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Research and analysis

Welfare and duty of care in Armed Forces initial training 2021 to 2022

Updated 6 October 2022

Applies to England

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Ministerial foreword

Defence exists to protect the people of the United Kingdom, to prevent conflict and to be ready to fight when required to do so. Its success depends on its people; they are a critical component of Defence capability. In order to maintain this capability, Defence must continue to get the right number of people with the right skills to the right place at the right time in an economically sustainable manner. Delivering this requirement begins with providing the military, technical and professional knowledge and skills delivered during initial training.

I therefore welcome the support of Ofsted for its independent oversight of our training provision. It is only right that it highlights our progress and focuses attention where action is most needed.

I am pleased to see the continued improvement of our initial training, with 10 of the 12 graded inspections being assessed as good. However, as highlighted, we still have more to do. The quality of some of the accommodation and infrastructure described in the report remains unsatisfactory. While improvements have been made, the Ministry of Defence (MoD) will continue to rationalise and invest in the training estate to drive further positive change. Across Defence, we continue work to widen the food choices available and improve the standard of food for our people, especially our recruits and trainees, to ensure that their nutritional needs are met. I'm also pleased to read Ofsted's positive review of how the 'Prevent' message is being inculcated among recruits and trainees. Defence will continue to develop training in this area so that learning is better reinforced.

During this inspection cycle, Defence commissioned Ofsted to carry out an additional, unassessed, review of Army Reserve training. This review highlighted some challenges in delivering training to the Reserves, in particular in terms of collaborating across multiple units, passing of information and sharing of best practice. Many of the findings are common to tri-Service Reserve training and will be used as a baseline for improvement.

Defence continues to value and appreciate the work of Ofsted. The annual report recommendations sit alongside those of wider MoD assurance teams and form the basis of improvement action plans that exist to ensure that we deliver the best possible training experience to our people. We remain committed to ensuring that our recruits and trainees receive the best start as they embark on their military careers.



The RT Hon Sarah Atherton MP

Minister for Defence People, Veterans and Service Families

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

This is Ofsted's 14th annual report on the effectiveness of care and welfare arrangements for recruits, trainees and officer cadets in Armed Forces initial training. It is the sixth report that I have presented as His Majesty's Chief Inspector. All training establishments have returned to full-time, face-to-face initial training of recruits and trainees following the disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic last year. Our programme of inspections was unaffected by COVID-19 over this year, and I would like to thank all involved for their cooperation in making this happen.

This was the second year that we have used the revised inspection handbook to inspect care and welfare in Armed Forces settings. Inspectors graded the key judgement areas of training and

support; personal and professional development; quality of facilities, infrastructure and resources; and effectiveness of leadership and management. They also provided an overall effectiveness grade for each establishment.

Inspectors used a new model of inspection for University Service Units (USUs) this year. They visited several University Royal Naval Units (URNUs) and their headquarters to carry out a single, ungraded inspection. This model has been a success, and we now intend to carry out graded inspections of other USUs using the same model.

At the request of the MoD, inspectors also carried out an ungraded review of Army Reserve initial training. Inspectors visited 2 Army headquarters and 6 Reservist units. They made several recommendations for improvement in the areas of oversight and assurance of training, care and welfare. We have summarised these in this report.

Six of the Regular and all 4 of the Reserve establishments were graded good for overall effectiveness and most key judgements. The Infantry Training Centre (ITC) at Catterick was judged outstanding in 2 of the key judgement areas: quality of training and support, and leadership and management. This was a great achievement for the staff at this large phase 1 and 2 Army training establishment.

In all 10 good establishments, Regular and Reserve recruits and trainees benefited from high-quality training and extensive, highly effective care and welfare arrangements. Because of this, recruits and trainees at these establishments became confident, skilled and knowledgeable. These young soldiers, sailors and aviators were ready to move on to the next stage of their training or into their first role in the Army, Royal Air Force or Royal Navy.

Two establishments were judged to require improvement: the RAF Officer Training Academy (RAFOTA) at RAF Cranwell, and the Defence Medical Academy (DMA). In both, the infrastructure and accommodation were major weaknesses, and at RAF Cranwell, they were inadequate. Classrooms had leaking roofs, and accommodation blocks frequently lacked hot water and heating. Repairs were not carried out quickly. The morale of young officers at the start of their careers in the Royal Air Force was lowered by the poor conditions they endured. At the DMA, senior staff failed to concentrate sufficiently on the quality of training for trainee medics based at the DMA and trainee undergraduate nurses at Birmingham City University (BCU). Consequently, inspectors judged the quality of training and support and the effectiveness of leadership and management to require improvement.

As we have found in previous years, even where the quality of facilities, infrastructure and resources was judged as good, there were disappointing weaknesses. Too often, senior officers and their staff are spending time dealing with the legacy of a lack of investment in infrastructure, or dealing with poor maintenance contracts. At several establishments, including large establishments like HMS Sultan and ITC Catterick, infrastructure, including accommodation and classrooms, needs to be improved. Too often, the needs of female recruits or trainees are not considered fully,

especially when there are few of them in one place. Females are often accommodated separately from their male peers to provide privacy, and this can make them feel isolated.

While self-assessment reporting continues to be a weakness in many training establishments, as it has over several years, inspectors report that commanding officers are providing the MoD with a new and useful analysis of their establishment's strengths and weaknesses. This has the potential to be a useful starting point for better analysis and evaluation of the effectiveness of care and welfare arrangements.

Congratulations to the commanding officers, and their teams, at the good establishments this year. Their success is indicative of the very good work that so many military and civilian staff do to train and care for recruits and trainees. However, more remains to be done. I have reported persistent and serious weaknesses in resources, infrastructure and accommodation for the past 6 years. As this report demonstrates, such weaknesses affect the quality of training and recruits' and trainees' experiences. I strongly urge colleagues in the MoD to deal with the recommendations from this report swiftly and with resolve, so that they provide future generations of Armed Forces personnel with the high-quality training, care and welfare they deserve.

Background

Ofsted inspects the training, care and welfare arrangements for recruits, trainees and officer cadets at phase 1 and phase 2 training establishments for Regular and Reserve personnel. This includes officer cadets training at USUs.

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

Ofsted's [terms of reference](#) are set out in a memorandum of understanding between the Secretary of State for Defence and His Majesty's Chief Inspector. This includes a requirement for Ofsted to:

- determine the extent to which progress has been made in addressing issues of care, welfare and support for recruits and trainees during initial training in the Armed Forces, including examining establishments' self-assessment
- evaluate the effectiveness of the strategic and operational management of the care, welfare and support for recruits and trainees during initial training in the Armed Forces

Inspections and visits carried out

This report draws on evidence from 8 inspections of Regular training establishments, 4 inspections of Reserve units, and one combined inspection of 5 URNUs and their headquarters.

Of the 8 Regular training establishments inspected during 2021/22:

- 2 provided phase 1 training for Army personnel (ITC Catterick and Army Training Centre (ATC) Pirbright)
- 1 provided phase 1 training for RAF officer cadets (RAFOTA)
- 1 provided phase 2 medical training for Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force personnel (DMA)
- 2 provided phase 2 training for Army personnel (Royal Engineer training at Minley Station and the Royal Military School of Music (RMSM))
- 1 provided phase 2 training for Royal Marines musicians (Royal Marines School of Music (RMSoM))
- 1 provided phase 2 engineering training for Royal Navy officers and ratings (HMS Sultan)

Inspectors completed graded inspections of 4 Reserve training establishments. Of these:

- 1 was an Army Training Unit that provides phase 1 training for Army Reserves from around the UK (Army Training Unit (North) (ATU(N)))
- 1 was a parent unit for Royal Marines Reserves (RMR Merseyside)
- 1 was an inland parent unit for Royal Navy Reserves (HMS Sherwood)
- 1 was a Royal Auxiliary Air Force unit that provides phase 2 training for RAF police Reserves (3 (Tactical) Police Squadron (3TPS))

In addition, this year we carried out an ungraded combined inspection of the following 5 URNUs and their headquarters:

- URNU Bristol
- URNU Cambridge
- URNU London
- URNU Northumbria
- URNU Liverpool
- Universities Department (URNU HQ), Britannia Royal Naval College (BRNC), Dartmouth

At the MoD's request, we also carried out a review of Army Reserve initial training, care and welfare. Inspectors visited several Army Reserve units, the Army Recruitment and Initial Training Command (ARITC) headquarters and the Initial Training Group (ITG). They also interviewed staff

from the Land Warfare Centre and Field Army Headquarters.

Inspectors reviewed training, care and welfare arrangements of the Army Reserve at:

- 7th Battalion, The Rifles
- 3rd Battalion, The Royal Welsh
- 5th Battalion, Royal Regiment of Fusiliers
- 3rd Battalion, Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment
- 103 Battalion, Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers
- 162 Regiment, Royal Logistic Corps
- Army Recruiting and Initial Training Command, Upavon
- Initial Training Group, Pirbright
- Land Warfare Centre
- Field Army HQ

A summary of the results of this review is included within this report.

How we carried out our inspections

This was the second year that we have used the [revised MoD inspection handbook](#). This handbook aligns closely with Ofsted's [education inspection framework](#), but has been adapted for inspections of Armed Forces initial training.

Each Regular training establishment received no more than 48 hours' notice of inspection. Reserve training units and USUs received 2 weeks' notice, because they provide training on a part-time basis.

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

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

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

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

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

Recommendations for improvement for all Regular and Reserve training establishments

- Urgently deal with the continuing and repeated failures in infrastructure. Provide commanding officers and their teams with clear guidance and funding to improve accommodation and infrastructure so that recruits, trainees and staff can live, learn and work in good-quality, well-maintained settings.
- Ensure that female recruits and trainees are given suitable kit and uniforms, and accommodation that provides adequate security, privacy and facilities.
- Continue to reduce the numbers of recruits and trainees on holdover or in unprogrammed time away from training. Where this is unavoidable, minimise the time they spend out of training and give them meaningful and relevant activities that help them to develop their military or trade knowledge and skills.
- Provide all recruits and trainees with food that enables them to do their physical training. Provide clear information about nutrition so that they can choose healthy food.
- Plan training programmes so that they are logical, and help recruits and trainees to develop their knowledge and skills quickly. Review any distance learning, online learning or courses delivered by contractors, to ensure that these are effective and help recruits and trainees to learn what they need to know.
- Review and improve policies that have an impact on the training, care and welfare of recruits and trainees, specifically, but not limited to:
 - the policy on mandatory checks for staff who interact frequently with recruits or trainees under the age of 18
 - the policy to inform staff, recruits and trainees about the 'Prevent' duty
 - the Army policy on trainees who require driving licences before leaving phase 2
- Provide potential recruits with more realistic and comprehensive information about the rigours and benefits of military training before they join.
- Improve the guidance and support for commanding officers on self-assessment, monitoring improvement and using data, so that they can better identify what works well and what needs to improve.

Establishments' inspection history

Inspections before September 2020 were carried out under a different handbook. These tables, therefore, are given as guidance only and does not provide a direct comparison of grades across years.

Regular establishments

Establishment	Overall effectiveness (2021-2022)	Key judgements (2021-2022): quality of training and support; personal and professional development; quality of facilities, infrastructure and resources; and effectiveness of leadership and management	Key judgements (previous inspection): outcomes; quality of welfare and care' and leadership and management (date of previous inspection)
Defence Medical Academy (previously the Defence College of Health Education and Training)	3	3, 2, 3, 3	2, 2, 2 (17 January 2017)
RAF Officer Training Academy (previously Officer and Aircrew Training Unit), RAF Cranwell	3	2, 2, 4, 2	1, 1, 1 (8 December 2015)
Royal Engineer training at Minley Station	2	2, 2, 2, 2	Previously inspected as part of Royal School Military Engineers (RSME) Group – 1, 2, 2

(30 September 2015)

HMS Sultan	2	2, 2, 2, 2	2, 2, 2 (monitoring visit 30 January 2019)
Royal Marines School of Music	2	2, 2, 2, 2	First inspection
Royal Military School of Music	2	2, 2, 2, 2	First standalone inspection. Previously inspected as part of RSME Group – 1, 2, 2 (30 September 2015)
Infantry Training Centre, Catterick	2	1, 2, 2, 1	2, 1, 1 (4 October 2016)
Army Training Centre, Pirbright	2	2, 2, 2, 2	2, 1, 1 (2 October 2018)

Note: 1 = Outstanding, 2 = Good, 3 = Requires improvement, 4 = Inadequate

Reserve establishments

Establishment	Overall effectiveness (2021-2022)	Key judgements (2021-2022): quality of training and support;	Key judgements (previous inspection): outcomes; quality of welfare and care' and leadership and management (date of previous inspection)
Royal Marines Reserve Merseyside	2	2, 2, 2, 2	First inspection
Army Training Unit (North)	2	2, 2, 3, 2	First inspection

3 Tactical Police Squadron, RAF Honington	2	2, 2, 2, 2	First inspection
HMS Sherwood	2	2, 2, 2, 2	First inspection

Note: 1 = Outstanding, 2 = Good, 3 = Requires improvement, 4 = Inadequate

Summary findings

Quality of training and support

Of the 12 establishments inspected and graded, one was graded outstanding for the quality of training and support. This was the ITC at Catterick, where staff provided exceptional support for recruits and trainees.

Ten establishments were graded good for the quality of training and support: Royal Engineer training at Minley Station, ATU(N), HMS Sultan, HMS Sherwood, RMR Merseyside, RMSM, RMSoM, RAFOTA, ATC Pirbright and 3TPS at RAF Honington. One establishment, the DMA, was graded as requires improvement.

At the DMA, the quality of training is not good enough. Commanders have not ensured that courses are high quality or that trainees are learning what they should. Not all trainers are effective at teaching or assessing trainees. Many trainees find the pace of teaching and assessment too fast, and cannot consolidate their learning. Trainee military nurses studying degrees at BCU do not always master the knowledge and skills they need before their placements, and do not feel they have been taught topics in a logical order or thoroughly enough.

In the other establishments inspected this year, there was a strong emphasis on the training, care and welfare of recruits and trainees. Senior commanders and their staff work diligently to train and support recruits and trainees to move successfully on to the next stage in their careers. Most staff are highly motivated to help recruits and trainees do well, and many are exceptional role models who recruits and trainees aspire to emulate.

