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THE UNITED KINGDOM RESERVE FORCES

# EXTERNAL SCRUTINY TEAM

ANNUAL REPORT 2020



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**EXTERNAL  
SCRUTINY  
TEAM**

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## FOREWORD

1. Inevitably the work of the External Scrutiny Team has been impacted on by the inability to conduct physical visits to Headquarters and Units from the beginning of the lockdown and so we complete this report a few months later than normal. We would like to thank all three Services in accommodating our work with virtual visits and greater written input. I would also like to record our appreciation of our team member, Air Vice Marshal Paul Luker, who is now stepping down having been a key member since the inception; first of all, acting as the Clerk in his position as the Chief Executive of the Council of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association and then joining as a member bringing with him extraordinary knowledge and continuity.
2. I would like to start by thanking the Secretary of State for Defence for his detailed response to our 2019 report and his appreciation of the value of independent scrutiny.
3. We concluded last year that the Future Reserves 2020 (FR20) programme had been a success and the Reserve were certainly in a much better place than the situation that culminated in the requirement for the establishment of the Independent Commission back in 2010. But we voiced our concerns that it was imperative the Reserve were consistently used to maintain and develop their experience and expertise and thus make an assured contribution to Defence's capabilities. It is pleasing to see this has been the case, albeit no one could have expected the requirement to assist in the Government's response to a pandemic.
4. But we also commented on the "danger of lessons learnt being forgotten" and unfortunately in this year's report we have had to highlight this as an ongoing inefficiency which seems to be a result of the nature of varied use of the Reserve for different types of operations over the years combined with the short term corporate memory resulting from the churn of knowledgeable personnel every two to three years. It would certainly appear Defence could do with a more robust authority on the ongoing use of the Reserve.
5. At the beginning of the reporting year we would not have foreseen what a complex year it would be with not only a pandemic but a combination of a defence review (The Integrated Review) and the commencement of a further review of the Reserve (Reserve Forces 2030). We consider all three of these events are opportunities for the Reserve to confirm and develop their contribution to defence.
  - a. Firstly, with the military support to the response for the pandemic it was pleasing to see such a large number of reservists responding to the call for volunteers to serve full-time and in doing so providing the assurance the Reserve's capability will always be available when called.
  - b. We support fully the intent of the Reserve Forces 2030 (RF30) review and fundamentally agree there is further work to be done in developing the Reserve after the completed 2020 programme. We have seen the review's early work and we applaud its ambition and look forward to seeing the conclusions in the months ahead and reporting on the implementation of the approved outcomes.

- c. With this work and the ongoing Integrated Review (IR) we can only reiterate what we said last year in that it is our belief there is much more the Reserve and the citizen servicemen and women can contribute. Not only providing mass and specialist skills to meet defined military capabilities, but also bringing to bear their expertise obtained in their civilian employment in more diverse areas and, with it, their knowledge gained across the spectrum of innovative approaches and technologies.
6. This year's report is fundamentally positive with the Reserve being widely used and all three Services developing their own Whole Force approach in a proactive and positive manner. We look forward to seeing the outcome of the IR and the RF30 work and hope this will be a defining moment in the integration of the Reserve and maximising their physical and intellectual contribution.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S F N Lalor', with a large, sweeping flourish above the name.

