staff and recruits. As a result, most training was able to continue without disruption.

Recommendations

We recommend that AFC(H):

- develops recruits' understanding of healthy eating and a balanced diet, and works with catering staff to ensure that recruits get enough food at each meal to meet the nutritional demands of training
- provides prospective recruits with accurate information and sufficient detail about the structure, demands and expectations of the course, so that they can make fully informed decisions about their own suitability before joining the Army

RAF Cosford

RAF Cosford is based in Shropshire near Wolverhampton. It is a major part of the Defence College of Technical Training and the headquarters of the Defence School of Aeronautical Engineering (DSAE). No. 1 School of Technical Training (No1 SofTT) is the largest training school at RAF Cosford and is part of DSAE. No1 SofTT provides phase 2 and phase 3 training to mechanical, electrical, avionics and weapons technicians, and survival equipment fitter personnel from all 3 services. The Aerosystems Engineering and Management Training School (AE&MTS), which is also part of DSAE, provides engineering officer foundation training for phase 2 RAF officers. This is in addition to a range of professional engineering and management training for other RAF personnel. Lodger units at RAF Cosford include No.1 Radio School (No1 RS), which is part of the Defence School of Communications and Information Systems.

This inspection looked at phase 2 training, care and welfare at No1 SofTT, AE&MTS and No1 RS for RAF trainees. At the time of the inspection, 811 trainees were at No1 SofTT, 161 trainees and 7 officers under training at No1 RS and 33 officers under training at AE&MTS. There were 52 women under training and all except 2 were training at No1 SofTT. Twenty-seven trainees were under the age of 18. In addition to the provision covered by this inspection, RAF Cosford is also home to the RAF School of Physical Training and the Defence School of Photography.

Main findings

Due to the lack of investment in infrastructure at RAF Cosford, and the fix-on-fail approach to maintenance as part of the MoD-managed contract, most trainees live in poor-quality accommodation. Senior commanders and other staff spend too much time managing immediate repairs, trying to secure additional funding for maintenance or relocating trainees to different accommodation. Since the accommodation blocks were built around 30 years ago, no systematic programme

of maintenance has been implemented. Sewerage, water, heating and electrical systems fail too often. To mitigate this, staff move trainees from one block to another, which trainees find disruptive. During the sub-zero temperatures early in 2021, some blocks had no heating, so trainees were cold. Most trainees at No1 RS and AE&MTS benefit from better accommodation. Although the MoD has plans in place to refurbish the accommodation fully, these are not due to start for a further 3 years.

Trainees have no recreational facilities within the accommodation blocks, so cannot rest and relax with their peers. Other facilities, such as for cooking and laundry, vary widely between blocks. Where they do exist, cooking facilities are insufficient for trainees to be able to cook healthy meals.

Due to serious maintenance and repair issues caused by a COVID-19-related shutdown, the station swimming pool is currently unusable. Consequently, trainees, staff or dependents cannot use the pool to improve their physical and mental health or recover from injury. The sports hall is also unusable after heavy rain because of significant leaks in its roof. This is a persistent issue.

The physical training resources at RAF Cosford are otherwise impressive and used well by staff to progressively develop the physical fitness of trainees. Trained specialist staff provide very good support to injured trainees and trainees recover quickly.

Training resources and facilities for trainees are very good. Well-equipped hangars enable trainees to work on airframes, weapons and avionics systems and develop good fundamental practical engineering skills. Many classrooms have smartboards and videoconferencing facilities. Aeronautical engineering officers complete virtual tours of remote stations, such as the Falkland Islands, which help them to understand the conditions under which aircraft operate.

Trainers are experienced, carefully selected and well trained. Trainers have substantial expertise and many have previously worked in live operational environments. Trainees benefit from their trainers' experience by gaining useful skills and knowledge that prepare them well for their careers in the RAF. Most trainers have completed their MoD mandatory training and those who have not are mentored effectively. They can access other useful courses as part of their professional development.

Training Development Coordinators (TDCs), who are senior non-commissioned officers, are a strong feature of care and welfare support for trainees. TDCs are appropriately trained, for example in mental health, and provide trainees with a single point of contact for administrative, general service and welfare issues. Their support is available to trainees 24/7 via phone and email. For serious care and welfare concerns, senior commanders have effective systems in place to monitor individual trainees and the actions taken to support them, which they record well. They implement case conferences, which include relevant specialist staff such as medical experts and the padre, to ensure that the right support is in place.

The senior team and staff have managed the training, care and welfare of trainees

well during the pandemic. Through careful planning, training programmes have been paused rather than curtailed so that trainees could keep learning wherever this was possible, including remote learning from home. The senior team and staff have ensured that trainees and staff have been kept safe when on site. Guidance laid down in the station supervisory care directive is clear. They articulate risks, and mitigations, to trainees well in the commander's risk assessment. The management of trainees under the age of 18 is good.

Senior commanders have improved leisure facilities since the previous inspection. A small shop, takeaway facility and social club have been refurbished. Senior staff are gradually re-opening sports and leisure facilities as it becomes safe to do so following the third national COVID-19 lockdown.