In these good establishments, training and welfare staff work closely together to provide well-coordinated welfare arrangements that benefit recruits and trainees who need support. Many staff work long hours to provide the level of support that their recruits and trainees need. This has especially been the case during the COVID-19 pandemic. Recruits and trainees have swift access to support from their chain of command, and also from a range of other personnel, such as the padres, chaplains and medical staff. They have the confidence to approach staff for help and support.

At ITC Catterick, staff provide recruits with highly individualised care and welfare support. Well-trained and compassionate specialist staff closely monitor individual recruits' needs, and ensure that they get the help and support they require. Trainees at RMSM highly value the support and respect they get from the training staff. At Minley Station, staff communicate well with each other about trainees who need additional support, and keep detailed records of any action they need to take or have taken. They are diligent in monitoring trainees who may be more vulnerable, including those under the age of 18.

At most establishments, the management of recruits or trainees who are deemed at risk, either of not completing training or because of welfare concerns, is good. At HMS Sultan, ATC Pirbright, HMS Sherwood and Minley Station, staff monitor this particularly closely. At HMS Sultan, the Royal Navy divisional officer system provides good support for trainees, including those who receive additional support from chaplains and medical teams. At RMSM and RMSoM, staff at every level get to know their trainees quickly as individuals and as musicians. This enables staff to provide relevant care and support, or signpost trainees to specialist support available in the naval base. At the DMA, staff are often too busy to provide the full support that their trainees need. However, trainee medics under the age of 18 receive good mentoring and support. A few of the training and support staff at RAFOTA lack the skills to support officer cadets (OCdts) with more complicated personal needs, such as those with young families at home.

The training teams in most establishments have designed courses well. Most trainers teach these courses effectively. As a result, recruits and trainees gain new knowledge, learn new skills effectively and practise them frequently. At Minley Station, engineering trainees construct and dismantle bridges competently. At RMSM and RMSoM, trainees play various styles of music to a high standard as members of marching bands, big bands and orchestras. At 3TPS, trainees learn how to deter and secure assailants swiftly and safely. In most URNUs, OCdts learn useful skills, such as maritime navigation and radio communications. However, not all URNUs teach the syllabus they should, so some OCdts do not learn the knowledge and skills they need.

At HMS Sultan, air engineer trainees benefit from learning the practical and theory elements of their courses in a logical sequence. However, this is not the case for marine engineers, because their course is not organised in a way that helps them to consolidate what they have learned in theory sessions. At HMS Sherwood, experienced recruits must repeat some of the training that they have already done when new recruits start, because staff have not sequenced the training well enough.

Recruits at ATC Pirbright sometimes struggle to remember what they have learned because their course is so intense and they find it overwhelming, especially in the early stages.

Training facilities and specialist resources in most establishments are very good. At RMSM and RMSoM, trainee musicians have excellent spaces in which to learn and practise their music skills, either individually or as part of a large orchestra. HMS Sherwood recruits and OCdts benefit from sharing facilities with an Army Reserve unit. Here, they have access to good drill facilities, as well as to assault courses and rifle ranges. Many OCdts at URNUs use good sporting and fitness facilities at their units. Training staff at RAFOTA have developed very good training materials, including online resources, to help OCdts develop leadership skills. However, recruits at ATU(N) find the distance learning that they complete dull and uninspiring. At 3TPS, while the practical training facilities are high quality, much of the training material is outdated. Trainers adapt materials to make them more relevant, but are waiting for better training technology and resources from the Defence School of Policing and Guarding to secure longer-term solutions.

Training staff in some establishments are still failing to provide purposeful activities for recruits and trainees who are on holdover, despite Ofsted reporting on this for several years. Recruits and trainees can be on holdover because they are ill or injured, and so are temporarily not in training, or because they are waiting to start their phase 2 training. Where staff do not provide recruits and trainees with enough to do, or give them dull and often pointless activities, recruits and trainees become bored and demotivated. At HMS Sultan, trainees who have previously achieved GCSE qualifications in English or mathematics do not have structured, interesting activities to do while they wait for their peers to complete functional skills courses. Staff at RAFOTA, ITC Catterick and ATC Pirbright work hard to reduce the time that recruits spend waiting for medical procedures, but always give these recruits enough to do. At Minley Station, too many trainees are prevented from moving to the next phase of their careers because they are waiting to learn to drive.

Most recruits and trainees who need rehabilitation following injury are supported well by specialist medical staff who help them to rejoin training swiftly. At ITC Catterick, recruits who need physiotherapy treatment receive it quickly. At ATC Pirbright, staff help recruits with rehabilitation, while providing them with helpful information about nutrition, physiology and how bodies heal. At HMS Sultan, injured engineering trainees recover in a separate division, where staff help them to catch up with training that they have missed. At the DMA, injured trainees have clear target dates for when they can rejoin training. Specialist staff give each of these trainees exercises designed to help them recover rapidly. At ATU(N), medically trained staff attend training activities where injuries may occur, in order to minimise these.

Staff in most establishments effectively support recruits and trainees with learning difficulties or additional needs to help them succeed in training. RMSM and RMSoM staff do this especially well for trainees who may need extra support to overcome anxiety or take examinations. At ATC Pirbright, staff give recruits effective guidance on how to improve their memory. At the DMA, specialist staff are effective in helping trainees with learning difficulties, but trainers do not always

take trainees' learning needs into account when teaching. Consequently, some trainees struggle to keep up with the fast pace of training.

Physical training instructors (PTIs) provide recruits and trainees at most establishments with structured and appropriate training. This helps recruits and trainees to develop their fitness in a safe and managed way to meet the high standards they need to achieve. The PTIs help OCdts at RAFOTA to take responsibility for their own fitness levels and well-being, and to think about the fitness needs of those they will lead in the future, and their oversight of them. Engineering trainees at Minley Station improve their fitness well because the PTIs structure their training effectively. PTIs at ITC Catterick support recruits who may struggle with fitness, providing them with bespoke training packages. Recruits at RMR Merseyside develop their fitness effectively in preparation for their 2-week commando course at the Commando Training Centre in Lympstone. Staff at RMSoM prepare trainees well for combat fitness tests and long periods of time playing in marching bands. RMSM was without a PTI for a short time, so trainees could not undertake physical training. This has now been rectified and trainees are again benefiting from a managed programme of activities, including swimming circuits at nearby HMS Temeraire.

Training staff in most establishments are highly motivated and experienced. Many military trainers are excellent role models for recruits and trainees, who look up to their staff as being the soldiers, sailors and aviators they aspire to be. Recruits and trainees also highly value the input of the many civilian trainers who teach and support them. Military trainers are often selected for the role based on their attributes and experience. Most military and civilian trainers at Regular establishments complete the mandated Defence Trainer course (DTc), either before or shortly after joining the establishment. Not enough Reservist trainers have completed the DTc, because there are not enough places allocated for them on courses, or because they are not able to commit the time to complete the course in its current format.

At ATU(N), permanent staff and visiting instructors are carefully chosen by senior commanders. RMSM commanders carefully select and train expert Army musicians so that they can teach and support trainees well, in collaboration with civilian music specialist teachers. At ITC Catterick, highly skilled military trainers use their knowledge and expertise well to turn recruits and trainees into infantry soldiers. In URNUs, many staff are experienced trainers and have relevant military or maritime knowledge. URNU commanders have recently developed a training syllabus that provides new trainers with the relevant skills and knowledge that they need to train OCdts.

At the DMA, RAF personnel must prove their ability to train in order to be accepted for trainer roles. However, DMA trainers from the Royal Navy and Army are often non-volunteers who are sometimes uninterested in training others. Trainers at the DMA are often required to teach topics outside of their specialist medical knowledge, so trainees do not benefit from being taught by experts. DMA trainee nurses who are on undergraduate courses taught by BCU tutors are negative about the training they receive. However, many undergraduate nurses gain a first-class degree.

The number of recruits and trainees who succeed in training continues to be high in most establishments, and is now mostly at pre COVID-19 levels. At Minley Station, HMS Sultan, RAFOTA, ATU(N) and 3TPS, almost all recruits and trainees pass training because of the good teaching and high levels of support that staff provide for them. At RMSM and RMsOM, trainees progress through training at their own pace and almost all are successful because of the very good coaching and support they receive. While a very high proportion of foundation medics at the DMA ultimately complete their course, many take several attempts to do so.

A high proportion of Army recruits leave ITC Catterick or ATC Pirbright in the first few weeks of training. Many potential recruits simply do not receive the guidance they need at the recruitment stage to understand the rigours of Army life and initial training, so are ill-prepared. Commanders are reviewing the information provided for potential recruits and their parents to help them know what to expect, but more needs to be done at the recruitment stage and by Armed Forces careers information offices. The pass rates at ATC Pirbright have fallen during the COVID-19 pandemic to the lowest in 3 years. At RMR Merseyside, the overall pass rates are low. Many recruits leave the RMR before they complete training, because of the physical demands of the course. Senior commanders have recognised this and recently introduced an orientation phase so that recruits can better prepare for their courses.

Personal and professional development

All establishments were graded good for personal and professional development.

Most recruits and trainees who remain in training beyond their first weeks enjoy it and feel they have made the right decision to join the military. They have a positive attitude to training, to each other and to staff, and quickly develop the qualities they need to do well in their Service careers. Recruits learn about the standards they need to achieve very early in their training, and most overcome the challenges that arise in changing from a civilian to a Service person. Trainees in phase 2 training build on what they learned in phase 1, to display high levels of military values and standards. Recruits and trainees are rightly proud of their achievements, and proud of being members of the Armed Forces.

Because of the good support they receive from staff, recruits and trainees learn to live and work with each other very well. They quickly value the support and camaraderie that working as part of a team brings. Most staff demonstrate excellent military skills and behaviours, and recruits and trainees hold them in high esteem. Staff at ATC Pirbright teach recruits to work as a team through a range of training activities, so that recruits quickly understand the importance of teamwork in the Army. At RMSM and RMsOM, expert musician trainers teach trainees what standards are required to be part of a military band. At RMR Merseyside, staff introduce recruits to Royal Marines values right at the start of their training. DMA staff ensure that trainee nurses at BCU are regularly included

in military routines such as physical training and accommodation checks. As a result, these trainees still feel part of the military, despite living in university student accommodation.

Senior officers and staff in all establishments work hard to develop an inclusive and welcoming culture. Most recruits and trainees have great respect for one another. Almost all feel that their unit is a safe place in which to live and train. Staff in all establishments swiftly investigate any allegations of bullying or discrimination. Recruits and trainees know that if they raise concerns these will be dealt with appropriately. Female officer cadets at RAFOTA say that staff and their male peers treat them fairly and respectfully. The very few female engineering trainees at Minley Station feel as valued as their male peers. Female musicians at both RMSoM and RMSM are exceptionally positive about the attitudes of male trainees and staff. At HMS Sultan, a few female trainees have been subjected to inappropriate language from a small number of male trainees, despite the best efforts of the staff to stem this.

Commanders and staff in most establishments focus on developing the health and well-being of recruits and trainees. This includes improving their mental resilience and confidence, as well as improving and sustaining their physical health. Recruits at ATC Pirbright learn to present topics to others to build their confidence in public speaking. Combat engineering trainees who were previously non-swimmers quickly learn to swim. This is an essential skill for these trainees, who frequently carry out activities near water, and it builds their confidence and resilience. RAFOTA OCdts are taught how to stay physically and mentally healthy, as staff understand that this makes them better at leading other people. OCdts develop new knowledge, such as understanding how emotional intelligence and communication help them to lead others.

At the DMA, trainees are often anxious about the quantity of information they need to learn, about their lack of practice in skills and techniques, and about the number of assessments they have. Many lack confidence in themselves as a result. Staff have not responded to trainees' concerns well enough. Nor have they provided trainees with enough information on important aspects of their course, such as the nature of their medical placements or the structure of training.

Staff at most training establishments provide some information about healthy eating, but the response to this is variable. Too often, catering facilities do not display the information that recruits or trainees need in order to make knowledgeable decisions about what to eat. At ITC Catterick, staff teach recruits about healthy lifestyle choices soon after arrival. Staff at RMR Merseyside give advice on healthy living and eating to recruits who are struggling with their fitness. However, recruits do not learn about the importance of good nutrition, and the part it plays in supporting good physical and mental well-being, early enough in their training.

Recruits and trainees benefit from a range of sports and activities outside the training day. This has continued to improve in all training establishments since the COVID-19 restrictions were lifted.

URNU staff work hard to provide OCdts with activities that they really value alongside the structured syllabus. These include adventurous training, sport and military events such as Remembrance Day

parades. At Minley Station, trainees can participate in a wide range of activities, sports clubs and elite sports competitions.

Most recruits and trainees know what progress they are making and what skills and knowledge they still need to master. The large majority understand the military career path available to them and know what their next steps are. Musicians at RMSM and RMSoM are very well prepared to join their first military bands, as staff frequently inform them of what to expect. OCdts at RAFOTA know what their later career training will be, right from their arrival. Recruits from Pirbright visit their phase 2 establishments before they leave phase 1. As a result, they are well prepared and look forward to the next stages of their military careers. URNU staff support OCdts who wish to pursue a Royal Navy career very well through the application process. Combat engineering trainees in 3 RSME Regiment (Regt) are not informed well enough about how they are selected for a specific trade, or what happens once they complete training at Minley Station, because staff at careers information offices and at Minley do not provide them with sufficient information.

Most recruits and trainees only have a basic awareness of how to protect themselves from radicalisation and extremism. Staff do not reinforce knowledge or check understanding frequently enough. Too often these topics are only covered briefly during induction or in an annual lecture. Staff rarely discuss them with recruits or trainees and often only have the same basic information as the recruits or trainees. In most establishments, the vast majority of recruits and trainees do not have a good understanding of national and local threats. Recruits at HMS Sherwood do not complete their online learning about this subject early enough in their training. RMR Merseyside staff do not teach recruits how to avoid risks. At the DMA, however, trainees are well informed by staff about possible risks in their locality, and staff keep trainees' knowledge up to date effectively during their courses. At HMS Sultan, trainees know how to work online safely, and how to recognise signs of radicalisation and extremism. At ITC Catterick, recruits and trainees have a good awareness of the risks posed by extremist groups to military personnel.