S F N Lalor  
Major General (Retired)  
25 September 2020





## INTRODUCTION

1. The Future Reserves 2020 (FR20) Independent Commission identified a requirement for an annual report by an External Scrutiny Team (EST) on the overall state of the Reserve Forces. The first two reports were provided at the request of the Secretary of State (SofS) for Defence in 2013 and 2014. On 1 October 2014, the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association (RFCA) had a statutory duty placed on them to report annually to Parliament on the state, and an assessment of the capabilities, of the United Kingdom's Reserve Forces (Annex A)<sup>1</sup>. Terms of Reference for the EST is at Annex B. This will be the sixth report under these statutory arrangements.
2. We submitted our last report through the SofS for Defence on 1 July 2019. It was placed in the Library of the House on 3 September 2019. On 30 January 2020, he responded to our report, updating us on progress and commenting on our recommendations (see Annex C).
3. **Methodology.** As before, we started the year visiting Headquarters and Establishments with Reserve responsibilities as well as a cross-section of units around the country to understand the situation 'on the ground', again using the RFCAs to coordinate our unit visits on a regional basis. Our programme was curtailed by the 'lockdown' imposed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic – we could not visit as many units as planned or exercises such as Exercise JOINT WARRIOR, in which reservists participate alongside their regular colleagues. Of particular disappointment, our visit to Cyprus to visit 7 RIFLES, deployed on Operation TOSCA also had to be cancelled. We had visited the Battalion on its pre-deployment training (PDT) and were keen to observe how a reserve unit integrated into an international UN operation normally undertaken by regular units.
4. Our report usually would have been submitted to the SofS in July, but we requested that we delay the report in anticipation that the restrictions of the lockdown might be freed up such that we could resume some visits. This turned out not to be the case. Nevertheless, we conducted a number of remote 'virtual' visits and the delay has given us the opportunity to comment on the mobilisation and utility of the Reserve in support of Operation RESCRIPT, the MOD's support to the wider government response to COVID-19.

## REPORT THEMES

5. This is our first report since the FR20 programme to 'arrest the decline in the state of the Reserves' ended on 31 March 2019. The focus of previous reports tended to be on the arrest to that decline, concentrating on manning, recruiting and meeting the FR20 programme targets. We comment on the Services manning below and we have also conducted a review of all the previous report recommendations (Annex D) and their implementation.
6. Clearly progress has been made – manning is much improved and the Reserve is much more integrated into the Whole Force and delivering the directed capability. But if one stands back, **what is striking is that we can see that the same institutional impediments to reserve service, often highlighted in previous recommendations, continually arise or recur**, in terms of recruiting, medicals, training and Terms and Conditions of Service (TACOS) etc, even when they have been acknowledged and remedial action taken.

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1. Defence Reform Act, 14 May 2014, Chapter 20 Part 3 Paragraph 47.

7. We asked ourselves why this is so, and have concluded that it is because the Reserve is managed by the regulars in the same way that they manage themselves, and who, therefore, see reserve issues through the prism of their regular experience. This combined with the constant turnover of regular personnel and the reserve commanders and staff officers also means that significant knowledge and experience of the Reserve is lost every two to three years. Lessons learnt are then too soon forgotten. A good example of this were the many lessons, practices and procedures of mobilising the Reserve at mass and pace were forgotten, and have had to have been re-identified as demonstrated on aspects of Operation RESCRIPT. **We also concluded that until this changes, embedded integration is unlikely to be achieved and the optimal value of the Whole Force will not be gained.**
8. Without knowing the outcome of the Integrated Review<sup>2</sup> (IR), we, nevertheless, believe that it will force significant change as to how Defence positions itself to meet the challenges of the future, which change quickly and get more complex, with the resources available and, perhaps, greater dependence on the Reserve, particularly for Homeland Defence. If our supposition is correct, **defence will need to be more innovative, imaginative and forward-looking with its thinking about alternatives to the exclusive use of costly full-time regulars;** retaining infrequently used capabilities within the Reserve and maximising the more specialist skills found from the civilian world. This would seem to be in line with the observations of many commentators (Select Committee, RUSI and the media) and what we have picked up from the Services themselves.
9. Again we have not seen the outcome of Reserve Forces 2030 Review (FR30), although we had early discussions with the review team. We welcome and support the overall aim of the Review to *“articulate a bold vision as to what the Reserve (including the Regular Reserve) could and should be contributing to Defence and wider HMG objectives by 2030.”* In this to, *“consider utilising novel and innovative ways of partnering across Government and with the private sector to share cost and benefit on how we might train, skill and equip our Reserve in support of the ambition that will be set out in the Integrated Foreign, Defence and Security Review.”* To this end, we, again, welcome and applaud the ‘Big Ideas’ that were articulated when we met: to expand the role of the Reserve within the Total Force; harness the potential of reservists civilian skills, expertise and networks; form a new societal contract for Defence and Security; and transform support to the Reserve to meet the specific needs of reservists.
10. The two Reviews, taken together add emphasis to the Whole Force Concept and reinforce the intent of the 2011 Independent Commission into the Reserve and the previous EST recommendations that the Reserve still needs to be developed as an integral part of the Whole Force. **For these ideas, particularly expanding the role and harnessing the skills of the Reserve, a further plan and associated programme will need to be developed and resourced.** This was key to the success of the FR20 programme. In this way, the skills and knowledge that come from their civilian background can be fully utilised and exploited – exemplars including technology, IT, AI and management methodology, as well as, perhaps, a more free-thinking approach. We do not see short-term or ‘lifer’ Full Time Reserve Service (FTRS) posts as a sustainable solution since when these posts end, so does the corporate knowledge; lessons then have to be re-identified and learnt again when a crisis re-occurs. **There should be no ‘reserve free’ areas.** It is noteworthy, and we commend the manner in which the Army has integrated part-time reservists into its compartment developing its input to the IR; the

