



House of Commons
Defence Committee

The Armed Forces Covenant in Action? Part 4: Education of Service Personnel

Fifth Report of Session 2013–14

*Report, together with formal minutes, oral and
written evidence*

*Ordered by the House of Commons
to be printed 9 July 2013*

HC 185
[Incorporating HC 941-i to -ii, Session 2012-13]
Published on 18 July 2013
by authority of the House of Commons
London: The Stationery Office Limited
£14.50

The Defence Committee

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The Reports of the Committee, the formal minutes relating to that report, oral evidence taken and some or all written evidence are available in a printed volume. Additional written evidence may be published on the internet only.

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Conclusions and recommendations

Requirements for the education of 16 and 17 year old recruits

Policy on recruiting those under 18 years of age

1. We support the Armed Forces' provision of challenging and constructive education and employment opportunities for young people. But we would welcome further information on why the Army is so dependent on recruiting personnel under the age of 18 years compared to the other two Services, and whether steps are being taken to reduce this dependency. (Paragraph 13)
2. We welcome the expansion of apprenticeships for new recruits and trainees and the improvements in the ratings given by Ofsted. The Armed Forces should build on these improvements to ensure that more establishments providing apprenticeships are rated as outstanding by Ofsted. The MoD should provide us with its plans to address the areas for further improvement identified by Ofsted and its recommendations. (Paragraph 19)

Cost-effectiveness of recruiting 16 and 17 year old recruits

3. The MoD should carry out a thorough cost-benefit analysis of the policy of recruiting Armed Forces personnel under the age of 18 years old. It should provide us with this cost-benefit analysis. (Paragraph 24)

Basic level entry requirements

4. If as the MoD states, it has to recruit personnel at whatever level of attainment is available, then it should boost remedial action when recruitment entry standards are particularly low. In the light of changes brought about by Future Force 2020, it may be that recruiting personnel with higher levels of attainment would better meet the future needs of the Armed Forces. The MoD should identify how it might raise the basic entry level and still recruit sufficient personnel. (Paragraph 27)

Literacy and numeracy support

5. The Armed Forces have a good record of improving the literacy and numeracy of recruits and trainees who enter the Armed Forces with low levels of attainment. We welcome the introduction of literacy and numeracy support throughout Phase 1 training. The MoD should consolidate this recent improvement by reviewing their support for literacy and numeracy to ensure that it meets best practice as set out by Ofsted. (Paragraph 35)
6. Whilst we recognise that some recruits may not have done well in their previous academic careers and may not be eager to take further academic exams, the MoD should encourage more recruits to undertake English and Maths GCSEs which would stand them in good stead for future employment. (Paragraph 37)

Defence instructors

7. The MoD should ensure that all instructors complete the 'Defence Train the Trainer' course before they take up their appointments. The MoD should also institute a system of observation and feedback to all instructors in line with the recommendations made by Ofsted in its recent work for the MoD. In response to this Report, the MoD should set out its plan and timetable to implement these recommendations. (Paragraph 42)

Oversight of education

8. We support the use of Ofsted inspections, which bring an independent assessment of the performance of training and education within the Armed Forces, in particular, for recruits and trainees under the age of 18 years. The Armed Forces should share the results of the inspections across establishments to help them improve. (Paragraph 47)

Results of Ofsted inspections

Inspections of establishments

9. We welcome the continuing improvement in the Ofsted ratings of Armed Forces initial training establishments. The MoD should work to improve all establishments so that they reach the minimum acceptable Ofsted standard of 'good' in a timely fashion. In particular, the MoD should focus its attention on those weaker establishments whose performance has not improved. The MoD should tell us how it intends to achieve this improvement and in what timescale. (Paragraph 52)

Learning Credits

10. In response to this Report, the MoD should inform us of the results of its investigation into the fall in the take-up of Standard Learning Credits. If appropriate, the MoD should encourage greater take-up amongst Armed Forces personnel. (Paragraph 57)

Funding and the time available for education

11. The MoD should not reduce funding for education as a result of the 2013 Spending Review. The MoD should promote education in the Armed Forces and encourage the chain of command to find time for personnel to engage in such activities. (Paragraph 62)

Higher education as part of career development for senior leaders

12. We are persuaded that, as well as recruiting graduates as officers, the provision of higher education for those in command in the Armed Forces is essential and should not be reduced by the MoD as a cost-cutting exercise. The MoD should provide us with the results of the Review of the Higher Command and Staff Course when completed and the response of the Defence Training Board to its recommendations.

We will return to the subject of higher education in the Armed Forces, in particular, the need to educate personnel in strategic decision-making, as part of our work on Future Force 2020. (Paragraph 69)

13. With the increased role envisaged for reservists in Future Force 2020, it is essential that the Armed Forces make Reserve Service as attractive as possible for the reservists and their employers. We see the education accreditation project as an important component in encouraging people to join the Reserves. The MoD should provide us with the results of this project and its implementation plans. (Paragraph 71)

The provision of civilian qualifications

14. Given that most Armed Forces personnel will need to have at least one further career, we support the MoD's policy of supporting the provision of civilian qualifications. We recommend that the MoD identify the potential for more pilot projects with civilian employers to develop the provision of civilian qualifications and to ensure that vital skills paid for by the MoD are not lost to the country. The MoD should tell us the results of its pilot projects on the training of paramedics. (Paragraph 75)

Resettlement prospects

15. Most Armed Forces personnel do well in gaining employment after leaving the Services. Many employers find ex-Armed Forces personnel very employable. In particular, employers value their disciplined approach, determination and work ethic. We encourage the MoD to continue its support for the resettlement of Armed Forces personnel, particularly in this time of redundancies from the Armed Forces. (Paragraph 80)

Conclusion

16. We recognise that training personnel to deliver operational capability is paramount for the Armed Forces. However, we believe that the Armed Forces also provide challenging and constructive education and employment opportunities for young people. We welcome the expansion of apprenticeships for those joining the Service. Ofsted reports that performance in most training establishments is good. But we would wish to see an improvement so that all establishments are rated at least good and more establishments, apprenticeships schemes and courses are rated as outstanding. (Paragraph 81)
17. Continuing education for serving personnel is important, both for their own career development and for retention. As personnel will almost certainly go on to a further career after they leave the Services, it is also important that training leads to civilian qualifications wherever possible. We welcome work by the Armed Forces to increase the number of areas where personnel can acquire a civilian qualification and would like to see this work further extended. (Paragraph 82)

1 Introduction

Background

1. On the education of Service personnel, the Armed Forces Covenant states that:

Service personnel should expect to receive appropriate training and education for both personal and professional development, including the opportunity to gain nationally recognised qualifications, in order to support them through their Service career and to prepare them for life after leaving the Service.¹

2. The Defence Training Board, chaired by the Chief of Defence Personnel, oversees Defence training and education. It sets overall policy, gives strategic direction, prioritises and makes balance of investment decisions on training and education. The three Services and the Joint Forces Command are responsible for setting the requirements for education and training in their areas.²

3. The Rt Hon Mark Francois MP, Minister of State for Defence, Personnel, Welfare and Veterans, described the purpose of education in the Armed Forces as:

[...] to prepare personnel for their role in operational capability. Given that that training is progressive and continues throughout an individual's service, the military requirement is paramount—after all, these are people in the Armed Forces—but where there is a comparable civilian qualification, we accredit the military course so that our people are awarded nationally recognisable qualifications. It is worth adding that the Ministry of Defence also supports elective learning and provides training to facilitate the eventual transition back to civilian life.³

4. The Ministry of Defence (MoD) summarised its view of the education of Armed Forces personnel as follows:

While the military requirement is paramount and the focus is on training our people for operational capability, the Armed Forces recognise the importance of education and civilian qualifications which offer recruiting, developmental, retention and resettlement benefits. The Services are amongst the largest training providers in the UK, with excellent completion and achievement rates, and the quality of our training and education is highly respected. With support for education ranging from entry level literacy and numeracy to full postgraduate degrees, Service personnel are offered genuine progression routes which allow them to develop, gain qualifications and play a fuller part in society either in the Armed Forces or in the civilian world which awaits them beyond.⁴

¹ The Armed Forces Covenant, /www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-armed-forces-covenant

² Ev 14

³ Q 46

⁴ Ev 16

Scope of the inquiry

5. This inquiry is the fourth in a series looking at the Armed Forces Covenant. The Committee's first inquiry into the Armed Forces Covenant was on the support and treatment of military casualties. The Report was published on 15 December 2011.⁵ The second inquiry was into the accommodation provided for Service personnel and their families. The Report was published on 26 June 2012.⁶ The third inquiry, running in parallel with this inquiry, is examining the education of the children of Service personnel.

6. The scope of the inquiry covered the provision of education to all Service personnel throughout their careers. We focused on what happens to new recruits in the early stages of their careers and how education and training allow personnel to obtain civilian qualifications useful in their post-Service careers.

7. In particular, we examined:

- The provision of education to new recruits including help with literacy and numeracy;
- The provision of education to Service personnel throughout their careers;
- The provision of higher education to those personnel for whom it is relevant and useful;
- The progress made by the Armed Forces in ensuring that training undertaken by Service personnel leads to civilian qualifications;
- The impact of education on the resettlement of Armed Forces personnel; and
- The adequacy of oversight of the education of Armed Forces personnel.

Evidence

8. At the start of the inquiry, we received a detailed oral briefing from the MoD on all aspects of education in the Armed Forces. We followed this up with a visit to two training centres—Army Recruiting and Training Division, Pirbright and the Defence Logistics School at Deepcut—where we had the opportunity to talk to recruits, trainees, instructors and managers. We also took oral evidence from MoD officials and the Minister for Defence Personnel, Welfare and Veterans. Written evidence was submitted by the MoD, the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) and Child Soldiers International. The National Audit Office (NAO) hosted an online survey on the education of Service personnel and produced a report for the Committee analysing the results of the survey.⁷ We are grateful to the witnesses, the NAO and those who submitted

⁵ Defence Committee, Seventh Report of Session 2010–12, *The Armed Forces Covenant in Action? Part 1: Military Casualties*, HC 762

⁶ Defence Committee, Second Report of Session 2012–13, *The Armed forces Covenant in Action? Part 2: Accommodation*, HC 331

⁷ NAO publication at Defence Committee website <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmselect/cmdfence/writev/942/naopart4.pdf> or NAO website <http://www.nao.org.uk/report/nao-briefing-the-education-of-service-personnel-findings-of-a-national-audit-office-consultation/>

written evidence. We are also grateful for the assistance of our Specialist Advisers⁸ and the staff of the Committee during this inquiry. We considered other relevant reports including:

- Welfare and duty of care in Armed Forces initial training – Ofsted’s 2012 report to the MoD;⁹
- Welfare and duty of care in Armed Forces initial training – Ofsted’s 2013 report to the MoD;¹⁰
- Directorate of Educational and Training Services(Army) Army Apprenticeships – report by Ofsted;¹¹ and
- Armed Forces Basic Skills Longitudinal Study by National Institute of Adult Continuing Education and the National Research and Development Centre commissioned by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and the MoD.¹²

⁸ The Specialist Advisers’ declaration of relevant interests are recorded in the Committee’s Formal Minutes which are available on the Committee’s website.

⁹ <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/welfare-and-duty-of-care-armed-forces-initial-training-2012>

¹⁰ <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/welfare-and-duty-of-care-armed-forces-initial-training-2013>

¹¹ <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/54805>

¹² www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/32285/12-886-armed-forces-basic-skills-executive-summary.pdf

2 The education of new recruits and trainees

Requirements for the education of 16 and 17 year old recruits

Policy on recruiting those under 18 years of age

9. UK Armed Forces need to recruit many young people for a wide variety of jobs and roles. The minimum entry age is 16 years of age, the earliest school leaving age. Some 28 per cent of Army recruits are less than 18 years of age on entry to the Armed Forces, whereas the Naval Service only recruited five per cent and the Royal Air Force (RAF) eight per cent. The ages at which personnel were recruited in 2011–12 are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Age at entry for those recruited to the Armed Forces in 2011–12

Age Years	Officers				Other Ranks			
	Naval Service	Army	Royal Air Force	All Services	Naval Service	Army	Royal Air Force	All Services
16	-	-	-	-	10	1,470	10	1,500
17	-	-	-	-	80	1,450	100	1,640
18	10	20	-	20	260	1,250	190	1,700
19	20	20	-	30	290	1,220	220	1,740
20	10	20	-	30	280	1,080	180	1,550
21	40	80	10	120	200	850	140	1,190
22	50	160	20	220	170	680	100	950
23	50	130	10	190	150	550	80	780
24	40	100	10	140	130	460	80	670
25 and over	70	200	40	300	350	1,450	220	2,020
Total	280	710	80	1,070	1,940	10,480	1,320	13,740

Notes: The totals are not the sum of the individual figures in the table as the Defence Analytical and Statistical Service rounds personnel numbers to the nearest ten.

Source: Ministry of Defence¹³

10. The MoD has adopted a number of safeguards when recruiting personnel under the age of 18 years. The MoD told us that such personnel:

- Require formal written consent from their parents;
- Have a statutory right of discharge from the Armed Forces if they wish to leave the Forces at any point; and
- Are not deployed on operations.¹⁴

11. The MoD told us that its policy of recruiting personnel under the age of 18 years is compliant with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children and that it had no intention of changing its policy. It further told us:

¹³ Ev 17

¹⁴ Ev 24

We believe that our policies on under 18s in Service are robust and comply with national and international law. In addition to the comprehensive welfare system that is in place for all Service personnel, we remain fully committed to meeting our obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, and have taken steps to bestow special safeguards on young people under the age of 18.¹⁵

12. In response to our questions about the validity of recruiting personnel under the age of 18 years, the MoD told us:

We take pride in the fact that our Armed Forces provide challenging and constructive education, training and employment opportunities for young people and that the Armed Forces remain the UK's largest apprenticeship provider, equipping young people with valuable and transferable skills.¹⁶

13. We support the Armed Forces' provision of challenging and constructive education and employment opportunities for young people. But we would welcome further information on why the Army is so dependent on recruiting personnel under the age of 18 years compared to the other two Services, and whether steps are being taken to reduce this dependency.

Additional requirements from the Education and Skills Act 2008

14. The Education and Skills Act 2008 requires that all young people who have ceased to be of compulsory school age, but are not yet 18 years old and have not attained a level 3 qualification,¹⁷ continue in education or training to the end of the academic year in which they turn 17 from 2013 and until at least their eighteenth birthday from 2015.¹⁸ In compliance with the Act, the MoD now requires all recruits in this category to enrol on an apprenticeship as part of their military training unless they are studying for a higher qualification.¹⁹

Apprenticeships

15. All Armed Forces Apprenticeships are accredited and linked to national occupational standards across a range of sectors. In the academic year 2011-12 some 7,500 apprenticeships and 2,700 advanced apprenticeships were completed.²⁰ The MoD provided us with information on the number of personnel on apprenticeship schemes and the diverse areas these schemes cover. Table 2 shows the apprenticeships completed in the academic year 2011-12 by skills area.²¹

¹⁵ *Ibid*

¹⁶ *Ibid*

¹⁷ Equivalent to AS/A levels

¹⁸ Education and Skills Act 2008, Ev 24

¹⁹ Ev 24

²⁰ Ev 19

²¹ Ev 18-19, tables 5a to 5c

Table 2: Apprenticeships completed skills area from 1 August 2011 to 31 July 2012

Skills area	Apprenticeships				Advanced Apprenticeships			
	Royal Navy	Army	RAF	Total	Royal Navy	Army	RAF	Total
Agriculture (includes animal care)		193		193		3		3
Business Administration and Law	36		35	71		62		62
Construction		36		36				
Engineering (including ICT)	1031	2041	125	3197	284	1076	641	2001
Health, Public Services and Social Care	1042	743	188	1973	55	1		56
Hospitality (including catering and food services)			39	39				
Management and Professional							14	14
Retailing and Customer Services	73	1494		1567		540		540
Transportation (including warehousing and storage)			377	377				
TOTALS	2182	4507	764	7453	339	1682	655	2676

Source: Ministry of Defence²²

16. Ofsted conducted a series of inspections on Army Apprenticeships between February and March 2013 and reported to the MoD in April 2013. The inspection rated the overall effectiveness as good which was an improvement over the last inspection in 2009, rated as satisfactory (now called 'requires improvement'). In particular, training for hospitality and catering apprenticeships was rated as outstanding.²³ We can attest to the abilities of the trainee caterers as they provided us with an excellent lunch from a typical operational field kitchen during our visit to Deepcut. Table 3 gives a summary of the keys findings of the results of the Ofsted inspection.

²² Ev 19

²³ Ofsted report on Directorate of Educational and Training Services (Army) Army Apprenticeships <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/54805>

Table 3: Key findings of the 2013 Ofsted inspection of Army apprenticeships.

<p>The provider is good because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The overall success rates are consistently high across the majority of programmes and effective actions have been taken to improve the achievement gaps of a small but, significant, proportion of learners in information and communication technology (ICT) and engineering. • Learners develop good employability and personal skills. They demonstrate good, and often outstanding, practitioner skills in their sector areas. • Teaching, learning and assessment are mostly good. Learners have the opportunity to share good practices with their peers and further improve their knowledge and skills. • The DETS(A) Army Apprenticeship Programme is led and managed particularly well. Senior staff provide clear and decisive leadership. Links with army units and subcontractors are strong, and self-assessment and quality improvement planning are thorough.
<p>The provider is not yet outstanding because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not enough teaching, learning and assessment are outstanding and a small proportion of training, particularly theory sessions, is dull and uninspiring. • Too few instructors, particularly military instructors who are new, are sufficiently qualified and experienced in teaching to take full account of individual learners' needs. • Not all reviews and learning plans are fully recorded, updated, and include clear targets for learners.

Source: Ofsted²⁴

17. The Royal Navy training provision had a full inspection in February 2009 and was found to be good with delivery of engineering training judged to be outstanding.²⁵ Key strengths and areas for improvement for the Royal Navy are shown in Table 4 below.

²⁴ Ofsted report on Directorate of Educational and Training Services (Army) Army Apprenticeships <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/54805>

²⁵ Ofsted Report <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/58403>

Table 4: Key findings of the 2009 Ofsted inspection of Royal Navy apprenticeships

Key strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outstanding provision in engineering • Very good development of good quality vocational skills • Outstanding resources • Particularly good pastoral and welfare support through the Divisional system • Very well managed training programmes • Good personal development for staff and apprentices • Good actions to improve the quality of provision
Key areas for improvement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some poor timely success rates • Insufficient focus on learning in the observations of teaching and learning • Insufficient sharing of good practice between establishments and sector subject areas • Insufficient evaluative and judgmental self-assessment reports

Source: Ofsted²⁶

18. Training by the RAF had a full inspection in January 2009. It was also found to be good.²⁷ Key strengths and areas for improvement for the Royal Navy are shown in Table 5 below. The next full inspections will be within six years of the last inspection but may be brought forward if performance drops and an Ofsted risk assessment indicates the need for an earlier visit.²⁸

Table 5: Key findings of the 2009 Ofsted inspection of RAF apprenticeships

Key strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very high overall success rates on most programmes • Good development of learners' practical skills • Very good resources to enhance and develop learning on most programmes • Particularly good welfare and vocational support for learners • Good strategic planning, co-ordination and performance management of the apprenticeship programmes
Key areas for improvement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient planning of reaching and learning for learners' varying skills and needs • Insufficient progression opportunities for all learners • Ineffective strategic co-ordination and quality management of self-assessment

Source: Ofsted²⁹

19. We welcome the expansion of apprenticeships for new recruits and trainees and the improvements in the ratings given by Ofsted. The Armed Forces should build on these improvements to ensure that more establishments providing apprenticeships are rated as outstanding by Ofsted. The MoD should provide us with its plans to address the areas for further improvement identified by Ofsted and its recommendations.

²⁶ Ofsted Report <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/58403>

²⁷ Ofsted report on <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/54191>

²⁸ Ev 31

²⁹ Ofsted report on <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/54191>

Cost-effectiveness of recruiting 16 and 17 year old recruits

20. Given the increased demands on the MoD to provide education for recruits under 18 years of age, we asked the MoD if it was still value for money to recruit Service personnel younger than 18 years old. The Minister replied:

[...] We are not concerned about it because we believe it is the right thing to do. Under-18s, who for instance join the Army, sometimes do cost a bit more to train initially, but they usually stay longer in the service—in some cases quite a bit longer—so we believe that the higher investment is worth it.³⁰

21. Admiral Williams, Assistant Chief of Defence Staff (Personnel and Training), said they had not done a full cost-benefit analysis of recruiting those under the age of 18 years. He also added that he was uncertain what these recruits would be doing if they were not taking an apprenticeship with the Armed Forces.³¹

22. Child Soldiers International estimated that the MoD would save between £81 million and £94 million a year if it stopped recruiting personnel under 18 years of age.³² The MoD acknowledged that initial Army training for those under 18 years of age (junior entrant) costs more than that for standard entrant recruits but said that if recruitment of under 18 year olds was to be stopped, a shortfall of nearly 30 per cent of recruits would need to be made up.³³ Admiral Williams said that it was unclear whether the Armed Forces would be able to recruit enough people if they stopped recruiting people under 18 years of age.³⁴

23. The MoD also told us that those who joined under the age of 18 years stayed in the Armed Forces longer. Of those Army personnel leaving in 2009–10, 2010–11 and 2011–12, the average length of Service for those who joined at less than 18 years of age was some ten years, and, for those over 18 years, the average length was some seven years.³⁵ The MoD told us that there was also some evidence that these younger recruits also achieved higher ranks than those who joined over the age of 18.³⁶

24. The MoD should carry out a thorough cost-benefit analysis of the policy of recruiting Armed Forces personnel under the age of 18 years old. It should provide us with this cost-benefit analysis.

Basic level entry requirements

25. The Royal Navy, Army and the RAF determine separately the minimum educational qualifications required from recruits. Entry level requirements also vary with the nature of the role to be undertaken by the recruit ranging from no educational qualifications to a full professional qualification such as a Registered Nurse. The minimum entry requirement is

³⁰ Q 49

³¹ Q 49

³² Child Soldiers International : One Step Forward http://www.child-soldiers.org/research_report_reader.php?id=650

³³ Ev 24

³⁴ Q 52

³⁵ Ev 26

³⁶ Ev 24

‘entry level 2’ which equates to the standard expected from a seven to eight year old in literacy and numeracy. The MoD does not keep data on the educational achievements of its recruits on entry to the Armed Forces.³⁷ But of those recruited in 2012, all in the Royal Navy or RAF were above entry level 2 for literacy or numeracy. Only 3.5 per cent of the Army were rated at entry level 2 for literacy, however, 39 per cent had a literacy level of an eleven year old. On numeracy, 1.7 per cent were at entry level 2 and 38 per cent of an eleven year old.³⁸

26. We asked the MoD if it had considered raising the basic entry level standard. Colonel Johnstone, Assistant Head, Training, Education, Skills, Recruitment and Resettlement, said that the issue had often been looked at but they recruited in competition with other employers and took the best available candidates. She further said that:

An individual who comes to be selected is put through a number of assessments, [including] literacy and numeracy [...]. We also measure their attitude, their physical fitness, their commitment to joining the Army, Navy or Air Force, and their trainability. We take the best that we can to fill the numbers that we need, so the actual levels of achievement will go up and down depending on who is coming to us from the marketplace.³⁹

27. If as the MoD states, it has to recruit personnel at whatever level of attainment is available, then it should boost remedial action when recruitment entry standards are particularly low. In the light of changes brought about by Future Force 2020, it may be that recruiting personnel with higher levels of attainment would better meet the future needs of the Armed Forces. The MoD should identify how it might raise the basic entry level and still recruit sufficient personnel.

Literacy and numeracy support

28. Given the entry levels of some of the recruits and trainees in the Armed Forces, considerable effort is needed to improve their literacy and numeracy levels. The MoD assesses that recruits need to reach entry level 3 (standard of an eleven year old) to assimilate training fully and all recruits have to reach this standard before the second phase of training.⁴⁰

29. In 2008, the MoD and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) commissioned the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) and the National Research and Development Centre for Adult Literacy and Numeracy to conduct a longitudinal study of basic skills in the Armed Forces. The study was conducted over three years and followed a sample of recruits from each of the three Services. It involved interviewing the recruits, their line managers and senior officers, trainers and education staff. The study also assessed some 1,600 Army recruits with low literacy and numeracy skills during their first two and a half years of training and service. The results of the study

³⁷ Ev 14

³⁸ Ev 17-18

³⁹ Q 5

⁴⁰ Ev 24

were, on the whole, very positive. It showed conclusive evidence of the importance of literacy and numeracy skills for professional development and operational effectiveness.⁴¹ It also reported that:

The strong Service ethos generates high expectations of success amongst learners and their line managers alike, which combined with the strong culture of training and development to prepare for immediate job roles and promotion, contribute to a most impact on learner outcomes.⁴²

30. The study also made a number of recommendations as to how support for the improvement of literacy and numeracy in recruits could be enhanced; how awareness of its importance could be raised; and on the need for better management information on the performance of individual learners for them and for the Services and Defence.

31. Ofsted told us that support for recruits and trainees with additional learning needs was mixed in 2011–12, and showed no clear improvement from the previous year. However, those recruits and trainees with specific learning disabilities, such as dyslexia, were managed more effectively.⁴³ It also told us:

An initial assessment of a recruit's literacy and numeracy needs often takes place at the initial stages of application. At this stage, literacy and numeracy support is well managed. The process of passing on information from initial assessment, through phase 1 and phase 2, including the role of subcontractors, was poorly managed in too many cases, with the result that the quality of literacy and numeracy support did not always meet the needs of the recruit.⁴⁴

32. We asked the MoD what it had done to address an Ofsted recommendation that literacy and numeracy support should be provided from the beginning of recruits' training programmes. Colonel Johnstone said:

[...] The previous training delivery model at the infantry training centre at Catterick was that when the recruits completed their training, they got a package of literacy at the end of their training. With the introduction of functional skills, [...] it is now peppered through the course, and the literacy and numeracy is delivered in context. That helps. The policy is that all our trainees will be at entry level 3 before they start phase 2 training.⁴⁵

33. Both Ofsted and the longitudinal study supported the MoD in the adoption of a functional skills approach to the teaching of literacy and numeracy: that is, integrating the teaching of these skills throughout the first phase of military and trade training rather than as separate modules. This approach reinforces the importance of learning in context and

⁴¹ The Armed Forces Basic Skills Longitudinal Study, 7 June 2012 <http://www.niace.org.uk/current-work/armed-forces-basic-skills-longitudinal-study>

⁴² *Ibid*

⁴³ Ev 32

⁴⁴ *Ibid*

⁴⁵ Q 2

the development of transferable skills. It was introduced over the period April 2011 and March 2013.⁴⁶

34. In its evidence, Ofsted identified characteristics of effective literacy and numeracy support that the best of providers shared and that, it believed, would benefit the education of new recruits. When asked if the Armed Forces had assessed its literacy and numeracy support against these characteristics, Colonel Johnstone detailed where they met best practice more generally.⁴⁷

35. The Armed Forces have a good record of improving the literacy and numeracy of recruits and trainees who enter the Armed Forces with low levels of attainment. We welcome the introduction of literacy and numeracy support throughout Phase 1 training. The MoD should consolidate this recent improvement by reviewing their support for literacy and numeracy to ensure that it meets best practice as set out by Ofsted.