Quality of facilities, infrastructure and resources

Nine establishments were graded good for the quality of their facilities, infrastructure and resources: Minley Station, ICT Catterick, ATC Pirbright, HMS Sultan, HMS Sherwood, RMSM, RMSoM, RMR Merseyside and 3TPS. Two establishments were graded as requires improvement: DMA and ATU(N). One establishment, RAFOTA, was graded inadequate.

Although inspectors found good facilities and resources in most establishments, they continued to find failing infrastructure, including poor accommodation for recruits and trainees. This requires urgent rectification. Far too often there are problems with heating and plumbing. Too many establishments have poorly maintained infrastructure and are in need of refurbishment. This causes much inconvenience and discomfort to staff, recruits and trainees, whose morale is frequently

affected negatively by the deteriorating conditions in which they live and work. Command teams often lack the authority or sufficient funds to improve things for recruits and trainees quickly. Because of poor contracting arrangements, it frequently takes too long for even minor faults to be fixed.

For the first time since the current inspection handbook was introduced, living and teaching accommodation at one location, RAFOTA, was found to be so poor that inspectors judged it inadequate. Classrooms were not used because of leaking roofs. Heating, electrical and drainage systems were not functioning properly, so OCdts were unable to stay warm or have hot showers. There were insufficient washing facilities for the number of OCdts in training.

Buildings and infrastructure at the DMA, ATU(N), HMS Sultan, 3TPS and ITC Catterick all need significant improvements. DMA senior commanders do not have effective oversight of the maintenance contractor's work, and repairs take far too long to be done. The contractor's response to requests for repairs is poor, even for minor works. Trainees are literally left in the dark because lighting does not work. The roof of the welfare centre leaks and the contractor's unsatisfactory repairs have failed to rectify this, so trainees cannot use the full facility. At ATU(N), old and run-down infrastructure at the Altcar and Strensall sites needs continuous attention just to keep it functioning. Ageing Nissen huts are due for demolition because of the presence of asbestos, and staff have no alternative classrooms to use for training. The team at Altcar carry out urgent repairs quickly, but at Strensall, which is due to close, repairs take too long.

Much of the training estate at HMS Sultan needs refurbishment or replacement, including the medical and dental centres. Some accommodation blocks need attention. At RAF Honington, staff at 3TPS carry out some training in an old aircraft shelter that lacks natural light and has loud heating fans, which makes it difficult for trainees to hear properly. The toilet facilities that they use during training are in poor condition. At ITC Catterick, many classrooms are run down and require refurbishment. Although senior staff have secured funds, work on improving recruits' accommodation and classrooms has not yet started. The laundry facilities for the DMA trainee nurses at BCU are inefficient.

In contrast, senior staff at ATC Pirbright ensured that problems with hot water and infrastructure identified at a previous inspection were rectified. Trainees at Minley Station have good accommodation. Senior staff work closely with contractors to prioritise trainees' accommodation and facilities over other areas that need maintenance, so that faults are fixed quickly. At RMSM and RMSoM, trainees' accommodation is comfortable, with adequate space to relax, sleep and store clothing and equipment, although minor faults are not always fixed promptly. Recruits at HMS Sherwood use good-quality and well-maintained accommodation during weekend training. Staff at RMR Merseyside manage infrastructure and facilities well, so that they are clean and functional.

Most recruits and trainees have somewhere comfortable where they can relax with their peers after the training day. RAFOTA OCdts have access to a social bar, games rooms and areas where they

can make hot drinks. RMSM and RMSoM trainees have well-equipped recreation areas in their accommodation blocks, and are close to amenities in central Portsmouth. Trainees at Minley Station have access to nearby civilian retail and food outlets. At ITC Catterick, recruits use their very well-equipped recreation areas frequently. They watch sports events on large TV screens and play games on consoles provided by staff.

Not all establishments consider the needs of female recruits and/or trainees. Women are often accommodated away from their male peers. While this ensures privacy and security, it has led to some being isolated, especially in establishments where there are very few female recruits, such as at ITC Catterick. Staff at 3TPS do not always ensure that female trainees have sufficient privacy in their accommodation. At ATC Pirbright, staff do not ensure that all female recruits are issued with uniforms or equipment, such as rucksacks, that fit them properly. Not only does this prevent them from looking as presentable as their male peers, but poorly fitting equipment can also increase the risk of injury.

Many recruits and trainees benefit from good training facilities. Trainers use technology well to help recruits and trainees to learn new knowledge. For example, at ATU(N), trainers use smartboards effectively, to enhance teaching and learning. Minley Station staff use online resources well to help trainee engineers understand important concepts. Most classrooms and training spaces are fit for purpose, and those at RMR Merseyside and Minley Station, particularly, are well resourced and well maintained. Trainees at RMSM and RMSoM use individual music practice rooms that they value highly. However, these are limited in number and now reaching capacity. The practice block is not heated properly, and this can be detrimental to trainees' musical instruments, as well as their ability to practise.

Physical training facilities in all establishments are at least good and sometimes better, including facilities to rehabilitate injured recruits or trainees. PT staff at all establishments make very good use of their facilities to improve recruits' and trainees' fitness. Facilities at ATC Pirbright are of very high quality. Trainees at Minley Station benefit from very good sports and fitness facilities, including an excellent swimming pool. The equipment at ITC Catterick was recently refurbished and recruits now have access to state-of-the-art facilities. Trainee medics at the DMA and DMA undergraduates based at BCU have good access to well-equipped gym facilities. Recruits at RMR Merseyside, and at the detachments, benefit from good-quality gym and sports facilities, and assault courses, that help them prepare well for their assessments at Commando Training Centre Royal Marines (CTCRM). The gym facilities that ATU(N) shares with other units are maintained well and have a suitable range of equipment.

In most training establishments, recruits and trainees have very good access to on-site medical and dental care. In these establishments, recruits and trainees have priority access, and usually obtain a rapid appointment on the day they request one. This includes specialist treatment, such as physiotherapy following injury. Medical staff in most establishments work closely with training and welfare staff to monitor the effectiveness of treatment on recruits and trainees, and try to return

those injured to training as soon as it is safe to do so.

Trainees at RMSM and RMSoM, who use the medical facilities at HMS Nelson, do not have the same good access to medical support as their peers elsewhere. Too often, trainees wait too long for an appointment to be signed off as medically fit and cannot return swiftly enough to training. This delays their progress and undermines morale. At Minley Station, the increasing number of trainees on holdover is putting pressure on the limited medical facilities there. In URNUs, medical assessments that are part of the recruitment process for OCdts and training officers (TOs) take too long. This has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. OCdts and TOs who are waiting for medicals cannot participate fully in training.

Most recruits and trainees are provided with plenty of food, and usually have a range of menu options available to them. At ITC Catterick, recruits can ask for additional portions if they are hungry. Gurkha recruits are given a choice of food that they are familiar with. At RAFOTA, menu choices are limited for vegetarians and vegans and there is not enough fruit or salad. At Minley Station, the choice of food is good during the week, but less good at weekends.

In too many establishments, catering staff do not provide enough dietary information to enable recruits and trainees to choose suitable, nutritious food. Too often, catering staff do not provide appropriate menu options for recruits or trainees who are undertaking large amounts of physical training. At HMS Nelson, RMSM and RMSoM, the food is of a reasonable quality and there are plenty of menu choices, but often there is no information about the food at all, including what the dishes are. Many RMSM and RMSoM trainees prefer to prepare their own food in the accommodation block kitchens. At HMS Sultan, trainees have limited facilities to prepare their own food if they choose to do so. Trainees at the DMA do not usually eat in the mess because they do not enjoy the food served there. Many live on microwaved ready meals because they do not have other kitchen facilities to prepare fresh food.

Effectiveness of leadership and management

One establishment was graded outstanding for the effectiveness of leadership and management: ITC Catterick. Ten were graded good: Minley Station, ATC Pirbright, HMS Sultan, HMS Sherwood, RMSM, RMSoM, RAFOTA, RMR Merseyside, ATU(N) and 3TPS. The effectiveness of leadership and management at the DMA requires improvement.

Commanding officers are good at informing staff of their high expectations and aspirations for recruits and trainees. At RMR Merseyside, for example, the command team makes sure that the ethos and culture it promotes for and to recruits are what the Royal Marines Corps expects. At HMS Sultan, ITC Catterick, ATU(N) and RMSoM, senior commanders set out their clear purpose and vision to their teams particularly effectively. Senior commanders at these establishments give staff

clear direction on the standards they expect, through detailed supervisory care directives. They review potential risks to recruits and trainees carefully, and provide clear strategies for mitigating these in their commanders' risk assessment documents.

Most senior teams implement effective processes to manage and monitor the training, care and welfare of recruits and trainees. These are especially effective in monitoring individual recruits and trainees where some form of intervention is required. At HMS Sherwood, staff go above and beyond to support trainees and OCdts so that they do well. At HMS Sultan, there is comprehensive oversight of the welfare and care of trainees, and staff intervene quickly to provide relevant support. However, senior staff at RMSM lack sufficient capacity to implement thorough systems to sustain good care and welfare of their trainees. Similarly, the URNUs and their headquarters do not have enough staff to manage the quality of training, and care and welfare, well enough. At the DMA, while staff manage the care and welfare of the trainees effectively, senior commanders do not monitor the quality of training well.

As we have highlighted in previous reports, in too many establishments senior staff spend too much time and energy dealing with failing infrastructure. This diverts them from their core role of providing high-quality training, care and welfare. Too much effort is spent on trying to secure funding to maintain deteriorating estates, or managing contractors who do not do the work required. Consequently, recruits and trainees often live or train in poor conditions, or do not always have access to the high-quality facilities they should expect as members of the Armed Forces.

Staff in most establishments continue to consider carefully what recruits and trainees say about their experiences. Senior staff in most establishments use a range of sources to provide them with information about what works well, and what they could improve. However, at HMS Sherwood, staff use a limited range of ways to gather feedback from recruits and trainees. At the DMA, staff do not take swift or effective action to improve trainees' learning or living conditions following adverse feedback in recruit training surveys (RTS) and other surveys.

Most senior staff are aware of the strengths and weaknesses in the quality of their training, care and welfare. But, too often, they do not evaluate these well enough in their self-assessment reports or identify the root causes of weaknesses. Often, important factors that have an impact on the experiences of recruits and trainees, such as poor accommodation, are excluded altogether. RMSM staff have not yet developed a useful self-assessment process. As reported in previous years, the actions captured in quality improvement plans do not always correspond to weaknesses in self-assessment reports. Commanders are now expected to give an analysis of a range of factors to the MoD. These form a useful initial evaluation for self-assessment reports, but command teams have yet to capitalise on this. In many establishments, commanders struggle to use the information they have to analyse what works well and what they should focus on improving. In URNU headquarters, senior staff do not routinely use available information to identify trends and inconsistencies across the units they are responsible for.

Senior commanders still do not provide staff, recruits and trainees with enough information about the risks of extremism and radicalisation. They follow the MoD policy guidance to provide information at induction and annually, but rarely more frequently. Without any further training or reinforcement of knowledge, recruits and trainees forget what they have learned.

Summary of the review of Army Reserve initial training

The focus of this review was the leadership, management and governance of Reserves initial training, care and welfare, based on the 4 key judgement areas of the current Ofsted [MoD inspection handbook](#).

The review covered the following areas:

- governance and oversight of initial Reservist training, care and welfare
- structure and management of training under the Common Military Syllabus (Reserves) 21
- selection and training of staff
- staffing levels
- management of training risk
- internal assurance and continuous improvement processes
- management of information

There were 3 stages to the review: an initial visit to the ARITC training headquarters in Upavon and ITG headquarters in Pirbright; visits to a selection of Field Army Reserve parent units; and a follow-up visit to the ARITC training headquarters in Upavon. These visits took place between 26 April and 12 May 2022. Inspectors spoke to senior commanders, quality assurance teams, parent unit commanding officers and their teams, and a range of specialists. Inspectors also met with Army personnel from the Land Warfare Centre based in Warminster and the Field Army headquarters in Andover.

Inspectors made recommendations to the MoD based on the following summary of findings:

- Many Army teams were involved in the assurance of different aspects of Reserve training, but they did not collaborate or share information sufficiently. Not all aspects of Reserves training, care and welfare were governed or assured effectively.
- While most recruits were trained and cared for well when training at ATUs and Army Training Regiments (ATRs), the staff at ARITC headquarters and the Field Army headquarters did not have a complete overview of what happened to recruits during their time at parent units between attending training modules. Not all recruits undertake their training at ATUs and ATRs, and there is no clear oversight or governance of the training, care and welfare of the recruits who train

elsewhere.

- Reserve recruits' physical training is mostly unsupervised when they are not at an ATU or ATR. This means that the risk of injury is higher than if staff provided more supervision.
- Too many initial training courses at ATUs and ATRs run under capacity, because too many parent units make multiple bookings for their Reservists.

Reports in date order

Defence Medical Academy

The DMA was established to unify military medical training. It operates across 3 sites: DMA, Whittington Barracks; BCU, City South Campus; and Joint Service School of Exercise Rehabilitation Instructors at the Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre, Stanford Hall.

The medical training provided by the DMA extends across a wide range of disciplines, from level 3 non-vocational healthcare support workers (for example, Military Medics) to consultant doctors, dentists and other health professionals taking level 8 (doctoral) qualifications. The DMA delivers most of the academic training that is below undergraduate level, as well as any training with a military focus, at the Whittington Barracks site. It delivers higher academic training in partnership with BCU and Leeds Beckett University. DMA staff manage and provide academic and personal support to trainees.

This inspection was carried out over 2 visits to the DMA. The visits included inspecting courses for phase 2 undergraduate trainees following 3- or 4-year degree courses in nursing, radiography, biomedical science, operating department practice or environmental health. When visit one was carried out, there were around 385 trainees on these courses, and around 300 when visit 2 was carried out. The inspection also included phase 2 junior ranks' training on 26-week non-higher education courses at the DMA for foundation medics, healthcare assistants or dental nurses (104 at the time of the first visit and 240 at the time of the second visit). During the second visit to the DMA, inspectors also considered the RAF young officers' course, which had 69 trainees enrolled at the time. At the time of the first visit, the DMA had around 120 trainees in holdover, in the Trainee Management Division (TMD). Holdover numbers had reduced significantly to 26 by the time of the second visit.

The inspected provision represents a small part of the total training throughput at the DMA, with the vast majority of training being at phase 3.