Almost all trainees experienced long periods at home during 2020 while waiting for their phase 2 training to start because of the pandemic. Many spent this time without a learning programme. However, trainees were positive about the support they received from RAF Cosford staff once they arrived. Very few trainees spend time on holdover at RAF Cosford and those who do are employed appropriately.

Almost all trainees who start their phase 2 training complete it, and pass rates have remained consistently high over the last few years. Very few trainees choose to leave or leave due to injury. It is rare for trainees to fail their course, or to be reclassified for failing assessments, as trainers provide them with good coaching and support. Due to COVID-19, those who must repeat elements of training are taking longer to do so than in previous years.

Female trainees interviewed by inspectors described a general lack of respect for their gender and their abilities as engineers from their male peers. They told us it was commonplace to be the recipients of inappropriate language from some male trainees, and a few had been approached to send inappropriate images. Despite senior staff's best, and often fruitful, efforts to gather the candid views of all trainees, including through female-only discussion sessions, commanders were unaware of this kind of poor behaviour by some male trainees because female trainees had not reported it. They say this was because they did not think staff would take it seriously.

When staff are aware of trainees' concerns or problems, they react swiftly to intervene. Staff gather information from a range of sources, including from trainees, staff, the Service police and welfare agencies, to ensure that they have the full picture. Staff monitor formal service complaints, and those about any form of reported bullying and harassment, well and ensure that appropriate actions are taken. They ensure that there is an external and independent investigation of complaints about the Service.

Staff have not delivered 'Prevent' duty information to trainees in a way that trainees remember. Staff do not reinforce how trainees can stay safe from extremism and radicalisation. Not all trainees who have joined since March 2020 have received induction training, because of the changes to the programme introduced due to COVID-19 restrictions, and they have not been given basic information about

extremism and radicalisation. Staff are not aware of any specific concerns based on the location of the station and so are unable to brief trainees on potential local risks. Senior staff know most of the strengths and weaknesses of the training, care and welfare. Staff develop actions to address most weaknesses effectively. School managers carry out rudimentary formal self-assessments, which provide commanders with some useful information, but the reports lack evaluation or sound analysis of available data. There is no station-level SAR to bring together themes from schools or to identify station-wide issues that need to be raised to higher chains of command.

Recommendations

We recommend that RAF Cosford:

- accelerates planned improvements to trainees' accommodation, particularly heating, hot water and sewerage systems
- provides the relevant approval to fix the sports hall's roof permanently, and fix and re-open the swimming pool
- continues to report infrastructure failings to higher authorities
- educates all trainees on the importance of respecting diversity as a British and military value and eradicates the poor behaviour of some male trainees
- reinforces a culture where all trainees know their concerns will be listened to and acted on, so that they are confident about reporting these concerns
- teaches trainees about radicalisation and extremism, so that they know how to keep themselves and peers safe, including in the local area
- improves self-assessment processes, so that the resulting reports identify what works well and what needs to improve at school and station level, based on thorough evaluation of all available information

HMS Collingwood

HMS Collingwood is the Royal Navy's largest training establishment. It is the headquarters of the Maritime Warfare School. The school is responsible for phase 1, 2 and 3 training.

HMS Collingwood's command provides executive, duty of care and facilities management functions for trainees at phases 1, 2 and 3 of their warfare and weapon engineer training. It also provides these functions for lodger organisations, including the Royal Naval Leadership Academy, Maritime Warfare Centre and Fleet Intelligence Centre.

At the time of the inspection, there were approximately 90 phase 1 ratings, around 600 phase 2 ratings and approximately 60 phase 2 officers. Phase 1 recruits arrive at HMS Collingwood straight from civilian life, usually with no previous military experience. There are currently 74 recruits under the age of 18 in training. Phase 2 trainees may come from either HMS Raleigh or HMS Collingwood phase

1 training. Phase 2 officers arrive from BRNC.

Main findings

The experiences and training of recruits and trainees at HMS Collingwood require improvement. Despite senior officers' very clear vision and ethos for high-quality training and care, and much determined work by the civilian and military staff involved, the infrastructure at HMS Collingwood has suffered from long-term neglect and underfunding. As a result, recruits and trainees do not have well-maintained, comfortable and warm accommodation in which to live and learn. In some cases, there are not enough staff available to carry out roles to support the fulfilment of the CO's vision.

Too many accommodation blocks do not have reliable heating or hot water supplies. A number of training rooms and buildings do not have reliable heating. Trainees and recruits often have to use showers and toilets in other accommodation blocks, putting further strain on those facilities and disrupting trainees' routines. Naval staff work assiduously to keep the buildings functioning and in good order, and they have good working relationships with on-site contractor staff. Despite this, because of the 'fix on failure' approach set out in the maintenance contract, too many infrastructure failures occur because equipment such as boilers is worn out or outdated. Too often, procurement processes are too lengthy to get essential new equipment purchased and installed. Too much money is wasted on short-term, temporary fixes, instead of proper investment and preventative maintenance.

Recruits and trainees are looked after and cared for well by their divisional officers. Divisional officers keep clear records of achievements and concerns, but do not consistently record personal or welfare concerns. Consequently, there is no one single point of reference for information about a trainee's or recruit's progress, welfare or conduct to enable them to identify consistently those at risk.