2. The Integrated Review in the Government’s review of the Security, Defence, Development Foreign Policy that will define the Government’s vision for the UK’s role in the world over the next decade.

Reserve component, therefore, will be viewed as a capability in its own right and be considered together with and alongside the regular component, rather than as an afterthought at the end, as happened in the past. We would commend this approach to the other two Services.

11. In expanding the role of the Reserve, decisions will need to be made as to what capabilities can or cannot be afforded and what capabilities, particularly those that are used rarely by regulars, might be considered viable being held in the Reserve. Where doubt has been expressed as to whether the Reserve are capable of using a capability – such doubts were expressed when the Multi Launch Rocket System (MLRS) was taken on by the Reserve – the opposite has been found to be true. Furthermore, what Operation RESCRIPT, as well as Operations TOSCA and CABRIT, have demonstrated, if it ever needed demonstrating, is that the Reserve will come forward when required. The call for volunteers was overwhelming and without a single case of compulsion. Defence can have the confidence that the Reserve will play its full part in future operations, whether aboard or at home, and will be there as required.
12. **Much of what we saw over the last year has been very positive, but we do comment on certain negative aspects that make reserve service unnecessarily difficult – it is our role to do so – but this should not detract from the very positive outlook we found.** We are also aware that some of the issues that we highlight have been or are already being addressed by the Services and we will be monitoring the efficacy of their approach.

### Reserve Manning

13. The details of the manning statistics are at Annex E<sup>3</sup>. The targets for trained strength in the three Services were: Royal Navy – 3,100; Army – 30,100; Royal Air Force – 1,860; totalling 35,060. Again, this target across the three Services was missed; at 32,920, it undershot by 2,140, an improvement on the year before of an undershoot of 2,500. However, this figure would be much worse if the Royal Air Force had not exceeded their target by some 880 personnel.
  - a. **Royal Navy.** The Royal Navy Maritime Reserve strength as at 1 April 2019 was 3,850 and as at 1 April 2020 it was 3,870; made up of 2,870 trained and 1,000 untrained personnel; an overall gain of 20 personnel.
  - b. **Army.** The Army too improved its overall manning figures from 29,470 as at 1 April 2019 to 29,930 as 1 April 2020; a gain of 460. Trained strength increased by 230 over the year from 27,070 to 27,300 personnel.
  - c. **Royal Air Force.** The Royal Air Force were above its targets last year and continued to grow throughout 2020, reaching an overall strength of 3,200 as at 1 April 2020, of which 2,740 were trained. As highlighted above, this was 880 above their trained strength target.
14. Although not shown in the figures, we note that retention also improved across the three Services. Of the outflow of reservists, it should be noted that some 25-30% left for another part of the Armed Forces or the regular component of their Service and, therefore, were not 'lost'. This can be seen reflected in the officer manning Appendix 4 to Annex E. On this latter point it is encouraging to see that officer numbers continue to grow.