Main findings

- The quality of support for phase 2 trainees is good, but the quality of training is not yet good. DMA leaders do not exercise sufficient control over course delivery and scheduling. Consequently, they do not ensure that provision is high quality and that trainees learn successfully. For trainees on the foundation medic course, levels of support are necessarily high because training is not always good enough.
- Trainers and trainees are uncertain about the purpose of the large number of assessments that trainees must complete on the DMA-based courses. Trainers do not use the results of assessments to adapt training or help trainees understand the progress they are making. Trainees spend much of their time cramming information into their short-term memory. As a result, they struggle to consolidate their learning and commit concepts to long-term memory.
- Most DMA trainers are highly regarded by trainees for their experience as Defence professionals. But the ability of trainers varies. A few trainers simply read out slide presentations in class with little or no interaction with trainees.
- Too many trainers from the Royal Navy and Army are simply posted to the DMA without any checks that they are fit for, or interested in, trainer roles. In contrast, RAF personnel must demonstrate an interest in, and capacity for, training. Once at the DMA, trainers are too often allocated topics to teach depending on availability rather than subject knowledge and expertise.
- Most trainees on the undergraduate courses at BCU are unhappy with the quality of the training they have received, which is delivered mostly online. The feedback they receive from tutors is not always detailed or clear. Trainees in the third year of their nursing course do not feel that they have mastered the foundation knowledge needed for their roles when they go to their units.
- The sequencing of the BCU undergraduate curriculum requires improvement. The order in which staff have covered topics, and the priority given to topics, has not always made sense to trainees. For example, trainees spent a lot of time on the communication and leadership and management topics but did not develop sufficient understanding about key topics such as pharmacology. As a result, some trainees struggled to apply their professional skills in their work placements and to be signed off as competent.
- Dyslexic trainees, and those with other specific learning difficulties, value highly the good support they receive from specialist staff. However, many trainers at the DMA make no allowance for learning needs in classes and run through lengthy slideshow presentations too quickly.
- Often on DMA and BCU courses, trainees' learning is not secure, and they must rely on extra help and support outside the working day. This can lead to long days for staff and trainees. A significant minority of DMA-based trainees struggle to manage their stress levels and anxiety. As a result, support staff work very hard to mitigate these difficulties.
- Most DMA-based trainees feel able to approach their course manager, normally a sergeant, for help or guidance. But course managers have such a high caseload that they either do not have the time or, in a few cases, the inclination to provide the proper individualised support that

trainees need. Trainees on the undergraduate-level courses who are, or are potentially, at risk of not achieving are monitored and supported well by DMA staff to get back on track. Trainees appreciate the knowledge and experience that DMA staff call on while training them.

- Staff use a comprehensive trainee record card system to record all contacts with a trainee. This includes welfare-, academic- and discipline-related matters. However, not all records are readily available to key personnel and in too many cases the resolution of a problem is not recorded.
- Trainees in the TMD are well managed, and leaders clearly understand the likely fluctuation in numbers caused by training pipelines from the single Services. TMD staff use a clear vulnerability risk-management system effectively to provide a record of the management of those who are deemed at risk. Trainees who need help to achieve the academic standards of the course get specific help with the areas they have not yet mastered. Trainees who are in the TMD because of injury or illness value the medical support they receive, including physiotherapy. Exercise rehabilitation instructors give them appropriate, personalised exercises that help them recover before returning to their course. Injured trainees have clear target dates for restarting training.
- DMA-based trainees use well-equipped physical training (PT) facilities that are accessible all week. The PT programme for trainees is appropriately structured and features the progressive introduction of distance and weight exercises. The gym for undergraduates at the university site is well equipped and trainees participate in a good range of gym activities. PT sessions are run frequently so trainees can fit sessions around their timetables.
- Current DMA-based trainees consider their decision to work in military medicine to be the right one and they are keen to complete their courses. Trainees relate well to one another and to staff, and their attitudes to training are positive. They appreciate their responsibilities as members of the Armed Forces and conduct themselves accordingly from an early stage.
- Undergraduate trainees at BCU feel militarised despite living in a civilian environment. They are resilient and keen to make progress and complete their studies. Activities such as PT and accommodation checks reinforce military behaviours and attitudes. Trainees at BCU enjoy their military routines but are not excluded from general student life.
- Trainees feel safe at the DMA's and at BCU's halls of residence. They know who to turn to if they have a complaint or concern. Undergraduates are well informed about how to keep themselves safe when outside of their halls of residence.
- All trainees are well informed about how to stay safe. They receive a thorough security briefing during induction and complete training on the 'Prevent' duty. This information is updated, and trainees' knowledge refreshed, later in training. Trainees are given information about their locality, including 'no-go' areas and venues that should be avoided. They know not to wear their uniform outside the camp because of the potential risks that this may create.
- All trainees appreciate the high levels of support they get from the welfare team and the padre, whom they describe as approachable and effective.
- Trainees at the DMA have decent, modern accommodation blocks. However, their experience of

living at the DMA is badly affected by the maintenance contractor's poor responses to repair requests. As a consequence, the lighting in one bathroom for female trainees had been off for 4 weeks at the time of the first inspection visit. The welfare centre has new and long-term leaks in its roof.

- Trainees benefit from a junior ranks mess at the DMA that is pleasant and uncrowded. The menu is varied monthly but has limited options for vegetarians. Many trainees do not use the mess because they do not enjoy the food. As a result, they do not maintain a consistently healthy diet. They have no facilities to cook themselves fresh food, and consume many microwave meals.
- Trainees on all courses have priority access to high-quality medical and dental resources throughout their training. Those requiring medical or dental treatment receive rapid support through a 'same day' appointment service. Medical and dental officers swiftly refer trainees suffering from injuries requiring physiotherapy or primary care rehabilitation. Dental staff have good plans in place to further promote the benefits of good oral hygiene to trainees at the DMA and the university campus at Hamstead in Birmingham.
- Senior staff have a clear vision and high aspirations for the DMA. A number of improvements to phase 2 provision have been made since the first inspection visit. However, the leadership and management of provision for phase 2 trainees is not yet good.
- The Training Division's quality improvement plan (QIP) does not function effectively to improve provision and trainees' experiences at the DMA. Given the restricted scale of evidence-gathering for self-assessment, the QIP is, as a result, necessarily restricted in scope and effectiveness. Further, the QIP does not track actions relating to areas for improvement with sufficient thoroughness. Often, an identified area for improvement simply results in a response in the reporting/action template that is an explanation of process or structure, rather than a search for solutions.
- Action resulting from trainees' feedback is insufficient or ineffective in improving trainees' learning or their experiences of training and living at the DMA. Even when such matters find their way onto the QIP as areas for improvement, remedial action is limited in effectiveness.
- Leaders do not have effective oversight or control of contractors' work. This has a negative impact on trainees' experiences. The current contract for repairs to resources and infrastructure provides contractors with excessively lengthy timescales to fix even the simplest of infrastructure problems. The contract with BCU covers a very long period and has few elements relating to quality of training and trainees' experience at BCU. DMA leaders do not use their existing good relationship with senior staff at BCU to take a sufficiently active role in overseeing the quality of training or trainees' experiences. BCU staff do not contribute to self-assessment for phase 2 training, nor do DMA staff observe or evaluate the quality of training at BCU.
- Trainees under 18 years of age are well supported by mentors. These trainees attend frequent review meetings with staff to discuss their progress and any welfare concerns. Most trainees value the opportunity to sit down with a member of staff for these in-depth discussions.

Recommendations

- Take focused and sustained action to reduce trainees' high levels of stress and anxiety by improving curriculum design and delivery, and particularly by rationalising the assessment loading of course elements.
- Provide training staff at DMA with sufficient time to familiarise themselves with course material before they teach.
- Work with staff at BCU to ensure that trainees on undergraduate-level courses receive good teaching and learning, including clear and constructive feedback on their assignments that helps them to improve their work.
- Ensure that contractors promptly deal with faults or failures in accommodation and other facilities.
- Improve the oversight and monitoring of areas for improvement identified in the Training Division's QIP. Ensure that all actions are followed to a clear, recorded conclusion.
- Broaden involvement in self-assessment, particularly to include input from DMA trainers and staff at partner universities.

Royal Air Force Officer Training Academy RAF Cranwell

RAFOTA is part of the RAF College, Cranwell. The officer commanding RAFOTA is responsible for the day-to-day management of the phase 1 recruits.

At the time of this inspection, the academy had 274 officer cadets in training. The majority (186) were on the modular initial officer training course (MIOTC). Fifty officer cadets were repeating elements of training that they failed or were unable to complete because of illness or injury.

Thirteen were on the specialist officer initial training (SOIT) course. This course is for those who will specialise in professions such as legal, medical, dental or clergy. Ten are on the Reserves officer initial training course. Fifteen officer cadets were on the cadet support flight (CSF) recovering from illness or injury.

Main findings

- The living and teaching accommodation at RAF Cranwell needs urgent and significant repair and renovation. Accommodation blocks do not have reliable heating and hot water supplies. Cadets' morale and well-being are negatively affected because they are not able to keep warm or have hot showers. Several classroom spaces are out of use because of leaking roofs and internal damage caused by water ingress. Approval for repairs and starting repair work both take too long.
- Senior staff have led an overhaul of the initial officer training programme. They have based the

new format on a model of coaching and mentoring to develop cadets' leadership skills. Training wing staff have developed a range of high-quality training materials and online resources to help cadets learn the leadership skills they need to be an officer in the RAF.

- To support the new training programme, senior staff have articulated very clearly the high expectations, vision and ethos for initial officer training at RAFOTA. Most, but not all, training and support staff exemplify this in their work. The quality of training and support that cadets receive varies depending on the staff they are working with.
- Staff have designed the MIOTC and SOIT courses well so that cadets build their knowledge and skills over time in a coherent order. Senior officers are quick to review the effectiveness of new training modules, methods and resources following the conclusion of a training element. They have made several improvements to the training programme based on these reviews.
- Catering staff do not provide sufficient nutritional information to cadets for them to make appropriate menu choices at the different stages of their training. For example, in the first 6 weeks of training, when they take part in more physical activities, they need higher levels of protein and carbohydrates. Additionally, the messes do not provide a sufficient variety of fruit or salad options. Those cadets who choose to have a vegetarian or vegan diet have a narrow range of options and struggle to eat enough protein during periods of intense physical activity. Cadets have a good range of food outlets available. They have 2 messes and separate areas where they can make tea and coffee, and a small shop on the station where they can buy snacks and drinks.
- Senior officers have completed a realistic assessment of the welfare and care provision at RAFOTA. They have used a suitable range of evidence sources to make judgements. However, their report is too descriptive. Although it identifies accurately the range of strengths and weaknesses of the provision, it does not evaluate the impact of these on the cadets' training experiences in sufficient depth.
- Most cadets enjoy their time at RAFOTA and value the knowledge, skills and behaviours that they develop. They speak with enthusiasm and confidence about how their skills will prepare them for phase 2 training and their careers as RAF officers. Almost all cadets who start training at RAFOTA pass their course and graduate. Around 4 out of 5 do this on their first attempt. The remainder achieve this after additional training or treatment to recover from illness or injury in the CSF. Cadets who spend a prolonged period of time in the CSF do not get enough relevant and stimulating activities to participate in beyond the elements of training that they have not yet passed. As a result, they can become bored or frustrated because they have too much spare time.
- Cadets highly value the training, support and guidance they get from most training and flight staff. While most staff work very hard and diligently to make sure cadets get high-quality training, there remain a few trainers who do not exemplify the vision and ethos communicated clearly by senior commanders. Similarly, a few flight staff do not have the skills or attitudes to support cadets with more complex or complicated personal needs, such as those with previous military experience or young families at home.

- Cadets are emphatic that RAFOTA is a safe place to live and train. They know how to keep themselves safe, especially when online or when leaving the station. They are aware of the dangers that those with extreme views can pose to the Armed Forces and talk knowledgeably about previous incidents that have occurred. Female cadets rarely, if ever, experience any gender-based harassment. They say that their male peers treat them with respect and know the difference between appropriate and inappropriate language and behaviour. On the rare occasions that inappropriate language or behaviour occurs, senior officers deal with it quickly and decisively.

Recommendations

- Urgently improve the reliability of heating and hot water in accommodation blocks so that cadets can keep warm in their rooms and have hot showers.
- Rapidly improve the programme of training that cadets in the CSF have available to them when they are recovering from injury or illness.
- Provide cadets with protein, fruit and salad options so that they can maintain a nutritious and healthy diet. Give them more information about their food so that they can make informed choices about nutrition and fulfil their energy and nutritional needs during training.
- Select and train staff so that all meet the high expectations of leaders. Further develop the knowledge and skills of trainers and flight staff so that they can help cadets from a wide range of backgrounds more effectively.
- Improve the quality and effectiveness of self-assessment by identifying the impact that the different aspects of a cadet's training have on their progress and experience.

Royal Marines Reserve Merseyside

RMR Merseyside is under the command of the Maritime Reserve staff at Royal Navy headquarters. They work closely with staff at CTCRM at Lympstone. RMR Merseyside is based in Liverpool and there are 5 detachments based in Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds, Nottingham and Birmingham. The unit provides phase 1 and 2 training for Reserve recruits over a 14-month period, with each phase of training culminating in 2 weeks of confirmatory training and assessment at CTCRM.

RMR Merseyside has a trained strength of 150 personnel. A small number of these are Royal Marine Regulars or permanent staff based at the Liverpool headquarters. At the time of inspection, there were 29 phase 2 recruits in training.