36. We asked the MoD if it should be doing more to encourage recruits to do English and Maths GCSEs as part of their basic training. Admiral Williams, Assistant Chief of Defence Staff (Personnel and Training) replied:

Many of those people who do not hit the GCSE bar are perhaps those who do not fit with our national education system. [...] Most of those who have come through the state system and have not got a GCSE may need a different approach. [...] Some of those individuals who just don't seem to get the standard state provision or the standard academic approach are able to develop their numeracy and literacy skills when taught and trained in a slightly different way. [...] In the Army in particular, we have a substantial number of people who haven't gained the traction in the standard state system and haven't developed a wish or an obvious ability to make the GCSE standard. Our approach is to take those functional standards and try to work it a different way.⁴⁸

He further replied that individuals had the opportunity to take the exams if they wished:

[...] right the way through all the Armed Services there are opportunities to take your education across. I would not say it was a very high number—I am not sure whether we gather the statistics—but the opportunity is there, whether you are on a deployed ship or whether you are in Afghanistan, depending on the operational situation. [...] In a ship I deployed with, I think we had 10 people out of 200 who got an English GCSE in a six-month deployment. So the opportunities are there.⁴⁹

37. Whilst we recognise that some recruits may not have done well in their previous academic careers and may not be eager to take further academic exams, the MoD should encourage more recruits to undertake English and Maths GCSEs which would stand them in good stead for future employment.

⁴⁶ Ev 23

⁴⁷ Q 17

⁴⁸ Q 18

⁴⁹ Q 19

Defence instructors

38. Instructors are required to attend a 'Defence Train the Trainer' course which involves some mentoring from a senior teacher.⁵⁰ We heard on our visit to two training establishments that some instructors did not attend the course before commencing their work as instructors. In its recent report, Ofsted said that:

Inspectors recognise that instructors at all establishments are knowledgeable, highly skilled and well qualified, but, as was the case in previous years, too few instructors arrive at their postings having completed the Defence Train the Trainer course. In half of the phase 1 establishments and in over half of the phase 2 establishments, fewer than half of all instructors begin their new roles having completed the training.⁵¹

39. Ofsted told us that instructors play a vital role in ensuring that recruits' and trainees' personal and educational needs are met effectively and that a well-planned professional development programme for these key personnel is important in sustaining improvement.⁵² The Ofsted inspection of Army apprenticeships shown in Table 3 also pointed to some instructors lacking experience and qualifications. It further said:

Most of the establishments inspected last year did not have an effective system for improving the quality of training through structured instructor observations to help them improve.⁵³

Ofsted also commented that this remained an area for improvement in its 2013 report.⁵⁴

40. We asked the MoD witnesses if they agreed with Ofsted's assessment. Colonel Johnstone replied:

I think they were right, and they put this in their annual report on what they had seen in armed forces education last year. It had also been picked up possibly because the Army was considering developing this new approach to instructors as something that our own internal inspections and audit had shown as an area for improvement, so we had asked Ofsted to do an additional piece of work for us that they did between January and April, which was to come and look specifically at the development of instructors after their initial defence training course, and they have come back to us with some proposals on how we can improve it. [...] ⁵⁵

41. She added:

the Army is rolling out something over the next 12 months or so called the Army instructor capability. As well as the instructor qualification that people will have when they go in to teach in training establishments, there will be a higher level of

⁵⁰ Q 21

⁵¹ <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/welfare-and-duty-of-care-armed-forces-initial-training-2013>

⁵² Ev 33

⁵³ *Ibid*

⁵⁴ <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/welfare-and-duty-of-care-armed-forces-initial-training-2013>

⁵⁵ Q 22

qualification, the Army instructor supervisor, and one of their specific roles will be to monitor and improve classroom level instruction. Above that, I think that it is going to be the Army instruction leader, who will be managing the whole instructor output and linking those instructor performance standards to the delivery of the quality education.⁵⁶

42. The MoD should ensure that all instructors complete the ‘Defence Train the Trainer’ course before they take up their appointments. The MoD should also institute a system of observation and feedback to all instructors in line with the recommendations made by Ofsted in its recent work for the MoD. In response to this Report, the MoD should set out its plan and timetable to implement these recommendations.

Oversight of education

43. Ofsted undertakes two types of inspection on MoD education and training. First, it inspects the provision of apprenticeship training and funded education by each of the three Services. This work is funded by the Skills Funding Agency.⁵⁷ Establishments by Ofsted judged to be ‘good’ or ‘outstanding’ are inspected again within six years. Those establishments judged to be ‘satisfactory’ or ‘requiring improvement’ are re-inspected within 12–18 months.⁵⁸

44. Secondly, the MoD commissions and pays Ofsted to inspect the welfare and duty of care of Armed Forces initial training establishments. These inspections cover outcomes for recruits as well as the quality of teaching and learning but are separate from Ofsted’s regular inspections of BIS-funded education and training delivered within the MoD.⁵⁹ Ofsted inspects at least ten establishments each year.⁶⁰

45. Ofsted reported that

[...] Evidence from the care and welfare [inspections] indicates that, overall, leadership and management is efficient but establishments need to make better use of data to support self-assessment and help them to improve. [...] Good practice, as evidenced through inspection, is not shared routinely across establishments to help others improve.⁶¹

46. Ofsted told us that the Director General of Army Recruiting and Training had provided clear strategic direction and leadership to enhance the awareness of the Army’s apprenticeship programme and that this had resulted in a greater understanding of the importance of apprenticeships to soldiers’ development. Ofsted further told us:

⁵⁶ Q 21

⁵⁷ Ev 31

⁵⁸ *Ibid*

⁵⁹ Ev 25

⁶⁰ *Ibid*

⁶¹ Ev 34

The Army's capacity to make and sustain improvements is good. The A&SDs [Arms and Service Directors] make good use of data to monitor provision. The analysis of data is shared very effectively across the Army to prompt action. In the infantry, A&SDs have introduced competitive performance tables which are very effective in stimulating commanding officers' commitment to the programme and their understanding of its benefits.⁶²

47. We support the use of Ofsted inspections, which bring an independent assessment of the performance of training and education within the Armed Forces, in particular, for recruits and trainees under the age of 18 years. The Armed Forces should share the results of the inspections across establishments to help them improve.

Results of Ofsted inspections

Inspections of establishments

48. The results of the Ofsted inspection of care and welfare of Armed Forces initial training establishments are given in Table 6 below. Eight out of the 21 establishments inspected were rated satisfactory (now categorised as 'requires improvement' by Ofsted).

⁶² *Ibid*

Table 6: Ofsted gradings for the overall effectiveness of Defence training establishments

	2010–2011	2011–2012	2012–13
Outstanding	HMS Sultan	HMS Raleigh Officer and Air Training Unit, RAF College Cranwell	Commando Training Centre Royal Marines (CTCRM) – Commando Training Wing CTCRM – Command Wing Army Foundation College
Good	Army Training Regiment, Basingbourne Army Training Regiment, Winchester Army Training Centre, Pirbright Defence College of Policing and Guarding	Royal Armoured Corps Training Regiment, Bovingdon 14 th Regiment Royal Artillery, 24 (Irish) Battery 2 (Training) Regiment, Army Air Corps 3 RSME Regt, Royal School of Military Engineering RAF Honnington RAF Cosford	RAF Halton, Recruit Training Squadron Defence Intelligence and Security Centre HMS Raleigh, Royal Naval Submarine School HM Naval Base Clyde, Submarine Qualification Course Defence College of Logistics and Personnel Administration, Worthy Down Infantry Training Centre, Catterick
Satisfactory, Adequate or requires improvement	Infantry Training Centre, Catterick 25 Training Regiment, Royal Logistic Corps Royal Military Academy Sandhurst RAF Halton RAF Honnington 11 Signals Regiment, Blandford	Infantry Training Centre, Catterick Defence Medical Services Training Centre	Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst 25 Training Regiment, Princess Royal Barracks, Deepcut
Unsatisfactory	Nil	Nil	Nil

Source: Ministry of Defence for 2010-11 and 2011-12⁶³ and Ofsted 2013 report *Welfare and Duty of Care in Armed Forces Initial Training*⁶⁴

⁶³ Ev 28

⁶⁴ <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/welfare-and-duty-of-care-armed-forces-initial-training-2013>

49. Ofsted told us that inspection was having a positive impact on establishments previously judged to be satisfactory or inadequate. However, one Army establishment was judged only to be satisfactory for the fourth time. Ofsted told us that, “in weaker establishments, the same problems remain: high wastage rates, inconsistencies in the quality of care and a failure to ensure that the recruits have sufficient basic skills to complete their training successfully”.⁶⁵

50. Ofsted further told us:

HMCI [Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Schools] is of the view that more needs to be done for young people and adults joining the Armed Forces training establishments. The establishments prepare and support young people to meet the challenges and demands of their role and to enter the Armed Forces as highly professional, highly skilled and well-motivated individuals. All establishments therefore must be at least good and that this must be viewed as the minimum acceptable standard.⁶⁶

51. We asked the Minister how long it would be before all establishments were judged good or outstanding. He replied:

I do not think that we can pre-empt that [publication of the Ofsted report for 2012–13], but I think that you will find that the gradings in the report that will come out in the summer will be better than those we had last year.⁶⁷

In its 2013, Ofsted reported that out of the eleven establishments inspected in 2012–13, three were rated as outstanding and six as good and two as only adequate (requiring improvement).⁶⁸

52. We welcome the continuing improvement in the Ofsted ratings of Armed Forces initial training establishments. The MoD should work to improve all establishments so that they reach the minimum acceptable Ofsted standard of ‘good’ in a timely fashion. In particular, the MoD should focus its attention on those weaker establishments whose performance has not improved. The MoD should tell us how it intends to achieve this improvement and in what timescale.

⁶⁵ Ev 32

⁶⁶ Ev 33

⁶⁷ Q 55

⁶⁸ <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/welfare-and-duty-of-care-armed-forces-initial-training-2013>

3 Continuing education of Armed Forces personnel

Description of the education support schemes

53. The Minister told us that the MoD supports elective learning.⁶⁹ The MoD also told us that it supports education throughout personnel’s careers which had benefits for the personal development of such individuals and for retention.⁷⁰ The MoD’s description of the various education support schemes available to serving personnel and those leaving the Services is set out in Table 7 below.

Table 7: Description of the education support schemes

The Standard Learning Credit (SLC) scheme, which supplies financial support, throughout the Service person’s career, for multiple, small scale learning activities, is designed to enhance educational or vocational achievement. Under the SLC scheme personnel may claim 80 per cent of course fees, up to a maximum of £175 per financial year, paid to civilian bodies for certain personal development courses, examinations and support.
Complementing the SLC scheme, there is the Enhanced Learning Credit scheme (ELC) providing help to personnel who qualify with a single payment, in each of a maximum of three separate financial years, offering to pay 80 per cent of the fees up to a maximum £1k or £2k (depending on qualifying scheme membership of either 4 or 8 years’ service) to help pay towards the cost of higher-level learning. The ELC scheme helps to motivate full time members of the Armed Forces to pursue their higher level personal development, both during their Service and for up to ten years afterwards, subject to the qualifying criteria being met.
An Individual Resettlement Training Costs (IRTC) grant is payable to Service Leavers (SL) with more than 6 years service to help towards the cost of resettlement training. A full refund for fees paid (up to a maximum of £534) may be claimed. IRTC may be claimed at any time in the last two years of service but normally in the last 9 months.
The Further Education/Higher Education Support Scheme provides eligible SL who have four years full-time service with fully subsidised tuition fees for a first full Level 3 or a first HE qualification, including foundation or full undergraduate degrees. SL must be registered for the ELC scheme. MOD pays a contribution per claim if any unused ELC credits remain, with BIS or the devolved administrations contributing the balance of the course fees.

Source: Ministry of Defence ⁷¹

Learning Credits

54. Standard Learning Credits (SLCs) provides very limited financial support of up to £175 a year for a maximum of 80 per cent of any course fees. The MoD explained to us that it was often used to extend a military course. Colonel Johnstone said:

[...] What we do in the Services, which is a little bit different—I think it is an advantage—is that we try to get as much educational benefit from the training that they are doing in service anyway, through the accreditation scheme and so on. We

⁶⁹ Q 46

⁷⁰ Ev 14

⁷¹ Ev 24-25

then encourage the individual to do the additional learning that might be needed. We actively say to people, “You have done 80 per cent of this qualification through the military course you have just completed. If you now want to get the full qualification, it will take this many credits at university, and here is the military funding system that will give you a refund towards it.”[...] ⁷²

55. Take up of SLCs has fallen since 2009–10, see Table 8 below. Annual expenditure on SLCs has also fallen from £2.8 million in 2009–10 to £1.6 million in 2010–11. In 2011–12, expenditure was some £1.9 million. ⁷³

Table 8: Take-up of Standard Learning Credits

	Service	No of Claims Authorised	Expenditure £ million	Totals
2007–08	Royal Navy	2,265	0.329	20,012 claims £2.267m
	Army	13,167	1.251	
	RAF	4,580	0.687	
2008–09	RN	1,755	0.250	17,964 claims £2.388m
	Army	13,533	1.737	
	RAF	2,676	0.401	
2009–10	RN	1,807	0.256	18,579 claims £2.841m
	Army	14,663	2.241	
	RAF	2,155	0.344	
2010–11	RN	2,276	0.314	121,010 claims £1.607m
	Army	6,447	0.862	
	RAF	3,178	0.488	
2011–12	RN	2,729	0.366	14,049 claims £1.945m
	Army	7,793	1.069	
	RAF	3,527	0.510	

Source: Ministry of Defence ⁷⁴

56. We asked the MoD why the take-up of SLAs had fallen, Admiral Williams said:

We have also noticed that and we are looking into why that might be. The initial feedback—it is not fully worked through; this is initial responses from the training commands—is that it might be as a result of the higher profile of the apprenticeship scheme and the fact that all of those coming in feel that they are on a course or getting qualifications and moving along a line that they can recognise. That might be why we are not feeling the need to focus on and take the opportunities of the SLCs. That is possible. Operational commitments might be part of it. That drop would largely seem to be in the junior ranks. [...] ⁷⁵

Colonel Johnstone added that completions of apprenticeships had increased from around 7,000 in 2007–08 to 12,000 in 2010–11. ⁷⁶

⁷² Q 58

⁷³ Ev 22

⁷⁴ Ev 22, table 7

⁷⁵ Q 26

⁷⁶ Q 27

57. In response to this Report, the MoD should inform us of the results of its investigation into the fall in the take-up of Standard Learning Credits. If appropriate, the MoD should encourage greater take-up amongst Armed Forces personnel.

58. Enhanced Learning Credits (ELCs) were developed to motivate full time members of the Armed Forces to pursue higher level personal development during their service and for up to ten years afterwards. Take-up of ELCs has significantly increased recently, see Table 9 below. Correspondingly, expenditure on ELCs has risen from £5.7 million in 2007–08 to £21.5 million in 2011–12.⁷⁷

Table 9: Take-up of Enhanced Learning Credits

	Service	No of Registrations	No of Claims Authorised	Expenditure £ million	Totals
2007–08	RN	2,987	1,255	1.112	13,881 registrations, 6,503 claims £5.687m
	Army	9,124	3,316	2.978	
	RAF	1,770	1,932	1.595	
2008–09	RN	3,721	1,677	2.258	16,048 registrations, 7,854 claims £10.083m
	Army	9,374	3,882	4.980	
	RAF	2,953	2,295	2.845	
2009–10	RN	4,127	1,663	2.324	18,262 registrations, 7,476 claims £9.978m
	Army	11,633	3,825	5.158	
	RAF	2,502	1,988	2.497	
2010–11	RN	2,715	2,115	3.006	13,550 registrations, 10,389 claims £14.651m
	Army	8,913	5,347	7.631	
	RAF	1,922	2,927	4.014	
2011–12	RN	3,006	2,970	4.467	19,254 registrations, 14,468 claims £21.461m
	Army	14,286	7,630	11.284	
	RAF	1,962	3,328	5.709	

Source: Ministry of Defence⁷⁸

59. We asked the MoD how information about ELCs is communicated to personnel. Admiral Williams replied:

They are widely advertised internally; in every unit that you visit, you should see posters. Equally, it is on the intranet, and that is where we would find increasing numbers, of our new people, particularly, looking for the information. Those who are interested in pushing ahead for an enhanced learning credit or getting accreditation for higher level education would look there, and every unit has people with education responsibilities if they are not big enough to have an education specialist officer. Part of the roles and responsibilities of that individual is to proselytise such things.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Ev 22

⁷⁸ Ev 22-23, table 8

⁷⁹ Q 25

Funding and the time available for education

60. We asked the MoD if learning credits and apprenticeships might be squeezed in the next round of spending reductions. Admiral Williams replied:

That is a really difficult question. Every last bit of the armed forces is subject to scrutiny of where we are at the moment in terms of funding, and we in the education area will not be immune to any of that. That is counterpoised by the very clear advantage we get by the investment we make in our people. That is recognised very well and very clearly. It is recognised today and it is recognised in our new employment model, which we are developing at the moment. One aspect of that is to ensure that we get parts of that that have some of these credits embedded within them. In terms of policy and where we are in our thinking, the educational side is absolutely front and centre, and crucial, but I could not sit here today and say that it is in any way protected.⁸⁰

61. The time available for education is often limited because of work pressures and operational deployments and this is likely to have been exacerbated by recent Armed Forces redundancies. We asked the Minister if personnel had enough time to participate in education. He replied:

I believe we encourage them to do so wherever it is practical. Again, I make the point that ultimately we are training personnel to be able to conduct operations in defence of the realm. But we do encourage people to study where they can and we do our best to try to advance all of our people as far as practical bounds allow. I am sure that people will always want to have more time in some contexts, but we have a fairly good crack at it.⁸¹

Colonel Johnstone also said that personnel could study when deployed:

It is a matter of mixing all that together in a blend, so that the individual, regardless of whether they are in a training establishment, a workplace or are deployed in Afghanistan or anywhere else, is able to access that support for literacy and numeracy, including electronic learning and so on.⁸²

The MoD also provided some information on the numbers of personnel taking qualifications on board Royal Navy ships and in deployed locations. In 2012–13, some 3,000 Army and Navy personnel had taken civilian examinations in Afghanistan or on board ship.⁸³

62. The MoD should not reduce funding for education as a result of the 2013 Spending Review. The MoD should promote education in the Armed Forces and encourage the chain of command to find time for personnel to engage in such activities.

⁸⁰ Q 28

⁸¹ Q 57

⁸² Q 17

⁸³ Ev 28, table 5

Higher education as part of career development for senior leaders

63. We asked the MoD whether higher education was seen as a core part of career development in Future Force 2020. Admiral Williams replied:

A lot of thought is going into higher education at the moment—where it sits and whether you need formally to stratify a rise within an officers career development programme, starting with a bachelor degree and moving through a masters. It is certainly true to say today that the Services offer foundation degrees for the basic officer training. There are other foundation degrees offered for warrant officer aircrew, [...]. So there is a foundation degree with a route to full honours, funded and paid for, for those who wish to take it.⁸⁴

He said that there is a debate within the Armed Forces about the possibility of an all-graduate entry for officers. He further said:

[...] we are a little bit nervous about going quite that far, for worry that you would miss one or two people who are just not academically focused but who are very good potential officers. So there is a lot of debate at the moment. If you look at the through-career development of officers—if you look at the advanced command and staff course, for example, where a masters degree is on offer, or the Royal College of Defence studies, where similarly one is able to take such a qualification—the opportunities are certainly there, and each Service has its own focus.⁸⁵

64. The Minister told us that education was important in producing senior officers and, in particular, in the development of strategic thinking. He added:

There have been studies undertaken into the intellectual support needed in the Armed Forces, and into how higher levels of training and education help us to develop people and our competitive edge, both operationally and in other areas. Clearly the ability to train our senior leaders in the right way and to the right standard is as important to the Armed Forces as to any other organisation. But of course there is the additional element of military and strategic training on top of that.⁸⁶

65. The MoD has undertaken limited research comparing qualification levels to the success of senior officers. Admiral Williams said:

I am not sure that the research or work that we have done stands up in the way of academic rigour, but certainly all three Services have looked quite carefully at their top cohort and looked at where they have come from. [...] and we have had very many very successful senior officers—actually, very clever, academically gifted senior officers—who did not necessarily have a degree when they entered the Service. There is an issue there for me in a broader educational sense, because I would give you a personal view that I think that some people are ready at the age of 18 to take a degree,

⁸⁴ Q 29

⁸⁵ *Ibid*

⁸⁶ Q 61

but some people are not and they get traction later on. The delight for me in the Services is that there is an opportunity. It is not easy, because you are doing a proper job at the same time, and to give yourself the time and to drive yourself hard enough to ensure that you give your academic studies enough focus is a difficult thing to do, but the opportunities are there.⁸⁷

66. Admiral Williams also said that the MoD evaluated education in the Armed Forces regularly:

There has been a more or less constant evaluation and re-evaluation of the educational input that we give our individuals, our officers and our senior officers. The Advanced Command and Staff Course, which takes place in the middle of an officer's career, is structured so that an MA is possible—and indeed recommended—on it. We are looking at the characteristics of that course and whether it delivers sufficiently the level of strategic studies required. It does contain a considerable proportion of strategic studies, and we continue to look at it. Only a month ago, the Defence Training Board commissioned me to do another review of our Higher Command and Staff Course, the relationship between that and the Royal College of Defence Studies, and that which we give our individuals on both those counts. [...] So this is a much reviewed, focused area of our capability. I do not think we would ever sit back and be complacent and say that we have got it right. [...] ⁸⁸

67. We asked whether the review of the Higher Command and Staff Course had been commissioned by the Defence Training Board with a view to cutting expenditure. Admiral Williams replied:

It is capability-focused. It is about using the current resources as well and as consistently as we can between something like the Higher Command and Staff Course, which is an operationally focused course, and the Royal College of Defence Studies, which is much more of a strategic piece. It is designed to make sure we get the optimal output out of all those things.⁸⁹

68. The MoD provided us with the terms of reference for the Review and told us that the Defence Training Board would consider the resulting report in October 2013.⁹⁰

69. We are persuaded that, as well as recruiting graduates as officers, the provision of higher education for those in command in the Armed Forces is essential and should not be reduced by the MoD as a cost-cutting exercise. The MoD should provide us with the results of the Review of the Higher Command and Staff Course when completed and the response of the Defence Training Board to its recommendations. We will return to the subject of higher education in the Armed Forces, in particular, the need to educate personnel in strategic decision-making, as part of our work on Future Force 2020.

⁸⁷ Q 34

⁸⁸ Q 61

⁸⁹ Q 62

⁹⁰ Ev 30

70. Given the increased role for reservists in Future Force 2020, we asked the MoD what it was doing to get work in the Reserve Forces accredited for civilian degree courses as happens in Australia. Admiral Williams replied:

We are looking at every bit of accreditation as part of the whole FR20 [Future Reserve 2020] piece. There is a massive amount of work going on there, as you might imagine, and some of it will follow on the initial work on how we are going to make the thing work. But the aim is, absolutely, to align regular and reserve; the aim is to ensure that in every bit of training that we do in the Ministry of Defence, we look for accreditation where we can. That aligns not only with FR20, but in this new employment model, which sort of had its genesis in the regulars [...].⁹¹

The MoD provided us with the terms of reference for the above accreditation project. The results of the project are due to be considered by the Future Reserves 2020 Programme Board in October 2013.⁹²

71. With the increased role envisaged for reservists in Future Force 2020, it is essential that the Armed Forces make Reserve Service as attractive as possible for the reservists and their employers. We see the education accreditation project as an important component in encouraging people to join the Reserves. The MoD should provide us with the results of this project and its implementation plans.

⁹¹ Q 33

⁹² Ev 29

4 The impact of education on the resettlement of Armed Forces personnel

72. Members of the Armed Forces will nearly always need to pursue a further career after they leave the Armed Forces. Many aspects of a career in the Armed Forces can help Service leavers obtain civilian employment. In particular, education and qualifications gained in the Armed Forces play an important role in future prospects. Armed Forces personnel undertake many qualifications during their time in the Armed Forces, see Table 10 below.