3. All figures have rounded to the nearest 10.

15. We note the Army decided to not extend from March 2020 the Army Reserve Financial Incentives for the recruitment of ex-regular personnel. This was funded by the FR20 programme and thus came to an end with this programme. We consider this illogical, albeit there would be an in-year cash saving. We consider that it would be better value to pay incentives, particularly for certain trades and specialisations that are expensive to recruit and train, rather than incurring the considerable cost of training civilians in the Reserve to get them to the same point as the ex-regular. It also would give a better financial return on the cost of their previous service and training, as well as gaining the benefit of other regular skills and experience, which might otherwise be lost. We appreciate such schemes must be tailored to the assessed requirement but **we recommend that all three Services develop and maintain Financial Incentives to recruit ex-regulars, particularly for those trades and skills that are expensive to train and develop, acknowledging this is a cost-effective method for manning the Reserve.**
16. Recruiting remains positive, but as always, there is never room for complacency. We previously emphasised the importance of the Regimental Sub-Unit Support Officers (RSUSO) for the Army, the role they play in maintaining the inflow of recruits and that they should be taken on to unit's permanent strength. We are pleased to understand that this has been achieved, as per previous EST recommendations, from March 2021 – by creating new enduring posts called Regimental Mentoring Support Officers (ReMSO) with the posts rank ranged Corporal to Sergeant. But we also understand the number of these personnel has been reduced by a relatively small amount so we will continue to monitor if these changes impact on the contribution to recruiting and thus manning.

#### Whole Force design – Utility of the Reserves

17. On our first visits to units, we picked up worrying reports that the value for money of the Reserve again was being questioned. However, as the year progressed, we are pleased to report that this is not the case and it has been encouraging to see the seeds of a Whole Force by design sown in 2010 now firmly rooted in the three Services. We have been struck by the many comments that 'we could not do what we do without the Reserve' whether because of the current tempo of operations or the particular skills that are brought to bear from the Reserve component. It is also noteworthy that the senior leadership of all three Services are looking forward, proactively and innovatively to develop and position their Reserve for an uncertain future.
18. We were unable to meet with Second Sea Lord, but in a written response, he says that Maritime Reserve is seen as a seamless part of the Royal Navy not a separate force. Furthermore, its Reserve "*... drives towards an auxiliary capability delivering core and niche capabilities into every aspect of frontline activity ...*", including blended manning of the Offshore Patrol Vessels, closer integration of the Royal Marines Reserve in the Future Commando Force, niche capabilities to the Carrier Strike Group, as well as individual augmentees. In the Army, the Reserve is seen an integral part of the Field Army and used to deliver operational capability worldwide. The Royal Air Force has widened the role of the Royal Auxiliary Air Force (RAuxAF) Commandant General, combining it with a Chief of Staff Reserves role in order to further develop its Reserve.

19. Following on from the overall theme of integration of the Reserve into the Whole Force articulated above, and in order to develop and encourage further the growth of the integration of the Reserve and harvest the benefits, we recommend **that the Reserve, through embedded part-time reserve staff posts, should be involved in all aspects of the Whole Force:**
- a. **Across all Defence Lines of Development (DLOD) – particularly force design, capability development.**
  - b. **In the MOD (Secretariat Policy Operations (SPO)) – the MOD’s operations cell – Standing Joint Command (SJC) Headquarter (HQ) and Land Operations Centre (LOC).**
  - c. **As operational staff of higher HQs.**
20. **Utility.** This year has shown many examples of the utility of the Reserve whether on operations overseas from the Baltic to Cyprus or in the UK, indeed anywhere regulars are deployed. What has been particularly impressive is the numbers of reservists that volunteer and want to be used, and not just for Operation RESCRIPT. Both the Royal Yeomanry and 7 RIFLES have had little difficulty in finding volunteers for their respective deployments to the Baltic and Cyprus. Indeed, the Royal Yeomanry, in the midst of preparing a squadron for deployment, had a further 109 reservists volunteering for Operation RESCRIPT.