Main findings

- The command team ensures that the ethos and culture of RMR Merseyside mirrors the values and standards of Regular Royal Marines. Senior officers clearly articulate, and demonstrate through their actions, that the training they provide should enable recruits to become effective Reserve commandos.
- Training is planned effectively by the well-qualified and highly experienced permanent staff instructors. Training staff carefully consider the planning and sequencing of training. This means that recruits progressively develop the knowledge, skills, behaviours and physical fitness they need to cope with the demanding 2-week commando training courses they attend at CTCRM at the end of each phase of training.
- The commanding officer's supervisory care directive is clear and detailed and based on a thorough risk assessment. Senior staff focus effectively on the safety and welfare of recruits, and training staff know their recruits well. Staff discuss and record any welfare and duty of care issues on a weekly basis. Staff provide support for any welfare issues promptly, based on the individual circumstances and needs of recruits.
- Physical training facilities are of a high standard. Physical training takes place each week, with sessions led by experienced trainers. Training is rigorous and challenging. It reflects how Reserves will have to meet the same high standards of physical fitness as Regulars when they are assessed at CTCRM.
- The overall pass rates are low due to the high number of recruits who voluntarily withdraw because of the rigorous demands of commando training. Commanders have made changes to the training programme with the aim of reducing the number of voluntary drop-outs. For example, they have introduced a 5-week recruit orientation phase at the start of the training. Senior officers and staff can see that this is already having some impact in preparing current recruits for the challenges they need to overcome to be successful.
- Commanders collect, record and analyse the reasons that recruits provide if they withdraw from training. However, they do not collect or analyse the reasons that candidates provide if they withdraw before starting training. Consequently, commanders cannot identify changes they could make to training and support arrangements to reduce the number of candidates who may leave in the future for similar reasons.
- Staff ensure that recruits are rapidly introduced to Royal Marine values and standards during their foundation training weekend. Permanent staff and Reservist trainers are excellent role models who help recruits to develop their military skills and behaviours and understand how to achieve the right standards.
- Recruits receive useful general healthy living advice during the recruitment process. Staff provide further advice on healthy living and eating to individuals who are struggling with fitness. However, in the early stages of their training, recruits do not learn about the importance of good nutrition and the part it plays in supporting good physical and mental well-being.
- Recruits feel safe and are comfortable about speaking to staff if they have any concerns. Staff do not teach recruits how to recognise, and therefore avoid, the potential dangers posed by extremism and radicalisation.

- Commanders manage infrastructure improvement projects and maintain facilities well. The quality of the infrastructure is good. Accommodation is provided in Liverpool for training weekends during the orientation phase of training. Recruits sleep in temporary cots in ground-floor classrooms which are near to their showers and changing facilities. These facilities are ageing but the showers, ablutions and changing facilities are clean and warm with plentiful hot water.
- Classroom training takes place in well-resourced and well-maintained classrooms. Trainers use information and communication technology in classrooms well to promote learning.
- Recruits benefit from the use of good gymnasium and sports facilities at each detachment. These are also well resourced and include cardiovascular equipment and a good range of weights. Well-maintained assault courses at each detachment replicate the challenges recruits will face during their 2-week confirmation courses at the CTCRM.
- Commanders' assessment of the quality and impact of training is thorough and evaluative. It accurately identifies the main strengths and areas that require improvement. Senior officers and staff frequently and effectively gather the views of recruits about the training they receive and their experiences as Reserve recruits. Commanders use this information well in their evaluations of training and unit procedures.

Recommendations

- Improve the analysis of the reasons why candidates decide not to start their training. Use this information to make any required changes to support candidates while they are waiting to start training.
- Provide training to recruits so that they understand and know how to recognise the risks and dangers of radicalisation and extremism and how to protect themselves and others.
- Provide recruits with more effective advice about the importance of good nutrition and diet and how eating healthily can contribute to their physical and mental well-being.

Army Training Unit (North)

ATU(N) is one of 4 Army Reserve training units and part of Initial Training Group. ATU(N) trains recruits at 2 sites: Queen Elizabeth Barracks, Strensall, near York, and Altcar Training Camp in Merseyside. The headquarters is at Strensall but the command team is equally focused on both sites and spends a significant amount of time at Altcar during training courses.

Recruit training follows the recently introduced Common Military Syllabus Reserves (CMSR21). This training has been restructured into 3 modules and includes several distance learning packages. Weekend training and distance learning prepare recruits for the 2-week 'battlecamp' in

module 3, where they consolidate and are tested on their skills and knowledge, before a phase 1 passing-out parade.

At the time of inspection, there were 42 recruits in training at ATU(N).

Main findings

- The commanding officer sets high expectations for all staff to provide high-quality training and care for recruits at both sites. All staff have a written copy of his guidance on how to ensure that all recruits are treated fairly.
- Recruits enjoy learning from all the training staff at ATU(N). They develop their knowledge and skills in a logical order. Recruits learn quickly on the short modular courses because training staff provide them with excellent coaching and support where they have any difficulties.
- Staff carefully select and induct trainers and visiting instructors. Nearly all have completed appropriate training courses and those awaiting training are closely supervised. All trainers benefit from frequent and constructive feedback from observations and they enjoy their work.
- All staff have a strong focus on the welfare and care of recruits. The padre visits frequently and is well known to recruits as he teaches the values and standards section of training. Recruits feel well supported and are confident that they would receive any additional help if they needed it.
- Well-qualified medical staff provide support during all activities that could potentially result in injury because of the physical nature of the training. For example, trained staff use a fully equipped safety vehicle to accompany long troop marches where recruits carry large loads.
- Staff gather feedback from recruits during and at the end of the training modules. Staff use this detailed and useful feedback well to rectify problems swiftly and to improve training or support as required. Any themes identified are entered into the quality improvement plan (QIP).
- Commanders and staff have evaluated the training, welfare and care they provide effectively. They review the QIP frequently, which informs their evaluation. The resulting self-assessment report identifies accurately a range of strengths and areas for improvement. However, there is too much narrative and not enough evaluation. The QIP does not set clear, challenging targets to support swift improvement.
- Recruits benefit from very good indoor and outdoor training facilities. Staff use up-to-date and interactive whiteboard technology well to enliven training and help trainees to remember new knowledge.
- Although staff work hard to ensure that the recruits' living accommodation is the best it can be, it requires improvement in both locations.
- Recruits found the distance learning packages that were introduced for remote learning during the COVID-19 restrictions, and as part of the new CMSR21 course, dull and uninspiring. Staff are currently reviewing these packages.

Recommendations

- Significantly improve the living accommodation used by recruits at Altcar and Queen Elizabeth Barracks. Ensure that future development plans at Altcar include sufficient classroom space.
- Urgently improve the quality of distance learning materials.
- Include more evaluation within the self-assessment process. Link this with more targeted actions in the quality improvement plan to implement improvements more quickly.

Royal Engineer training at Minley Station

Initial trade training of Royal Engineers takes place at 3 RSME Regt and Royal Engineer Warfare Wing (REWW), based at Gibraltar Barracks at Minley Station, Surrey. They are part of the RSME Group, which has headquarters at Chatham in Kent.

The 3 RSME Regt provides initial combat engineering training over 12 weeks to soldiers on completion of their phase 1 basic training. Combat engineers are trained in bridging, demolitions and maintaining water supplies. REWW provide the Troop Commanders' course to phase 2 officers and a 10-week digital communications training course to trainees who are selected for this, usually after they have completed combat engineer training.

At the time of the inspection, there were approximately 100 trainees under training at 3 RSME Regt and 27 in REWW. There are also around 400 3 RSME Regt trainees within Talavera troop. These trainees may be undergoing rehabilitation training after injury, waiting for driving licence training, or waiting for a return to their combat engineering course after extra support (for example, after failing physical assessments). The officers on the Troop Commanders' course at REWW were on overseas training so were not included in this inspection.

Main findings

- Staff provide well-structured courses in combat engineering and digital communications that they teach well. As a result, trainees learn and frequently practise new knowledge and skills so that they become quickly proficient in applying these. They become increasingly confident in their technical abilities, teamwork and military skills. For example, they construct and dismantle bridges, provide clean water supplies and construct improvised communications antennae. Most trainees pass their training because of the good teaching and coaching they receive.
- Trainees have a positive attitude to their training and are respectful of one another. The very few female trainees are supported well by staff and peers so that most feel valued equally to their male counterparts. Trainees hold their training and welfare staff in high esteem because of their high levels of expertise and knowledge.

- Trainers teach trainees important military skills such as navigation, hygiene and footcare. Trainees are aware of how this links into their job roles, especially when they are operating in areas far from medical facilities.
- Trainees improve their fitness well because of the developmental training that physical training staff provide. Trainees who were previously non-swimmers quickly learn to swim, which is an essential part of the training due to frequent proximity to water. Sports and fitness facilities are very good and are used effectively and frequently by trainees.
- Staff provide very good care and welfare support to trainees. As a result, trainees feel safe and well cared for. Section commanders and well-being team members are approachable and helpful. There are good communications between these teams regarding trainees who need help. Senior commanders keep detailed records about trainees so that they know what support is provided and how effective this is. They constantly monitor trainees who are more vulnerable, including those under the age of 18. The numbers of trainees seeking help and advice has increased during the COVID-19 pandemic. Consequently, staff work long hours to keep up with demand.
- Trainees benefit from good accommodation, resources and infrastructure. Their accommodation is warm and comfortable and there is sufficient hot water. Trainees have good facilities where they can socialise together safely. Commanders work well with contractors so that faults are fixed quickly. The maintenance of trainees' accommodation and facilities are prioritised over other areas of maintenance.
- Staff provide trainees with sufficient, nutritious food on weekdays and most trainees choose to eat in Minley Station facilities. At weekends, the standard and choice of food is less good. Trainees have access to and use civilian retail and food outlets nearby.
- Trainees have access to high-quality medical and dental resources. Trainees who need treatment are usually seen quickly, including for physiotherapy following injury. The medical staff work closely with commanders and training and well-being teams to provide effective healthcare and welfare support to trainees. Because of the increasing numbers of trainees that are spending additional time at Minley Station in Talavera troop, the small numbers of medical staff are struggling to keep up with demand.
- There are too many trainees in Talavera troop waiting to complete their car driving licence training and tests before they leave Minley Station. These numbers increase almost weekly. This creates a large and unsustainable burden on staff and resources, especially when including the trainees who are rehabilitating from injury and those who may be receiving extra coaching to pass aspects of their course. In particular, there are insufficient welfare and medical resources at Minley Station to cope with the increasing numbers of trainees in Talavera troop, many of whom are injured and/or need additional welfare support.
- Senior commanders of 3 RSME Regt do not routinely analyse available data, including pass rates, trainee feedback or reasons that trainees go to Talavera troop for additional coaching. Consequently, they do not identify trends in training or welfare, or underlying causes for these, so that they can specifically target areas for improvement effectively. However, staff do know

individual trainees very well, and also the reasons why some trainees do not make progress as well as others, including spending extra time in training in Talavera troop.

- Trainees in 3 RSME Regt are selected for, and allocated to, specific combat engineering trades while in their final weeks at Minley Station. These include artisan trades such as bricklaying, carpentry and joinery, combat specialist roles such as digital communications and logistics, and technical roles such as electricians, surveyors or materials technicians. Almost all trainees are unaware of this selection process until they arrive at Minley because the staff at careers offices do not explain it to them. Consequently, trainees do not realise when they join the Army that they may not go into the trade they wish. Around 3 quarters of recent trainees were allocated their first choice of trade.
- Trainees do not always know what their next steps are once they complete their 3 RSME Regt training because staff do not communicate this well enough.

Recommendations

- Remove the requirement for trainees to obtain their driving licences before they leave Minley Station to reduce the numbers in Talavera troop.
- Review the numbers of well-being and medical staff and adjust these to cope with the increasing number of trainees with mental health concerns, illnesses and injuries.
- Provide information on trade selection to potential recruits before they join the Army so that they are aware of what trades they may be eligible for.
- Provide 3 RSME Regt trainees with information on what happens after they complete their training in sufficient time so that they can make appropriate plans.
- Make better use of available data to compare performance, evaluate trends and inform decision-making on changes and improvements to training, care and welfare.

University Royal Naval Units

URNUs provide training to university students who wish to experience life in the Royal Navy alongside their university studies. They usually spend between 1 and 4 years as part of the URNU, depending on the length of their university courses. There is no commitment for them to join the Royal Navy after university, although many do.

There are currently around 800 students, known as Officer Cadets (OCdts) based in 16 URNUs across the UK. There is also a new virtual URNU for OCdts who study at more remote universities. There are 2 new URNUs that have recently opened in Belfast and Nottingham. OCdts attend their URNUs once a week for training in the evenings, and for some weekends. They also carry out longer periods of training away from their units, such as for adventurous training or time at sea. The

small URNU headquarters is based at Britannia Royal Naval College at Dartmouth, Devon. Inspectors visited 5 URNUs and the headquarters as part of this inspection.

Main findings

- Well-motivated, committed and enthusiastic URNU staff provide OCdts with valuable training and effective care and welfare. OCdts learn useful military and naval skills and knowledge, such as navigation, communication by radio, drill and weapon handling. They make good progress in developing their skills and knowledge because of the good training and support they get from their TOs and URNU staff. Most OCdts have access to good training facilities, including fitness, sports and social facilities. OCdts enjoy their training, especially now that they have returned to face-to-face drill nights after COVID-19 restrictions were lifted, and most attend well.
- Senior staff recently implemented a new, well-designed training syllabus. Most URNU staff use this effectively to structure training so that OCdts can build on what they have learned. Staff combine practical and theory training effectively so that OCdts can practise what they learn. Staff at a few URNUs are not yet following this syllabus, meaning that OCdts at these URNUs do not learn the same content as their peers.
- Commanding officers (COs) of individual URNUs and their teams work hard to provide effective support to OCdts. Many work long hours to do so. Several URNUs do not have strong links with the university welfare departments where their OCdts study, which means that they are not always aware of what additional support OCdts receive or may need from them.
- Staff strive to provide varied activities to OCdts that they really value alongside the structured syllabus, including adventurous training, sport and military events such as Remembrance parades. OCdts gain a wide range of personal and social skills throughout their time with URNUs that help them with their military or civilian careers. Staff support OCdts who wish to pursue a naval career very well through the application process.
- Most OCdts spend some time at sea. URNU staff try hard to arrange this through their contacts but often cannot get access to operational warships. There is no formal system in place to facilitate this. Staff do provide other maritime opportunities, such as sailing, as enrichment, but this does not provide OCdts who do not spend any other time at sea an opportunity to experience the realities of life on board a warship.
- Many TOs are experienced trainers and have relevant military or maritime knowledge. New TOs now follow a new training pathway that provides them with the useful, relevant skills and knowledge they need to train OCdts. Not enough TOs have completed the Defence Trainer course (DTc), as there are insufficient places for them.
- There are insufficient numbers of staff in the headquarters and URNUs to manage the quality of training, care and welfare across all URNUs well enough. Those in post are busy managing day-to-day activities. As a result, there is limited oversight or quality assurance of URNUs. Senior commanders do not have a coherent central strategic improvement plan or risk register.
- URNU COs produce useful information on OCdts' progress, staff training and OC recruitment

using a central software tool. They also develop self-assessment reports and quality improvement plans for their units. Senior commanders do not routinely evaluate and analyse this information to identify trends, inconsistencies or common strengths and weaknesses across the URNUs.