Table 10: Qualifications (excluding apprenticeships) gained by Armed Forces personnel as a result of their Service training

Type of Qualification	Academic year		
	2009–10	2010–11	2011–12
Stand alone NVQ and other Level 2	13,282	17,204	11,195
Stand alone NVQ and other Level 3	6,813	8,105	7,592
Stand alone NVQ and other Level 4	2,670	2,519	2,249
HND, Foundation Degrees and other level 5	4,774	5,113	3,582
Honours Degrees and other level 6	543	779	915
Postgraduate Degrees/Diplomas and Higher Degrees	596	218	1,578
Total	26,275	33,938	27,111

Source: Ministry of Defence⁹³

The provision of civilian qualifications

73. We asked if the MoD was doing enough to enable Service personnel to gain a civilian qualification related to their military job. Admiral Williams replied:

I think, throughout the Service [...] that we fight for and spend the money to accredit that which we do in a military sense, and for a civilian. So flying a fast jet aeroplane, for example—funding the civilian pilot's licence, which seemed at one stage to me to be rather counter-intuitive. You might imagine all the pilots would immediately leave, but actually what it meant was that they felt that they were being invested in and did not feel that there was green grass over the other side that they really wanted to focus on. And it helped retention. So that is the sort of thing—there is a good business reason for doing a lot of this.⁹⁴

Admiral Williams also said that the MoD tried to get civilian accreditation for most of what they did and that they would spend up to an additional 10 per cent on a military training course to ensure that it led to civilian accreditation. The Minister added that if Armed Forces personnel had done 80 per cent of a civilian qualification as part of their

⁹³ Ev 18, table 5c

⁹⁴ Q 45

military training then there were resources to enable them to get the civilian qualification.⁹⁵

74. We asked the Minister if there were areas where it is not possible to get a civilian qualification, citing naval medics as a possible example. He replied:

[...] We had a meeting yesterday where this was on the agenda. Part of the issue is that being a paramedic in the national health service is effectively a degree level qualification now. People coming out of the Armed Forces who have very good medical qualifications and who may have served in theatre, do not necessarily have a degree, but would be extremely useful in the back of an ambulance. We are therefore looking at ways to try to provide some form of conversion to allow ex-medics to convert to work, for instance, as paramedics in the ambulance service. Some pilot programmes are under way actually at the moment, with a couple of ambulance trusts. We are looking to learn lessons from that to see how we could roll it out.⁹⁶

The MoD further told us that there were three pilot projects looking at paramedic qualifications in place or being considered. These projects included:

- scoping a new course for new trainees to close the gap between basic military medic training and what is required to work in civilian ambulances;
- professional recognition for existing military medics working with Cumbria University and Yorkshire Ambulance Trust; and
- a possible further project working with West Midlands and East England Ambulance Trust.⁹⁷

75. Given that most Armed Forces personnel will need to have at least one further career, we support the MoD's policy of supporting the provision of civilian qualifications. We recommend that the MoD identify the potential for more pilot projects with civilian employers to develop the provision of civilian qualifications and to ensure that vital skills paid for by the MoD are not lost to the country. The MoD should tell us the results of its pilot projects on the training of paramedics.

Resettlement prospects

76. We put to the MoD that people who join the Armed Forces are not going to remain in Service until they are 65 years old and will need to go on to a civilian working life. Admiral Williams agreed and further said:

[...] We spend money and we take time and help individuals get accredited, get the kind of qualifications they want to get. There is money available to get civilian qualifications, if you want to go and do something completely different.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ Q 65

⁹⁶ Q 64

⁹⁷ Ev 25-26

⁹⁸ Q 45

77. Armed Forces personnel are entitled to resettlement advice and support when leaving the Services. The support is designed to help personnel leaving the Armed Forces make a successful transition to civilian employment in a suitable further career, which is appropriate to their skills, knowledge, experience and aspirations. The level of support is graduated based on the length of service in the Armed Forces although all those who are medically discharged are entitled to the full resettlement service. For example, those who have served more than six years receive individual career support such as CV writing, interview skill, training and a grant towards other training plus time to attend training. The support is provided by the Career Transition Partnership (CTP) which comprises the MoD and recruitment specialists, Right Management.⁹⁹

78. The number of personnel leaving the Armed Forces who have used CTP support has increased from some 9,900 in 2009–10 to 14,900 in 2011–12.¹⁰⁰ Current figures show that between 93 per cent and 95 per cent of leavers receiving CTP resettlement support obtain employment within six months of discharge.¹⁰¹

79. We asked if the skills of Armed Forces personnel were readily transferable to civilian employment. Admiral Williams replied:

[...] if I look at the engagement we have done very recently as part of the FR20 [Future Reserve 2020] work and the Green Paper, those employers who we have managed to engage with appear to venerate and understand those skills that the military brings to their offices. British Telecom, for example, cannot have enough ex-military in its ranks of technicians. [...] If I look at the career transition partnership, we seem to score above 90 per cent in Service people getting a job. That seems to me to be proof that, as long as we work on translating those military skills and trying to put them in words that people will understand, they are there. Of course, we take civilian qualifications wherever we can.¹⁰²

The Minister said that the education received by Service personnel helped them in returning to civilian life. He further said:

[...] We do not do a GCSE in character formally, but I believe that we help to engender character in the Armed Forces in a way that is attractive to employers.¹⁰³

He added that former Armed Forces personnel did well in employment:

If you have served for six years or more, when you leave the forces you get a support package called the Career Transition Partnership—the CTP—and the statistics on this are quite impressive. If you leave the forces, you are looking for work and you have been through the CTP programme, 90 per cent of those people get a job within

⁹⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/information-for-service-leavers>

¹⁰⁰ Ev 23

¹⁰¹ http://www.defencemanagement.com/article.asp?id=180&content_name=Human%20Resources&article=4506

¹⁰² Q 39

¹⁰³ Q 66

six months, and 95 per cent of those people get a job within 12 months. We know that because we do tracking surveys that follow their progress.¹⁰⁴

80. Most Armed Forces personnel do well in gaining employment after leaving the Services. Many employers find ex-Armed Forces personnel very employable. In particular, employers value their disciplined approach, determination and work ethic. We encourage the MoD to continue its support for the resettlement of Armed Forces personnel, particularly in this time of redundancies from the Armed Forces.

¹⁰⁴ Q 66

Conclusion

81. We recognise that training personnel to deliver operational capability is paramount for the Armed Forces. However, we believe that the Armed Forces also provide challenging and constructive education and employment opportunities for young people. We welcome the expansion of apprenticeships for those joining the Service. Ofsted reports that performance in most training establishments is good. But we would wish to see an improvement so that all establishments are rated at least good and more establishments, apprenticeships schemes and courses are rated as outstanding.

82. Continuing education for serving personnel is important, both for their own career development and for retention. As personnel will almost certainly go on to a further career after they leave the Services, it is also important that training leads to civilian qualifications wherever possible. We welcome work by the Armed Forces to increase the number of areas where personnel can acquire a civilian qualification and would like to see this work further extended.

Formal Minutes

TUESDAY 9 JULY 2013

Members present:

Mr James Arbuthnot, in the Chair

Mr Julian Brazier

Mr Jeffrey Donaldson

Adam Holloway

Penny Mordaunt

Sir Bob Russell

Bob Stewart

Ms Gisela Stuart

Derek Twigg

Draft Report (*The Armed Forces Covenant in Action? Part 4: Education of Service Personnel*), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

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

Paragraphs 1 to 82 read and agreed to.

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

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

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

Written evidence, reported and ordered to be published on 30 January, 19 March and 16 April 2013 in the last Session of Parliament, was ordered to be printed with the Report.

[Adjourned till tomorrow at 2.00 p.m.]

Witnesses

Tuesday 16 April 2013	Page
Rear Admiral Simons Williams , Assistant Chief of Defence Staff (Personnel and Training), and Colonel Carolyn Johnstone , Assistant Head, Holding to Account, Training, Education, Skills, Recruiting and Settlement, Ministry of Defence	Ev 1

Tuesday 23 April 2013	
Rt Hon Mark Francois MP , Minister of State for Defence, Personnel, Welfare and Veterans, and Rear Admiral Simons Williams , Assistant Chief of Defence Staff (Personnel and Training), and Colonel Carolyn Johnstone , Assistant Head, Holding to Account, Training, Education, Skills, Recruiting and Settlement, Ministry of Defence	Ev 8

List of printed written evidence

1	Ministry of Defence	Ev 14: Ev 23
2	Ofsted	Ev 31
3	Child Soldiers International	Ev 34

List of Reports from the Committee in Sessions 2012–13 and 2013–14

The reference number of the Government's response to each Report is printed in brackets after the HC printing number.

Session 2012–13

First Report	Ministry of Defence Supplementary Estimate 2011–12	HC 99 (HC 577)
Second Report	The Armed Forces Covenant in Action? Part 2: Accommodation	HC 331 (HC 578)
Third Report	MoD Main Estimate 2012–13	HC 133 (HC 607)
Fourth Report and First Joint Report	Scrutiny of Arms Exports (2012): UK Strategic Export Controls Annual Report 2010, Quarterly Reports for July to December 2010 and January to September 2011, the Government's Review of arms exports to the Middle East and North Africa, and wider arms control issues	HC 419
Fifth Report	Future Maritime Surveillance	HC 110 (HC 827)
Sixth Report	Defence and Cyber-Security	HC 106 (HC 719)
Seventh Report	Defence Acquisition	HC 9 (Session 2013–14, HC 73)
Eighth Report	The work of the Service Complaints Commissioner for the Armed Forces	HC 720 (Session 2013–14, HC 505)
Ninth Report	Ministry of Defence Annual Report and Accounts 2011–12	HC 828 (Session 2013–14, HC 292)
Tenth Report	Securing the Future of Afghanistan	HC 413 (Session 2013–14, HC 461)

Session 2013–14

First Report	MoD Supplementary Estimate 2012–13	HC 291
Second Report	Ministry of Defence Main Estimates 2013–14	HC 517

Oral evidence

Taken before the Defence Committee

on Tuesday 16 April 2013

Members present:

Mr James Arbuthnot (Chair)

Mr Julian Brazier
Mr Jeffrey M. Donaldson
Mr Dai Havard
Mr Adam Holloway

Mrs Madeleine Moon
Penny Mordaunt
Sandra Osborne
Sir Bob Russell

Examination of Witnesses

Witnesses: **Rear Admiral Simon Williams**, Assistant Chief of Defence Staff (Personnel and Training), Ministry of Defence, and **Colonel Carolyn Johnstone**, Assistant Head, Holding to Account, Training, Education, Skills, Recruiting and Resettlement, Ministry of Defence, gave evidence.

Q1 Chair: Welcome to the second evidence session this afternoon. This one is about the education of Service personnel. Admiral, would you like to introduce yourself and Colonel Johnstone, even though we have met her on several occasions?

Rear Admiral Williams: I am sure you have. I am Admiral Simon Williams. I am responsible for personnel and training policy in the Ministry of Defence. I have been in post since September last year. I took the post after having commanded, in my previous job, initial naval training across both officers and ratings academies in the Navy. I also commanded the initial of the Navy's leadership academies. Previous to that, I was a director of personnel strategy. Those two jobs led to my selection for this post.

Colonel Carolyn Johnstone is a career education specialist, and is the person I rely on for deep, specialist education advice. I am not allowed to say she is my education ninja, because she does not like it.

Q2 Chair: Thank you. I understand that you have been heavily involved in the organisation of the funeral tomorrow, so we are grateful to you for coming to give us evidence at a very busy time. Ofsted recommended that literacy and numeracy support should be provided from the beginning of recruits' and trainees' programmes. What have you done to address that recommendation?

Rear Admiral Williams: We have a plan to put literacy and numeracy skills in context using the Functional Skills programme. We have found that that is both the right approach for Service people, and it seems to work best with the recruits that come into the Naval Service.

Colonel Johnstone: This is mainly a concern for the Army, which tends to take in people at lower levels of achievement in literacy and numeracy. The previous training delivery model at the infantry training centre at Catterick was that when the recruits completed their training, they got a package of literacy at the end of their training. With the introduction of functional skills, as the Admiral said, it is now peppered through the course, and the literacy and numeracy is delivered in context. That helps. The policy is that all our

trainees will be at entry level 3 before they start phase 2 training.

Q3 Chair: So it is essential to allow them to get the best out of the later stages of their training?

Colonel Johnstone: Indeed. Phase 2 training, which is where they do their specialist and trade-related training, tends to be of a more technical nature in some cases. There would be more written material for them to absorb, and therefore we assess—it is an internal assessment—that entry level 3 is required for them to participate fully and get the benefit from that military training.

Q4 Chair: Would you achieve the same thing by raising the basic entry level requirements?

Colonel Johnstone: Individuals could come in with higher levels. Our policy then is that the Services should aim to improve everybody's level of literacy and numeracy by one level, on the national levels, during their training, to at least entry level 3 before they go into phase 2 training.

Q5 Chair: Have you considered raising the basic entry level?

Colonel Johnstone: It is an issue that comes along reasonably often, I think. It is an old chestnut that is often revisited. The armed forces recruit in competition with the other employers in the marketplace. An individual who comes to be selected is put through a number of assessments, and literacy and numeracy achievement would be just one of those. We also measure their attitude, their physical fitness, their commitment to joining the Army, Navy or Air Force, and their trainability. We take the best that we can to fill the numbers that we need, so the actual levels of achievement will go up and down depending on who is coming to us from the marketplace.

Q6 Mrs Moon: Given the increased legal and educational responsibilities placed on the MOD in recruiting what are technically still children—16 and 17-year-olds—what is the continued cost-benefit

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analysis involved in pursuing that course of action? Is it still worth recruiting children as young as 16?

Colonel Johnstone: Raising the participation age—the school leaving age remains at 16. The new obligations under raising the participation age oblige the individual who does not have a full level 3 qualification, which is broadly A-levels, to remain in some form of education or training for that time when they are 16 and 17. The Services recognise that.

The three ways in which an individual can meet that duty are either to stay in full-time education at a school or college, to undertake an apprenticeship, or, if they go into full-time employment, to take structured training leading towards qualification on a part-time basis. All those who would have a duty to participate will be enrolled on an apprenticeship scheme when they come into the armed forces, unless their training is leading to a higher level qualification—some may already be on degrees associated with their military training, depending on specialism. However, the majority of those who would previously have been considered to be coming in with lower levels of achievement would be enrolled on an apprenticeship. We are not trying to compete with or replace a college; raising the participation age is as an employer providing access to that continued learning. As for the costing of that, we have done some work on the actual costs, but not necessarily on the value for money and the cost-benefit. There are some indications, and on an ad hoc basis people will tell you that those who are recruited at 16 and 17 stay in longer, get promoted quicker and are better quality soldiers, sailors and airmen, in some cases. So that investment early on may be giving us a benefit later—we have not done that analysis fully.

Q7 Mrs Moon: You have not done that analysis?

Colonel Johnstone: Not fully, no.

Q8 Sir Bob Russell: How frequently do you feel that Ofsted should be inspecting armed forces initial training establishments, and in particular the substance, quality and suitability of the curriculum on offer? I ask that particularly in relation to apprenticeships.

Rear Admiral Williams: In terms of the quality of the establishments, if an Ofsted inspection detects something that is below a good standard, at the moment our policy is that they would reinspect within a year.

Q9 Sir Bob Russell: So how frequently are they inspecting at the moment, because I have been told that they have done only three inspections since 2009, which suggests just one inspection a year across the whole country?

Rear Admiral Williams: There are many more than that. Carolyn?

Colonel Johnstone: We have two separate types of inspection from Ofsted. The armed forces commission Ofsted to do inspections of our welfare and duty of care, and those inspections also look at the quality of teaching and learning. We pay for those inspections and usually between 10 and 12 of our initial training

establishments are inspected on that scheme on an annual basis.

With the apprenticeships, Ofsted comes and inspects armed forces apprenticeship schemes in the same way that they would inspect any other SFA-funded educational provision. It is under Ofsted's statutory framework and it is for Ofsted to decide how often it comes.

Q10 Sir Bob Russell: So how many establishments are only rated as "satisfactory" at the moment?

Colonel Johnstone: For the—

Q11 Sir Bob Russell: From Ofsted's perspective.

Colonel Johnstone: For the statutory ones, I don't know.

Q12 Sir Bob Russell: I am going for the initial training establishments, because my next question was going to be this: how are you going to ensure that all initial training establishments are rated as being at least "good" by Ofsted inspectors? However, before I got to that, I was going to ask how many of them were rated only "satisfactory". I do not mind in which order the questions are answered.

Colonel Johnstone: I will just refer to my notes.

Rear Admiral Williams: While Carolyn is looking for the notes and the detail, in terms of policy, we are looking at what Ofsted looks at as well as at the broader quality of our training. When Ofsted comes and inspects a military establishment, clearly the reports are published and they are given not only to that military establishment, but to every other military establishment.

In terms of best practice, we do peer group sharing of information as to when Ofsted has noticed something as being "good", and we have now moved into the "outstanding" bracket for some of our establishments. The last Ofsted report had, out of 10 or 11, two "outstanding" assessments: one was a basic training establishment; and one was an air crew training establishment.

Where we get those "outstanding" ratings, we look and analyse and improve right the way across the board, so we are trying not to lose those that are already perhaps at the "good" level; we are trying to spread best practice right the way through the training community and we take the whole process seriously. So it is informed by Ofsted, but not necessarily driven by Ofsted.

Q13 Sir Bob Russell: So how long do you anticipate that it will take for all establishments to achieve the "good" standard?

Rear Admiral Williams: We are making very good progress. I say "very good progress"—we are patting ourselves on the back and looking at last year's assessment, which I think had only two establishments below the "good" level and I think that in the previous year, there were six.

Colonel Johnstone: I have finally found the bits of paper. In the 2011–12 round, and these are for the ones that we commission, there were two "outstanding" grades and 60% were "good" or better. So, six of the 10 were "good" or better. Obviously,

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we are already well through the 2012–13 cycle and although the information will not be published until the summer when Ofsted does its annual report on the armed forces, with the ones that have been done already we know that we have improved on them.

Q14 Sir Bob Russell: So the graph is going up?

Colonel Johnstone: We are definitely going in the right direction and we have good momentum.

Q15 Sir Bob Russell: My last question is this: just out of interest, with the Ofsted inspectors is there a military dimension, background and knowledge among the inspectors?

Colonel Johnstone: Not necessarily. My team are Ofsted's liaison point within the MOD, and Ofsted always tries to provide inspectors who understand the sector and the provision that is being inspected. There is a small team of people who have been to previous defence establishments, but I do not think that any of them have specific prior military experience necessarily.

Q16 Sir Bob Russell: Is that a plus or a minus, if your establishment is being inspected by people who have not served in uniform at some point themselves?

Colonel Johnstone: We value Ofsted's independence. It is particularly helpful that we get a number of inspectors who through their work with Ofsted have been involved with the forces previously. That means that every time they come round we do not have to start from the very beginning and introduce our training structure and so on. Once they have done one training establishment in defence they will be able to take that knowledge across.

Q17 Mrs Moon: Has an assessment of your numeracy and literacy support been carried out to ensure that it is meeting those characteristics set by Ofsted as the best providers? How are you ensuring that what you are providing in terms of literacy and numeracy support is of the best?

Colonel Johnstone: We did the armed forces basic skills longitudinal study and that recently reported. I think we provided that for the Committee. That highlighted that a lot of what we do is best practice in literacy and numeracy, and our outcomes are very positive. There is a key investment. People in the armed forces who need support with literacy and numeracy will get that from various sources. For some it will be part of their apprenticeship through functional skills; for others it will be something that they choose to do, although we do have a requirement that they reach levels 1 and 2 by certain points in their career linked to their promotion.

They will be supported, either through the contractor that is delivering one of the other courses, or there may be military officers, such as people from my own branch of educational and training services, who are deployed through the armed forces, working directly with units. They are trained to support the literacy and numeracy needs of their learners. We also have some civil servants who are literacy and numeracy tutors, working in learning centres through the armed forces. There is also peer support: members of the armed

forces can volunteer to be literacy and numeracy mentors.

It is a matter of mixing all that together in a blend, so that the individual, regardless of whether they are in a training establishment, a workplace or are deployed in Afghanistan or anywhere else, is able to access that support for literacy and numeracy, including electronic learning and so on.

Q18 Mrs Moon: Have you thought of having your recruits aim to achieve GCSE in maths and English? Why do you not pursue that as your goal—where they go away with a clear achievement?

Rear Admiral Williams: Many of those people who do not hit the GCSE bar are perhaps those who do not fit with our national education system. We are not a specialist educational organisation. Most of those who have come through the state system and have not got a GCSE may need a different approach. That is where the functional skills are showing in a rather practical sense. Some of those individuals who just don't seem to get the standard state provision or the standard academic approach are able to develop their numeracy and literacy skills when taught and trained in a slightly different way. Our experience is certainly that is what is happening. In the Army in particular, we have a substantial number of people who haven't gained the traction in the standard state system and haven't developed a wish or an obvious ability to make the GCSE standard. Our approach is to take those functional standards and try to work it a different way.

Q19 Mrs Moon: Is there an opportunity to take the exams if they have the capability?

Rear Admiral Williams: Absolutely so, and right the way through all the Armed Services there are opportunities to take your education across. I would not say it was a very high number—I am not sure whether we gather the statistics—but the opportunity is there, whether you are on a deployed ship or whether you are in Afghanistan, depending on the operational situation. That can impact, if I am honest, on your ability to sit down and start getting through your English GCSE. But we make provision on board ship, if you have the expertise on board in terms of subject matter, so English, for example, can generally be taught in most ships and units deployed. We run courses and people do take them on. In a ship I deployed with, I think we had 10 people out of 200 who got an English GCSE in a six-month deployment. So the opportunities are there.

Q20 Mrs Moon: I quite honestly see the military as one of the best examples of a through-life educational establishment. If ever there was one, it is the British armed forces. So to say that you are not an education establishment, I think that you misrepresent yourselves and what you do.

Rear Admiral Williams: Thank you.

Q21 Chair: This is a question about improving the quality of the teaching and training that you provide. Ofsted said: "Most of the establishments inspected last year did not have an effective system for improving the quality of training through structured instructor

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observations to help them to improve.” What are you doing about that?

Rear Admiral Williams: A number of things. We are encouraging coaching and mentoring networks within training establishments. So in the training establishments that I commanded, for example, in both leadership skills and the coaching skills themselves, we had one sphere of training, but also in the training and building on the DTTT—the Defence Train The Trainer—course, mentoring a senior teacher, looking in from the outside and commenting on and improving performance. We also looked pretty carefully at the responses from cadets and students going through particular courses to see, if you are teaching a similar sort of area, which teachers or individuals who are teaching were not as successful as others, and that sort of collegiate coaching-type approach seemed to be delivering dividends, as far as I could see, in a very promising way.

The Army has looked at it in a slightly more structured way, and I think the Army has now got a plan to have a three-tier instructor or teacher network with those who have done the DTTT course and two higher qualifications—if you want to talk about that, Carolyn.

Colonel Johnstone: Indeed; the Army is rolling out something over the next 12 months or so called the Army instructor capability. As well as the instructor qualification that people will have when they go into teach in training establishments, there will be a higher level of qualification, the Army instructor supervisor, and one of their specific roles will be to monitor and improve classroom level instruction. Above that, I think that it is going to be the Army instruction leader, who will be managing the whole instructor output and linking those instructor performance standards to the delivery of the quality education.

But we have also got an eye to what is happening in civilian life, and Lord Lingfield’s report last year has resulted in different approaches perhaps to the professionalisation of teaching in the learning and skills sector. We are close alongside the Learning and Skills Improvement Service; it produces perhaps new qualifications for teachers in further education. We expect those to come out in the summer, and the military will almost certainly try to mirror those developments in our own systems.

Q22 Chair: So when Ofsted said, “Most establishments...did not have an effective system for improving the quality of training”, were they wrong, or were they right and you are doing something about it?

Colonel Johnstone: I think they were right, and they put this in their annual report on what they had seen in armed forces education last year. It had also been picked up possibly because the Army was considering developing this new approach to instructors as something that our own internal inspections and audit had shown as an area for improvement, so we had asked Ofsted to do an additional piece of work for us that they did between January and April, which was to come and look specifically at the development of instructors after their initial defence training course, and they have come back to us with some proposals

on how we can improve it. Our own internal process agreed with what Ofsted had said, so we were fortunate enough to be able to use Ofsted again to map out a way forward.

Q23 Chair: Admiral Williams, may I confirm something that you just said? I think you said that while our forces are on deployment on operational duties they can still complete some forms of literacy and numeracy training, even overseas. Is that right?

Rear Admiral Williams: That is correct.

Q24 Mr Brazier: I would like to ask about extended learning credits, which seem to be a rather interesting initiative, Admiral. Because we are running out of time, let me give you several questions together: what type of qualifications do they typically support—

Chair: No, stop there. One question at a time.

Rear Admiral Williams: Educational academic professional vocational things, which, importantly, lead to a qualification at level three or above is the target for the ELC.

Q25 Mr Brazier: And how do you communicate information about them?

Rear Admiral Williams: They are widely advertised internally; in every unit that you visit, you should see posters. Equally, it is on the intranet, and that is where we would find increasing numbers, of our new people, particularly, looking for the information. Those who are interested in pushing ahead for an enhanced learning credit or getting accreditation for higher level education would look there, and every unit has people with education responsibilities if they are not big enough to have an education specialist officer. Part of the roles and responsibilities of that individual is to proselytise such things.

Colonel Johnstone: The other thing is that the enhanced learning credit scheme is one that you have to register for and commit to. Everybody, during their initial training, is given a presentation, told that these things exist and invited to complete a form that allows them to register for the scheme. So, for the enhanced level credits, right up front everybody gets the message.

Q26 Mr Brazier: I am an enthusiast for this and I endorse my colleague Madeleine Moon’s comment earlier about you as a learning organisation, but we were quite surprised to hear that the participation in standard learning credits—I do not have the figures here for the enhanced ones—has fallen from nearly 12% in 2007–08 to around 8% in 2011–12. Clearly both years were very busy with operations and so on, but, given that the pace had already slightly fallen by that late period, to find a one-third fall in participation seems rather surprising. Is there any explanation for that?

Rear Admiral Williams: We have also noticed that and we are looking into why that might be. The initial feedback—it is not fully worked through; this is initial responses from the training commands—is that it might be as a result of the higher profile of the apprenticeship scheme and the fact that all of those coming in feel that they are on a course or getting

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qualifications and moving along a line that they can recognise. That might be why we are not feeling the need to focus on and take the opportunities of the SLCs. That is possible.

Operational commitments might be part of it. That drop would largely seem to be in the junior ranks. So, being in the junior ranks would lead us to think—

Q27 Mr Brazier: May we have some figures on the apprenticeship side? That would be quite an interesting explanation.

Colonel Johnstone: I believe that they are in the memorandum. The apprenticeship completions, which were around 7,000 in 2007–08, had gone up to 12,000 by 2010–11, so it may well be the answer, particularly if it is at the junior ranks, as they would be involved in the apprenticeships.

Q28 Mr Brazier: Are learning credits and apprenticeships—let's ask about both—likely to be squeezed in the next round of spending reductions?

Rear Admiral Williams: That is a really difficult question. Every last bit of the armed forces is subject to scrutiny of where we are at the moment in terms of funding, and we in the education area will not be immune to any of that. That is counterpoised by the very clear advantage we get by the investment we make in our people. That is recognised very well and very clearly. It is recognised today and it is recognised in our new employment model, which we are developing at the moment. One aspect of that is to ensure that we get parts of that that have some of these credits embedded within them. In terms of policy and where we are in our thinking, the educational side is absolutely front and centre, and crucial, but I could not sit here today and say that it is in any way protected.

Q29 Mr Brazier: Thank you, Admiral. May I move us on to higher education? Is this seen as a core part of career development in Future Force 2020?