The command team maintains good oversight of the risks to training and care of which it is aware. However, members have not identified all the key risks, and the lack of a consistent and comprehensive recruit and trainee recording system means they cannot have full oversight of their progress and development.

Too much training, especially for phase 2 trainees, is poorly structured, planned and taught. Consequently, trainees make less progress in developing their military and technical skills than they should. Trainers do not take account of trainees' very varied starting points. Trainees with less prior knowledge or experience find technical training sessions too hard or challenging, while those with higher levels of prior knowledge or experience find training boring or mundane. Trainers do not get enough help with developing their pedagogical skills to understand how to make training purposeful and enjoyable.

While COVID-19 restrictions have limited the opportunities available, recruits and trainees on holdover do not get sufficient worthwhile activities to help them develop their technical or military skills. In some cases, trainees on holdover are waiting for their peers to complete functional skills qualifications in the early weeks

of phase 2 training. They do not get the opportunity to develop their skills in English and mathematics to a higher level, or to master skills they have not yet achieved confidently when it would be appropriate to do so.

Self-assessment and quality improvement processes are underdeveloped. Officers make limited use of the quantitative and qualitative data they have gained about recruits' and trainees' achievements and satisfaction. While staff have made a number of changes and improvements, they have identified too few of the improvements needed to recruits' and trainees' training and experience at HMS Collingwood.

Recruits and trainees do not always get food of an acceptable quality or amount. When recruits or trainees go for meals later in the sitting, there is often a much-reduced choice of menu. Particularly when they are undergoing periods of intense physical training, the portion sizes can be too small, and recruits are hungry. Staff distribute recruits' 4th meal supplement in the morning, so recruits often eat it then rather than in the evening, for when it is intended.

Several messes do not have toilets or handwashing facilities at their entrances. Consequently, recruits and trainees do not have the opportunity to wash their hands before meals. Hand sanitiser is now available in most instances but only as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Recruits and trainees are safe at HMS Collingwood. They are free from harassment and bullying. Officers deal with the very few instances of inappropriate language and banter quickly if it occurs. Recruits and trainees have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe as members of the Armed Forces, both online and when off the base. They have a broad understanding of the dangers posed by those who hold extreme views, as staff inform them of this. However, they do not know enough about the specific dangers in the local area because staff do not reinforce this sufficiently well.

Recommendations

We recommend that HMS Collingwood:

- urgently improves the living conditions of recruits and trainees, and rectifies the faults in heating, hot water and laundry facilities swiftly and permanently
- provides recruits and trainees on holdover with meaningful and productive activities to help them develop their trade and military skills within the time available
- introduces records that detail welfare, personal and pastoral concerns for all recruits and trainees on one record system, so that senior officers have a thorough oversight of these matters
- provides a handwashing facility for all dining areas so that recruits and trainees can wash their hands before meals
- supports trainers to develop the skills to improve the quality of training, reducing their reliance on presentation and instructional methods
- makes training more purposeful and enjoyable, so that recruits and trainees

learn more and remember more

- develops trainees' and recruits' understanding of the dangers from those who hold extremist views in the local area
- uses the data available on the achievement, progress and satisfaction of trainees and recruits to identify accurately the strengths and areas for improvement in the welfare, care and training provision
- develops self-assessment processes so that staff understand the key priorities for improvement and are held accountable for achieving those that relate to their work

Royal Navy Submarine School

The RNSMS is a lodger unit based at HMS Raleigh. The CO of HMS Raleigh has ultimate responsibility for all matters of safety, welfare and care across the site.

RNSMS provides phase 2 and 3 career courses and limited team training to warfare and weapon system personnel. It currently provides 96 courses, ranging in length from 2 days to 6 months. Phase 2 trainees studying communications, engineering, warfare and weapons specialisms were the focus of this inspection. Phase 2 trainees enter RNSMS either directly from initial training at HMS Raleigh or from HMS Collingwood.

At the time of the inspection, 69 phase 2 trainees were at RNSMS. Six were under 18 years of age and 5 were female. Most joined in the early part of 2021 and will complete their training by June or July this year. A further 24 trainees, all but one male and all over 18, were based at HMS Drake in Devonport, having very recently begun their submarine qualification training, which ends in August. Drake trainees were not included in the inspection.

RNSMS training facilities include classrooms and high-fidelity training equipment, allowing individual training in a team environment. Of the high-fidelity equipment, the weapon handling rig, tactical weapon embarkation/disembarkation rig and dolphin attack team trainer are also used to provide team training and assessment of submarine crews.

Main findings

Trainee submariners benefit from strong leadership and management during their time at RNSMS, which ensures that trainees' health, safety and security are central to all training activities. Nonetheless, training to ensure that trainees are fully aware of the risks of radicalisation and extremism requires improvement so that trainees know more about the indicators of extremism.

Trainees are not 'spoon-fed' during training but actively encouraged by staff, through high expectations, to become self-reliant, reliable team players who are well trained and can do the job they have trained for. The welfare network and arrangements available to trainees are comprehensive and work well, particularly

the divisional system. Staff ensure that trainees have the support to learn and develop their knowledge, skills and behaviours well.