### Operations

21. Last year we highlighted the direction given by Min(AF) for a percentage target for reservists within a deployed force and we are pleased to report the outcome has been positive. All three single Services have made much use of the Reserve on operations, whether as individuals or formed units. The Army look to exceed the directed targets – 7% in 2019/20 (against 5%) and 9% in 2020/21 (against 8%). We highlight two operations below:
- a. **Operation TOSCA.** Operation TOSCA from March to September 2020 was undertaken by a 7 RIFLES battlegroup consisting of 50% 7 RIFLES, 40% 5 RRF and 10% from 13 other regular and reserve units. The required volunteer target in April was 150% oversubscribed by June.
    - 1). A tour with the United Nations Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) is different, but it is not a ‘sunshine’ tour, as some might think. Geopolitical tensions between key parties make for a challenging tour for peacekeepers as incidents on the international scene – gas in the Mediterranean – play into what the peacekeeper encounters on the ground on their patrols. The military skills and experience from Iraq or Afghanistan are not immediately relevant; instead, the requirement is more for soft diplomacy underwritten by an open mind and skills for influence, liaison, outreach, conflict resolution mediation and moderation. To this end, from our visit to the Army’s 77 Brigade last year, we can see that making use of, or deploying, reservists from the Brigade with expertise in such areas as human terrain, behavioural analysis and civil affairs would benefit units (both regular and reserve) and the Brigade.
    - 2). We visited the Battlegroup in February during its pre-deployment training. The Reserve has shown it can respond much faster, but we noted that it would be beneficial if a reserve unit is given 12 months warning, for what is a predictable operation, in order that its people can re-organise their civilian

job and family commitments. Unlike a regular unit, a reserve unit needs slightly longer on PDT in order not only to make training thorough and effective, but also to weld what might be a disparate unit and establish the necessary esprit de corps; deploying on a six-month operation is different to evening, weekend and two-week camp training sessions.

- 3). The key issue for the Battlegroup revolved around mobilisation, similarly experienced by the Royal Yeomanry preparing for Operation CABRIT, and the rest of the Army on Operation RESCRIPT, which we discuss below.

In sum, all the reports we have received showed that the 7 RIFLES Battlegroup has had an excellent tour – every bit as good as regular unit; not that we should be surprised. To this end, HQ UNFICYP were impressed with 7 RIFLES Battlegroup's energy and intellect and noted that the Battlegroup was tested by the key parties early in their tour, but were very quick to adapt, bringing fresh civilian skills and thinking to bear. This has continued throughout the tour.

- b. **Operation CABRIT.** The Royal Yeomanry are deploying a squadron made up of 64 Yeoman, 50 Queen's Dragoon Guard and 15 REME reservists.
  - 1). The challenges of mobilising and preparing effectively an independent squadron, based on Jackal, to work within a US battlegroup is considerable. COVID-19 then posed yet another complexity. It placed a huge workload on a small Regimental Headquarters (RHQ) of five to coordinate the selection and then training for a myriad of different courses; this required personnel to be mobilised at different times depending on the length of the course. **We recommend that an assessment is made on the requirement for an uplift of personnel to meet the workload of managing a mobilisation and that additional personnel are mobilised to reinforce the RHQ of the mobilising unit, as enablers, before and throughout deployment.**
  - 2). A key issue was the provision of a Light Aid Detachment (LAD) from the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (REME), for which the unit is not established, and none seemed to be forthcoming from the Chain of Command. The unit, therefore, found its own solution from a REME Reserve unit. The craftsmen, with a maintenance course reduced from two weeks to a week and two weekends, demonstrated that they can cope with 85% of the tasks set. We recommended in 2016 that the decision to withdraw LADs from Reserve units to create REME units be revisited. We accept the decision has been made, but it was disappointing to see that the inherent weakness of a lack of LAD, and the impact it has at unit level, remains. **We, therefore, recommend that the issue of the provision of REME support to equipment heavy units, whether for training or operations, is revisited as the current process does not appear to be working.**