Rear Admiral Williams: A lot of thought is going into higher education at the moment—where it sits and whether you need formally to stratify a rise within an officers career development programme, starting with a bachelor degree and moving through a masters. It is certainly true to say today that the Services offer foundation degrees for the basic officer training. There are other foundation degrees offered for warrant officer aircrew, for example, and I suspect there are some others. So there is a foundation degree with a route to full honours, funded and paid for, for those who wish to take it.

There is a lot of debate at the moment within the Armed Services about whether one ought to go for an all-graduate entry for one's officers. I would say that where we are at the moment, we are a little bit nervous about going quite that far, for worry that you would miss one or two people who are just not academically focused but who are very good potential officers. So there is a lot of debate at the moment. If you look at the through-career development of officers—if you look at the advanced command and staff course, for example, where a masters degree is on offer, or the Royal College of Defence studies, where similarly one

is able to take such a qualification—the opportunities are certainly there, and each Service has its own focus.

Q30 Mr Brazier: May I ask two questions following directly from that? First, you specifically mention the Royal College of Defence Studies and the Cranfield availability of degrees. One of the often-quoted points about Petraeus and the young Turks around him was that all of them, I think without exception, had done a master's degree in war studies through an institution not controlled or funded by the Pentagon. Are we going to continue with all the money that goes into war studies being through one or two large contracts and effectively under the MOD's control, or is that being looked at all?

Rear Admiral Williams: It most certainly is being looked at. I have a remit from the last defence training board to look at our higher command and staff course, our Royal College of Defence Studies course and the higher education aspects of both of those. One might look at the RCDS and say, "Is that a sort of pass/fail for senior individuals?" If it is, we might look again at the educational qualifications inherent within it or the potential educational aspects within it. We are certainly looking at options beyond that controlled by the MOD, but as we strive to get the best bang for the buck in an educational sense, that is quite a difficult thing to do. In terms of economies of scale, if we go through our central providers we get a better deal, and therefore I can roll out education to a wider group of people.

Q31 Mr Brazier: Could I suggest to you that if you compare it with the American model, the Americans clearly have a lot more money than we do but if you look at it on a per 100 officer model rather than in aggregate, where the Americans save a great deal of money is by having a lower proportion going through them? The fact that we have chosen to go for mass, low-cost contracts put with just one or two providers rather than having a smaller number of people going through a greater number of slightly more expensive courses—one wonders, given that we have the Levene commitment now to have less turnover among senior ranks so we are going to have fewer people being promoted, whether there is a case for going more for quality rather than quantity.

Rear Admiral Williams: I think there is certainly a case, but it is actively part of the area that we are looking at.

Q32 Mr Brazier: Good. One last question, Chair, if I may, going back for a moment to first degrees. Reserve forces have not been mentioned yet. Forgive me taking an Army example, but I do not have a parallel naval one. If you are an army reserve officer in Australia, for example in the Royal Australian Engineers, and you are taking a degree in engineering, your phase 2 training will count for several credits towards your degree. What work is going forwards at the moment on providing what should in principle be a free inducement, from the MOD's point of view, to attract TA officers by getting recognition for the qualifications that they are taking within the civilian degree sector?

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Rear Admiral Williams: I would certainly say that as part of FR20—Future Reserves 2020—we are looking at exactly what we can accredit and how a future reservist career can be more closely aligned with a regular Service career, because our aim and our wish is for these individuals to be interchangeable. The principle of being able to shape a course, whether regular or reserve, towards giving an accreditation is in our policy—we say that we will do it, and that we will pay slightly more for the course to ensure that it leads to a civilian qualification. That is there already. I am not sure that we have anything specific on engineers—

Q33 Mr Brazier: That was just an example. But you are looking at getting recognition for qualifications, including degree courses?

Rear Admiral Williams: We are looking at every bit of accreditation as part of the whole FR20 piece. There is a massive amount of work going on there, as you might imagine, and some of it will follow on the initial work on how we are going to make the thing work. But the aim is, absolutely, to align regular and reserve; the aim is to ensure that in every bit of training that we do in the Ministry of Defence, we look for accreditation where we can. That aligns not only with FR20, but in this new employment model, which sort of had its genesis in the regulars but will actually move, probably in the next five years if I am honest, to talking about the same sort of activity elsewhere. Certainly in the area that I work, I am working increasingly with considering that reserve component, because we absolutely must.

Q34 Mrs Moon: May I take you back to your statement about not necessarily seeing a university education as a prerequisite for entering officer training? Have you done any research into how many senior officers entered with a university qualification, as opposed to a non-university qualification, but still managed to rise through the ranks successfully? To claim interest in this question, I happen to know that the student who passed out from Sandhurst recently with the top sword award, or whatever, was a Welsh student without a university degree who had already successfully passed out from Cranwell, but because of the cuts had recycled himself through.

Rear Admiral Williams: I am not sure that the research or work that we have done stands up in the way of academic rigour, but certainly all three Services have looked quite carefully at their top cohort and looked at where they have come from. That is informing their thoughts as to whether they need a degree-level qualification for coming in—for example, the Army feel that at the moment. That example you have just quoted is one of the things that they focus on, and we have had very many very successful senior officers—actually, very clever, academically gifted senior officers—who did not necessarily have a degree when they entered the Service. There is an issue there for me in a broader educational sense, because I would give you a personal view that I think that some people are ready at the age of 18 to take a degree, but some people are not and they get traction later on. The delight for me

in the Services is that there is an opportunity. It is not easy, because you are doing a proper job at the same time, and to give yourself the time and to drive yourself hard enough to ensure that you give your academic studies enough focus is a difficult thing to do, but the opportunities are there.

Q35 Mrs Moon: That is the through-life education bit.

Rear Admiral Williams: It is through-life education.

Colonel Johnstone: Can I follow up on that one? We have to be careful of what we look at in the current cohort of senior officers and what they might have done when they were of university age, because of the increase in and expansion of higher education. Probably only 15% of the population would have gone to university straight from school at the time that our current board members joined the Army, Navy or Air Force. The Army did some analysis of the actual work required, and they said that cognition levels for junior officers and captains are equivalent to graduate-level work; master's degrees are the level for majors or officer grade 3.

Q36 Sir Bob Russell: What would you say to the observation that qualifications obtained in Service are too military-focused and are not understood by civilian employers?

Rear Admiral Williams: Sir Bob, we must have ongoing and important engagement with employers, and we absolutely must have that support. We have talked about FR20, and we are going to rely on that amount of people supporting us. If I talk about the wounded, injured and sick transitioning into civilian life, and if I talk about the standard transition into civilian life after a military career, engaging with employers and trying to decode those things that might appear slightly odd and abstract in the military is something that we absolutely have to do.

Q37 Sir Bob Russell: The reason I phrased the question as I did is because most respondents to this Committee's online survey, which was administered by the National Audit Office, stated that they had studied for civilian qualifications, but only 46% of those who have obtained a civilian qualification thought that they were completely or mostly transferable. That is less than half.

Rear Admiral Williams: I guess that that information is from those who are in the Service.

Q38 Sir Bob Russell: Yes.

Rear Admiral Williams: There is a difficulty, it seems to me, with those in the Service understanding, or being sure about, how transferable their skills are.

Q39 Sir Bob Russell: So it could be a misconception?

Rear Admiral Williams: It might well be a misconception, because if I look at the engagement we have done very recently as part of the FR20 work and the Green Paper, those employers who we have managed to engage with appear to venerate and understand those skills that the military brings to their offices. British Telecom, for example, cannot have

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enough ex-military in its ranks of technicians. I wonder whether it is actually a misconception. If I look at the career transition partnership, we seem to score above 90% in Service people getting a job. That seems to me to be proof that, as long as we work on translating those military skills and trying to put them in words that people will understand, they are there. Of course, we take civilian qualifications wherever we can.

Q40 Sir Bob Russell: Clearly the Committee is looking at the whole inquiry, so we are not trying to find fault—at least I hope we are not trying to find fault—but we are trying to get helpful answers. Do you think the armed forces have done enough to ensure that training undertaken by Service personnel leads to civilian qualifications? If so, so that we can make recommendations to the Secretary of State, what has been done and what more needs to be done?

Rear Admiral Williams: I will take that sequentially. We are able to put up to 10% extra into a course to ensure a civilian qualification, and if you see that as being helpful, it is a useful thing to support because it seems to me that that helps us as we try to design education programmes for the armed forces. That is pretty much defending the status quo.

In terms of focusing on the right area in decoding military skills and translating them into something that will be useful in civilian life, the contract has not been going on for ever. I do not know how long the CTP contract is, but we can probably find out. I have just been through three days' worth of the resettlement programme with a civilian company. They worked very well indeed to translate my military skills into something that I initially found unrecognisable.

Q41 Sir Bob Russell: Has the MOD experienced any barriers to getting its courses recognised as civilian qualifications? The crucial word there is "barriers."

Rear Admiral Williams: It would be wrong of me to say that there have been no difficulties in getting people to understand what we are doing—and try and benchmark. And, therefore, are there barriers? Well, I guess there are sometimes barriers in understanding. But I am looking—certainly in the naval area that I commanded, we did not find any area that we could not eventually get understanding and—

Q42 Sir Bob Russell: So they were not too defence-orientated that the civilians said, "We don't want that, it's too defence"?

Rear Admiral Williams: I never had an experience where the civilian accreditor said, "You're just too defence". They just tried to understand what it was we were doing and advise us as to—perhaps with minor changes, and with certain slightly different schematics, you could tick the boxes that they needed to be ticked.

Colonel Johnstone: It is usually the other way round.

Rear Admiral Williams: I was going to say it was absolutely usually the other way round, where civilian accreditors are looking to benchmark against, or to use ours.

Q43 Sir Bob Russell: Chairman, I was prompted to ask this question because I have been trying to get answers out of Ministers. I hope I am not misquoting Mark Francois, who told me, "Young people joining the armed forces are engaged in a full-time occupation and so, unlike a school, but in common with other employers, the training they undertake is designed to prepare them for their role in a chosen trade or specialisation." But people who join Her Majesty's armed forces are not going to be there until they are 65. Moreover, that is going to be just the first phase of their working life, before they then return to civilian life.

Rear Admiral Williams: Yes.

Q44 Sir Bob Russell: So they are not the same, are they?

Rear Admiral Williams: Well, I suppose I could not demur from Mr Francois's comment, because I suppose—I know what he is saying. Perhaps, if he were here, he would complete the sentence and would talk about the—

Q45 Sir Bob Russell: We will raise that with him.

Rear Admiral Williams: I suspect he would talk about the time when transition into civilian life is appropriate. We spend money and we take time and help individuals get accredited, get the kind of qualifications they want to get. There is money available to get civilian qualifications, if you want to go and do something completely different.

I think, throughout the Service—if he were here, he would certainly say that we fight for and spend the money to accredit that which we do in a military sense, and for a civilian. So flying a fast jet aeroplane, for example—funding the civilian pilot's licence, which seemed at one stage to me to be rather counter-intuitive. You might imagine all the pilots would immediately leave, but actually what it meant was that they felt that they were being invested in and did not feel that there was green grass over the other side that they really wanted to focus on. And it helped retention. So that is the sort of thing—there is a good business reason for doing a lot of this.

Chair: Thank you. I think we will draw this evidence session to a close now. I thank you both very much indeed. I should like to hang on to the Committee itself for a very brief private session. But to both of you, may I say thank you very much for some very interesting evidence? It was very helpful.

Tuesday 23 April 2013

Members present:

Mr James Arbuthnot (Chair)

Mr Dai Havard
Adam Holloway
Mrs Madeleine Moon
Penny Mordaunt

Sandra Osborne
Sir Bob Russell
Ms Gisela Stuart

Examination of Witnesses

Witnesses: **Rt Hon Mark Francois MP**, Minister of State for Defence, Personnel, Welfare and Veterans, **Rear Admiral Simon Williams**, Assistant Chief of Defence Staff (Personnel and Training), Ministry of Defence and **Colonel Carolyn Johnstone**, Assistant Head, Holding to Account, Training Education Skills, Recruiting and Resettlement.

Q46 Chair: Thanks very much for appearing before us again. You do not need to introduce your team this time, because they are the same team as were here in front of us last week. I would guess that this evidence session will take about 40 minutes. Can I begin by asking what is the purpose of education in the Armed Forces?

Mr Francois: I would say that the purpose of military training and education is to prepare personnel for their role in operational capability. Given that that training is progressive and continues throughout an individual's service, the military requirement is paramount—after all, these are people in the Armed Forces—but where there is a comparable civilian qualification, we accredit the military course so that our people are awarded nationally recognisable qualifications. It is worth adding that the Ministry of Defence also supports elective learning and provides training to facilitate the eventual transition back to civilian life.

Q47 Chair: I would rather hope that there was also an element of attracting into the Armed Forces and retaining those who might find the value of the education provided by the Armed Forces necessary for the provision of military quality.

Mr Francois: I do not decry that for a moment, Chairman, but I was tipped off that you do not like long opening statements or wordy answers to the first question.

Chair: Ah, I see. Well then, we are second-guessing each other.

Q48 Mrs Moon: I wonder whether you have been tipped off about my question, Minister. Last week, we asked about the legal and educational requirements placed on the MOD in relation to the recruitment of children.

Mr Francois: Yes.

Q49 Mrs Moon: We were told that the costing of the value for money and cost-benefit resulting from that had not been carried out—the analysis has not been done. You will be aware that there continues to be concern about the UK recruiting children as soldiers. Is that a value, or is it something that we should reconsider?

Mr Francois: I am told that there is concern in some quarters. We are not concerned about it because we believe it is the right thing to do. Under-18s, who for instance join the Army, sometimes do cost a bit more to train initially, but they usually stay longer in the service—in some cases quite a bit longer—so we believe that the higher investment is worth it. I know that the Admiral has been looking at this quite closely, including this morning, so I thought I might ask him to amplify.

Rear Admiral Williams: Mrs Moon, since the last meeting, Child Soldiers International has produced a report, which I have looked through. I don't know if you have had a chance to look at it, but it makes a number of claims that I think are rather difficult to square with reality.

We told you accurately last time that we had not done a full cost-benefit analysis of recruiting those under the age of 18, but we did stress, in terms of operational deployment and of whether they were deployed in combat, that we did not deploy those individuals in combat, and therefore I see them through the lens of individuals training for their eventual employment, under formally recognised apprenticeship schemes. I guess I focus on what these individuals would be doing if they were not being trained in an Army, Navy or Air Force training establishment.

Something has been made of the fact that those individuals are no longer in state education and therefore would not be retaking GCSEs, for example. Clearly, the individuals we would recruit have already had a chance to take GCSEs at the normal stage. And something has been made of the issue that I know Professor Alison Wolf has looked at—education—and would argue that GCSEs are a better indicator than some of the functional skills that we use. One could argue that that might be the case, but we are dealing largely with individuals who would not be in the bracket of being able, certainly at that stage and age, to pass a GCSE at grade C or above, as Professor Wolf would advocate. Therefore I go back to looking at what the individuals would be doing had they not had the opportunity to take their apprenticeships and train within their chosen career. I am not sure I have an answer to that, and I am not sure that Child Soldiers International has either.

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Q50 Mrs Moon: Can I go back to my questions in relation to child protection? Are you satisfied that you are able to protect those child soldiers from sexual harassment, which we know is 100% experienced on a daily basis by adult females serving in the Armed Forces? Are you happy that you are able to protect youngsters—16, 17 and 18-year-olds?

Mr Francois: I do not think we accept that that is experienced on a 100% basis by all females in the Armed Forces on a daily basis. I have to push back at that. We do not accept that. I believe that we have procedures in place to protect young people from those sorts of issues when they are training in the service, but again I will allow the admiral to amplify.

Rear Admiral Williams: The Armed Forces have come a long way. In fairly recent times they have come a considerable way. My experience of the Armed Services is that some of the things we would have dismissed as being okay—sort of banter—perhaps 10 or 20 years are absolutely not allowed, and not expected to be allowed, in the Armed Forces of today.

Looking to your specific question of whether I believe that we have put in place in our training establishments the necessary procedures to protect those individuals who are under 18, I think we have. I think we have put an enormous amount of effort into looking at and training people in the right kind of behaviours. Some people grow up in parts of our society where they do not learn how to act appropriately, and therefore they need instruction. I think that that instruction is available—very readily available. I think that if you walk around our establishments you will see posters and all manner of areas where we try, via the web and via everything they see around them, to get an understanding of the ethos of the Armed Services, and that includes respect for the individual. I think that respect for the individual is not a sex issue.

However, I probably ought to hand over, if I may, to Colonel Johnstone, who has a female perspective as well as a professional military one.

Colonel Johnstone: I did not join as an under-18. We have specific policies concerning under-18s for those who run training establishments. Our duty of care to all our trainees is very important to us. For those who are under 18 there is a specific instruction to the commanding officers which covers the law as it applies to those under 18s, and some additional things that they could do to look out for vulnerable individual trainees. It gives specific direction on alcohol, smoking, gaming machines and so on. The levels of supervision are also specified for those who are under 18. In many cases, the training establishment chooses to extend that level of supervision to everybody, so they raise the level and treat all their trainees as one group. To confirm that under-18s are being properly looked after we commission Ofsted duty of care and welfare inspections of our training provision.

Q51 Sandra Osborne: Is it the case that many of those who are recruited under 18 drop out by their mid-20s, as the Child Soldiers International suggests?

Mr Francois: Briefly, some may do, but people recruited over the age of 18 can drop out by their mid-20s. I do not think it is a phenomenon particular to those who joined under 18. I will let the admiral amplify, but anecdotally quite a lot of those people who joined slightly younger often stay in slightly longer. They are very keen and enthusiastic about joining the forces, and they really make quite a career of it.

Q52 Sandra Osborne: So there is not a big disparity between the age groups, with under-18s dropping out in much bigger numbers than older recruits? They say they are using MOD figures.

Rear Admiral Williams: Yes, they are. The equation is more complex than you would realise by looking at the way that Child Soldiers International presented its figures. I think that would be the best summation. Although a slightly higher percentage of individuals do fail the training in the under-18 cohort, some of them stay for about twice as long. If those who manage to complete the training stay twice as long—and very many of them reach very senior NCO status, or senior rank in the Services—the equation starts to look a little bit different.

Our assessment has a number of levels. One is the question of whether we could run the Army and recruit enough people if we did not recruit those who were under 18 and wished to join the Army. Our evidence so far, although it is not complete, is that we could not do that. We did stop junior recruiting at one stage before we built Harrogate, and we did not get enough recruits coming in to the Army during that interim period of a couple of years. We have some evidence, but I am not sure that it stands up. It was not a properly analysed piece, it was just that we experienced a drop in recruiting.

I think that there is a real question of whether we would be able to run the Army and recruit enough people. There is also the issue that those we do recruit at that young age, if they stick with the Army or the Navy or the Air Force, tend to stay a lot longer. The calculation is just not simple.

Q53 Sandra Osborne: Do you think that, as with children of serving personnel, children who join the Armed Forces should get the same level of education as children who stay on at school until they are 18?

Rear Admiral Williams: I guess that they have made a different career choice at that stage. They have chosen not to stay with the GCSE and A-level track; they have in a real sense chosen to go and do what is effectively an apprenticeship. They have chosen a different career. I think we fulfil our statutory obligation if we ensure that they complete a structured apprenticeship. I think this is now the case for 100% of people who join the Armed Services; they get either an apprenticeship or higher. If they have a higher level of education to start with, there is no requirement for them to follow the apprenticeship scheme. Looking at it from a national perspective, we contribute on that educational stage as much as we would if they had gone to an apprenticeship in another area. I keep coming back to the fact that the individuals we are talking about are largely those who have not, for

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whatever reason, got traction in the GCSE line, and need something else. Sometimes the foundation skills and the way in which things are taught in the Armed Services gain better traction with them. Certainly, when we have been externally analysed it would seem that that is indeed the case, and that some people who simply did not get the literacy and numeracy piece in standard education have found an ability to do that given the different approaches we have taken in the Armed Services. We have got fairly positive feedback from the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education.

Ms Stuart: I would like to follow up a point that has been raised about the recruitment of 16-year-olds. I understand that the report hit the papers, in a sense, this morning. Could you, in a written answer, try to square for the Committee the circle about why the drop-out rate for 16 to 18-year-olds is higher than it is for adults? You are quite right that the 16 to 18-year-old is likely to serve 10 years compared with the seven and a half years an adult serves, but the report seemed to suggest that training a 16 to 18-year-old costs us twice the amount for an adult. That needs some explaining, and I would ask you to do that in writing. Equally, I would like some suggestion as to why none of the EU countries and none of the P5 actually recruit from 16 to 18, but we are still doing it. You must have some thoughts on the rationale behind that, other than the Minister's assertion that it is the right thing to do.

Chair: Mind you, we would not necessarily want to take military lessons from the European Union.

Ms Stuart: Or the P5, or the rest of the world.

Q54 Sandra Osborne: Not all 16 and 17-year-olds who stay on at school get GCSE or the equivalent—in Scotland, it is a different exam. Do you think that you should raise the basic entry level requirement for recruits, or do you think it is okay as it is?

Mr Francois: We think we have the entry level requirements set about right in order to be able to recruit the sort of numbers that we need to man the Armed Forces. I will take this opportunity to make the point that, because we recruit from the bottom up, even with the tranches of redundancy that we have had we are still recruiting, and the Army will be running a big recruiting campaign in the next few months. If I may, Chairman, as we have talked about the importance of careers, I will get that firmly on the record while I have the opportunity—if you will allow me, Mrs Osborne. We think we have the entry levels set about right to meet our manning requirements, but I think the admiral will want to amplify.

Rear Admiral Williams: I think that many of the kinds of skills we require in the Armed Services do not require GCSEs and A-levels or their Scottish equivalents, which are an academic description of how far an individual has come. Many of the individuals we are talking about would not be able to attain that level, so we are effectively talking about whether we should exclude them from joining the Armed Services. We have proven that those individuals who cannot manage the full academic piece can actually deliver as members of the Armed Forces. They will get leadership training while they

are in there, they get functional skills training and they get an enormous amount of support behind them. Looking at them as individuals, very many of them have not had that support from their families or in their personal circumstances—perhaps that is why they joined the Armed Services in the first place—and they are able to use the Armed Services to move on in a way that they would not have been able to move on in the state system. It would be a mistake to set our entry standards higher, given that we can, as the Minister has said, deliver our job and make sure that individuals pass to the requisite levels for those individuals who perhaps are not able to get those GCSEs.

Chair: Okay. I want brief and snappy questions and brief and snappy answers, because we have a lot to get through today.

Q55 Sandra Osborne: How long do you anticipate it will take before all the establishments achieve a good ranking from Ofsted inspectors?

Mr Francois: I think we are not far from publishing the new set of rankings, are we, Colonel?

Colonel Johnstone: The Ofsted report for the current cycle will be out in the summer.

Mr Francois: I do not think that we can pre-empt that, but I think that you will find that the gradings in the report that will come out in the summer will be better than those we had last year.

Chair: To a certain extent, that is a repeat of the evidence that we had last week. In a sense that is reassuring, but I do not want to go through all the same questions and answers that we had last week, so I will move on to Penny Mordaunt

Q56 Penny Mordaunt: Shouldn't we be doing more to encourage recruits to do English and Maths GCSEs as part of their basic training?

Mr Francois: We recruit across a whole range of skills. In some areas—for some particular technical trades—we already require GCSEs in order to qualify. In others—for instance, in the infantry—we do not necessarily do that.

Every new entrant, and whichever trade that they go into, is effectively enrolled on an apprenticeship, so we are trying to provide a qualification, or the equivalent of a qualification, for every single recruit who comes in. Not all of them necessarily need English and Maths GCSEs for the role that they will fulfil in the military, and ultimately we are there to fulfil an operational requirement.

I do not think that we would want to make that *de rigueur* in every case, but it is worth restating that every entrant is put on an apprenticeship or equivalent qualification; that is not necessarily equivalent to English and Maths GCSEs in every case and, in some cases, some of those recruits would struggle to get GCSEs in English and Maths, though not necessarily all of them, by any means.

Colonel Johnstone: The key point I would make is that, often, the functional skills we give them give them the confidence that they can achieve some things in an educational context that they have never experienced before. Our progressive approach, and the support that we give through elective learning, means

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that many people who possibly did not get GCSEs at school will get them through elective learning in the forces. That would be paid for through the standard learning credits scheme.

We also have arrangements whereby the individual can do the exams in all kinds of contexts: we have the defence exams board, which allows people to sit exams in all kinds of strange places. Over 20 years, I was invigilating—in those days it was not GCSEs—in some fairly strange places in Northern Ireland.

Chair: Our Northern Irish member is not here today, so you can get away with that.

Q57 Sir Bob Russell: Minister, do personnel have enough time to participate in education?

Mr Francois: I believe we encourage them to do so wherever it is practical. Again, I make the point that ultimately we are training personnel to be able to conduct operations in defence of the realm. But we do encourage people to study where they can and we do our best to try to advance all of our people as far as practical bounds allow. I am sure that people will always want to have more time in some contexts, but we have a fairly good crack at it.

Q58 Sir Bob Russell: Clearly, operational duties and deployments overseas will impact on that, but do you think that the three Services are doing enough to encourage our serving personnel to pursue education outside of what they would be doing for their military activities?

Mr Francois: Yes, we have a number of learning credits schemes that we can use to help to encourage personnel to do this. I am conscious that you want short questions and answers, Chairman, and some of these schemes are admittedly a little bit complicated, but I will ask the Colonel to run through them quickly for Sir Bob's benefit.

Colonel Johnstone: We can give you, in writing, how the different schemes work if you would prefer that detail. It is useful to point out that we tend to link the education opportunity to something that they are doing in their military training. People in the military are no different from the rest of the population; if they can find time to do an Open university degree or go to get an additional professional qualification while they are holding down a full-time job, looking after families and having a social life, it is a big commitment and it is challenging.

What we do in the Services, which is a little bit different—I think it is an advantage—is that we try to get as much educational benefit from the training that they are doing in service anyway, through the accreditation scheme and so on. We then encourage the individual to do the additional learning that might be needed. We actively say to people, “You have done 80% of this qualification through the military course you have just completed. If you now want to get the full qualification, it will take this many credits at university, and here is the military funding system that will give you a refund towards it.” There are also learning advisers to help them.

Q59 Sir Bob Russell: I think you have almost answered my last question, which is, are education support schemes sufficiently well understood?

Colonel Johnstone: Sorry.

Q60 Sir Bob Russell: Your answer indicates that they are, but could more be done?

Colonel Johnstone: We could do a blanket publicity drive. The information is available to everybody, but we do it on a push basis rather than a pull basis because it is done in a context in which it is more likely to be taken up.