Commanders run a frequent and effective carers forum that provides a confidential opportunity to monitor closely trainees and staff who are deemed at risk. Chaired by a senior member of the Raleigh staff, the forum is attended by representatives from the welfare, medical, chaplaincy and divisional teams.

A very high proportion of trainees start and complete their phase 2 courses at RNSMS. Very few choose to leave the Royal Navy or switch to a different branch or service. Divisional staff ensure that trainees are well prepared and informed when moving to their next phase of training.

RNSMS staff influence and augment the mandated curriculum content by incorporating trainers' current hands-on knowledge and expertise into training. Trainers use post-course discussions with trainees to identify aspects of the curriculum that can be refined or improved, and how training resources might be improved to reflect current practice.

Trainees receive well-structured and developmental training. Around half of the military trainers volunteer for their roles and, for the most part, are highly experienced submariners with a wealth of expertise gained from active service. Trainers benefit from a carefully designed programme of professional training which, combined with their experience, ensures that they support trainees well to make good progress. Trainees readily turn to trainers for advice and help with subjects they find difficult. Training has good currency because it is carried out using technology currently installed on submarines, for example the bespoke software used to operate sonar equipment.

Trainees can explain clearly and demonstrate what they have learned. For example, trainees completing their submarine radar training showed good recall, application and dexterity when completing their final practical assessment. They could all operate the radar competently and plot the course, bearing, distance and speed of 5 contacts on a screen. They correctly applied their mathematics skills to navigate through a restricted channel. Trainees achieved this while communicating with officers on the Bridge, using appropriate technical language and voice procedures. All of the trainees we spoke with who had attended HMS Collingwood before RNSMS said that the technical training they received there did not prepare them well enough for their submariner training. However, RNSMS trainers go out of their way to ensure that all trainees get the support they need to develop the foundation-level skills required to be a submariner. While at HMS Collingwood, too many phase 2 trainees were 'invited', but effectively co-opted, they say, to switch from the surface fleet to submarines, some with only a couple of weeks left of training.

Phase 2 trainees benefit from a well-structured and developmental fitness programme. The physical training sessions are appropriately sequenced and include limited-space exercises. Trainees learn how to make best use of shore-based physical training facilities and develop their own programmes for life, as

well as increasing their understanding of good nutrition, hydration and the correct use of supplements.

RNSMS trainees without a qualification in English or mathematics at the required level are expected to complete functional skills qualifications during the first 2 weeks of training. However, much of the teaching is not contextualised to trainees' roles as submariners. Most commented that the information and communication technology skills taught were very basic. Only around a third of trainees gain their level 2 mathematics qualification. Most trainees with prior achievements in English and mathematics do nothing of value while waiting in holdover for their peers to complete their courses, though few trainees are based in holdover for any length of time. The timing of and approach to functional skills training is in the early stages of substantial reform across the Royal Navy, but it was too early to see the impact of this.

RNSMS staff provide good role models for trainees. While rank is respected, senior staff and trainers generally interact with trainees on a collegiate basis, similar to the nominal conditions in a submarine at sea. Trainees are frustrated that they are unlikely to experience real life on a submarine for any meaningful period during their training. The small number of female trainees have had no contact with a female officer with fleet or submarine experience who can provide advice about being a small minority among a largely male crew on board a vessel. Consequently, female trainees could only base their ideas on their and others' conjecture rather than fact.

Senior staff manage the arrangements well for the very few early leavers from training. RNSMS staff recognise that the information they receive about trainees from their previous phase of training is not comprehensive enough, so they have to seek it out rather than receiving it routinely. Senior staff at RNSMS provide good-quality handover information about trainees for their next phase of training.

Accommodation is fit for purpose. Most trainees recognise that the accommodation provides them with a bed and storage facilities that are better than they can expect on a submarine. Living and working in close proximity to each other in training, trainees can study, research and revise, learn and develop together. Each messdeck has a kitchen utility room equipped with a small fridge, microwave and washing/drying machines that meet the needs of those occupying the 8-person rooms on that deck. However, the fridges are too small to hold all the raw ingredients trainees need to prepare their own meals, so they fall back on food that can be heated in a microwave.

Too many trainees elect not to eat food from the galley because they regard the quality and quantity as poor. Divisional staff know that at sea submariners look forward to mealtimes and the opportunity to socialise and relax. Trainees who do not eat in the galley do not gain this appreciation or know the importance of making the most of mealtimes. Divisional staff do not know how many trainees do or do not eat pre-prepared meals regularly. The on-site shop, where trainees can buy food such as ready meals, is very expensive.

Much successful work has been done since the previous inspection to improve the recreational and living facilities for staff and trainees. Funding has been secured to repair infrastructure before it fails and to reinvigorate and replace worn-out recreational areas and bathrooms. Since the previous inspection, the fire alarm system has been replaced, the leaking gym roof has been mended, the floor of the second gym has been replaced and the pool plant has been serviced and repaired. Staff have also obtained funds to refurbish recreational areas to improve the range and quality of activities and entertainment available to trainees.

Trainees have good opportunities to contact friends and family. For example, they can use the free Wi-Fi signal in their accommodation, which was particularly useful during the pandemic. However, the signal is not strong enough to accommodate a large number of simultaneous users.