- Medical assessments for new OCdts and TOs take too long. As a result, some OCdts and TOs cannot participate fully in all training activities. This has been the situation for some time and there is now further delay caused by COVID-19.

Recommendations

- Provide URNUs and headquarters with enough personnel to manage and assure the quality and consistency of training, care and welfare across all units effectively.
- Provide a more consistent experience for OCdts across all URNUs and provide the right training at the right time. Hold COs and URNU staff more accountable for the quality of training, care and welfare of OCdts at their unit while providing staff with the support they need.
- Evaluate and analyse all available information at headquarters level to identify strengths and weaknesses in the quality of training, care and welfare across all units. Use this to develop a strategic improvement action plan that senior commanders monitor closely.
- Formulate a central at-risk register that senior commanders use to monitor OCdts who may need additional support.
- Provide enough capacity on the DTc so that TOs can complete their training.
- Reduce the time taken for OCdts and staff to complete their medical assessments.

HMS Sultan

HMS Sultan is a large and complex Defence training establishment on the Gosport peninsula. On average, there are approximately 1,350 trainees and 1,150 staff who are training or working at the base, with about 1,000 of these remaining on site overnight.

HMS Sultan comprises several separate schools and other units. This inspection covered the quality of welfare, care and training of phase 2 trainees at the Defence School of Marine Engineering (DSMarE) and the Royal Navy Air Engineering and Survival Equipment School (RNAESS).

At the time of the inspection, there were 351 phase 2 trainees and phase 2 officers in training in DSMarE, and 140 phase 2 trainees and phase 2 officers in training in RNAESS. Trainees follow a 30-week course.

Support for training includes the provision of personnel support services, such as the Royal Navy Family and People Support group and medical, dental and chaplaincy services. Catering, accommodation, facilities and personnel management are provided by a contractor.

Main findings

- The command team has a clear vision for the quality of training and care at HMS Sultan. This is expressed through a series of core values, in the supervisory care directive, and in the actions that officers take when reviewing the care and welfare of trainees.
- Trainees in both schools, and officers in training, receive very high standards of support, care and training. They are supported well by very experienced and diligent divisional officers (DOs), civilian welfare staff and chaplains. They benefit from training from military, civil service and civilian staff who have extensive military and industry experience. Training staff use their experience consistently to enliven and illuminate training.
- The command team has a comprehensive oversight of the arrangements for welfare and care at HMS Sultan. They have several supervisory groups and committees that monitor and review the progress and support needs of trainees identified to be at risk for health, welfare, discipline or training reasons. They intervene quickly to make sure trainees get the help and guidance they need. As a result, very few trainees leave before the end of their training and a high proportion pass their course.
- Trainees receive very good support for their welfare and for training from their DOs, chaplains and medical staff. DOs get to know their trainees very well as a priority when they start their training. As a result, they quickly identify any trainees who need extra help with their training or support to resolve a health or welfare matter. While DOs keep very good records of trainees' welfare concerns, they use several systems and methods to do this, meaning that there is not one easy-to-access and chronological record of a trainee's progress.
- Senior officers have yet to make improvements to the curriculum for marine engineering trainees and officers in training. The curriculum is not organised and taught in such a way that trainees can consolidate what they have learned in classrooms, for example by learning the appropriate or connected practical skills soon after learning the theory elements. Trainers make every attempt to show marine engineering trainees relevant examples or pieces of equipment at opportune times, but they are not able to access the relevant workshops or equipment because these are being used by trainees in the later stages of training.
- Air engineering trainees benefit from a well-developed and sequenced curriculum that enables them to consolidate their understanding of key concepts and procedures by learning the associated practical skills very soon after or at the same time as learning theory elements.
- Trainees and officers in training develop very good professional and personal skills during their phase 2 training. The majority build effectively on their military skills that they started to develop in phase 1. Trainees develop maturity and confidence, and skills such as teamwork. This improves the morale and camaraderie in their divisions. Air engineering trainees develop their

practical skills to a high standard very quickly because of the well-designed curriculum. Marine engineering trainees develop their skills at a slower rate.

- Despite much work and investment in recent months, too much of the estate still needs urgent refurbishment or replacement. Several accommodation blocks have had showers and toilets updated, and new heating and hot water systems installed. Facilities such as the medical and dental centres remain in urgent need of repair and updating. Some accommodation blocks are still to be refurbished and faults such as sewage backflow in toilets occur on occasions. Trainees do not have adequate facilities to store and prepare their own food in their accommodation blocks.
- Trainees and officers in training are provided with sufficient food of a suitable quality most of the time. Trainees who do not like the food provided in the junior rates mess (JRM) or wish to eat a more specialist diet have limited facilities to prepare their own food in their accommodation blocks. Catering contractor staff and military staff responsible for food have introduced a new system for trainees and other staff who eat in the JRM to feed back their compliments and complaints at the time the meal is served. Senior officers' aim is to improve trainees' satisfaction with the food they eat through improvements informed by their feedback.
- The food provided for trainees in the JRM meets the physical demands of training. The labelling of the food served in the JRM is not clear enough, meaning that trainees cannot make informed decisions about a sufficiently varied and balanced diet easily.
- Trainees who need extra help with elements of their training, or who miss training because of illness or injury, join a separate division to help them recover or catch up with the training that they have missed. Most trainees who need this help make better progress as a result and return to a new training division as quickly as possible.
- Too often trainees who arrive at the base before the start of their phase 2 training, or who are waiting for other trainees in their division to complete functional skills qualifications, do not have enough relevant activities to keep them occupied and prevent them from being bored. The activities that training officers give to trainees are often mundane, unstructured or unrelated to their intended trade or skill.
- Trainees and officers in training feel safe at HMS Sultan. Because of training they have received in phase 1 and at HMS Sultan, they know how to stay safe online and how to recognise the signs of extremism and radicalisation. They do not have sufficient awareness of the types of extremist activity that are occurring in the local area.
- Trainees live and learn in an environment of respect and inclusion. They are treated fairly and consider that any discipline or remedial actions are fair and proportionate. The command team has worked diligently to ensure that trainees understand how to behave appropriately. Despite this, a few female trainees report that they have been subjected to inappropriate language from a small minority of male trainees.

Recommendations

- Urgently review and update the curriculum for trainees and officers in training in the DSMarE to ensure that the training they receive enables them to remember what they learn by linking theory and practical work more effectively.
- Review the systems used to record trainees' welfare concerns to ensure that information held about trainees is chronological and comprehensive, and easily accessible to those who need it.
- Provide trainees who are moved into different divisions to catch up on training, or trainees who are not in training, with meaningful and worthwhile activities that relate to their chosen trade.
- Complete the refurbishment and renovation of trainees' accommodation as rapidly as possible. Provide facilities to enable trainees to store and prepare their own food.
- Provide further training for all trainees and staff in order to ensure that they all understand what sexual harassment is, and its impact on those who experience it.

Royal Marines School of Music

RMSoM is a lodger unit within the boundaries of HMS Nelson and HM Naval Base, Portsmouth. RMSoM is based in the same location as the Royal Military School of Music (RMSM). RMSoM is a satellite school under the authority of the Commando Training Centre Royal Marines Specialist Wing and provides phase 2 and phase 3 music training. Only phase 2 musicians were within the scope of this inspection.

RMSoM trains phase 2 musicians. At the time of the inspection, there were 66 phase 2 musicians. All trainees arrive at RMSoM already performing a musical instrument to a minimum standard. RMSoM uses a training model known as a fixed mastery variable timescale (FMVT). Trainees spend different amounts of time in training, depending on the individual's ability. Because of this training model, there is only one continuous course, rather than separate courses.

The inspection of RMSoM took place at the same time as an inspection of phase 2 training at the RMSM. As both units share the same facilities, infrastructure and resources, they were co-inspected and both reports include the same judgements.

Main findings

- Trainers plan and sequence the trainee musicians' programme well. It supports trainees to develop their knowledge and music skills based on their starting level of skill and expertise. This gives trainees an individualised programme of learning that is tailored to their needs so that they meet the standards expected in the Band Service. As a result, trainees develop their music skills well.
- Trainees have good access to practice spaces at all times of the day. The innovative conversion

of the naval base's former prison provides trainees with their own individual practice space. Trainees value this facility, but the school is currently reaching capacity and space will soon be at a premium.

- The practice block and staff offices are not heated properly. In the practice block, temperatures can be too hot in summer and too cold in winter. This makes it difficult for trainees to practise and can be detrimental to their instruments. Senior commanders at RMSM and RMSoM have secured funding to make improvements, including heating and refurbishment, but work has yet to start.
- Trainees are confident about approaching all staff for help or to raise concerns if they need to. Staff are very supportive and approachable. Trainees value the positive culture and the way that staff promote equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Trainees with additional learning needs get good support to help them be successful. This includes support for dyslexia and anxiety. As a result, trainees with additional needs make good progress in developing their music skills.
- The recent appointment of a new instructor has allowed physical training to recommence. The trainees enjoy the physical aspects of their training, as this supports them well in their daily duties, such as parade marches.
- Staff have supported trainees effectively to develop their character. Trainees are polite and have grown in confidence. They are proud of being in the Band Service. Trainees demonstrate military standards and values with pride. They work respectfully with each other and their instructors and have a high appreciation of their surroundings.
- Trainees are being prepared well to move to their bands. They are exposed to a range of musical genres, which enables them to prepare for what is expected of them. The FMVT training model allows trainees to learn at their own pace. However, a minority of trainees feel that this increases pressure on them to complete the course as soon as possible.
- Trainees' accommodation is secure and a reasonably comfortable environment in which they can study, relax and sleep. A duty officer is based on site at night and is a useful point of contact for any trainees with professional or personal concerns. Trainees have adequate personal space and lockers to store their clothing and equipment. Accommodation blocks include large, well-equipped recreation areas. Not all faults are fixed promptly once reported.
- Food provided for trainees is plentiful and of reasonable quality. There are multiple menu choices, including vegetarian, but too often these are not publicised and do not contain any nutritional information. This results in many trainees choosing not to eat in the on-site mess. Those who choose to make their own meals can do so in the accommodation kitchen.
- Staff do not encourage trainees to wash or sanitise their hands routinely before eating, despite COVID-19.
- Trainees' access to medical support requires improvement. A lack of staffing compromises trainees who are recovering from injury. They often experience long waiting times for appointments to be signed off as medically fit. As a result, trainees miss out on their training.

- The officer commanding (OC) has set a clear, purposeful and well-understood vision for his team. The team of military trainers and civilian tutors work with enthusiasm to translate this vision into high-quality training.
- The OC's vision has a golden thread of high expectations that runs through phase 2 and phase 3 training. This vision focuses on developing musicians who are technically competent and can play a full and active role in the band as soon as they arrive.
- Trainees benefit from both male and female role models, who are all excellent musicians. This has a positive influence on all trainees and ensures that, if trainees have any concerns, they have a choice of individuals whom they could approach.
- Leaders' self-assessment relies too much on a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis. It does not take a sufficient range of data into consideration. There is only a tentative link between the self-assessment report and the quality improvement plan. Although the latter is very detailed and updated frequently, it is not always clear what the relationship is between the two. As a result, the self-assessment does not provide an effective enough starting point from which to make improvements.

Recommendations

- Develop the self-assessment process so that it uses available data to inform judgements and links effectively to quality improvement to support continuous and sustainable improvement.
- Improve trainees' access to timely medical treatment so that delays do not have an adverse impact on their training.
- Carry out the heating and refurbishment improvements without delay.
- Provide trainees with a menu and nutritional information about each dish, so that they can make informed choices about what and where they eat. Ensure that trainees wash or sanitise their hands before their meals.
- Ensure that trainees fully understand trainers' expectations about the FMVT model of training, so that they do not feel pressured to complete their training in the shortest time possible.

Royal Military School of Music

RMSM is part of the Royal Corps of Army Music (RCAM). It moved recently from its long-term base at Kneller Hall in Twickenham to the same location as the Royal Marines School of Music

(RMSoM), as a lodger unit at HMS Nelson in His Majesty's Naval Base (HMNB), Portsmouth.

RMSM is part of the Royal School of Military Engineering Operational Group. It provides phase 2 and phase 3 training for Army musicians. Only phase 2 musicians were within the scope of this inspection.

At the time of the inspection, there were 35 phase 2 musicians. All trainees arrive at RMSM already performing a musical instrument to a minimum standard. RMSM uses a training model known as a fixed mastery variable timescale. Trainees spend different amounts of time in training, depending on the individual's ability. Because of this training model, there is only one continuous course, rather than separate courses. Trainees leave phase 2 to join an Army band once staff deem them ready. There are no trainees waiting to start their phase 2 course, or out of programmed training for any reason.

The inspection of RMSM took place at the same time as an inspection of phase 2 training at the RMSoM. As both units share the same facilities, infrastructure and resources, they were co-inspected and both reports include the same judgements.

Main findings

- Senior commanders ensured that the move from Kneller Hall to HMS Nelson had minimal impact on training. This was despite the difficulties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and an unexpected move to an interim location because Kneller Hall had deteriorated below the standard at which it was safe to continue training there. All staff have worked hard to successfully recreate the RCAM ethos and culture enjoyed by musicians at Kneller Hall. Staff and trainees enjoy working with their Royal Marine musician counterparts.
- Military and civilian staff work collaboratively to provide trainees with very good musical training and military skills. Staff monitor effectively the progress that trainees make and provide each trainee with specific and precise feedback on what they need to improve. Trainees work at their own pace, and practise playing their music independently, with their trainers and tutors and with each other. Staff provide effective support to trainees who fall behind in their training, need to re-take examinations or have additional learning needs.
- Military trainers are expert Army musicians and excellent role models for trainees. Senior commanders carefully select trainers with relevant experience and attributes and provide them with useful training. Trainers and expert civilian tutors help trainees to develop technical musical mastery and deep theoretical knowledge. Trainees learn to apply their learning to playing as part of a marching band, an ensemble, a big band or an orchestra.
- Trainees have lots of practice playing in front of small and large groups of people, which trains them to manage any performance anxieties appropriately. They are well prepared to join their bands on completion of their phase 2 training. Almost all trainees are successful in phase 2.
- Trainees have good access to practice spaces at all times of the day. The innovative conversion of the Navy base's former prison provides trainees with their own individual practice space. Trainees value this facility, but the school is currently reaching capacity and space will soon be at a premium.
- The practice block and staff offices are not heated properly. In the practice block, temperatures can be too hot in summer and too cold in winter. This makes it difficult for trainees to practise

and can be detrimental to their instruments. Senior commanders at RMSM and RMSoM have secured funding to make improvements, including heating and refurbishment, but work has yet to start.