Q61 Chair: Moving on, what do you see to be the value of higher education for senior officers in strategic studies, for example? Do you think it is an important part of the nation's strategic capability?

Mr Francois: I declare an interest as a graduate of the MA programme in war studies at King's College London, although it was admittedly back in the last century.

Chair: Respect.

Mr Francois: There have been studies undertaken into the intellectual support needed in the Armed Forces, and into how higher levels of training and education help us to develop people and our competitive edge, both operationally and in other areas. Clearly the ability to train our senior leaders in the right way and to the right standard is as important to the Armed Forces as to any other organisation. But of course there is the additional element of military and strategic training on top of that.

Rear Admiral Williams: There has been a more or less constant evaluation and re-evaluation of the educational input that we give our individuals, our officers and our senior officers. The Advanced Command and Staff Course, which takes place in the middle of an officer's career, is structured so that an MA is possible—and indeed recommended—on it. We are looking at the characteristics of that course and whether it delivers sufficiently the level of strategic studies required. It does contain a considerable proportion of strategic studies, and we continue to look at it. Only a month ago, the Defence Training Board commissioned me to do another review of our Higher Command and Staff Course, the relationship between that and the Royal College of Defence Studies, and that which we give our individuals on both those counts. There is also a Pinnacle course for officers of a high calibre to help them get strategic jobs in the Ministry of Defence. So this is a much reviewed, focused area of our capability. I do not think we would ever sit back and be complacent and say that we have got it right. We have got to be restless, and we have got to look at getting it better. Indeed, I think we are.

Mr Francois: As part of being restless, I am going down to Shrivenham on Thursday.

Q62 Chair: I hope that the review that you are just about to do is not with a view, in these financially stringent times, to cutting it.

Rear Admiral Williams: It is capability-focused. It is about using the current resources as well and as consistently as we can between something like the

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Higher Command and Staff Course, which is an operationally focused course, and the Royal College of Defence Studies, which is much more of a strategic piece. It is designed to make sure we get the optimal output out of all those things.

Q63 Sir Bob Russell: This is a small supplementary to the question on uniformed officers. I attended a breakfast-lunch this morning about part-time further education and part-time university courses. It was said that the number of applications had gone down by 40% over the last year or two. Bearing in mind that what you provide is part-time, have you noticed any falling-off of people wishing to participate in part-time higher education courses?

Rear Admiral Williams: I am not aware of that, and I think one would notice that. We put a lot of effort into providing our core defence academy qualifications. I mentioned the MA that is available there, and there is an MA available at the RCDS. It may be that our in-service provision means that people do not have to go outside our core providers, with which we have contracts and which provide us with a pretty high-quality service.

Colonel Johnstone: By coincidence, I was at a coffee morning where that same statistic was discussed. I think that that is only very recently, or within the last 12 months, so we do not have the statistics. We collect them on an annual basis from across the three Services. Between '10-'11 and '11-'12, we actually saw an increase in those qualifications at higher education level.

Sir Bob Russell: We are clearly doing something right. Thank you for those encouraging responses.

Chair: We will move on to the provision of civilian qualifications.

Q64 Sandra Osborne: If you have any evidence on whether the provision of civilian qualifications aids retention, that would be useful. Are there still some areas where it is not possible for forces personnel to acquire a civilian qualification? The Naval Families Federation cited the example of naval medics.

Mr Francois: May I take that first? I have reasonably regular meetings with Dr Dan Poulter in the Department of Health, when we discuss issues between the Ministry of Defence and the Department of Health. To give a quick example, we work very closely on the whole prosthetics issue about new legs for wounded service personnel.

We had a meeting yesterday where this was on the agenda. Part of the issue is that being a paramedic in the national health service is effectively a degree level qualification now. People coming out of the Armed Forces who have very good medical qualifications and who may have served in theatre, do not necessarily have a degree, but would be extremely useful in the back of an ambulance. We are therefore looking at ways to try to provide some form of conversion to allow ex-medics to convert to work, for instance, as paramedics in the ambulance service. Some pilot programmes are under way actually at the moment, with a couple of ambulance trusts. We are looking to learn lessons from that to see how we could roll it out.

Forgive me if that is a slightly long answer, but I was literally talking about that with a ministerial opposite number yesterday. That is one practical example of how we are trying to look at this, but perhaps the Admiral would like to give some more breadth on it.

Chair: I will just bring in Gisela Stuart.

Q65 Ms Stuart: Just to add to that example, what about the Air Force—pilot qualifications and their transferability? The thinking used to be that the MOD did not want to train its personnel only for them to go to civvy street and use their qualifications. Are you making any progress on that?

Rear Admiral Williams: Yes. I am pleased to report that we have taken a different line on private pilot qualifications. We took a risk: we decided that we would accredit fully all the flying in-service, and help pilots to get that qualification. It has resulted in a very positive outcome. Many fewer than we expected left the service. It simply took away a concern they had that they were falling behind their civilian partners. That is therefore a really good example of why it is sensible to give civilian accreditation.

We give civilian accreditation to just about everything we do when we can do it. In the Navy, if you drive a boat, where there used to be a bespoke military course, we now get the RYA to accredit it, so that is something you can take outside when you leave the service. We are allowed to spend up to 10% more on a military training course in order to ensure that we get a civilian accreditation at the end of that course, and I think that it is an entirely positive thing. It is also being incorporated into the new NEM.

Mr Francois: It is worth reiterating the Colonel's point that if you have done something that takes you 80% to a civilian qualification, we have packages and resources available to help you to top up in order to add that on.

Q66 Sandra Osborne: Do you think that the education that personnel receive helps or hinders them in readjusting to civilian life?

Mr Francois: Broadly, it must help them. We do not do a GCSE in character formally, but I believe that we help to engender character in the Armed Forces in a way that is attractive to employers.

If you have served for six years or more, when you leave the forces you get a support package called the Career Transition Partnership—the CTP—and the statistics on this are quite impressive. If you leave the forces, you are looking for work and you have been through the CTP programme, 90% of those people get a job within six months, and 95% of those people get a job within 12 months. We know that because we do tracking surveys that follow their progress.

Q67 Sandra Osborne: Even at the moment with high unemployment.

Mr Francois: That holds up now, yes. If you have been in six years or more, you get that package.

I will add, if I may, that when I have had discussions with American colleagues about this, they are quite impressed by those numbers. There are some areas where the Americans are ahead of us, but in terms of resettlement I think that they would admit that we are

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probably ahead of them in actual fact. Whenever I have pitched the CTP to American colleagues, the pens come out and they start taking notes pretty copiously.

Chair: I think that we are done. I would like to thank all of you very much indeed for an excellent evidence

session and particularly you, Minister, for giving evidence in two evidence sessions on the same afternoon. You have shown an impressive grasp of your subject matter, if I may say so, and an admirable approach to parliamentary accountability. We are most grateful.

Written evidence

Written evidence from the Ministry of Defence

MOD welcomes the decision of the Committee to extend its inquiry into the Armed Forces Covenant to the education of Service personnel. The purpose of military training and education is to prepare personnel for their role in operational capability. Training is progressive and continues throughout an individual's service. The military requirement is paramount but, where there is a comparable civilian qualification, we accredit the military course so that our people are awarded nationally recognised qualifications. In addition, Defence supports elective learning and provides training to facilitate the eventual transition back to civilian life.

There is an established learning culture across all three Services and, ultimately, education is an individual's responsibility. The 3rd Defence Training Board (DTB), chaired by Chief of Defence Personnel, ensures coherence within Defence training and education. It sets overall policy, gives strategic direction, prioritises and makes balance of investment decisions on training and education. Requirement setting is delegated to the Service Commands as appropriate, with Commander Joint Forces Command responsible for setting the joint requirement and training standards, as well as co-ordinating user requirements for the Defence Academy. Assurance includes the evaluation, inspection and audit of training and education activities. A culture of continuous improvement facilitated by regular self assessment exists in all Defence training activities. The Service Commands are accountable for the conduct of 2nd Party assurance of all Training & Education activities within their area of responsibility (including Defence Training Establishments) and 3rd Party inspections conducted by Ofsted continue to be commissioned through MOD/TESRR¹.

ENTRY TO SERVICE

The minimum age for entry into the UK Armed Forces is 16, which reflects the normal minimum school leaving age. As at 1 April 2012 1.5% of UK Regular Forces were under the age of 18, and 28% were under the age of 25². Table 1 shows the age distribution on entry to each of the Services in FY11/12, with 23% of recruits being under 18. The Education and Skills Act 2008 means that all young people who have ceased to be of compulsory school age, not reached the age of 18 and not attained a level 3 qualification will be required by law to continue in education or training to the end of the academic year in which they turn 17 from 2013 and until at least their 18th birthday from 2015.

All recruits who are subject to this duty to participate (ie those aged 16 and 17 who have not attained a level 3 qualification) will enrol on an apprenticeship as part of their military training whilst in full time employment as a soldier, sailor, marine or airman. No one can join the trained strength of the Armed Forces unless they have completed both Phase 1 broad militarisation training and Phase 2 specialist and trade related training. Young people joining the Armed Forces are engaged in a full time occupation and so, unlike a school but in common with other employers, the training they undertake is designed to prepare them for their role in their chosen trade or specialisation.

Minimum educational qualifications are determined by individual Service and specialisation requirements, ranging from no formal qualifications (eg RAF Regiment Gunner) to a full professional qualification (eg RN Registered Nurse). Data on the qualifications held on entry are not available as the recruiting staff record only whether applicants have the minimum qualifications for their selected trade or specialism; examples of some minimum qualifications are at Table 2. As part of a range of tests to determine their suitability, all applicants will undergo an initial assessment of their literacy and numeracy skills and a screening during the selection process, administered by trained staff. Applicants falling below the Service's entry standard for literacy and numeracy are offered practical exercises and signposted to their local Further Education College or online learning for specific Functional Skills advice and provision. Recruits enter training with a wide range of qualifications or none at all. However, all candidates undertake Basic Skills Initial Assessments to establish their level of literacy and numeracy. The results of these tests are at Table 3a/3b. Entry Level 2 (the level broadly expected of a 7–8 year old) is the basic entry requirement. We assess that Entry Level 3 is required to assimilate training fully and expect all recruits to reach this level before starting Phase 2 training. Candidates must also pass an English Speaking and Listening Test.

The Armed Forces Basic Skills Longitudinal Study—jointly commissioned by BIS and MOD and carried out over 3 years (2008–11) by the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) and the National Research and Development Centre for Adult Literacy and Numeracy (NRDC)—was published 7 June 2012. The executive summary of the report is available at: <http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/further-education-skills/docs/a/12-886-armed-forces-basic-skills-executive-summary>

For the Armed Forces, the term Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD) encompasses: Dyslexia; Meares-Irlen Syndrome; Dyscalculia; and Dyspraxia. Opportunities for SpLD screening and subsequent assessment are available to all within the Armed Forces as early in their career as possible, and delivered by appropriately trained and qualified staff. Those individuals identified with SpLD needs receive appropriate support at the relevant time in their training and careers. There is no mandatory requirement for individuals to inform the

¹ Training, Education, Skills, Recruitment and Resettlement

² Source: DASA National Statistics UK Armed Forces Annual Personnel Report Edition 2012 Released 17 May 2012, points as at 1 April 12

Services of any SpLD and consolidated statistics are not collected. However, comments from each of the Services on their level of support for SpLDs can be found at Table 4.

ACCREDITED TRAINING AND EDUCATION TO ACHIEVE CIVILIAN QUALIFICATIONS

Accreditation is sought for all mandatory education and training as an important component of MOD personnel strategies, since they provide recruiting, developmental, retention and resettlement benefits. Although courses are designed primarily to satisfy the operational requirement, we take account of the potential to accredit the course. For example, the RAF initial officer training course can be used to gain a Level 5 Diploma from the Chartered Management Institute or the Institute of Leadership and Management; it also earns 120 points towards an Open University (OU) undergraduate degree. The RAF Warrant Officer Study Period is accredited with 30 points towards an MBA³ and the RN Physical Training Instructor qualification course is accredited with 120 Level 1 CAT⁴ points towards a foundation degree in Sports Science. In total, more than 37,000 awards at all levels were gained as a result of Service training in academic year 11/12; for full details, see Tables 5a-c. Some accreditation schemes require additional learning beyond the military requirement; this supports the development of general intellectual abilities and enables personnel to contribute more effectively to the organisation, respond better to change and cope better with the novel situations that the dynamic Defence environment presents.

The Armed Forces moved from using Basic Skills awards as accredited measures of literacy and numeracy towards the wholesale adoption of Functional Skills qualifications and provision in September 2012. Functional skills are an integral part of Apprenticeships. The Government response to the Wolf report acknowledged that Apprenticeships are rightly regarded as the best way to learn in work. All Armed Forces Apprenticeships are accredited and linked to national occupational standards across a range of sectors. In academic year 11/12, there were 7,453 Level 2 and 2,676 Level 3 apprenticeship completions.

The RN has a generic policy for non-graduate Naval College entrants to be automatically registered and funded up to foundation degree; the Route to Honours (R2H) is also funded, currently with a funding limit for the R2H of £3,700, although this financial limit is under review. The R2H for all RN in-Service degrees is elective and individuals may choose which institution they go to. However the OU and University of Portsmouth are often chosen because of their expertise in distance learning. Since September 2012, the University of Lincoln has also proved popular with Logisticians. The RAF In Service Degree Scheme was offered to those non-graduate pilots and Weapons Systems Officers who joined the Service before they reached the age of 20. A total of 104 students are registered with 54 actively studying. The scheme is now closed to all new entrants to the RAF and will cease in 2015. In addition, Staffordshire University provides a foundation degree based on the current basic and specialist training for Senior NCO non-commissioned aircrew.

Defence provides post graduate education for some 350 personnel across MOD each year, with around 900 more taking opportunities to obtain qualifications through accreditation of military education and experience. The Advanced Command and Staff Course (ACSC) and the course at the Royal College of Defence Studies (RCDS) provide education and training at Masters Level for officers to develop their professional understanding.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR EDUCATION

Pre Service

The Defence Sixth Form College at Welbeck (DSFC) offers a two-year residential A level course to young men and women who would like, in the future, to enter one of the more technical areas of the three Services or the MOD Civil Service. DSFC provides the preferred entry route to the Defence Technical Undergraduate Scheme (DTUS). Whilst at the College the students remain civilians although Combined Cadet Force attendance is compulsory. Parents/guardians are required to make a contribution to their child's maintenance based on their aggregated residual income. The Defence Technical Officer and Engineer Entry Scheme (DTOEES) encompasses the DSFC Welbeck and the DTUS which are quad-Service schemes. The Universities of Southampton, Newcastle, Loughborough, Aston and Northumbria support DTUS. The DTOEES Annual Report 2012 includes statistics on academic achievement and is available at http://www.da.mod.uk/dtoees/public-documents/20130151-DTOEES_Annual_report_final-U.pdf. The Armed Forces offer financial support to selected recruits to support them in education prior to joining the Services. Sixth Form scholarships and bursaries for undergraduates are available. Cadetships are offered mainly to Medical professionals; details of the financial support schemes are in Table 6.

In Service

The Standard Learning Credit (SLC) scheme, which supplies financial support throughout the Service person's career for multiple, small scale learning activities, is designed to enhance educational or vocational achievement. Personnel may claim 80% of course fees, up to a maximum of £175 per financial year, paid to civilian bodies for certain personal development courses, examinations and support. See Table 7a for SLC Authorised Claims by Service. Expressed as a percentage of combined trained strength for all three Services

³ See Annex A Table 4 Accreditation gained as a result of Service Training

⁴ Credit Accumulation and Transfer.

the take-up of SLC over last five years has averaged at about 9.7% per annum (Table 7b). In addition to the SLC scheme, the Enhanced Learning Credits scheme (ELC) provides help to personnel who qualify to help pay towards the cost of higher-level learning and is funded by the single Services. Eligible personnel make a personal contribution of 20% of the total course fees and can receive a single payment, in each of a maximum of three separate financial years, of up to £1k or £2k (depending on qualifying scheme membership) to cover up to a maximum of 80% of course fees. The ELC scheme helps to motivate full time members of the Armed Forces to pursue their personal development, both during their Service and for up to ten years afterwards, subject to the qualifying criteria being met. Over 310,000 personnel, including those eligible who have left the Armed Forces, have registered with the scheme. Over 62,000 claims, worth about £74.4m, have been authorised to support a wide range of higher level academic and vocational learning; a breakdown by Service, year-by-year is in Table 8. Of those claims: about 32% were used for personal development by personnel with over 2 years left to serve; about 45% were used by personnel in their last two years of service in preparation for resettlement; and approximately 23% were submitted by personnel who had left the Service. Up to 31 October 2012, for the Financial Year 12/13, just over 10,600 claims had been submitted for ELCs worth just over £17.3M.

Resettlement

MOD provides all Armed Forces personnel with access to timely and accurate resettlement information and advice. Resettlement assistance is available on a graduated basis, both in terms of provision and time available, according to length of service. Assistance includes access to employment support or full resettlement services, between 4 and 7 weeks of resettlement time (often used for training courses or civilian work attachments) and a non-taxable grant of £534 for training and education costs. For those leaving with less than 4 years of service (Early Service Leavers (ESL)), support is normally limited to a signposting service immediately prior to discharge, directing individuals to assistance that they may receive from Other Government Departments and to ex-Service welfare and other organisations once they have been discharged. There are two ongoing trials of extended support for ESL. Employment statistics for those leaving the Armed Forces are not broken down by Service. Historically, we know that over 91% of Service leavers that use the Career Transition Partnership service are in full-time employment after 6 months of leaving the Armed Forces⁵. Table 9 shows the number of people leaving the Services each year from 2009 to date. Because military training and education is accredited, individuals are likely to hold civilian qualifications that could assist them in finding civilian employment after they leave the Services. However, the qualifications gained will vary depending on an individual's Service history and the amount of elective education they might have completed. When Service leavers are moving into employment in a new discipline, the qualifications held may not be relevant and specific resettlement training courses may be required.

Post Service HE/FE Support Scheme

From July 2008, the Armed Forces made a commitment for Service Leavers to gain a **first** Level 3 or **first** foundation/undergraduate degree free from tuition fees. MOD contributes any unused ELCs. Additional costs are then paid by BIS or the Devolved Administrations. Claimants must be registered for the ELC scheme and have served 4 years full time service. Medical discharges who have completed Phase 1/2 training may access it earlier than 4 years but must be registered for ELCs. Redundees with less than 4 years of service are not eligible. To date, 520 people have used the scheme; details are in Table 10. The tuition fee free course can be transferred to a spouse or eligible partner in the event of death or medical discharge of the Service member resulting in inability to complete the study. The scheme is available in the resettlement period (2 years prior to discharge) and up to 10 years after but the individual must be resident in UK while studying full or part time. It is open to Foreign & Commonwealth/Gurkha Service leavers if they meet the residence requirement.

CONCLUSION

While the military requirement is paramount and the focus is on training our people for operational capability, the Armed Forces recognise the importance of education and civilian qualifications which offer recruiting, developmental, retention and resettlement benefits. The Services are amongst the largest training providers in the UK, with excellent completion and achievement rates, and the quality of our training and education is highly respected. With support for education ranging from entry level literacy and numeracy to full postgraduate degrees, Service personnel are offered genuine progression routes which allow them to develop, gain qualifications and play a fuller part in society either in the Armed Forces or in the civilian world which awaits them beyond.

ANNEX

A. Tables of Statistics and Supporting Data

March 2013

⁵ Based on a monthly sample taken by the Career Transition Partnership.

Annex A

TABLES OF STATISTICS AND SUPPORTING DATA

Table 1

EXTRACT FROM DASA NATIONAL STATISTICS PUBLICATION: UK ARMED FORCES PERSONNEL REPORT EDITION 2012 RELEASED 17 MAY 2012—UK REGULAR FORCES INTAKE BY SERVICE AND AGE, FINANCIAL YEAR 2011–12

	<i>All Services</i>	<i>Officers Naval Service</i>	<i>Army</i>	<i>Royal Air Force</i>	<i>All Services</i>	<i>Other Ranks Naval Service</i>	<i>Army</i>	<i>Royal Air Force</i>
Total	1,070	280	710	80	13,740	1,940	10,480	1,320
16	-	-	-	-	1,500	10	1,470	10
17	-	-	-	-	1,640	80	1,460	100
18	20	10	20	-	1,700	260	1,250	190
19	30	20	20	-	1,740	290	1,220	220
20	30	10	20	-	1,550	280	1,080	180
21	120	40	80	10	1,190	200	850	140
22	220	50	160	20	950	170	680	100
23	190	50	130	10	780	150	550	80
24	140	40	100	10	670	130	460	80
25 and over	300	70	200	40	2,020	350	1,450	220

Table 2

EXAMPLE MINIMUM ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

<i>Service</i>	<i>Entry Requirements</i>
Army Officer	35 ALIS points (34 for SCEs) from 7 GCSE/SCE subjects, with a minimum grade C/2 in English language, maths and either a science or a foreign language; plus 240 UCAS Tarrif points from at least two A level passes grades A-E or SCE Higher grades A-D.
RAF Officer	Specified GCSEs plus two passes at General Certificate of Education (GCE) A2 Level at Grade C or higher, or; three Scottish Highers at Grade C or above with a minimum value of 160 UCAS points, or; equivalent qualifications. The General Studies and Critical Thinking papers are specifically excluded. However, where a candidate holds a UK degree at grade 2:2 or higher or an acceptable alternative, the A2 Level requirement (or equivalent) is superseded.
Naval Service Rating/Other Rank	Entry into most branches does not require any formal educational qualifications, although all candidates must attain minimum test scores on the Recruiting Test. The following branches require GCSE or equivalents in addition to the Recruiting Test: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communications Technician. - Medical Technician (Radiographer). - Dental Nurse. - Naval Nurse (Student) (and 280 UCAS points). - Aircraft Controller.

Table 3a

NUMERACY: INITIAL ASSESSMENT RESULTS

	<i>RN (2012)</i>	<i>Army (2012)</i>	<i>RAF (Sep 11 to date)</i>
Level 2	314	4446	38.8%
Level 1	726	1464	59.7%
Entry Level 3	73	3489	-
Entry Level 2	-	155	-
Entry Level 1	-	12	-

NOTE:

RAF record Basic Skills Key Builder Maths: 1.5% at Level 3 are not shown.

Table 3b

LITERACY: INITIAL ASSESSMENT RESULTS

	<i>RN (2012)</i>	<i>Army (2012)</i>	<i>RAF (Sep 11 to date)</i>
Level 2	481	1793	37.5%
Level 1	618	4089	62.1%
Entry Level 3	10	3347	-
Entry Level 2	1	286	-
Entry Level 1	-	51	-

NOTE:

RAF record Basic Skills Key Builder English: 0.4% at Level 3 are not shown.

Table 4

COMMENTS ON SPECIFIC LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

<i>Service</i>	<i>Comments</i>
RN	Work is ongoing to develop a culture of declaration during Phase 1 training. For example at HMS RALEIGH new entrants are required to write an essay and complete a learning questionnaire in order to identify risk of SpLD. This has subsequently identified 8.5% undertaking a Dyslexia Adult Screening Tool (DAST) assessment.
Army	The Army does not routinely screen for SpLD as often it has no impact on the individuals ability to carry out their role, so the data below only registers those individual who have sought and been provided with assistance. - In 2012, 205 soldiers had DAST assessments recorded on the Basic Skills Development Managers' database - Directorate of Educational & Training Services (Army) funded 70 Educational Psychologist assessments in 2012, compared to 41 in 2011.
RAF	Since 2000 the RAF has identified 1583 individuals who required funding for Educational Psychologist assistance. The RAF roughly mirrors the civilian population with approximately 1 in 10 of our population having a SpLD. - Approximately 10% of entrants present with undiagnosed SpLDs during the Pre-Recruit Training Course screening process and require a formal diagnosis - A further 10% come with a previous diagnosis of an SpLD and require support with transferring their coping strategies to the RAF environment - More than 90% of those who fail the English Functional Skills exams (particularly the writing element) have an SpLD

Table 5a

ACCREDITATION (EXCLUDING APPRENTICESHIPS) GAINED BY ARMED FORCES PERSONNEL AS A RESULT OF THEIR SERVICE TRAINING

<i>Type of Qualification</i>	<i>FY 2005–06</i>	<i>FY 2006–07</i>	<i>FY 2007–08</i>	<i>FY 2008–09¹</i>	<i>AY 2009–10</i>	<i>AY 2010–11</i>	<i>AY 2011–12</i>
Stand alone NVQ and other L2	10,895	7,592	5,725	9,971	13,282	17,204	11,195
Stand alone NVQ and other L3	1,148	1,758	5,018	6,538	6,813	8,105	7,592
Stand alone NVQ and other L4	418	266	1,225	2,251	2,670	2,519	2,249
HND (L5)	140	238	185				
Foundation Degrees (L5)	541	502	435				3,582
Other L5	337	436	1772	4,517	4,774	5,113	
Honours Degrees (L6)	81	185	146				915
Other L6	-	27	123	1,163	543	779	
Postgrad Degrees/Diploma and Higher Degrees	136	168	353	983	596	218	1,578

NOTE:

1. The format for the collection of Accreditation Statistics was simplified for FY 2008–09 to show levels of accreditation only.

2. From 2009–10 Stats were collected by the Academic Year (1 Aug–31 Jul).

Table 5b

ARMED FORCES APPRENTICESHIP FIGURES BY YEAR

<i>Qualification</i>	<i>FY</i> <i>2005–06</i>	<i>FY</i> <i>2006–07</i>	<i>FY</i> <i>2007–08</i>	<i>FY</i> <i>2008–09¹</i>	<i>AY</i> <i>2009–10²</i>	<i>AY2010–</i> <i>11</i>	<i>AY 2011–</i> <i>12</i>
Military Apprenticeships (L2 & 3)	8,015	7,299	6,670	L2 7,977 L3 1,570	L2 9,874 L3 2,065	L2 9,836 L3 2,173	L2 7,453 L3 2,676

Notes:

1. The format for the collection of Accreditation Statistics was simplified for FY 2008–09 to show levels of accreditation only.