RNSMS trainees have ready access to high-quality on-site medical and dental facilities. This includes an on-site ward to treat trainees needing to isolate from their accommodation 'bubbles' or who have injuries inhibiting their mobility. Trainees requiring medical or dental treatment are routinely seen as part of a 'same day' appointment service. Medical and dental staff prioritise submariners' medical and dental health to ensure that they are fit to serve at sea.

A team of exercise rehabilitation trainers provides personalised rehabilitation programmes to get injured trainees back to full fitness. Physiotherapists use a well-equipped consultation and rehabilitation facility, as well as the on-site swimming pool, to provide bespoke support that helps trainees recover from injury quickly. Senior staff can identify most of what is working effectively in training and what needs to be improved. They formally evaluate the quality of training and evaluate post-course discussions. However, self-assessment is rudimentary and does not provide a comprehensive picture of all RNSMS's strengths and weaknesses. Similarly, the station-level commander's risk assessment and supervisory care directive apply generally to all schools on site, but they do not reflect the specifics of training in any of them. Commanders now plan that the school-level commander's risk assessment and supervisory care directives will be annexes to the station-level document.

Staff promote equality and diversity well during training. All the trainees we spoke with confirmed that their training has been free of harassment from trainers or peers. Trainees under 18 years of age are treated in accordance with RNSMS policies and otherwise receive the same level of support as other trainees. The Ipsos MORI survey of RNSMS trainees who have completed their courses during the past 18 months contains no negative views.

However, current trainees unanimously expressed their concern to inspectors about the poor communications and problems they encountered in dealing with the recruitment contractor, Capita, during their recruitment process. They said that communications to and from Capita were slow and the information given was often incorrect. Trainees' medical assessments in several cases were left until only a week before individuals were due to arrive for their initial training.

Recommendations

We recommend that RNSMS:

- ensures that all trainees are made fully aware of the risks of radicalisation and extremism in all their forms, including risks in places they may visit in the local area outside of the establishment
- provides female trainees with access to a serving female rate or officer who can give them accurate information about the realities of being a woman on board a ship or submarine
- works with phase 1 establishments to ensure that the information received by RNSMS divisional staff includes a full narrative of incoming trainees' experiences during initial training and any welfare concerns
- improves self-assessment measures and produces a commander's risk assessment and a supervisory care directive specific to RNSMS to provide all staff with clear, practical direction about managing trainees' welfare and care needs

Defence Fire Training Unit

The previous inspection of phase 2 RAF firefighter training was carried out at MoD Manston, Kent, in October 2019. Since then, the MoD has awarded a contract to Capita Business Services to provide training to MoD firefighters. This resulted in MoD Manston closing and firefighter training being relocated to the Fire Service College (FSC), a civilian organisation, in Moreton-in-Marsh, Gloucestershire. The majority of the training team involved in this inspection are new in post.

The DFTU is a lodger unit at the Fire Service College. It is responsible for phase 2 and phase 3 specialist and non-specialist training for firefighters from all 3 services, defence contractors and the Civil Service, as well as training for non-professional firefighters. Trainees arrive at DFTU after completing phase 1 training at RAF Halton. At the time of the inspection, there were 15 phase 2 trainees, who were around half-way through their training.

Trainee RAF firefighters take a 14-week phase 2 trainee firefighting course at DFTU. Trainees are also enrolled on the level 3 operational firefighter apprenticeship standard. When they graduate from DFTU, trainees are posted to an operational station to complete their on-the-job training and apprenticeship programme.

There was one female trainee, and there are currently no trainees under the age of 18.

Main findings

The trainee firefighter programme is very well planned and sequenced. It supports trainees to learn basic knowledge and develop their skills before they take part in

complex practical activities. This gives trainees real-life experience of working in unfamiliar and stressful circumstances. Trainees stated that they particularly enjoy this element of their learning.

Trainers plan learning that builds trainees' knowledge and skills. They help trainees to consolidate what they have learned previously.

Trainees have good access to the padre at all times of the day and night, who provides spiritual support and listening, advocacy and signposting to trainees. As a result, trainees have access to an appropriate range of spiritual and welfare support. Trainees are highly confident about approaching all staff for help or to raise concerns if they need to. They told us that the staff are very supportive and approachable. They feel there is a positive culture and that equality, diversity and inclusion are promoted well.

Trainees with additional learning needs are well supported. They are very positive about the help they have received and say this is better than they have experienced elsewhere during the training.

All trainees receive a notebook computer on arrival, which they use well in theory lessons. This not only provides them with access to training resources during lessons but enables them to revise in the evenings and at weekends.

Physical training is well planned, progressive and based on the functional fitness that trainees need as firefighters. Staff liaise well together to ensure that there is a balance between the physical activity that trainees do in their training and their physical training programme.

Staff support trainees well to develop their character. Trainees have exceptional manners and have grown in confidence. They are extremely proud of being in the RAF. Trainees demonstrate military standards and values with pride. This is especially important because they live and work at a civilian training centre. They work respectfully with each other and their trainers and have a high appreciation of their surroundings.

Trainees demonstrate exceptionally positive attitudes to their learning. They study and revise together in the evenings, using the study area in their accommodation. They value the added benefit of studying the level 3 operational firefighter apprenticeship that they will complete during phase 3 of their training.