- Staff at every level are focused on trainees' care and well-being. They meet trainees frequently to discuss any training or personal concerns and are swift to signpost trainees to relevant help. The HMNB chaplaincy team is available 24 hours a day and trainees can get assistance very quickly. Senior staff work closely with a range of professionals to monitor any trainees of concern and ensure that these trainees receive appropriate help. A newly implemented risk register captures information effectively.
- Staff use well-equipped facilities to develop trainees' fitness effectively. Trainees benefit from aerobic and strength and conditioning training in preparation for combat fitness tests and long periods of time playing in marching bands. Trainees have access to a range of high-quality sports, fitness and leisure facilities.
- Because of the good training and support they receive from staff, most trainees are confident, happy and enjoying their training. They have high levels of respect for each other, staff and visitors. Female trainees in particular feel safe, comfortable and respected by their male peers. Trainees model the positive behaviours and attitudes shown by their staff. They are clear on how to report any concerns.
- Trainees' accommodation is secure and a reasonably comfortable environment in which they can study, relax and sleep. A duty officer is based on site at night and is a useful point of contact for any trainees with professional or personal concerns. Trainees have adequate personal space and lockers to store their clothing and equipment. Accommodation blocks include large, well-equipped recreation areas. Not all faults are fixed promptly once reported.
- Food provided for trainees is plentiful and of reasonable quality. There are multiple menu choices, including vegetarian, but too often these are not publicised and do not contain any nutritional information. This results in many trainees choosing not to eat in the on-site mess. Those who choose to make their own meals can do so in the accommodation kitchen.
- Staff do not encourage trainees to wash or sanitise their hands routinely before eating, despite COVID-19.
- Trainees' access to medical support requires improvement. A lack of staffing compromises trainees who are recovering from injury. They often experience long waiting times for appointments to be signed off as medically fit. As a result, trainees miss out on their training.
- Senior commanders have rightly focused on the training, care and welfare of trainees and staff during COVID-19 and the move to HMS Nelson. They lack the capacity to implement the systems and processes they need to sustain good care and welfare. For example, mandated documentation is outdated and there is no systematic approach to capturing or analysing important information about trainees or useful knowledge for staff changes.
- Senior staff are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of their training, care and welfare but do not capture these well enough in self-assessment reports or action plans.

Commanders provide trainees and staff with training on the 'Prevent' duty. This is not frequent or detailed enough to give them a good understanding of potential national or regional threats, including those from online sources.

Recommendations

- Develop a more systematic approach to capturing and analysing important information about trainees, providing new staff with useful knowledge and self-assessment.
- Improve trainees' access to timely medical treatment so that delays do not have an adverse impact on their training.
- Carry out the heating and refurbishment improvements without delay.
- Provide detailed and frequent 'Prevent' duty training so that staff and trainees understand fully what potential national and local risks they may encounter, including from online sources.
- Provide trainees with a menu and nutritional information about each dish, so that they can make informed choices about what and where they eat. Ensure that trainees wash or sanitise their hands before their meals.

Infantry Training Centre, Catterick

ITC Catterick provides infantry training. Phase 1 (basic training (BT)) and 2 (initial trade training (ITT)) are combined in the Combat Infantry Course (CIC). Junior soldiers (those who are under 18 at the start of their phase 1 training) who are going to join the infantry complete their BT at the Army Foundation College (AFC) in Harrogate before joining ITC to complete their ITT. The ITC trains all infantry soldiers joining the British Army.

ITC Catterick is divided into 3 battalions, of which 2 are infantry training battalions (ITB) and one is a support battalion (ITC). Both ITBs train recruits for phase 1 and phase 2 of their training. Phase 1 training consists of the first 3 units of the 7-module training course. Recruits remain in the same platoons throughout both phases of their training.

The 1st Infantry Training Battalion (1 ITB) is responsible for training soldiers who are going to join the infantry and rifles regiments of the British Army. It delivers the standard version of the CIC, which is 28 weeks' long. 1 ITB has 4 training companies that deliver the CIC, and the Peninsular Training Company (PTC), which looks after and trains recruits and trainees who are not in programmed training due to injury or illness, or because they need to repeat aspects of training.

The 2nd Infantry Training Battalion (2 ITB) is responsible for training recruits who will join the Foot Guards, the Parachute Regiment and the Brigade of Gurkhas. It is also responsible for phase 2 training for junior entry recruits from AFC, Harrogate as well as training for the infantry elements of

the Army Reserve. 2 ITB provides variations of the CIC to recruits and trainees, depending on their regimental roles and requirements.

The ITC Support Battalion provides support to ITC. Its specific functions include planning and resourcing training, and providing support services such as facilities management and medical and dental services. The ITC Support Battalion also provides courses at the Army School of Bagpipe Music and Highland Drumming in Edinburgh, and at the Army School of Ceremonial at ITC Catterick. These courses are for trained soldiers and were not included in this inspection.

At the time of the inspection, ITC Catterick had approximately 650 recruits in 1 ITB, 450 in 2 ITB and 218 Gurkhas in training. These numbers included recruits in phase 1 BT and trainees in phase 2 ITT. Of the 1,350 recruits and trainees, 130 were under 18 years of age and 16 were female.

Main findings

- Senior officers have developed a very clear strategy and purpose for training phase 1 recruits and phase 2 trainees to become infantry soldiers. Staff at all levels work hard to ensure that the intent is fully realised. Staff have designed the refreshed CIC curriculum with care so that it better meets the needs of the Field Army. Senior staff frequently check the quality of the training recruits receive to ensure that it continues to meet their high standards.
- Senior staff ensure that military trainers are skilled and use their up-to-date knowledge to ensure that recruits, trainees and Gurkhas become highly effective infantry soldiers. Modules of learning are clearly defined and well planned to ensure that recruits' and trainees' skills and knowledge develop sequentially. For example, recruits quickly learn how to read maps and handle weapons safely and effectively, and understand the importance of maintaining their kit. Recruits enjoy learning and receive frequent developmental feedback from staff, who closely monitor the quality of the skills that recruits acquire. As a result, recruits develop their military standards, values, resilience and leadership skills very well.
- The command team uses a range of appropriate strategies to reduce the number of recruits who leave training during the first few weeks of the course. However, senior officers acknowledge that these strategies have a limited impact on retaining recruits. This is because too often staff do not give recruits sufficient information at the recruitment stage about the rigour and commitment needed to succeed in the Army. Many recruits do not receive the guidance they need to be prepared for the physical, cultural and emotional stresses that are placed on them in the early weeks as they transition from civilian to soldier. As a result, the number of recruits that leave phase 1 training early remains at around a quarter of those initially recruited.
- Senior officers ensure that recruits' and trainees' welfare and well-being are very well supported. Staff collaborate successfully to ensure that recruits access an extensive welfare and care package that meets their needs. Those who have more complex individual welfare and support needs are closely supported by well-trained and compassionate staff. Welfare officers, for example, provide excellent support for recruits who have been in the care of their local authority

before joining the Army. If a care leaver chooses to leave the Army before they complete their training, officers liaise very effectively with social workers and other agencies to make sure that the recruit has suitable, safe accommodation and support to help them back into civilian life.

- Officers prepare recruits and trainees well for their future careers in the Army. Officers and staff liaise closely and effectively with officers at the recruits' receiving units when they complete their training at the ITC. ITC staff ensure that they know about individual recruits' ongoing training, support, discipline and personal support needs. Consequently, soldiers continue to be supported and developed once they leave the ITC and join the Field Army.
- Recruits' and trainees' accommodation is fit for purpose. It is warm and clean, and recruits have access to suitable laundry and washing facilities. However, senior officers say that they struggle to house the small number of female recruits appropriately. This is because the current accommodation blocks were not designed for mixed gender use. Female recruits can find themselves isolated from the rest of their platoon. Senior officers have developed workaround strategies, but these are not the best way to ensure that female recruits are fully integrated into their platoons.
- Classrooms are functional but require significant refurbishment and updating because many are basic, run down and tired. Consequently, learning environments are not motivational and do not reflect the very high standards that staff expect recruits and trainees to aspire to. The commanding officer has secured funding to renew recruits' living accommodation and training rooms, but this work has not yet started.
- Staff teach recruits about the importance of eating and living healthily to ensure that they can cope with the rigours of physical training very effectively. Staff ensure that recruits develop the physical resilience they need to meet the high standards expected of them. Where recruits have difficulties in meeting these standards, physical training instructors give them individualised training packages. This ensures that recruits develop the fitness levels they need to progress into the Field Army.
- Staff ensure that recruits, trainees and the Gurkhas have access to enough food to sustain them through the rigours of training. Recruits have 3 meals a day and can ask for more food if they are hungry. Recruits also get a high protein snack in the afternoon to supplement their diet, particularly when they undertake arduous physical training. Gurkhas eat in their own mess, where they get food that they are familiar with. However, catering staff do not currently label the nutritional value of food clearly enough to enable recruits to make the healthiest choices.
- Senior officers ensure that recruits and trainees have access to very high-quality dental and health facilities. Medical officers, for example, refer recruits who require physiotherapy intervention to specialists within 24 hours of referral. Those who require additional rehabilitation and intervention follow a bespoke programme so that they can rejoin their training programme quickly. However, some recruits who are not in programmed training for medical reasons can spend too long waiting for specialist treatment, such as operations. Despite the efforts of training staff, not all recruits have enough to do while they are waiting to be treated, so some recruits get bored and frustrated during this time. To mitigate the long waits, staff fund private healthcare to

speed up treatment so that recruits do not drop out of training during this period.

- Officers and staff have a very strong focus on creating an inclusive living and learning environment for recruits and trainees. Recruits and trainees know who they should go to if they want to report behaviours that cause them concern, for example the equality, diversity and inclusion champions. Staff ensure that concerns such as bullying and discrimination are investigated, and actions put in place to resolve them quickly. As a result, recruits and trainees know that their concerns will be dealt with appropriately and that everyone understands what acceptable behaviours are.
- Civilian and Army staff work very diligently to safeguard recruits and trainees. Senior officers ensure that staff who work directly with recruits who are under 18 years old have a current Disclosure and Barring Service check. Trainers and staff do not begin their training roles until the check is received. Battalion welfare officers identify those recruits who may have a safeguarding concern and handle disclosures sensitively. Officers ensure that all relevant agencies are involved in supporting recruits with concerns when required. As a result, recruits and staff are kept safe.
- Recruits and trainees have a good awareness of the risks posed by extremist groups and other individuals or groups who might target military personnel. Recruits understand, for example, why they must not wear their uniforms when off camp and while on leave. Recruits and trainees are well supported and are safe in training.

Recommendations

- Urgently review the accommodation provided for female recruits so that they are not isolated from the rest of their platoon, or from other females.
- Upgrade classrooms so that they provide a more modern and aspirational environment.
- Provide potential recruits with a realistic understanding of what life in the Army is like so that fewer leave their basic training early.
- Provide recruits in medical holdover with more meaningful and worthwhile activities to support their training and personal development while they are unable to train with their platoons.
- Provide relevant nutritional labelling by portion size of the food served in the cookhouse, so that recruits and trainees can make more informed and healthier decisions about what they eat.

3 Royal Auxiliary Air Force (Tactical) Police Squadron, RAF Honington

The 3TPS recruits Reservist RAF police personnel and provides part 1, phase 2 training at RAF Honington. 3TPS is one of 2 Royal Auxiliary Air Force units at RAF Honington and cooperates with 2623 (East Anglia) Squadron to recruit for and deliver part of phase 1 training.

Phase 2, part 1 training consists of 6 training weekends at 3TPS, followed by phase 2, part 2 training. This is a 15-day continuous period known as 'Exercise Griffin Endeavour'. This exercise is now carried out by staff at the Defence School of Policing and Guarding.

During the inspection there were 7 phase 2 trainees (3 female and 4 male) in training.

Main findings

- Senior staff set high expectations for the quality of training and support that trainees experience, and focus strongly on continual improvement. These expectations are reflected by the squadron staff and ensure that trainees experience good-quality training and support.
- Senior staff have worked successfully to ensure that the right staff are in the right roles to provide good-quality training and support. They have made plans to mitigate the impact of the imminent deployment of important staff members. These plans need to be implemented quickly to ensure the quality of training and support is sustained.
- Trainees enjoy learning and highly value the good-quality teaching, coaching and mentoring that all training staff provide. They make swift progress in developing their military and Royal Air Force policing skills and almost all pass their training at the first attempt.
- Trainers provide trainees with excellent practical training in personal safety skills. For example, trainees rapidly learn how to use their police batons effectively to deter an assailant and then how to handcuff them safely. They achieve this in a high-quality training facility.
- The training material trainers use is being updated but trainers ensure that they adapt any out-of-date material, for example by using recent scenarios from their experience. Plans to introduce training technology, and access to training material from the Defence School of Policing and Guarding that has been adapted for Reserves, need to be implemented quickly.
- Trainees are safe and feel well supported in an inclusive learning environment.
- Station welfare staff are not available to trainees at weekends, although trainees can contact the duty padre at any time. A senior member of staff, who is not involved in training provision, is the primary welfare contact for trainees. This works effectively, although trainees would benefit from easier access to station welfare staff, and a trained equality and diversity facilitator, should they need to make contact. Staff took effective action to rectify this shortfall at the end of the inspection.
- Following the loss of dedicated accommodation on a satellite site, trainees are allocated station-controlled accommodation in different blocks or corridors for each training weekend. The accommodation is in single rooms with shared bathrooms. These are somewhat run down, but fit for purpose. Station staff do not always allocate trainees' rooms in accordance with the squadron policy of accommodating male and female trainees on different corridors with functioning locks.
- During the COVID-19 restrictions, staff moved classroom training into an aircraft shelter, alongside other training facilities and offices. This provided enough space to enable training to continue. However, the environment lacks natural light and has a constant hum from heating

fans, which can make it difficult for trainees to hear. Staff plan to move classroom training back to the small, dedicated classroom for the next course. However, this classroom is too small for the increasing number of trainees. Squadron staff are working with station staff to secure a larger classroom.