2. Apprenticeship Stats were collected for the Academic Year (1 Aug–31 Jul) to meet SFA reporting requirements.

Table 5c

APPRENTICESHIP COMPLETIONS BY SECTOR SKILLS AREAS: 1 AUG 11–31 JUL 12

<i>SECTOR</i> <i>SKILLS AREA</i>	<i>RN</i>	<i>Apprenticeships</i>			<i>Advanced Apprenticeships</i>			
		<i>ARMY</i>	<i>RAF</i>	<i>TOTALS</i>	<i>RN</i>	<i>ARMY</i>	<i>RAF</i>	<i>TOTALS</i>
Agriculture (includes animal care)		193		193		3		3
Business Administration and Law	36		35	71		62		62
Construction	36		36					
Engineering (including ICT)	1,031	2,041	125	3,197	284	1,076	641	2,001
Health, Public Services and Social Care	1,042	743	188	1,973	55	1		56
Hospitality (including catering and food services)			39	39				
Management and Professional							14	14
Retailing and Customer Services	73	1,494		1,567		540		540
Transportation (including warehousing and storage)			377	377				
Totals	2,182	4,507	764	7,453	339	1,682	655	2,676

Table 6
PRE JOINING SPONSORSHIP SCHEMES

<i>SCHEME</i>	<i>RN</i>	<i>ARMY</i>	<i>RAF</i>
Defence Technical Officer and Engineer Entry Scheme (DTOEES)	DTEES encompasses the Defence Sixth Form College (DSFC), Welbeck and the Defence Technical Undergraduate Schemes (DTUS) which are quad-Service Schemes.		
Defence Sixth Form College (DSFC)	Welbeck DSFC offers a two-year residential A level course to young men and women who would like, in the future, to enter one of the more technical areas of the three Services or the MOD Civil Service. DSFC provides the preferred entry route to the DTUS. Whilst at the College the students remain civilians. Parents/guardians are required to make a contribution to their child's maintenance based on their aggregated residual income. CCF at Welbeck is compulsory.		
Target entry: RN—30 Army—100 RAF—30 MOD CS -10	The primary aim for RN students at Welbeck is to study technical A-levels in preparation to undertake an engineering degree, normally at one of the DTUS Universities, before joining BRNC as Engineer Officers.	Of those destined for the Army, most Welbexians will be commissioned into: - Royal Engineers. - Royal Signals. - Royal Logistic Corps. - Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers.	RAF entrants are targeted as potential Engineering Officers for both Aero-Systems (AS) and Communications Engineers (CE) and also, from the 2010 intake to DSFC, for Logistics Officers.
Defence Technical Undergraduate Scheme (DTUS) £4000 pa and up to £1500 pa for military activities undertaken Southampton, Newcastle, Loughborough, Aston and Northumbria.	The University of Southampton is the preferred (but not mandatory) choice for the RN.	Potential officers leaving DSFC will proceed direct to DTUS to read for a science, engineering or management degree. A small number of DTUS Bursaries are now available to direct entrants to the scheme. The application process is similar to that for Army Bursaries, but all successful applicants will be restricted to service in one of the 4 technical corps on commissioning.	On completing DSFC, students move on to a university participating in the DTUS to complete their degree before entering Initial Officer Training. In certain years, places for Direct Entrants to DTUS will arise and these will be filled by applicants for university sponsorship on an annual basis through competition, with the proviso that they intend to study at a university within the DTUS.
Sixth Form Scholarship 6 FS/Scholarship Payment allocated on a sS basis. RN- £1500 pa with a bonus of £1500 for those who join as Naval College Entrants Army-£1500pa for 2 years RAF—£1000 in Yr 13	The Scholarship and Reserved Place Scheme is for young people who wish to join the RN/RM as Officers. It is open to those who are about to take GCSE or SCE Ordinary/Standard Grade examinations, and are intending to study for A levels, Higher Grade, Certificate of Sixth Year Studies or other equivalents. The parents/guardians of those awarded a Scholarship will receive an award towards the cost of keeping their child at school or college in order to qualify for entry to the RN/RM (or university if 'E' branch). Parents/guardians of those awarded a Reserved Place only, will receive no financial assistance.	The Army Sixth Form Scholarship exists to encourage young people to commit themselves, at an early age, to a career in the Army. The award of a Scholarship provides the candidate with an AOSB pass which is valid for 7 years. The scholarship application is normally made in either the GCSE year or in the term immediately following the examination.	The RAF holds an annual national competition for RAF Scholarships to attract high quality candidates into the Service. The Scholarship is awarded for Year 13 of study and is available to applicants who wish to be considered for Direct Entry into the Service on completion of their A levels. The Scholarship is currently available for the following branches: Pilot, ATC, ABM, Intelligence and Logistics. Applicants undergo the full selection process for RAF officer and successful scholars attend a 5-days Adventure Training and Preparation for IOT package prior to joining the Service on satisfactory completion of their A levels. The scholarship award is £1000.

SCHEME	RN	ARMY	RAF
<p>Bursary Payment allocated on a sS basis.</p> <p>RN- £1,500 pa for non engineering officers. £4,000 pa for Engineering Officers.</p> <p>Army-£10,000pa for 3 years plus £3,000 on commissioning from RMAS</p> <p>RAF—£6000</p>	<p>Candidates who do not wish to join the Service before starting a first degree course at a UK university may apply for Bursary sponsorship at any time before the start of their final year (engineers may apply at any stage before graduation). Bursars remain civilians whilst reading for their degrees, but are required to join the Service after graduation on an Initial Commission. Acquaint courses are held during vacations and bursars are expected to participate. A bursary is normally awarded for 3 years, but may be awarded for up to 5 years if there are bona fide reasons for attending a course of this length (eg MEng at a Scottish university).</p>	<p>The bursary scheme is for undergraduates who wish to commit themselves to the minimum of a three-year SSC (8yr for AAC) after graduation and successful completion of the Commissioning Course at RMAS. The Army provides financial support and opportunities for paid training which supplement the normal education authority grant and other sources of student income. Bursary holders are required to join the University Officer Training Corps and carry out such part time training as required by the CO.</p>	<p>Bursaries take the form of cash awards and are available to support candidates through all or part of a qualifying undergraduate degree. For the UAS BS, the maximum bursary payable is £6,000, with no cash award in year 1 and the remaining years having equal payments. Therefore, for a 3 year degree the payments will be £3,000 in years 2 and 3, and for a 4 year degree, the payments will be £2,000 in years 2, 3 and 4. This sponsorship is for a first degree only, however, in the case of Medical and Dental Branches, bursaries may be available for subsequent degrees where the 1st degree has not already been sponsored by MoD. The bursary is paid at the beginning of the academic year, but only after OASC has been informed that the previous year's study, for other than first year Bursars, has been successfully completed. Bursary availability is determined by the recruiting need for each Branch against the latest Manning Plan.</p>
<p>Cadetship Payment allocated on a sS basis.</p> <p>RN- £14983 on appointment</p> <p>Army-£14,983 on appointment rising to £18,671 after two years, with Lieutenants (PRMP) on appointment starting at £40,728, with Captains on appointment £53,803 and Majors (GP) on appointment £96,262.</p> <p>Return of service is 6 years</p> <p>RAF—£14983 on appointment</p>	<p>Medical and Dental students are eligible for cadetships which generate a current annual salary of £13k with tuition fees paid and additional academic support. The cadetships are available to those in their final 3 years of study.</p>	<p>A special Cadetship (but not a bursary) scheme applies to potential officer applicants for RAMC, RADC, QARANC and Lawyers. Bursaries are also available for potential Pharmacists and Nurses. Veterinary students may apply for a bursary but the award does not guarantee a commission in RAVC.</p>	<p>University Cadetships are only available for the Medical and Dental Branches. For Medical Bursars, the first 3 years at Medical School will be under the same terms and conditions as for all UAS BS Bursars ie no payment is made in year 1 and the £6,000 bursary is then paid in equal amounts of £3,000 in years 2 and 3. However, the Dental Bursary of £4,000 is payable in years 1 and 2. Progress to the Dental Cadetship in year 3 or the Medical Cadetship in year 4 is determined by a specialist interview with senior officers of the relevant branch. If successful, candidates are commissioned as plt offs for their final years at university. University tuition fees, a £50 book allowance, graduation fees and professional registration fees are paid for all Cadets.</p>
REPAYMENT	Candidates awarded bursaries will be required to	Candidates awarded bursaries will be required	If the scholar is subsequently awarded a university bursary,

<i>SCHEME</i>	<i>RN</i>	<i>ARMY</i>	<i>RAF</i>
	sign an undertaking that they will refund to the MOD the bursary payment if they fail to complete their studies, fail to report for duty, or leave the RN/RM before the expiration of a period of three years from completion of their specialist training.	to sign an undertaking that they will refund to the MOD the bursary payment if they do not serve for 3 years after the end of their Commissioning Course at RMAS.	the scholar (or parent if the scholar is under the age of 18) will be required to give an additional financial undertaking to repay all of their sponsorship monies if, without good cause, they fail to graduate or subsequently fail to serve in the RAF for a period of 3 years productive service.

Table 7a

STANDARD LEARNING CREDIT SCHEME AUTHORISED CLAIMS BY SERVICE

<i>FY</i>	<i>Service</i>	<i>No of Claims Authorised</i>	<i>Amount Spent £m</i>	<i>Totals</i>
2007–08	RN	2,265	0.329	20012 claims
	Army	13,167	1.251	£2.267m
	RAF	4,580	0.687	
2008–09	RN	1,755	0.250	17964 claims
	Army	13,533	1.737	£2.388m
	RAF	2,676	0.401	
2009–10	RN	1,807	0.256	18579 claims
	Army	14,663	2.241	£2.841m
	RAF	2,155	0.344	
2010–11	RN	2,276	0.314	121010 claims
	Army	6,447	0.862	£1.607m
	RAF	3,178	0.488	
2011–12	RN	2,729	0.366	14049 claims
	Army	7,793	1.069	£1.945m
	RAF	3,527	0.510	

Table 7b

TAKE UP OF STANDARD LEARNING CREDIT SCHEME AS A PERCENTAGE OF TRAINED STRENGTH

<i>FY</i>	<i>ROYAL NAVY</i>			<i>ARMY</i>			<i>ROYAL AIR FORCE</i>			<i>TOTAL</i>		
	<i>Claims</i>	<i>Strength</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Claims</i>	<i>Strength</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Claims</i>	<i>Strength</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Claims</i>	<i>Strength</i>	<i>%</i>
FY 07/08	2,265	34,570	6.6	13,167	94,120	14.0	4,580	40,540	11.3	20,012	169,210	11.8
FY 08/09	1,755	34,310	5.1	13,533	94,130	14.4	2,676	39,280	6.8	17,964	167,720	10.7
FY 09/10	1,807	34,780	5.2	14,663	97,210	15.1	2,155	39,640	5.3	18,579	171,630	10.8
FY 10/11	2,276	35,250	6.50	6,447	97,730	6.6	3,178	40,290	7.9	11,901	173,270	6.9
FY 11/12	2,729	34,320	7.9	7,793	95,780	8.1	3,527	38,920	9.1	14,049	169,020	8.3

Table 8

ENHANCED LEARNING CREDIT TAKE UP BY SERVICE

<i>FY</i>	<i>Service</i>	<i>No of Registrations</i>	<i>No of Claims Authorised</i>	<i>Amount Spent £m</i>	<i>Totals</i>
2007–08	RN	2,987	1,255	1.112	13,881 registrations, 6,503 claims £5.687m
	Army	9,124	3,316	2.978	
	RAF	1,770	1,932	1.595	

<i>FY</i>	<i>Service</i>	<i>No of Registrations</i>	<i>No of Claims Authorised</i>	<i>Amount Spent £m</i>	<i>Totals</i>
2008–09	RN	3,721	1,677	2.258	16,048 registrations, 7,854 claims £10.083m
	Army	9,374	3,882	4.980	
	RAF	2,953	2,295	2.845	
2009–10	RN	4,127	1,663	2.324	18,262 registrations, 7,476 claims £9.978m
	Army	1,1633	3,825	5.158	
	RAF	2,502	1,988	2.497	
2010–11	RN	2,715	2,115	3.006	13,550 registrations, 10,389 claims £14.651m
	Army	8,913	5,347	7.631	
	RAF	1,922	2,927	4.014	
2011–12	RN	3,006	2,970	4.467	19,254 registrations, 14,468 claims £21.461m
	Army	14,286	7,630	11.284	
	RAF	1,962	3,328	5.709	

Table 9

ANNUAL OUTFLOW AND USE OF CAREER TRANSITION PARTNERSHIP

<i>FY</i>	<i>OUTFLOW (Including Redundees where applicable)⁶</i>	<i>REDUNDEES⁷</i>	<i>USED CTP SERVICE⁸</i>
2009–10	18,270	N/A	9,883
2010–11	18,140	N/A	11,380
2011–12	21,370	1,773 ⁹	14,863
2012–13	18,470 (to date)	3,832 ¹⁰	11,829 (to date)

Table 10

FE/HE ANNUAL TAKE UP BY SERVICE

<i>FY</i>	<i>Service</i>	<i>No of Claims Authorised</i>	<i>Amount Spent £m</i>	<i>Totals</i>
2009–10	RN	21	0.028	76 claims: £0.097m
	Army	43	0.059	
	RAF	12	0.010	
2010–11	RN	28	0.032	153 claims: £0.186m
	Army	88	0.119	
	RAF	37	0.035	
2011–12	RN	64	0.114	291 claims: £0.463m
	Army	160	0.274	
	RAF	67	0.075	

Further written evidence from the Ministry of Defence

FOLLOW-UP TO ORAL EVIDENCE SESSIONS

1. FUNCTIONAL SKILLS

New Functional Skills qualifications were introduced by the Government in September 2010 and these replaced “Key Skills” within apprenticeships over the period April 2011 to March 2013. During 2012, this new contextualised approach was adopted across the Armed Forces (in apprenticeships and replacing “Skills for Life”) and there have been no registrations for Basic Skills literacy or numeracy qualifications since September 2012. The Services’ adoption of Functional Skills reinforces the importance of learning in context and developing transferable skills.

⁶ Source: DASA website <http://www.dasa.mod.uk/>

⁷ Source: MOD Top Level Messages.

⁸ Source: CTP.

⁹ Tranche 1 Applicants.

¹⁰ 1,087 Tranche 1 non-applicants and 2,736 Tranche 2 applicants.

2. POLICY OF RECRUITING U18s

The minimum age for entry into the UK Armed Forces reflects the normal school leaving age of 16¹¹. Evidence of age is required, and formal written consent is required from the parents of those under 18. There is no compulsory recruitment into the UK Armed Forces, and personnel under 18 have a statutory right to discharge from the Armed Forces if they wish to leave. There is no intention to change this policy, which is compliant with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. We believe that our policies on under 18s in Service are robust and comply with national and international law. In addition to the comprehensive welfare system that is in place for all Service personnel, we remain fully committed to meeting our obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, and have taken steps to bestow special safeguards on young people under the age of 18. We take pride in the fact that our Armed Forces provide challenging and constructive education, training and employment opportunities for young people and that the Armed Forces remain the UK's largest apprenticeship provider, equipping young people with valuable and transferable skills.

The numbers of U18s entering each Service are recorded in Defence Statistics' *National Statistics Publication*. In 2011–12, 90 U18s entered the Naval Service, 2,930 joined the Army and 110 enlisted in the RAF. There is evidence that those joining at a younger age remain in service for longer and that Army Foundation College, Harrogate (AFC(H)) cohorts were more likely to have continued in Service than those trained under Standard Entry (SE); Tables 1 and 2 at Annex A detail age on entry and LoS. For cohorts who joined the Army in 2001–04 and were still on strength in January 2010, those trained at AFC(H) were slightly more likely to have achieved the rank of LCpl/Cpl. Details are in Table 3 but, of note, 23% of the 2001 cohort from AFC(H) had achieved the rank of LCpl/Cpl/Sgt while only 16% of their SE counterparts had done so.

The Naval Service and RAF do not make a distinction in the training provided to U18s and over 18s (O18) so costs are the same. For the Army, the initial training provided for a Junior Entrant (JE) was changed in 2000 and again post SDSR, when all JE training was moved to AFC(H). Phase 1 training wastage is now comparable between SE and JE when JE(Short) and JE(Long) are taken together (approx 24%) and the costs per *successful* Phase 1 trainee (less SE Infantry who complete a combined Phase 1/Phase 2 course) were as follows:

- JE (Long). 50 week course costing £69k (U18s only).
- JE (Short). 23 week course costing £32k (U18s only).
- SE (non-Infantry). 14 week course costing between £20K and £24K depending on location (both U18s and O18s).

A full VfM case for the additional costs involved in conducting Phase 1 training at AFC(H) cannot be made until 2024 when the first cohorts who joined the new college will have completed their maximum engagement length. Were U18 recruiting to be stopped, yearly inflow would need to be substantially increased. There would need to be a significant financial incentive to make good the shortfall of c30% of the total intake to the Army were JE to be curtailed. A sophisticated and bespoke costing model would be required to fully expose the VfM of recruiting U18s.

3. FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR EDUCATION IN THE ARMED FORCES

The *Standard Learning Credit* (SLC) scheme, which supplies financial support, throughout the Service person's career, for multiple, small scale learning activities, is designed to enhance educational or vocational achievement. Under the SLC scheme personnel may claim 80% of course fees, up to a maximum of £175 per financial year, paid to civilian bodies for certain personal development courses, examinations and support.

Complementing the SLC scheme, there is the *Enhanced Learning Credit* scheme (ELC) providing help to personnel who qualify with a single payment, in each of a maximum of three separate financial years, offering to pay 80% of the fees up to a maximum £1k or £2k (depending on qualifying scheme membership of either 4 or 8 years' service) to help pay towards the cost of higher-level learning. The ELC scheme helps to motivate full time members of the Armed Forces to pursue their higher level personal development, both during their Service and for up to ten years afterwards, subject to the qualifying criteria being met.

An *Individual Resettlement Training Costs* (IRTC) grant is payable to Service Leavers (SL) with more than 6 years service to help towards the cost of resettlement training. A full refund for fees paid (up to a maximum of £534) may be claimed. IRTC may be claimed at any time in the last two years of service but normally in the last 9 months.

The *Further Education/Higher Education Support Scheme* provides eligible SL who have four years full-time service with fully subsidised tuition fees for a first full Level 3 or a first HE qualification, including foundation or full undergraduate degrees. SL must be registered for the ELC scheme. MOD pays a contribution

¹¹ The Education and Skills Act 2008 means that all young people who have ceased to be of compulsory school age, not reached the age of 18 and not attained a Level 3 qualification will be required by law to continue in education or training to the end of the academic year in which they turn 17 from 2013 and until at least their 18 birthday from 2015. They will be able to choose: full time education; work based learning, e.g. an apprenticeship; or, part time training alongside work or volunteering. The school leaving age will remain 16.

per claim if any unused ELC credits remain, with BIS or the devolved administrations contributing the balance of the course fees:

Example A. Pte Active joins the Army and registers with the ELC scheme during initial training. Each year, she completes elective learning and claims her SLC refunds for 80% of the course costs. After 3½ years, she leaves the Army. Maximum payments: 3 x £175 = **£525**

Example B. Leading Hand Bright registered with the ELC scheme on enlistment in the Royal Navy. During his five years of service, he claimed SLCs each year. On leaving the service, he goes to university and has his tuition fees (in this example, £9k per year) paid by the FE/HE Support Scheme, using all three unclaimed Tier 1 ELC claims. Maximum payments: 5 x £175 plus 3 x £9k = **£27,875**

Example C. Cpl Clever was always interested in learning so registered for ELCs when he joined the RAF. He took a number of GCSEs and A Levels using SLCs and, after five years, started a part time HND using one of his three ELCs. He stopped studying due to pressure of work and retired from the RAF at the 8 year point, after doing a resettlement course in finance. Later, he returned to studying and began a degree using the remainder of his ELCs. Total payments: 8 x £175 plus £1k plus £534 plus 2 x £2k = **£6,934**

4. OFSTED INSPECTIONS

MOD commissions Ofsted to inspect the care and welfare of Armed Forces initial training establishments. These cover outcomes for recruits and trainees as well as the quality of teaching and learning but they are separate from Ofsted's regular inspections of BIS-funded education and training delivered within the Ministry of Defence. In 2010/11, 11 establishments were inspected and 10 were visited in 2011/12. The grades awarded are shown in Table 4.

5. EXAMINATIONS AND QUALIFICATIONS

The Services reported completion of civilian exams on board ships or in deployed location for FY 12/13, as shown in Table 5. Candidates who are registered through the Defence Exam Centre are able to change the location where they sit exams if they are relocated as a result of service obligations.

Table 6 shows the qualifications (excluding apprenticeships) gained by Armed Forces personnel as a result of their Service training. Higher qualifications are taken to be those at Level 5 or higher on the Qualifications and Credit Framework and a total per annum is shown.

6. ACCREDITATION—RESERVES AND MILITARY MEDIC TRAINING

Reserves

The Future Reserves 2020 (FR20) Green Paper articulated the MOD's intent to "develop mutual benefit through reward, incentives and skills development". Accreditation is one of the ways in which the skills part of that intent is being delivered. An accreditation project will support the Reserve "offer" to individuals and employers by improving the accreditation of training, skills and experience gained through Reserve service. In addition to the potential to directly support recruiting, the outcome may indirectly influence employers' perceptions of Reservists and the enhanced commercial and operational utility that employing reservists with accredited skills may offer. Terms of Reference for the FR20 accreditation project are at Annex B.

Paramedic qualifications

MOD's efforts in accreditation for military medics are focused on training medics that meet the future needs of Defence, as well as developing skills that could be harnessed by the NHS, particularly when individuals leave military service. Three associated pilot programmes are either in place or being considered.

For new trainees, a "Defence Medic" course, currently being scoped, would close the gap between basic military medic training and what is required to work in civilian ambulances. Military training does not cover certain areas (eg children and old people which represent significant vulnerable groups for ambulance services but are not found in the military) so the training is not accredited to the Level 3/Level 4 awards required for employment as Emergency Medical Technicians or Emergency Care Assistants. If approved, the intent is to deliver a tri-Service pilot course commencing September 2014. This would have an annual training requirement of approximately 470 students. It is intended that for selected students, this training will allow clearer access to the paramedical practice training pathway by means of a foundation degree.

We are also looking at professional recognition for existing military medics, starting with the Army. A number of Army medics have already completed a pilot project to take Combat Medical Technicians up to the Level 4 award in Pre-hospital Emergency Care. Thirty of these medics have been selected for a further pilot course with Cumbria University and the Yorkshire Ambulance Service to attain the Level 5 Foundation degree in paramedic practice. When the pilot course completes, the intent is to expand the numbers and provide placements with ambulance trusts in a wider range of locations within 50 miles of a medic's military base. West Midlands and East of England Ambulance Trusts have each expressed an interest in participating by

providing placements, although we will seek to coordinate these arrangements through the Association of Ambulance Chief Executives.

7. QUALIFICATIONS AND LEVELS OF COGNITION REQUIRED FOR OFFICERS

There is no requirement for non-specialist officers to have degrees before entry into officer training, nor is the award of a degree a prerequisite for selection for promotion. However, all Services accept a high proportion of graduates and acknowledge there is a requirement to develop an individual's intellectual capacity during a Service career. The RN has conducted a number of studies which broadly suggest that officers are required to operate at graduate level (regardless of qualification). Service comments on the qualifications and levels of cognition for officers are in Table 7.

The Army has completed some analysis on the cognition levels required of its officers. Analysis of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)¹² showed that all officers operate in roles that require them to demonstrate the intellectual qualities associated with degree level education or higher. Recent experience and studies¹³ also indicated a requirement for all officers to have cognitive skills associated with Levels 4—6. If the current generic officer Operational Performance Statement is mapped to FHEQ levels it also confirms the Army's extant requirement for its officers in their first appointment to operate at least at Level 4 in the following areas: competence in communication, decision-making, knowledge, critical analysis and understanding.

There is evidence that graduates generally perform better than non-graduates once recruited into the Army, particularly when the application of intellectual agility is compared. This evidence is clearest at RMAS, but becomes less easy to discern further into service, although is apparent once again at ICSC(L)¹⁴. On average graduates fared better on ICSC (L) than non-graduates in the formal assessments. Non-graduates did achieve better results in 2 areas of the assessment, both of which are independent study in their own time, perhaps reflecting diligence more than the application of an agile intellect under pressure. The graduates performed much better in the informal assessment on ICSC(L), with significant differences in both effective intelligence and written communication, reinforcing the supposition that the agile application of intellect is where the graduate outpaces those who haven't had the benefit of HE.

The Defence Training Board commissioned a review of the requirements and Service need for higher level education for senior military personnel (taken to be OF5, ie RN captain, colonel or group captain and above) within Defence. The Terms of Reference for this review are at Annex C.

Annex A

TABLES OF STATISTICS AND SUPPORTING DATA¹⁵

Table 1

EXITS AND LENGTH OF SERVICE BY AGE ON ENTRY (FY 09/10, 10/11 and 11/12)

	<i>17y6m or under</i>		<i>More than 17y6m</i>		<i>Remarks</i>
	<i>Exits</i>	<i>Mean LoS</i>	<i>Exits</i>	<i>Mean LoS</i>	
Naval Service	2,480	17.6	9,290	10.3	There are considerable differences in LoS by capbadge.
Army ⁶	11,630	9.9	21,010	6.9	
RAF	1,950	22.7	8,930	16.1	

Table 2

NUMBERS STILL ON REGULAR ARMY¹⁶ STRENGTH AT EACH 1 JANUARY POINT AFTER ENTRY (ALL SOLDIER INTAKES FROM JULY 2001 TO SEPTEMBER 2004)

<i>Entry Type</i>	<i>Intake Cohort</i>	<i>Year 1</i>	<i>Year 2</i>	<i>Year 3</i>	<i>Year 4</i>	<i>Year 5</i>	<i>Year 6</i>
Total	19,820	78.9%	63.4%	56.8%	52.1%	44.2%	35.9%
AFC(H)	4,250	86.1%	70.6%	61.4%	56.2%	51.6%	44.0%
JE Other	2,030	75.7%	58.9%	50.0%	45.6%	41.4%	34.4%
SE	13,540	77.1%	61.8%	56.3%	51.7%	42.3%	33.6%

¹² The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (August 2008).

¹³ Future Character of Conflict, New Employment Model, Army 2020 and Ex AGILE WARRIOR.

¹⁴ Intermediate Command and Staff Course (Land), usually completed on promotion to major.

¹⁵ For all tables, where rounding has been used, totals and sub-totals have been rounded separately and so may not equal the sums of their rounded parts. When rounding to the nearest 10, numbers ending in "5" have been rounded to the nearest multiple of 20 to prevent systematic bias. The symbol (~) represents fewer than 5 and (-) means zero or equal to zero.