Trainees feel they are being prepared very well to move to their operational units. They are exposed to pressured situations, which helps them cope with stress and builds their resilience. However, trainees do not yet know where they will be posted. While most are comfortable with this, those with small children say they would like to know sooner.

Trainees' accommodation is superb. It was newly built for the arrival of DFTU trainees and consists of 4-person en-suite rooms, study space and a large kitchen area with seating, and with additional laundry facilities. Bedrooms are large and comfortable, with plenty of storage space. Contractors provide laundry services

for bedding and linen, and clean communal areas, while trainees clean their bedrooms and bathrooms. Contractors check bathrooms regularly for hygiene and maintenance. The accommodation is clean and warm and there is plentiful, reliable hot water.

Food is excellent, wholesome and plentiful. There are multiple menu options. Trainees are overwhelmingly positive about the meals provided in the mixed personnel on-site restaurant. Those who choose not to attend breakfast can store their own breakfast-making ingredients safely in the accommodation kitchen, which is fitted with a large fridge/freezer. There is a small, well-stocked shop on site for incidentals and snacks.

Training resources are very good. Purpose-built classrooms are clean, light and airy. Trainees benefit from 4 brand new defence fire trucks and use well-maintained firefighting equipment such as breathing apparatus. The fire station facility is excellent. Trainees can change from dirty firefighting uniform, shower and dress in very good facilities. These facilities replicate those that trainees will be using when deployed, resulting in less time being spent on familiarisation activities.

The officer commanding (OC) has set a clear, purposeful vision for his team, which is well understood. The team works with enthusiasm to translate this vision into high-quality training and this is supported by excellent equipment and facilities. The OC's vision has a golden thread of high expectations that runs through phase 2 and phase 3 training. This vision focuses on developing firefighters who are technically competent, but also able to make decisions and use their initiative for the benefit of those whose lives they are saving.

Trainees benefit from strong female role models in uniformed and civilian firefighter roles. This has a positive influence on all trainees and ensures that very few equality and diversity problems arise.

Commanders' self-assessment is immature and relies too much on a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis. It does not take qualitative and quantitative data into consideration sufficiently well. There is only a tentative link between the SAR and the quality improvement plan. Although the latter is very detailed and updated frequently, it is not always clear what the relationship is between the two.

Recommendation

We recommend that DFTU:

- develops the self-assessment process so that it links more effectively to quality improvement planning and becomes a more useful tool to support continuous and sustainable improvement

Reports in date order: Reserve establishments

Army Training Unit (West)

ATU(W) provides phase 1 training to Reserve recruits at Wyvern Barracks, Exeter and Maindy Barracks, Cardiff. Around 400 recruits pass through each year from across the UK, drawn from a variety of regiments and parent units. Recruits initially complete a short introductory 'alpha' course, which is either modular over 4 weekends or consolidated into 7 consecutive days. Successful recruits then complete a 'bravo' course over 17 consecutive days.

ATU(W) also runs additional courses to support the Field Army.

Main findings

Senior commanders have established a positive ethos and culture in which staff and recruits feel valued. They have a clear focus on the care and welfare of recruits that has been enhanced further during the COVID-19 pandemic. The training teams at Maindy and Wyvern Barracks work well together to train and support recruits. The new command team has worked hard to improve relationships with permanent staff at both sites so that relevant training facilities are booked when required.

Senior staff are involved heavily in developing the new Reserve recruit training syllabus. This gives them a useful view of the requirements of Reserve recruit training and a good understanding of how the courses should be structured and delivered. Consequently, recruits benefit from well-structured courses that are taught well by experienced trainers. These include visiting trainers with specialist knowledge of areas such as ballistic missiles. As a result, recruits learn new skills and knowledge quickly and most recruits pass their courses. Most of the few recruits who do not complete training are those who have chosen to leave.

Recruits at Wyvern and Maindy benefit from good welfare amenities and appropriately resourced training facilities, including classrooms and firing ranges. The gymnasiums at both locations are good and support recruits effectively to develop the required fitness levels. Because of good liaison by ATU(W) staff, parent units provide recruits with the correct uniform and equipment for their training courses.

Recruits have somewhere comfortable to relax and socialise at the end of their busy training days. They can buy essential items such as hygiene products without leaving the base. They have access to appropriate medical care should they need it during their short courses. Most recruits know how to raise complaints and who to go to should they need help.

Food at both locations is of reasonable quality and healthy options are provided. Recruits at Maindy pay more for their food than those at Wyvern, and more than other phase 1 recruits elsewhere, because of a difference in the contractual catering arrangements at Maindy. The higher cost of food at Maindy resulted in financial hardship for a small number of recruits before they received their first Reservist pay.

The senior team selects the most appropriate candidates applying from parent units to join the ATU(W) training team. Those who are successful receive the relevant training they need to become good trainers. Many trainers return to parent units after their tour at ATU(W) better qualified than when they left, and many are ready for promotion. Despite this and the command team's efforts to fill them, around half of the training team posts are vacant and commanders rely too much on visiting trainers to compensate.