- Training staff use the simulated police station within the aircraft shelter for offices. This deprives staff and trainees of a training asset and forces training staff to work without natural light and with noise from the heating fan. Staff and trainees use very poor-quality outside toilets, which are some distance from the training and office facilities.
- Staff do not keep records of remedial training activity. This does not allow senior staff to review any remedial training to ensure that it is appropriate and fair.

Recommendations

- Accommodate male and female trainees on different corridors and provide functioning locks.
- Provide training staff with more appropriate office accommodation.
- Provide all staff and trainees with suitable toilet facilities.
- Provide all trainees with contact numbers for welfare staff and trained equality and diversity staff so that trainees can raise any concerns outside the training chain of command should they wish.
- Maintain, and review frequently at a senior level, records of any remedial training activity that staff require trainees to complete.

HMS Sherwood

HMS Sherwood is a Royal Naval Reserve unit based in Nottingham, located in the same place as an Army Reserve unit. Staff provide phase 1 training for Reservist officer cadets (OCdts) and naval ratings (recruits). They also nurture applicants who are waiting to join as Reservists. OCdts and recruits attend training evenings once a week and occasional training weekends at HMS Sherwood. They complete task books during their training evenings, which include all the objectives they have to achieve. They also attend 2 development weekends and a 2-week confirmation course. For OCdts, these take place at Britannia Royal Naval College, and for recruits, they take place at HMS Raleigh. On the day of the inspection, one recruit and 5 OCdts were undergoing training. There were a total of 9 recruits and 6 OCdts in phase 1 training, and 9 applicants were waiting to join.

Main findings

- Senior staff set high expectations for the quality of training and welfare. They ensure that all staff with training and welfare roles are trained appropriately and are doing their best for OCdts and recruits. There is a good mix of permanent and part-time reserve staff, which gives some

flexibility and resilience when staff are absent. For example, permanent staff augment the training staff to provide additional training when needed.

- Staff, including allocated divisional officers, know the OCdts and recruits extremely well. If unit staff consider it useful for staff at external training courses to be aware of any concerns, they provide welfare briefs on recruits so that the receiving unit knows how to best support them.
- OCdts and recruits benefit from good teaching, coaching and mentoring from staff. They enjoy learning in very good-quality training facilities. They also benefit from good-quality, well-maintained living accommodation during the occasional training weekends they attend.
- Senior staff closely monitor the progress that OCdts and recruits make. At weekly commanders' group meetings, staff brief the commanding officer on the progress of individual recruits. Senior staff help training staff to go the extra mile in supporting individuals to succeed. Staff maintain a supervisory care log that identifies recruits or OCdts who are at risk of not completing the recruiting process or training. Staff do not record these in enough detail, or the actions taken by staff to mitigate them, so that they can try to reduce the very high dropout rate in the reserve recruiting and training process.
- When new OCdts and recruits arrive, they join the training course at different points. This means that those who are already in training sometimes repeat training sessions that are intended for new joiners. Staff work hard to reduce the impact of this. For example, staff often provide additional training sessions. OCdts and recruits are very positive about their training overall, but find any repetition of the same material tedious.
- Training branch and other staff provide good-quality instruction, coaching and mentoring for OCdts and recruits. For example, a number of staff provided close monitoring and coaching for a team that was carrying out a command and leadership task to extract a downed pilot from a dangerous location. The staff's excellent feedback and guidance on completion of the task helped the leader and team members recognise what they did well and how they could improve further.
- Training staff receive frequent feedback on their teaching from supervisors to help them improve. This feedback does not focus enough on how well training practice ensures that OCdts and recruits learn and retain the knowledge and skills they need.
- Feedback from OCdts and recruits on the training and support they receive, which is gained through internal validations discussions, is very positive. Staff do not, however, secure any other formal feedback from OCdts and recruits.
- Too few recruits are aware of the dangers of radicalisation and extremism. The online learning package, which is now mandatory, is not completed by OCdts and recruits early enough in their training.
- Very few recruits join under the age of 18. There was one at the time of inspection. Commanders are compliant with the current Royal Navy policy for carrying out checks on staff who have frequent contact with recruits under the age of 18, but this policy is not consistent with the approach for Army or Royal Air Force (RAF) recruits.

Recommendations

- Keep more detailed records of why OCdts and recruits are at risk of not completing their recruitment and training, so staff can ensure that appropriate action is taken to retain them.
- Avoid OCdts and recruits repeating any learning when new OCdts or recruits join training.
- Improve the range and usefulness of feedback from OCdts and recruits on their feelings about the quality of training and support.
- Teach OCdts and recruits about the dangers of extremism and radicalisation as early as possible in their training, and check that they retain this information.
- Review the Royal Navy policy for checks on staff who have frequent contact with recruits and trainees under the age of 18 and bring it in line with the Army and RAF.

Army Training Centre, Pirbright

ATC(P) is about 30 miles west of London, close to the towns of Aldershot and Guildford. The ATC(P) provides basic training for new Regular and Reserve Army recruits joining a range of corps.

ATC(P) consists of 3 regiments, 2 of which provide training: 1 and 2 Army Training Regiments (ATRs) and a Headquarter Regiment (HQ Regt). ATC(P) provides phase 1 training for the Army Air Corps, Army Medical Services, Corps of Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, Corps of Royal Engineers, Corps of Army Music, Royal Armoured Corps, Royal Regiment of Artillery, Royal Corps of Signals, Royal Logistic Corps, Adjutant General's Corps and Intelligence Corps Regulars.

At the time of the inspection, the ATC(P) had around 683 recruits. Of the total, 1 ATR had 385 recruits and 2 ATR had 298 recruits. Of those, 45 were under 18 years of age and 116 were female recruits. There were 50 recruits in Normandy company for rehabilitation.

ATC(P) provides a 14-week Common Military Syllabus (CMS) to around 3,879 Regular recruits annually. It also provides Reserve training in the common military syllabus.

HQ Regt provides several support functions to ATC(P), including:

- Normandy Company, which manages recruits across ATC(P) who need longer than 14 weeks to complete the CMS
- Kohima Company, which provides basic training to Army Reserve recruits
- Soldier Development Wing, based in the Brecon Beacons, which provides adventure training packages for all ATC(P) recruits.

Main findings

- Senior officers and staff across the 3 regiments place a high priority on the welfare, care and support of recruits. They focus on building recruits' resilience and mental health. They have developed an environment that promotes inclusivity. Senior officers make clear to staff and recruits that bullying and discrimination are not tolerated. As a result, recruits are confident that, if they raise concerns, staff will take decisive action. Senior officers deal with any complaints and concerns promptly.
- Senior officers and staff have high expectations of recruits. They have a clear vision to give recruits the necessary foundation knowledge and skills to transform them from civilians to soldiers. Recruits who complete their training quickly develop the military skills and behaviours they need to move to phase 2 training. Most recruits who are ready to start their phase 2 training benefit from visiting their phase 2 establishments before passing out. As a result, they are well prepared and look forward to the next stages of their military careers.
- Staff give recruits very effective support to develop their personal skills. Recruits gain confidence, self-belief and resilience quickly. In training sessions, they frequently give presentations, which improves their confidence in public speaking. Through a range of training activities, recruits develop good team-working skills. They understand that working together is essential in training and in the Field Army.
- Most trainers have expert subject knowledge and relevant training qualifications. They use these effectively to teach recruits the foundation knowledge and practical skills they need. For example, recruits learn how to handle weapons, with a strong emphasis on safety, stabilising battlefield casualties and basic map reading. Most trainers provide excellent coaching in sessions. They check recruits' knowledge and frequently reinforce learning. Trainers give recruits very helpful feedback about their progress in their good-quality reflective training diaries.
- A minority of trainers are not skilled enough in checking recruits' understanding in sessions. This is because they do not complete the necessary pre-employment training before they arrive at Pirbright. They complete this training alongside their training role. As a result, they have not had enough opportunity to hone their training skills. Too often they rush through the intense content, and not all recruits can learn effectively at this fast pace.
- Recruits enjoy and value their training. However, because of the intensity of the programme they sometimes struggle to remember what they have learned. Some find the content overwhelming. The content of the programme is logically put together; however, there is insufficient time for trainers to revisit all elements of the content. As a result, some recruits do not get to practise their skills enough before the battle camp and feel unprepared.
- Recruits with additional learning needs get effective support. Staff provide them with strategies to help them manage their learning. For example, they give them tips on how to improve their memory and strategies to help them revise. The few recruits who need to improve their English and/or mathematics skills get good support. As a result, recruits pass their examinations first time in these subjects.

- The proportion of recruits who complete their basic training has decreased significantly over the previous 2 years. Senior leaders identify that much of this is attributable to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Recruits often arrive with less resilience, academic ability and understanding of what to expect, because recruiting staff have not provided enough information. As a result, a high proportion leave basic training in the early weeks. Leaders have recently introduced opportunities to give recruits and their parents more information about what to expect much earlier in the application process. However, it is too early to assess the impact of this.
- Recruits in Normandy Company receive good support to help them recover and rehabilitate from injury. Rehabilitation staff provide focused and purposeful training. For example, they teach sessions about diet and nutrition, anatomy and physiology, pain and healing to recruits. Recruits are positive about the support they receive to manage their injuries. However, those recruits who have been in rehabilitation for a long time do not have enough varied learning activities to keep them occupied and motivated.
- Staff who provide welfare support work closely with troop commanders and the chain of command. The multi-disciplinary regimental review boards meet fortnightly to discuss recruits who are at risk of failing. Staff keep detailed records of recruits' performance. They use this information effectively to identify when recruits need to retrain. As a result, recruits referred to retraining benefit from a highly individualised training plan to help them prepare to rejoin the core programme.
- Recruits benefit from a range of good-quality training and welfare facilities and resources. Physical training facilities are very high quality. Recruits have access to good-quality medical and dental facilities.
- Female recruits are not always given properly fitting rucksacks, webbing, trousers or shirts. In addition to reducing their ability to present themselves smartly, poorly fitting kit exposes recruits to increased risk of lower limb or back injury.
- Senior officers have ensured that most weaknesses identified with the accommodation and infrastructure at the previous inspection, for example the problems with hot water and heating, have been rectified. The recruits' mess provides a pleasant environment and is well laid out. Recently refurbished sinks in the entrance enable recruits to wash their hands before eating. Food is of a reasonable standard and labelled with calorific value. However, there is not enough nutritional information displayed to help recruits make informed choices about healthy eating. Senior officers know the areas where they still need to make further improvements.
- Senior officers have a comprehensive supervisory care directive in place. This gives very clear guidance to permanent staff and recruits about their roles and responsibilities. Senior officers set clear expectations on how staff should model military values and behaviours. They have appropriate arrangements in place to safeguard recruits. They are clear on their responsibilities to ensure the safety of trainees aged under 18 and the few care leavers in training. They have very thorough health and safety risk assessment processes in place.
- Recruits feel safe at Pirbright. They know who to contact if they have concerns. However, they do not have a good enough awareness of the dangers posed to them through radicalisation and

by extremist groups. Recruits recall receiving information about this at the start of basic training. However, this is not revisited and, as a result, they do not remember the signs to look out for.

Recommendations

- Increase the number of recruits who complete their courses.
- Help recruits consolidate their knowledge and practise their skills before attending battle camp.
- Provide recruits who have been in rehabilitation for long periods of time with more varied activities to keep them motivated.
- Provide relevant, clear nutritional labelling for food served in the mess, so that recruits can make more informed and healthier choices about what they eat.
- Provide recruits with more detailed and current information on how to understand the threats posed from radicalisation and extremist groups.
- Issue female recruits with the appropriately fitting rucksacks and uniform.

Ofsted's terms of reference

Ofsted will:

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

care and welfare for recruits and trainees during initial training

- publish an annual report that includes the observations and findings from individual units, overarching recommendations for the MoD, and suggested improvements to policy and practice across all initial training,
- support TESRR in the delivery of workshops and internal training to raise awareness of the inspection framework and role of the nominee
- deliver nominee conferences for representatives of units within the scope of inspection programme
- provide a lead MoD inspector to liaise with TESRR to manage the relationship to deliver agreed obligations
- review the inspection framework annually in consultation with TESRR, confirming major changes by formal amendment and publication
- carry out any additional joint project with TESRR, as set out in a separate formal agreement

The MoD seeks to achieve the following:

- provide external, independent assurance of the care and welfare standards in initial training carried out across the Armed Forces
- unit-level inspections, reinspections and feedback to cover all initial training before personnel become 'gains to trained/trade trained strength'
- strategic recommendations to enable the maintenance, development and continuous improvement of policy, principles and practice of care and welfare for recruits and trainees
- the ability to share good practice with the national learning community and benchmark the provision of Defence training and education to ensure comparable standards to civilian learning programmes
- the ability to maintain and update professional skills through continuous professional development activity in order to support the lifelong learning agenda and skills development in the MoD

Inspection dates

Regular establishments

Date of inspection

Defence Medical Academy

13 October 2021 and 25 January
2022

Royal Air Force Officer Training Academy at RAF

20 October 2021

Cranwell

Royal Engineer training at Minley Station	8 December 2021
HMS Sultan	2 March 2022
Royal Marines School of Music	8 March 2022
Royal Military School of Music	8 March 2022
Infantry Training Centre, Catterick	23 March 2022
Army Training Centre, Pirbright	18 May 2022

Reserve establishments	Date of inspection
Royal Marines Reserve Merseyside	23 November 2021
Army Training Unit (North)	24 November 2021
3 Tactical Police Squadron, RAF Honington	9 April 2022
HMS Sherwood	3 May 2022

University Royal Naval Units (URNU)	Date of inspection
URNU Bristol	15 February 2022
URNU Cambridge	16 February 2022
URNU London	17 February 2022
URNU Northumbria	17 February 2022
URNU Liverpool	17 February 2022
University Department (URNU HQ), BRNC, Dartmouth	22 February 2022

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