¹⁶ Figures are for UK Regular Forces (including both Trained and Untrained personnel), and therefore exclude Gurkhas, Full Time Reserve Service personnel and mobilised reservists.

Table 3

NUMBERS STILL ON REGULAR ARMY⁶ STRENGTH IN JANUARY 2010 BY SUBSTANTIVE RANK ACHIEVED

<i>Intake still on strength by substantive Rank</i>	<i>Entry Type</i>							
	<i>All</i>		<i>AFC(H)</i>		<i>JE</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>SE</i>	
2001 Initial Intake Still on Regular Trained Strength January 2010								
All	3,400	100.0%	850	100.0%	400	100.0%	2,160	100.0%
Pte	840	24.6%	240	28.3%	100	25.4%	490	23.0%
LCpl	230	6.8%	40	5.3%	40	8.8%	150	7.0%
Cpl	340	10.0%	110	12.7%	50	11.6%	190	8.7%
Sgt	260	7.7%	90	10.3%	20	5.0%	150	7.1%
2002 Initial Intake Still on Regular Trained Strength January 2010								
All	6,320	100.0%	1,320	100.0%	550	100.0%	4,451	100.0%
Pte	1,650	26.2%	380	28.6%	120	21.6%	1,160	26.0%
LCpl	540	8.6%	120	9.3%	50	9.6%	370	8.3%
Cpl	700	11.2%	170	12.9%	50	9.1%	480	10.9%
Sgt	390	6.2%	80	6.4%	20	2.9%	290	6.6%
Lt	10	0.1%	-	-	-	-	10	0.2%
2003 Initial Intake Still on Regular Trained Strength January 2010								
All	6,460	100.0%	1,161	100.0%	660	100.0%	4,640	100.0%
Pte	1,950	30.1%	370	32.2%	170	26.2%	1,400	30.2%
LCpl	860	13.4%	160	13.7%	100	14.4%	610	13.1%
Cpl	800	12.4%	170	14.6%	60	9.5%	570	12.3%
Sgt	280	4.3%	40	3.8%	20	2.3%	220	4.7%
Lt	~	~	-	-	-	-	~	~
2004 Initial Intake Still on Regular Trained Strength January 2010								
All	3,650	100.0%	920	100.0%	430	100.0%	2,300	100.0%
Pte	1,340	36.7%	400	43.7%	150	34.7%	790	34.3%
LCpl	720	19.7%	210	22.8%	90	22.0%	410	18.0%
Cpl	530	14.5%	180	19.4%	40	10.5%	300	13.3%
Sgt	90	2.5%	10	1.5%	10	2.1%	70	3.0%
Lt	~	~	-	-	-	-	~	~
Capt	~	~	-	-	-	-	~	~
Total	3,650	100.0%	920	100.0%	430	100.0%	2,300	100.0%

Table 4

OFSTED GRADINGS FOR DEFENCE TRAINING ESTABLISHMENTS		
	2010–2011	2011–2012
Outstanding	HMS Sultan	HMS Raleigh Officer and Air Training Unit, RAF College Cranwell
Good	Army Training Regiment, Bassingbourne Army Training Regiment, Winchester Army Training Centre, Pirbright Defence College of Policing and Guarding	Royal Armoured Corps Training Regiment, Bovington 14th Regt Royal Artillery, 24 (Irish) Battery 2 (Training) Regiment, Army Air Corps 3 RSME Regt, Royal School of Military Engineering RAF Honnington RAF Cosford
Satisfactory	Infantry Training Centre, Catterick 25 Training Regiment, Royal Logistic Corps (RLC) Royal Military Academy Sandhurst RAF Halton RAF Honnington 11 Sig Regt, Blandford	Infantry Training Centre, Catterick Defence Medical Services Training Centre
Unsatisfactory	Nil	Nil

Table 5

CIVILIAN EXAMINATIONS TAKEN BY SERVICE PERSONNEL ON BOARD RN SHIPS OR IN DEPLOYED LOCATIONS (FY12/13)

	<i>Basic Skills Literacy/ Numeracy (L1 or L2)</i>	<i>Functional Skills: English/ Maths (L1 or L2)</i>	<i>GCSE</i>	<i>A Level</i>	<i>OU Exam</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
Naval Service	440	50	160	~	Not known	
Army	2130		10	~	40	JTEC, Camp Bastion, Afghanistan ¹⁷
RAF	Data not held but the Defence Exam Centre routinely transfers approx 5 papers per GCSE exam period (10 per annum) from home stations to Falkland Islands, Kandahar or Camp Bastion					
Total	2620		170	10	40	Excludes RAF

Table 6

QUALIFICATIONS (EXCLUDING APPRENTICESHIPS) GAINED BY ARMED FORCES PERSONNEL AS A RESULT OF THEIR SERVICE TRAINING¹⁸

<i>Type of Qualification</i>	<i>FY 2005–06</i>	<i>FY 2006–07</i>	<i>FY 2007–08</i>	<i>FY 2008–09¹</i>	<i>FY 2009–10</i>	<i>AY 2010–11</i>	<i>AY 2011–12</i>
Stand alone NVQ and other L2	10,895	7,592	5,725	9,971	13,282	17,204	11,195
Stand alone NVQ and other L3	1,148	1,758	5,018	6,538	6,813	8,105	7,592
Stand alone NVQ and other L4	418	266	1,225	2,251	2,670	2,519	2,249
HND (L5)	140	238	185				
Foundation Degrees (L5)	541	502	435				3,582
Other L5	337	436	1772	4,517	4,774	5,113	
Honours Degrees (L6)	81	185	146				915
Other L6	-	27	123	1,163	543	779	

¹⁷ May include members of the RN, RM or RAF.

¹⁸ Figures not rounded.

<i>Type of Qualification</i>	<i>FY 2005–06</i>	<i>FY 2006–07</i>	<i>FY 2007–08</i>	<i>FY 2008–09¹</i>	<i>AY 2009–10</i>	<i>AY 2010–11</i>	<i>AY 2011–12</i>
Postgrad Degrees/Diploma and Higher Degrees	136	168	353	983	596	218	1,578
Total number of higher qualifications (L5 and above)	1,235	1,556	3,014	6,663	5,913	6,110	6,075

NOTES:

1. The format for the collection of Accreditation Statistics was simplified for FY 2008–09 to show levels of accreditation only.
2. From 2009–10 Stats were collected by the Academic Year (1 Aug—31 Jul).

Table 7

SERVICE COMMENTS ON THE QUALIFICATIONS AND COGNITION LEVELS REQUIRED OF OFFICERS

<i>Service</i>	<i>Detail (b) (a)</i>	<i>Comment (c)</i>
Naval Service	The majority of officers commissioning into the Naval Service (both RN & RM) are graduates. Non Graduate, Direct Entry RN Officers can access a number of fully funded degree programmes dependent on the branch (these may require them to undertake additional study in their own time), a similar scheme is being developed for the RM. There are a number of opportunities available for officers to undertake funded post graduate studies on a full and part time basis, individuals are selected with care for these places to ensure that the investment represents value for money to the service.	
Army	85% of RMAF officer cadets are graduates. As senior captains, officers complete 3 x week-long, Masters level courses in Military Analysis and on promotion to major, the ICSC(L) ¹⁹ is also at Masters level. Up to 6 officers per annum have the opportunity to complete an MPhil.	Details of qualifications held by senior officers are not available
RAF	Approximately 65% of officers commissioned in the RAF are graduates. The importance of HE in developing intellectual capacity as part of wider human capability is understood and the RAF offers a limited number of opportunities for postgraduate study each year. There are no requirements to hold qualifications to be selected for promotion.	Details of qualifications held by RAF officers are not recorded
Joint	The Advanced Command and Staff Course (attended by OF4s) and the Royal College of Defence Studies course both incorporate MAs from King's College, London.	

Annex B

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR FR20 ACCREDITATION PROJECT

OVERVIEW

The project requires single Services to identify what Reserve training they could accredit, at what cost, in the following groupings:

- Phase 1 and Generic training (Command, Leadership & Management, First Aid, etc).
- Phase 2 and 3 specialist trade and career training (equipment or role related).

TIMESCALE

- March to June 2013: Scope and cost options.
- Jul to September 2013: Refine proposals.
- October 2013: FR20 Programme Board—Consider proposals & confirm.
- November 2013: Implementation by the single Services.

¹⁹ Intermediate Command and Staff Course (Land).

ENDSTATE

The project end-state will be a clearly articulated and defined reserve accreditation proposition.

Annex C

A REVIEW OF THE EDUCATION²⁰ AND TRAINING OF SENIOR MILITARY OFFICERS (SMO):

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Over the next 5 years, it is predicted that the number of SMO at OF5 and above (c1600) serving in the Armed Forces will reduce by at least 10%²¹. Individual Services employ and manage their SMO in different ways. For example the Army categorises appointments in career fields (eg Combat, Defence Policy, Technical, Logistics, Human Resources) and the RAF has introduced a model based on mainstream and executive stream SMO. These Service differences lead to separate approaches to training and education (T&E) requirements, listed in individual job specifications and agreed between employing officers and Defence/Service Secretaries.

2. Historically, T&E of SMO has been delivered through centralised and hierarchical Defence courses including: the one year academic course at the Royal College of Defence Studies, based at Seaford House in Central London; the 15 week Higher Command and Staff Course at the Joint Services Command and Staff College; a range of strategic business courses run by the College of Management and Technology; and decentralised fellowships and university post graduate degree courses, covered by the Higher Defence Studies Programme, a Tri-Service programme established in the MoD Policy Area in 1980, which funded the first 10 years of the MPhil in International Relations at Cambridge. Academic input tends to be focused on international theory, political science, military history and their derivations including conflict studies, international security, contemporary warfare, strategic studies, etc. Additionally, there are shorter interventions such as a mandatory SMO course for Army OF5/6 officers at Warminster and UK PINNACLE for 2* officers.

3. Despite “customer” consensus about the benefits of these courses, some of the incoherence identified by DOC in the 2010 audit of Joint Staff T&E²² remains. Subsequent studies such as the Defence Reform Unit review of T&E and the Defence Training Board (DTB) review of the Advanced Command and Staff Course (ACSC) combined with continuing resource pressure has led DTB to agree an action for ACDS (Pers & Trg) “to review the requirement and delivery options for education and training above ACSC of senior military personnel within Defence”²³.

4. Taking account of previous research²⁴ and the New Employment Model, Hd TESRR is to lead the review of SMO education and training, focusing on Service needs and the following areas:

- Update key data, including costs²⁵ and mapping SMO requirements for each Service.
- Recommend options to co-ordinate Defence and Service Requirements for higher level education and training for OF5 officers and above for FY 14/15 and beyond, including RCDS and HCSC.
- Recommend options for the future delivery of education and training, including a hierarchy of courses, accreditation and assurance.

5. The review team is to update TEPAG and DTEG members and widen this stakeholder group to include Service Secretaries, partners across government and civilian academic providers. A final report is to be circulated to DTB members in Oct 13.

6. In applying strategic coherency, any recommendations must be compliant with the Defence Vision and Operating Model, the Defence Joint Operating Concept, the New Employment Model, Future Reserves (FR) 20 work and pan-government/Joint Services policies.

7. The review is to hold 3 stakeholder workshops to consider:

- Existing Senior Officer Job Specifications and Requirements by end May, to include Service Secretaries/Head Office/Defence Policy Career Field representatives. This event should allow discussion of: the link between strategic education and high rank; selection policies and criteria; talent management; subsequent employment; the roles of HCSC and RCDS and the optimal balance in terms of Ends, Ways and Means.
- Governance and Resource issues in early Jun to include Service Commands. This event should include discussion of: decision making processes; sponsorship; programmed funding; risk; capitulation rates.

²⁰ Education defined as developing an individual’s intellectual capacity, knowledge and understanding; equipping them to come to reasoned decisions, judgements and conclusions, including in unpredictable and complex circumstances and situations.

²¹ Information provided by Defence Statistics and Service Commands.

²² DOC Audit 2/10.

²³ DTB 6 Action 6.3; TESRR/04_01_01/DTB6 dated 21 Mar 13 ROD of the 6th Meeting of the DTB held at MoD MB on 14 Mar 13.

²⁴ The 2010 DOC Audit led to the staffing of 2 papers: Balance of Investment for Post-Graduate Education (PGE) dated 14 Mar 11, and Future Delivery of MOD-Funded Post Graduate Education (PGE) dated 27 Jul 11. Key reference documents are listed at Annex B.

²⁵ This should be done iaw the FMC TOM adhering to principles of Cost Leadership and Management, using verified and validated data.

-
- Delivery Options by end Jun, to include DEFAC/Civilian Academic Providers. This event should include discussion of: Training Needs Analysis; the Defence Statement of Requirement; distance learning and distributed training; length of courses; accreditation and assurance.
8. The following assumptions will apply:
- Senior military personnel are defined as officers at OF5 and above, regular and reserve.
 - The number of SMOs²⁶ will decrease by at least 10% over the next 4 years.
 - SMO T&E requirements will increase commensurate with Defence and Security complexity.
 - Decreasing Defence T&E resources will attract pan-government value for money analysis.
 - The review will build on endorsed changes to the Advanced Command and Staff Course (ACSC) in 2014²⁷ and focus on T&E interventions based on Ends, Ways and Means, relating to Joint Operations and Defence Policy (or Service equivalent).
 - Specialist training, such as medical and engineering will not be included in the review.
 - Research doctorates sponsored by Defence (eg dstl projects) will not be considered.
 - The review will build on DOC audits of the Higher Command and Staff Course²⁸ and Joint Staff Training and Education²⁹ and other relevant work.
-

Written evidence from Ofsted

This submission is Ofsted's response to the Committee's call for written evidence on the education of service personnel. Ofsted's evidence does not cover all the issues raised by the Committee and consequently we are not in a position to provide informed responses to all of them.

BACKGROUND

1. Ofsted conducts two different types of inspection in relation to armed forces training.

The regular inspection of funded education and training provision (primarily apprenticeships) for trainees 16 and over

2. Ofsted inspects the education and training provision carried out by all three of the armed forces which is funded by the Skills Funding Agency (Army, Navy and RAF). This is primarily apprenticeship training and covers funded education and provision for those aged 16 and over.

3. The armed forces' education and training provision for those aged 16 and over is inspected to the same high standards as for other education and training. Ofsted applies the same evaluative criteria and the uses the same grade descriptors when arriving at a graded judgement throughout our inspections. We inspect a sample of the provision which is reasonably representative of the whole. This would cover the 16 to 18 age group and those 19 and over where those age groups are provided for.

4. Inadequate education and training provision is re-inspected within 12 to 15 months. Provision found to be satisfactory before September 2012 will be inspected again by September 2014. In the 2012 Common Inspection Framework, HMCI has replaced the grade of satisfactory with that of "requires improvement". Any provider found to "require improvement" will be re-inspected within 12–18 months. Provision judged to be good is inspected within six years of the last inspection. However, if our risk assessment of providers suggests performance has dropped, we may visit before the six years are up. We risk assess every provider on an annual basis, using success rates and other available information, to arrive at a judgment as to whether an inspection needs to be prioritised. Typically, we will only go back to outstanding provision if performance has dropped.

5. The last full inspection of education and training in the Army was in March 2009. Inspectors judged provision to be satisfactory and so, in line with the Common Inspection Framework 2009, we carried out a monitoring visit in November of that year. Inspectors reported at least reasonable progress since the March inspection. In the case of improvement in outcomes for learners, the provider had made significant progress. The inadequate health and public services (security) provision was re-inspected in June 2010 and was found to be satisfactory. As the Army provision was judged to be satisfactory overall, we will be inspecting it again before September 2014.

6. Navy training provision had a full inspection in February 2009. It was found to be good. The next full inspection will be within six years of the last one, unless performance drops.

7. Training provided by the RAF had a full inspection in January 2009; it was found to be good overall. Similarly, we will return to inspect this provision within six years of the last inspection unless our risk assessment process indicates the need for an earlier visit.
-

²⁶ Defence Statistics' data reveal the current number of SMO as c1600, approximately 9% of the total number of officers.

²⁷ Maintaining the Intellectual Edge: Ensuring the Advanced Command and Staff Course meets the needs of Future Force 2020; Jan 2013.

²⁸ DOC Audit 03/05.

²⁹ DOC Audit 2/10.

The Annual inspection of care and welfare of armed forces initial training establishments

8. Care and welfare inspections cover the “outcomes for recruits and trainees”. The quality of teaching and learning is also evaluated as part of the “quality of welfare and duty of care”. Sir Michael Wilshaw presented Ofsted’s fourth report, his first report as Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector (HMCI), on the effectiveness of welfare and duty of care for recruits and trainees in Armed Forces initial training, in 2012.

9. Inspection evidence, at that time, indicated the overall effectiveness of welfare and duty of care was at least good in six of the 10 establishments inspected for this report. One naval establishment and one aircrew training unit were judged to be outstanding. This was the first time since these inspections began in 2008 that more than one establishment was judged outstanding—and the first time for an officer training establishment. Common features of these outstanding establishments were: the impressive attention they paid to supporting each trainee’s personal, training and learning needs; the combination of high expectations of trainees and a coaching and mentoring programme which built successfully on the trainees’ prior experience and provided a very good foundation for their progress and achievement. Both establishments were very successful in ensuring that as many recruits as possible were supported to remain in training.

10. Inspection is having a positive impact on establishments previously judged to be satisfactory or inadequate. Such improvement has not always been replicated in the establishments inspected. One Army establishment was judged to be satisfactory for the fourth time. In weaker establishments, the same problems remain: high wastage rates, inconsistencies in the quality of care and a failure to ensure that the recruits have sufficient basic skills to complete their training successfully.

The provision of education to new recruits, including help with literacy and numeracy

11. Ofsted’s evidence from the most recent care and welfare report covers the inspection of 10 training establishments between June 2011 and February 2012 and visits to five Armed Forces Careers Offices (AFCOs). Two of the 10 training establishments were revisited, following up their inspection visits in 2010–11. Two establishments were judged to be no better than satisfactory. Two were judged to be outstanding for the overall effectiveness of welfare and duty of care

12. Most of the establishments inspected in 2011–12 either had not previously been inspected or their previous inspections had been more than five years earlier. Overall, new recruits enjoyed their training, and felt well supported by the chain of command and other welfare-designated non-military staff contributing to their welfare.

13. The support for recruits and trainees with additional learning needs was mixed, and showed no clear improvement from the previous year. All establishments had systems to record welfare concerns, and all relevant parties were invited to meetings or to contribute their views. However, some establishments were still not operating systems which worked across the whole site, resulting in operational inconsistencies and the incomplete identification of any patterns in behaviour or of concerns raised by recruits.

14. An initial assessment of a recruit’s literacy and numeracy needs often takes place at the initial stages of application. At this stage, literacy and numeracy support is well managed. The process of passing on information from initial assessment, through phase 1 and phase 2, including the role of subcontractors, was poorly managed in too many cases, with the result that the quality of literacy and numeracy support did not always meet the needs of the recruit.

15. The support for recruits and trainees with specific learning disabilities was managed more effectively. In the best examples, recruits’ and trainees’ additional needs were met by coaching and mentoring, resulting in performance that was as good as that of their peers.

16. In their feedback to inspectors, trainees often commented about dull teaching but too few establishments had an effective system to help instructors to improve their practice. Too much time was wasted as some trainees waited for the start of a course. Other recruits experienced poorly planned “holdover” training in their phase 1 establishment. This was a weakness identified in the previous inspection.

17. In Ofsted’s report “*Removing barriers to literacy*”, the best of the providers shared the following characteristics that would benefit the education of new recruits:

- when literacy was part of a wider vocational programme, it was integrated effectively, so that it had immediate relevance;
- managers at all levels were acutely aware of the barriers that learners faced in improving their literacy and knew how to help them to overcome them;
- the teaching of literacy was consistently good or outstanding when it was provided by tutors who had specialist training;
- teaching methods and content reflected a clear emphasis on treating learners as adults and responding to them as individuals;
- classes for adult learners rarely comprised more than 10 learners, allowing tutors to give learners good individual attention;
- learners were well-motivated and worked enthusiastically towards qualifications in literacy; and

- provision for literacy formed part of a coherent, institution-wide approach to improving learners' English or numeracy (or both of these).

18. In Ofsted's report "*Tackling the challenge of low numeracy skills in young people and adults*," published April 2011, common features of effective numeracy teaching and learning that would benefit the education of new recruits included:

- developing learners' ability to tackle numeracy-related problems by setting them in purposeful contexts;
- showing learners how to build on their previous knowledge and skills to develop their understanding;
- providing opportunities for learners to work out the most appropriate approaches to problems individually and with other learners;
- encouraging learners to tackle their misconceptions by analysing incorrect answers;
- developing learners' conceptual understanding of numeracy through activities which helped them reach the stage where they could explain why a specific method worked; and
- enabling learners to apply mathematical techniques in their training, at work or in their personal lives.

19. Instructors play a vital role in ensuring that recruits' and trainees' personal and educational needs are met effectively. A well-planned professional development programme for these key personnel is an important driver in sustaining improvement. Most of the establishments inspected last year did not have an effective system for improving the quality of training through structured instructor observations to help them to improve.

20. HMCI is of the view that more needs to be done for young people and adults joining the Armed Forces training establishments. The establishments prepare and support young people to meet the challenges and demands of their role and to enter the Armed Forces as highly professional, highly skilled and well-motivated individuals. All establishments therefore must be at least good and that this must be viewed as the minimum acceptable standard.

The provision of education to service personnel throughout their careers

21. Inspection evidence from Army provision inspected in March 2009 and partially reinspected in June 2009 shows that overall, outcomes for learners are good. Success rates improved significantly since the inspection. Overall success rates on the large apprenticeship programme rose from 49% in 2007–08 to 84% in 2009–10. Over the same period, timely success rates were up by 24%, to 71%. Timely success rates on the much smaller Train to Gain programme increased to 86% in 2009–10.

22. Army apprenticeship data for 2011–12 indicates that, for 16–18 year olds at advanced level, success rates were around 22% below the national figure, with timely completion around 13% below. For all other age groups and levels, outcomes are significantly above average.

23. At the last inspection Army key skills training was better contextualised with military activities and offered at an earlier stage in the training. Teaching and learning overall required improvement, in particular the quality of military training.

24. Of the 36 infantry regiments, 34 offered an appropriate apprenticeship but some infantrymen did not have access to a suitable training course. At the previous inspection, 48% of security learners were suspended from training because they were on operational duties. At the re-inspection, the suspension rate improved to 23%. Quality mentors provided through the Arms and Service Directors (A&SDs) had improved the subcontractors' understanding of the role and timing of reviews in helping learners to progress.

25. In order to improve the provision to Army service personnel Ofsted makes the following recommendations:

- Consolidate arrangements for the observation of teaching and learning and extend them to military training in order to improve the quality and consistency of training.
- Develop learners' progress reviews as a mechanism for planning their training and assessment and reinforcing their understanding, so that learners make better progress, particularly when on operations.
- Increase the proportion of soldiers taking apprenticeships by developing the understanding of all military staff, especially at company level, about the importance of the Army apprenticeship scheme and the progress that learners are making.
- Increase the access to provision within the infantry to enable more soldiers to participate in apprenticeships.

26. In the Royal Navy all ratings and marines have apprenticeship training. At the time of the inspection in February 2009 a total of 2,135 apprentices were on apprenticeship programmes, with 704 apprentices in public services, 1,092 apprentices in engineering, 103 apprentices in information and communication technology (ICT) and 159 apprentices in hospitality and catering. Provision overall was good and outstanding in engineering. Apprenticeships in business administration and warehousing and distribution and aircraft operations on the ground were not inspected. Inspection, evidence highlighted some poor timely success rates and insufficient

focus on learning in managing the performance of teachers and trainers. In 2011/12, overall success and timely completion rates were above the national figure at all levels and across all groups. The programmes provide civilian accreditation and prepare personnel to progress to higher level qualifications

27. At the time of the last inspection Royal Air Force in January 2009, a total of 1,420 learners were in learning. Approximately 48% were apprentices and 52% advanced apprentices.

28. Apprenticeships are offered in Health, public services and care; retail and commercial enterprise, Transportation operations and maintenance, and business administration and law. Advanced apprenticeships are offered in engineering and manufacturing technologies; information and communication technology and Arts, media and publishing. Overall success rates are very high on most programmes, with particularly good welfare and vocational support for learners. Key areas for improvement included: insufficient planning of teaching and learning to meet learners' varying skills and needs and insufficient progression opportunities to higher levels for all learners.

The progress made by the armed forces in ensuring that training undertaken by service personnel leads to civilian qualifications

29. Ofsted evidence from routine inspections of the training undertaken by service personnel, as outlined in the sections above, indicates that the progress made by the armed forces in this aspect is good. However, not all service personnel have the opportunity to progress to higher levels. The provision for meeting the literacy and numeracy needs of service personnel, so that they have the skills to complete their training successfully, in both military and civilian life, has improved but would benefit from further improvement.

The adequacy of oversight of the education of armed forces personnel

30. Ofsted evidence, on the adequacy and oversight of armed forces education, is held establishment level and reported through the commissioned inspections. Evidence from the care and welfare indicates that, overall, leadership and management is efficient but establishments need to make better use of data to support self-assessment and help them to improve. Weaknesses in self-assessment were also reported in Ofsted's inspections of apprenticeships in the Royal Air Force: ineffective strategic coordination and quality management of self-assessment; and in the Royal Navy: insufficiently evaluative and judgemental self-assessment reports. Good practice, as evidenced through inspection, is not shared routinely across establishments to help others to improve.

31. In the Army inspection, evidence suggests the Director General of Army Recruiting and Training has provided clear strategic direction and leadership to enhance awareness of the Army's apprenticeship programme. As a result, there is a much greater understanding of the apprenticeships' importance to soldiers' development. The Army's capacity to make and sustain improvements is good. The A&SDs make good use of data to monitor provision. The analysis of data is shared very effectively across the Army to prompt action. In the infantry, A&SDs have introduced competitive performance tables which are very effective in stimulating commanding officers' commitment to the programme and their understanding of its benefits.

The provision of higher education to those personnel for whom it is relevant and useful

32. Ofsted does not hold data on progression to higher education from routine inspection. However, inspection evidence suggests, more generally, that progression opportunities are often available to personnel who have the skills needed where there are relevant courses.