Senior commanders have identified some areas for improvement in their own self-assessment, but this is insufficiently evaluative and does not link with their action plans. They have implemented appropriate actions to deal with most risks that recruits are likely to face. Although staff complete 'Prevent' duty training, they do not use this to raise recruits' awareness of radicalisation and extremism sufficiently. ATU(W) runs too many courses with too few recruits on them because insufficient numbers of recruits are sent by Reserve parent units. This wastes resources that are booked to cope with the full courses required by the Army. Too often, course numbers alter at the last minute so that ATU(W) staff are unable to adjust their resources.

Recommendations

We recommend that ATU(W):

- ensures that more 'alpha' and 'bravo' courses are run with numbers of recruits at or nearer full capacity
- removes the disparity in the cost of meals at Wyvern and Maindy Barracks and ensures that Army Reserve recruits pay no more than Regular recruits
- reduces the number of vacancies in the training team and the over-reliance on visiting trainers
- improves recruits' knowledge of the 'Prevent' duty so that they know how to stay safe from extremism and radicalisation
- better evaluates strengths and weaknesses in training, care and welfare, and links these clearly to action plans for improvement

Royal Marines Reserve Bristol

RMR Bristol is part of the Royal Maritime Reserve structure within the Royal Navy. The CO and full-time staff are based at the unit's headquarters in Bristol and work closely with Commando Training Centre Royal Marines, Lympstone. They

coordinate the delivery of training in 5 detachments across the south west of England and south Wales. The unit has a trained strength of 150 personnel; 13 of these are permanent staff.

At the time of inspection, there were 35 phase 1 and 10 phase 2 recruits (the term the RMR uses to cover both phases). Recruits carry out 14 months of challenging training during evenings and some weekends, with each phase culminating in 2 weeks of training and assessment at Commando Training Centre Royal Marines, Lympstone.

Main findings

The command team ensures that the ethos and culture of the unit reflects the values and standards of the Royal Marines. These are encapsulated in a culture that ensures that recruits reflect the high levels of integrity expected by commanders. Commanders and training staff have a strong focus on enabling recruits to complete their rigorous and demanding training and become high-quality Royal Marine Reservists. They provide recruits with good support, coaching and mentoring throughout their training.

Commanders' SAR is largely descriptive rather than evaluative. During the inspection, they demonstrated that they understood the strengths and most of the areas for improvement. These were similar to those identified by inspectors. Staff frequently review the structure and sequence of the course and make improvements where necessary. For example, the recent introduction of a reserve recruit orientation phase has eased recruits more gently into the demands and expectations of their training. It is, however, too early to judge the impact of this on retention of recruits.

Permanent staff and reserve trainers know the recruits well. Recruits say that their trainers are good at helping them learn. They get support when they need it and trainers recognise the demands of their civilian lives and jobs. For example, they make training as flexible as possible by providing individual coaching to help recruits catch up when they could not attend training.

Overall pass rates are low. A high proportion of recruits voluntarily withdraw from this rigorous and demanding course. The success rates at RMR Bristol are similar to those achieved at other RMR units and reflect the very demanding nature of this training done on a part-time basis.

Medical assessments during the recruitment process continue to take too long for a minority of recruits.

Very few recruits join under the age of 18 and there were none at the time of the inspection. Commanders follow Royal Navy policy for carrying out checks on staff who have frequent contact with recruits under the age of 18, but this policy is not consistent with the approach for Royal Air Force and Army recruits.

Even though recruits rarely need overnight accommodation, the accommodation for recruits in Bristol is poor. This, along with the capacity limits of the good

training facilities at Bristol, has led to a planned move to another reserve site in Bristol. The planned move of the Plymouth detachment to the Royal Marine Barracks at Stonehouse will reduce the security limitations that result from being located in Devonport. Both moves are likely to improve the recruits' training experience. Commanders have recently improved their focus on capturing and analysing training data, including using feedback from recruits. This improved approach needs to continue further and include all available training data, for example the relative progress made by different groups of recruits.

The quality of instruction is high and reserve trainers are qualified specialist trainers in key specialisms such as skill at arms. Most have not completed the DTc or online COT module. This places a significant additional oversight burden on the permanent staff trainers. With only 3 established permanent staff trainers, the training officer and chief instructor carry out instructional duties, which reduces the unit's capacity for quality assurance work and useful data analysis.

Recruits are well aware of potential risks online but have little awareness of the risks of radicalisation and extremism, or of the importance of British values and their close fit with Royal Marine values and standards. Trainers have not received training on the 'Prevent' duty.

Recommendations

We recommend that RMR Bristol:

- ensures that the planned site moves for the Bristol and Plymouth detachments happen quickly in order to provide a range of improvements for staff and recruits
- improves self-assessment and the evaluation of the quality of training and welfare, taking account of the views of staff and recruits
- ensures that all trainers complete the COT module, the DTc and training on the 'Prevent' duty
- reviews the Royal Navy policy for checks on staff who have frequent contact with recruits and trainees under the age of 18
- ensures that delays in medical assessments do not slow down the recruitment process
- ensures that recruits understand the dangers of extremism and radicalisation and the importance of British values, linking closely, as they do, to Royal Marine values and standards

University service unit headquarters' support and assurance visit summaries in date order

No. 6 Flying Training School

6FTS, based at RAF College Cranwell in Lincolnshire, provides the headquarters and elements of ground training function for the 15 RAF UASs located around the UK. 6FTS recruits students from 114 universities.