February 2013

Written evidence from Child Soldiers International

SUMMARY

1. Child Soldiers International³⁰ welcomes the call for evidence issued by the Select Committee in relation to its inquiry into the education of service personnel. Child Soldiers International is concerned that the education provided to minors (aged 16 and 17) in the armed forces fails to meet the standards recommended for this age group. As a result it narrows rather than broadens recruits' future opportunities, and compounds rather than alleviates long-term disadvantage.

2. Child Soldiers International requests that the Select Committee examine the nature, breadth and level of education available to (and achieved by) armed forces personnel aged below 18 years separately from the education of adult personnel. This should be compared with the national recommended standards of education

³⁰ Child Soldiers International is a human rights research and advocacy organization, formerly known as the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers. Child Soldiers International seeks to end the military recruitment and use in hostilities of child soldiers (boys and girls below the age of 18) and other human rights abuses resulting from their association with armed forces or groups. We seek the release of child soldiers from armed forces or groups, promote their successful return to civilian life and accountability for those who recruit and use them. Child Soldiers International promotes global adherence to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict.

for young people, the education options and outcomes of their peers in the mainstream (civilian) education system, and government policy on enhancing social mobility among young people.

3. The evidence presented in this submission contends that:

- The literacy and numeracy curriculum for minors in the armed forces is set at a level lower than the minimum recommended for this age group in an independent review of education.
- Too few recruits are able, in practice, to take advantage of additional, elective academic courses. Those who do so are penalised by burdensome additional return of service commitments.
- Training consists predominantly of military skills which have limited or no transferable value to civilian employment, with consequent negative repercussions for post-service resettlement.
- There is a lack of independent oversight of the education policy and curriculum.

4. Child Soldiers International concludes by recommending that the Ministry of Defence (MoD) raise the minimum armed forces recruitment age to 18 years, to ensure recruits enter the armed forces only after completing a full secondary level education. Such a measure would significantly enhance their operational effectiveness within the armed forces as well as their employability in future civilian life. It would also benefit the armed forces by reducing initial training time and costs by up to one third, and improve recruit retention rates.

CONCERNS

5. The Army recruits far greater numbers of minors than the other two services combined³¹ and the large majority of these now undertake Phase One training at the Army Foundation College in Harrogate (AFC Harrogate).³² This submission therefore focuses primarily on the educational provision at AFC Harrogate, as it accounts for the experience of the large majority of minors in the armed forces as a whole.³³ Where relevant, the submission also refers to the Department for Business Innovation and Skills *Armed Forces Basic Skills Longitudinal Study* (“the BIS study”) which concerns provision of basic skills education to recruits in the armed forces as a whole including, but not limited to, recruits at AFC Harrogate.³⁴

I. THE PROVISION OF EDUCATION TO NEW RECRUITS INCLUDING HELP WITH LITERACY AND NUMERACY

6. Recruits at AFC Harrogate study Level 1 Functional Skills in English and maths, and a Level 2 Diploma for IT users.³⁵ Over the 50 week period of the “Long Course” at AFC Harrogate, recruits spend a total of just five and a half hours a week studying for these qualifications.³⁶

7. Child Soldiers International recognises that there is a high pass rate for the three basic courses undertaken by recruits at AFC Harrogate. Of all recruits training there between September 2010 and August 2011, 97% passed the Level 1 literacy qualification and 87% passed Level 1 numeracy.³⁷ Recruits who achieve Level 1 Functional Skills in English and maths during the course “have the additional opportunity” to study them at Level 2. However, between September 2010 and August 2011, just 52% of AFC Harrogate recruits achieved Level 2 literacy and 49% Level 2 numeracy.³⁸ MoD data does not indicate whether this is because fewer recruits undertake Level 2 courses, or because pass rates are lower. In either case, the figures indicate that there is a lower level of institutional support for recruits embarking on Level 2 study.

8. Prior to its closure to Junior Entry recruits in October 2012, recruits on the (23 week) course at Army Technical Foundation College Winchester (ATFC Winchester) studied only “functional skills in either [*sic*] numeracy or literacy, along with basic military training”.³⁹ The pass rates for literacy and numeracy courses at ATFC Winchester were very low. Between March and September 2011, the pass rates for recruits taking Level 1 literacy and numeracy qualifications were just 48 and 65% respectively. For Level 2 the figures were even lower, with pass rates of 47% for candidates enrolled in the Level 2 numeracy courses, and just 10% for

³¹ *UK Armed Forces—Annual Manning Report 2010/2011: Table 7. UK Regular Forces intake by Service and age*, available at www.dasa.mod.uk. In the financial year 2010/2011, the RAF recruited 90 under-18s, the Navy recruited 280, and the Army recruited 2,400.

³² Prior to October 2012, Junior Entry recruits (those aged 16 to 17 and a half at enlistment) could also undergo Phase One training at ATFC Winchester. ATFC Winchester now accepts Senior Entry recruits only (those aged over 17 and a half years) and all Junior Entry recruits train at AFC Harrogate. Between September 2010 and September 2011, 3,745 under-18s commenced Army Phase One training. Of these, 950 (25 per cent) attended ATFC Winchester and 2,114 (56 per cent) AFC Harrogate. See HC Deb, 8 December 2011, c427W and HC Deb, 10 January 2012, c12W.

³³ Child Soldiers International’s 2012 report “Mind the gap: Education for minors in the British armed forces” explores in detail the education provided at AFC Harrogate and ATFC Winchester. The report is available at www.child-soldiers.org.

³⁴ The recruits participating in the study were typically aged between 16 and 20 and had left school by the age of 16. Department for Business Innovation and Skills; *BIS Research Paper Number 78. Armed Forces Basic Skills Longitudinal Study: Part 2*, June 2012, page 28 (hereinafter “*BIS Research Paper: Part 2*”).

³⁵ These levels are intended to be broadly equivalent to GCSE grade D-G and GCSE grade A*—C respectively.

³⁶ HC Deb, 18 July 2011, c578 W.

³⁷ HC Deb, 10 January 2012, c12W.

³⁸ *ibid.* The figures provided for those passing out with Level 2 qualifications in the BIS study sample vary significantly from the figures provided in Hansard. Hansard figures have been used in this document as they are taken from a larger data set. See *BIS Research Paper: Part 2*, page 25 to contrast.

³⁹ HC Deb, 30 November 2011, c976W.

those undertaking Level 2 literacy.⁴⁰ Data is not yet publicly available on the current pass rates for recruits taking the “Short Course” at AFC Harrogate, which has replaced the ATFC Winchester training course.

9. Notwithstanding the high pass rate for Level 1 literacy and numeracy courses at AFC Harrogate, Child Soldiers International considers the literacy and numeracy provision to be inadequate as it consists solely of Functional Skills rather than GCSE qualifications. The BIS study also questioned the extent to which qualification achievement rates in armed forces basic skills education “are accompanied by significant and functional long term gains”.⁴¹ The BIS study further expressed concern at pressure on tutors to “teach to the test” rather than focus on sustainable development of skills.⁴²

10. In 2011 the Department for Education commissioned Professor Wolf to conduct a *Review of Vocational Education* (“the Wolf Report”). This report singled out Functional Skills qualifications for criticism, describing them as “conceptually incoherent”,⁴³ suffering from “major and fundamental flaws”,⁴⁴ “of highly variable standards”⁴⁵ and “certainly not in themselves an adequate “maths and English” diet for the 16–19 cohort”.⁴⁶ The Wolf Report judged as “shocking” those educational institutions where—as is the case at AFC Harrogate—students without English and maths GCSE A* to C are “channelled into, or required to take, key or functional skills” instead of being supported to re-sit the GCSE exams. The Wolf Report concluded that this practice served “to deny rather than promote the acquisition of good English and maths qualifications”.⁴⁷

11. In contrast, the vital importance of achieving GCSE qualifications in English and maths has been emphasised on numerous occasions. The Wolf Report was adamant that English and maths GCSEs were “of critical importance for employment”.⁴⁸ The Department for Education’s response to the Wolf Report recognised that the failure of the “most vulnerable” young people to achieve “critical” GCSE level qualifications “harms their prospects for progressing in education or training and finding a job”.⁴⁹ A report by Centre for Cities noted a strong correlation between failure to attain GCSE English and maths at grades A* to C and high levels of youth unemployment.⁵⁰ Furthermore, the BIS study found Army recruits with GCSE grade A*—C in English and maths had a better retention rate.⁵¹

12. The Wolf Report concluded that a GCSE at grade A* to C was the only adequate qualification in these subjects for all young people, regardless of future education and career plans and that no lower level or theoretically “equivalent” level qualification was an adequate alternative. One of the Wolf Report’s main concluding recommendations was that:

“Students who are under 19 and do not have GCSE A*—C in English and/or Maths should be required...to pursue a course which either leads directly to these qualifications, or which provide significant progress towards GCSE entry and success (...) Key Skills should not be considered a suitable qualification in this context”.⁵²

13. The BIS study highlighted the challenge presented to the armed forces by this conclusion and recommended a “substantial assessment” of the issue.⁵³

14. Both the Wolf Report and the Department for Education’s response recognised that some young people who had not achieved GCSE English and maths Grade A*—C by age 16 might not be ready to retake their GCSE exams immediately and would need to undertake other levels of study, such as Functional Skills, as a preparatory step. However, these alternative qualifications were endorsed only as a means of progressing towards GCSE qualifications, and not as an alternative to them. Despite this consensus on the importance of GCSE English and maths qualifications for all young people, GCSEs are not studied at AFC Harrogate. This is because literacy and numeracy training in the Army is matched directly to the skill level required to perform a junior soldier’s role and the GCSE curriculum currently exceeds this level.

15. There is currently no requirement for recruits to undertake literacy and numeracy training in Phase 2 except for those enrolled on an “apprenticeship”.⁵⁴ When questioned as to how many recruits undertook GCSE English and/or maths in Phase Two training or subsequently, the MoD was unable to provide figures.⁵⁵ This

⁴⁰ HC Deb, 10 January 2012, c13W.

⁴¹ *BIS Research Paper: Part 2*, page 103.

⁴² Department for Business Innovation and Skills; *BIS Research Paper Number 78. Armed Forces Basic Skills Longitudinal Study: Part 1*, June 2012, page 11 (hereinafter “*BIS Research Paper: Part 1*”).

⁴³ Wolf, A. *Review of Vocational Education—The Wolf Report*, 2011, page 170 (hereinafter “*The Wolf Report*”).

⁴⁴ *The Wolf Report*, page 170.

⁴⁵ *ibid*, page 171.

⁴⁶ *ibid*, page 84.

⁴⁷ *ibid*, page 82.

⁴⁸ *ibid*, page 32.

⁴⁹ Department for Education, *Wolf Review of Vocational Education: Government Response*, 2011, page 7.

⁵⁰ www.centreforcities.org, “Half of all young people in cities are not getting the grades in Maths and English GCSE to get them a job”. Accessed 01/12/2011.

⁵¹ *BIS Research Paper: Part 1*, page 66. BIS recommended further investigation of the relationship between level of literacy and numeracy and retention rates.

⁵² *The Wolf Report*, page 15. Key Skills were replaced by Functional Skills in 2010.

⁵³ *BIS Research Paper: Part 1*, page 50.

⁵⁴ *BIS Research Paper: Part 2*, page 55.

⁵⁵ HC Deb, 10 January 2012, c10W.

indicates that there is no policy to ensure that all Army recruits, including those enlisting under the age of 18 in particular, obtain GCSE English and maths qualifications.

16. Indeed, the MoD's goal is only for Army personnel to achieve "at least Level 1" qualifications within three years of enlistment.⁵⁶ This target falls short of the minimum standard recommended for young people in mainstream education by the Wolf Report. Consequently, Child Soldiers International concludes that the education opportunities provided to minors in the armed forces are substantially inferior to those available in a mainstream school or college. In the BIS study, 10 out of 14 soldiers interviewed reported that "they would be happy to take a GCSE",⁵⁷ indicating that recruits themselves wish to study to a higher level of qualification than that currently on offer.

17. It should be noted that some have argued that young people who join the armed forces as minors are of a particular social and educational profile likely to drop out of, or fail to achieve in, mainstream education and therefore general education targets are not relevant to them.⁵⁸ However, it is precisely this cohort of youth that the government's April 2011 report on social mobility, *Opening Doors, Breaking Barriers*, identified as most in need of encouragement to stay on in education, in order to arrest and reverse the widening gap in young people's academic attainment and employment prospects. Minors in the armed forces are prevented from closing this gap by an education policy which sets lower targets than the minimum recommended for their (civilian) peers. As a result, an armed forces education is by definition of lower standard than that available in mainstream education.

18. Child Soldiers International also notes with concern the low ratio of professional teachers employed at AFC Harrogate compared to military training staff, and the negative consequences this may have on the quality of teaching. Just 51 of the 379 staff involved in training junior soldiers have qualified teacher status (42 civilian teachers and nine military education and training service officers).⁵⁹

II. THE PROVISION OF EDUCATION TO SERVICE PERSONNEL THROUGHOUT THEIR CAREERS

19. Elective study opportunities beyond the requirements of compulsory training are available to Army personnel. However, the transient nature of armed forces life, combined with demanding daily schedules and the pressures of preparing for—or deployment on—operations "significantly constrains opportunities to gain access to literacy and numeracy support."⁶⁰ The BIS study noted that "it can be difficult to fit educational provision into the busy military training lines"⁶¹ and "In the Army there are more urgent priorities than support for literacy and numeracy".⁶² Operational commitments, busy military training schedules and other demands "often prevent or dissuade personnel from accessing literacy and numeracy provision".⁶³ None of the 14 soldiers in the BIS study qualitative sample had sought or taken any further educational provision once they had finished initial training.⁶⁴ It is evident that despite the substantial resources invested the Army is not the ideal institution, nor does it offer the most conducive environment, for providing broad, sustainable academic education for young people.

20. Furthermore, Army personnel can only undertake additional, elective courses if they extend their minimum service period beyond the terms of their original enlistment agreement.⁶⁵ This additional service period is up to one year for a course of two weeks to three months duration, or up to six years additional service for a course lasting more than three months. As a result, recruits must choose between committing to up to six years' additional service in the Army (which would more than double the total minimum service period of a 17 year old recruit) or refusing all additional educational courses. In the latter case recruits retain the right to leave service sooner but could leave the Army no better qualified than when they joined.

21. Child Soldiers International considers that the burdensome additional service commitment imposed on Army personnel who wish to undertake supplementary study acts as a major disincentive to pursuing education.

III. THE PROGRESS MADE BY THE ARMED FORCES IN ENSURING THAT TRAINING UNDERTAKEN BY SERVICE PERSONNEL LEADS TO CIVILIAN QUALIFICATIONS

22. Child Soldiers International is deeply concerned that young recruits' training results in few, if any, civilian qualifications and has very little transferable value to civilian employment. Apart from the IT Level 2

⁵⁶ *ibid.*

⁵⁷ *BIS Research Paper: Part 1*, page 52.

⁵⁸ The BIS study found that up to 50 per cent of recruits joining the Army in 2010 had literacy or numeracy skills at Entry Level 3 or below. The BIS study also reported that the more times a recruit had been suspended from school, the higher their drop-out rate from the armed forces. See *BIS Research Paper: Part 1*, page 22; *BIS Research Paper: Part 2*, page 242.

⁵⁹ HC Deb, 8 December 2011, c426W.

⁶⁰ *BIS Research Paper: Part 1*, page 24.

⁶¹ *BIS Research Paper: Part 2*, page 43.

⁶² *ibid.*, page 104.

⁶³ *BIS Research Paper: Part 1*, page 25.

⁶⁴ *BIS Research Paper: Part 2*, page 44. Child Soldiers International suggests that the Defence Committee request the MoD provide annual data on the number of soldiers who seek, undertake, and successfully attain, further educational qualifications after completing Phase 1 and 2 training.

⁶⁵ The Army Terms of Service Regulations 2007, Regulation 15: *Return of service commitment*.

Diploma (NVQ) there are no GCSE, AS level, A level, BTEC, HNC, HND or NVQ qualifications on the curriculum at AFC Harrogate.⁶⁶

23. Recruitment materials for AFC Harrogate emphasise the possibility and benefits of undertaking an “apprenticeship”. However, the “apprenticeships” referred to here and elsewhere by the MoD refer to the Functional Skills, IT diploma and specific military training listed below which, combined, are termed “an Army apprenticeship”. They are not apprenticeships in the commonly understood meaning of the term, ie transferable vocational training leading to a nationally recognised professional qualification in, for example, mechanics, plumbing, carpentry or electronics. The MoD has confirmed that vocational training in these areas is not on offer at AFC Harrogate.⁶⁷

24. Aside from the Functional Skills curriculum in English and maths, the predominant focus of education at AFC Harrogate—unsurprisingly—is on military training. Recruitment materials state that recruits spend “most of the course” learning basic military skills, including “weapon handling, fieldcraft, camouflage, survival...[how to] handle and shoot the SA80 rifle...drill...march and parade”.⁶⁸ This is particularly the case for recruits entering into “combat oriented roles” in the Infantry, Royal Armoured Corps, Royal Artillery and some Royal Logistic Corps.⁶⁹ Almost half of recruits enlisting as minors—46%—join the Infantry, which entails some of the most specialised combat-specific training of all.⁷⁰

25. This specialised military training, whilst clearly essential for a combat-related career, does not lead to civilian qualifications and has very little, if any, direct transferable value to future civilian employment. In contrast, mainstream education offers young people the opportunity to undertake training with far greater transferable value and therefore better long-term employment prospects.

IV. THE IMPACT OF EDUCATION ON THE RESETTLEMENT OF ARMED FORCES PERSONNEL

26. Recruits who enlist as minors have a high dropout rate from the armed forces and are therefore more likely than adults to need to find alternative civilian employment.

27. In 2010/2011, 27% of minors in initial armed forces training (Phase One and Phase Two) dropped out.⁷¹ The BIS study also found that “younger recruits [in the quantitative sample] were more likely to leave as compared to their older peers”⁷² and that “trainees from AFC(H) and ATFC(W) were more likely to leave”.⁷³ In 2010–11 36% of all Early Service Leavers⁷⁴ had enlisted below the age of 18. Early Service Leavers are known to be at greater risk than longer serving armed forces personnel of experiencing serious difficulties transitioning to civilian life, including greater vulnerability to unemployment (as well as other forms of social exclusion such as homelessness, criminality, and substance misuse).⁷⁵ MoD guidelines for resettlement staff recognise minors as a sub-group of Early Service Leavers at especially high risk of such exclusion.⁷⁶

28. For those who successfully complete initial training, the average length of service for Infantry soldiers who enlisted below the age of 18 is 10 years.⁷⁷ This means that most recruits who enlisted as minors will be seeking alternative civilian employment by the age of 26 or 27, with some 40 years of working life ahead of them. Civilian qualifications and transferable skills are therefore essential for their successful resettlement.

29. The essential importance of “generalisable and transferrable skills” to allow young people to succeed in employment—in both the short-term and throughout their lives—was emphasised in the Wolf Report, in the Department for Education’s response, and in submissions to the Wolf Report from employers’ bodies and the Confederation of British Industry.⁷⁸ The Wolf Report recommended that:

“16—19 year old students pursuing full time courses of study should not follow a programme which is entirely ‘occupational’”.⁷⁹

30. In this respect, the Wolf Report explicitly distinguishes between the suitability of specialised training programs for adult versus teenage employees or apprentices. Job-specific training which is necessary for adults in skilled trades is not a suitable substitute for the general educational needs of minors, as it severely restricts

⁶⁶ HC Deb, 30 November 2011, c966W; HC Deb, 30 November 2011, c977 W; HC Deb, 18 July 2011, c578 W; HC Deb, 19 July 2011, c862w.

⁶⁷ HC Deb, 13 September 2011, c1147W.

⁶⁸ See “Army Colleges” brochure available at www.army.mod.uk/documents/general/ArmyJuniorE-LowRes.pdf.

⁶⁹ The combat-focused nature of these roles is highlighted by the fact that the corps which Harrogate “Long Course” graduates enter have consistently had the highest death and injury rates throughout the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan—HC Deb, 6 December 2010, c2W.

⁷⁰ HC Deb, 10 January 2012, c12W.

⁷¹ HC Deb, 7 February 2011, c26W. This is a substantially higher drop-out rate than for adult personnel.

⁷² *BIS Research Paper: Part 2*, page 100.

⁷³ *ibid*, page 242.

⁷⁴ Early Service Leavers are armed forces personnel discharged within four years of enlisting or who have been compulsorily discharged.

⁷⁵ Ministry of Defence, *Early Service Leavers: Guidance notes for resettlement Staff*, JSP 575 Issue No: 4. March 2010.

⁷⁶ *ibid*.

⁷⁷ HC Deb, 12 September 2011, c1007W.

⁷⁸ *The Wolf Report*, page 107 and page 122; Department for Education, *Wolf Review of Vocational Education: Government Response*, p.6.

⁷⁹ *The Wolf Report*, page 115.

their future employment and education options. The Wolf Report noted that occupation-specific training programs and qualifications:

“may be appropriate for adults who are in employment or have made definitive decisions about their occupation and job of choice, [but they] should not be the main, let alone the only, type of vocational qualifications offered to 14–19 year olds in education and training”.⁸⁰

31. In conclusion, the Wolf Report argues that:

“all young people should receive a high quality core education which equips them to progress, whether immediately or later, to a very wide range of further study, training and employment...**We have no business, as a society, placing 16 year olds...in tracks which they cannot leave**”.⁸¹ (Emphasis in original.)

32. What is true of vocational education in general is even more pertinent to military training which, due to its highly specialised nature, has no direct transferable value to any other field of employment. The military skills which constitute “most of the course” at AFC Harrogate clearly have no direct civilian use and so cannot be interpreted as providing the “generalisable and transferable” skills identified as essential for successful civilian employment.

33. These concerns about young recruits’ prospects for successful transfer to civilian life are borne out by an investigation by the Royal British Legion in 2006 which found that the unemployment rate of 18–49 year old ex-service personnel was double the national unemployment rate for civilians in the same age group. Significantly, the study found that “lack of training, qualifications or skills is also more of a problem among this age group”.⁸²

V. THE ADEQUACY OF OVERSIGHT OF THE EDUCATION OF ARMED FORCES PERSONNEL

34. Child Soldiers International considers that there is inadequate independent oversight of education for minors in the armed forces. Since 2009 Ofsted has produced four reports on armed forces initial training, but all four related to welfare and duty of care issues rather than the suitability and quality of the educational curriculum. There has been no specific review of these areas since the 2005 Adult Learning Inspectorate report into the ICT curriculum at the Army Foundation College Harrogate, and the MoD has not commissioned any specific research into the education and transferable skills acquired by minors in the Army.⁸³ As a result, there is no independent, objective evidence base on which to assess the quality of education provided to armed forces personnel and to minors in particular.

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

35. Child Soldiers International considers that young people, including those with low prior educational attainment, have greatly reduced opportunities in the armed forces to achieve qualifications regarded as “fundamental” than they would have in mainstream education. Despite the substantial resources invested, the armed forces are not institutionally or environmentally suited to providing minors with the range and depth of education required for successful long-term employment.

36. Child Soldiers International therefore concludes that raising the minimum recruitment age to 18 years would be in the best interests of recruits’ educational attainment and long-term employment prospects. This measure would ensure that all recruits had completed a broad, transferable secondary level education with the opportunity to attain GCSEs in English and maths under the guidance of professionally qualified, subject-specialist teachers before joining the armed forces. This would ensure that government strategies on education and social mobility are implemented consistently across all government departments, to the benefit of all young people irrespective of their prior level of educational attainment and future career path. It would also address the need identified by the Strategic Defence and Security Review to recruit better educated and more highly trained personnel.

37. By recruiting only from age 18 and above the MoD would ensure that personnel leaving the armed forces (at any stage in their training or career) would be able to resettle into civilian life more easily than at present, as their employment options would no longer be limited by early specialisation in military training to the exclusion of broader, more transferable skills. Their military training would therefore act as an additional qualification, rather than a substitute for a full secondary level education, as is the case at present. This should reduce some of the post-service welfare problems experienced by many veterans and Early Service Leavers in particular.

38. Raising the recruitment age would also save MoD resources. The BIS study found that there were higher retention rates among Army recruits who had “stayed in full time education for longer”.⁸⁴ The BIS study also noted that “delivering literacy and numeracy education to recruits with Entry Level skills represents a large

⁸⁰ *ibid*, page 86.

⁸¹ *ibid*, page 141.

⁸² Royal British Legion, *Profiles and Needs: Comparisons between the Ex-Service Community and the UK Population*, 2006. Section 4.9.

⁸³ HC Deb, 10 July 2012, c197W.

⁸⁴ *BIS Research Paper: Part 2*, page 100.

claim on resources, including funding for provision and military training time for literacy and numeracy programmes”⁸⁵ and recommended that the MoD “Seek to reduce the Services’ literacy and numeracy skills training liability for recruits by adjusting minimum literacy and numeracy standards for joining”.⁸⁶ Recruiting only those who have already completed their secondary level education would therefore benefit the armed forces by significantly reducing MoD expenditure on basic education. At present this is, on average, three times higher for recruits aged under 18 than for adults.⁸⁷

39. Raising entry standards would also improve operational efficiency in the armed forces, by reducing the time and resources spent supporting those with poor literacy and numeracy skills. This support, where extensive and routine, was identified as “likely to corrode...operational efficiency”, particularly on active service.⁸⁸ The BIS study questioned to what extent junior personnel could be considered “operationally effective” when they required extensive literacy and numeracy support on a consistent basis.⁸⁹ In contrast, it noted that “Trainees with sound literacy and numeracy skills are more flexible in the roles they can undertake and are able to work more effectively without supervision...improving levels of literacy and numeracy will improve the employability of recruits within the Services”.⁹⁰ They also have far better prospects of successful promotion and consequently a longer armed forces career.

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⁸⁵ *BIS Research Paper: Part 1*, page 36.

⁸⁶ *ibid*, page 14.

⁸⁷ HC Deb, 15 Dec 2011, c866W. Average expenditure per recruit (Junior Entry) on Phase One training at AFC Harrogate is £64,458 and was £53,985 at ATFC Winchester. Average expenditure per recruit for Phase One Training Standard Entry (i.e. for adult recruits) is £21,318 at the Army Training Centre Pirbright, £26,992 at the Army Training Regiment Basingbourn and £26,543 at the Infantry Training Centre Catterick.

⁸⁸ *BIS Research Paper: Part 1*, page 10; *BIS Research Paper: Part 2*, page 207.

⁸⁹ *BIS Research Paper: Part 1*, page 59.

⁹⁰ *ibid*, page 60.

ISBN 978-0-215-06082-2