Recommendations

We recommend that 6FTS:

- establishes systems and processes to quality assure the standard of training, welfare and care in the 15 UASs under 6FTS command
- urgently appoints senior-level defence trainer supervisors in each UAS
- establishes appropriate systems for gathering and analysing meaningful and detailed data, captures this, for example in SARs, and shares it with staff and command teams so they can implement actions promptly
- complies with MoD policy on care of trainees and safeguarding and implements appropriate arrangements to provide support to UAS students, irrespective of their age
- ensures that supervisory care directives meet the minimum policy requirements

Universities Department, Britannia Royal Naval College

The 15 URNUs located around the UK are commanded through the Universities Department at BRNC, Dartmouth. The department comprises just 2 staff. Commander Universities has created a virtual headquarters team by giving unit COs and other unit-level staff additional tasks. URNUs recruit students from over 60 universities.

Recommendations

We recommend that the Universities Department, BRNC:

- establishes sufficient capacity in the universities headquarters to sustain the welfare, care and training development work underway and to assure the quality of this
- implements the plan for transition to the new training syllabus and the required specialist training for URNU training officers to provide continued training and essential staff development
- links more clearly the areas for improvement in the headquarters SAR with the headquarters action plan and ensures that these reflect the key issues from the unit-level assessments and improvement plans

Royal Military Academy Sandhurst Group

The RMAS Group provides headquarters support for the 19 UOTCs in the UK. The 19 UOTCs cover 28 locations and recruits from over 120 universities. The units are run by a mix of Regular and Reserve army staff and civilians.

Recommendations

We recommend that the RMAS Group:

- establishes the headquarters SAR at the heart of UOTC quality assurance processes to enable all UOTC to methodically identify strengths and areas for improvement
- uses the outcomes of the headquarters self-assessment to inform quality improvement and risk assessment actions
- provides suitable IT and internet connectivity to UOTC staff

Ofsted's terms of reference

Ofsted will:

- carry out an annually agreed programme of activity that may include inspections, surveys, reports and training that satisfy the requirements of this memorandum
- use the most recent version of Ofsted's inspection framework, adapted specifically for this purpose, to make judgements on the strengths and weaknesses of care and welfare provision within initial training units
- keep establishment senior staff informed about emerging findings and inform the MoD's Directorate of Training, Education, Skills, Recruiting and Resettlement (TESRR) of any major concerns
- take account of safeguarding in line with the current framework, where relevant
- produce inspection reports after each training establishment inspection
- provide follow-up reinspection where poor performance has been found
- provide regular progress reports on inspection outcomes to TESRR
- visit MoD Service training headquarters as required
- determine the extent to which progress has been made in dealing with concerns about care, welfare and support for recruits and trainees during initial training in the Armed Forces
- use inspections to evaluate the effectiveness of the MoD strategic management of the support, care and welfare for recruits and trainees during initial training
- publish an annual report that includes the observations and findings from individual units, overarching recommendations for the MoD, and suggested improvements to policy and practice across all initial training
- support TESRR in the delivery of workshops and internal training to raise

- awareness of the inspection framework and the role of the nominee
- deliver nominee conferences for representatives of units within the scope of the inspection programme
- provide a lead MoD inspector to liaise with TESRR to manage the relationship and deliver agreed obligations
- review the inspection framework annually in consultation with TESRR, confirming major changes by formal amendment and publication

The MoD seeks to achieve the following:

- the provision of external, independent assurance of the care and welfare standards within initial training carried out across the Armed Forces
- unit-level inspections, reinspections and feedback to cover all training prior to individuals becoming 'gains to trained/trade trained strength'
- strategic recommendations to enable the maintenance and development of policy, principles and practice of care and welfare to enable the continuous improvement to the standard and expectations of 'lived experience' by recruits and trainees
- the ability to share good practice with the national learning community and benchmark the provision of defence training and education to ensure comparable standards to civilian learning programmes
- 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 MoD

In light of this agreement, Ofsted and the MoD will work together to develop a training and inspection programme which will run alongside the MoD's existing audit arrangements.

Inspection dates

Regular establishments	Date of inspection
Royal Armoured Corps Training Regiment	21 October 2020
2 (Training) Regiment, Army Air Corps	12 November 2020
Royal Naval Air Station Yeovilton	25 November 2020
RAF Regiment, RAF Honington	21 April 2021
Army Foundation College, Harrogate	5 May 2021
RAF Cosford	5 May 2021
HMS Collingwood	11 May 2021

Royal Navy Submarine School 26 May 2021

Defence Fire Training Unit 26 May 2021

Reserve establishments **Date of inspection**

Army Training Unit (West) 10 November 2020

Royal Marines Reserve Bristol 9 December 2020

University service unit headquarters support and assurance visits **Date of inspection**

No. 6 Flying Training School, RAF College Cranwell 27 January 2021

Royal Military Academy Sandhurst Group 10 February 2021

Britannia Royal Naval College 17 February 2021

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