### Mobilisation

22. Some 2,000 reservists were mobilised for Operation RESCRIPT (a Military Assistance role to support Government Departments' response to COVID-19)<sup>4</sup>. It is noteworthy that in the mid-1980s, mobilisation exercises were routine, being held annually before units deployed on annual camp or large exercises such as Exercise LIONHEART. Reservists reported to their reserve centre and were processed through the various administrative requirements. This exercise

4. At time of writing approximately 200 Royal Navy, 1,800 Army and 150 Royal Air Force.

also included the Regular Reserve, some of whom had the option to take part in the annual camp.

23. It is understandable that due to the nature of COVID-19 pandemic, there was some confusion – the fog of war – particularly in the first three weeks, as to what was required and the nature of the military response. From the start, much greater numbers were envisaged to meet the requirement than were needed in the end – for the Army, from a requirement for 3,000 to an actual 1,800 (1,200 as sub-units and 600 individuals). As we have reported above, it was very positive to see so many reservists respond to the potential call-up, but this, combined with the ‘stop/start’ at the beginning of the operations, did cause disappointment as some reservists who were stood up were then stood down soon afterwards.
24. Nevertheless, although in the end a success, it did demonstrate that the current process for mobilisation was not optimised for the requirement; particularly for the Army. **A number of old lessons had been forgotten.** It was much easier for the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force as numbers were much smaller, and for the latter, having the Call Out Order on the stocks, combined with previously delegated financial authority, meant that HQ Air Reserves could react swiftly to changing events. Indicators of these challenges were seen when reservists of 7 RIFLES and Royal Yeomanry were mobilised for Operations TOSCA and CABRIT respectively. We have identified a number of reasons including:
  - a. The current process is based around individuals reporting to Chilwell and undergoing a standard force preparation package. This worked for earlier operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, but was not optimal or sufficiently responsive for more focused bespoke deployments or home operations.
  - b. We heard a consistent theme that there was limited expertise or corporate memory in the MOD (Secretariat Policy Operations (SPO)) – the MOD’s operations cell – Standing Joint Command (SJC) HQ and Land Operations Centre (LOC). Different lexicons were used by different people and a lack of understanding of the nature of the Reserve and their civilian employment, its procedures and TACOS became obstacles.
  - c. Such an undertaking had not been practised fully or exercised.
25. In the end, the mobilisation process was a success due to the Services unique ability to react swiftly, adapt and change process while ‘in contact’. **But it does demonstrate plans for mass mobilisation were not in place or practised.** The Army brought in new processes of remote mobilisation, which took place at regional centres and units. The Royal Air Force continued to mobilise through their squadrons as before. The Royal Navy adopted mobilisation remotely/virtually and looked to carry this forward into future processes. As there was no capacity for medicals on mass, medical ‘lite’/self-certification was brought in by all three Services. Although these lessons have been identified by the Services, **we recommend that:**
  - a. **The Services and the MOD review their plans for mobilisation so that it accommodates individuals as well as mobilising large numbers/units at short notice and rapidly.**
  - b. **Reserve mobilisation expertise (staff posts with experience and expertise) is integrated into such areas as the SPO, SJC and LOC by creating embedded part-time reservist posts within those organisations.**

- c. **The process for pre-mobilisation medicals is reviewed and appropriate standards adopted for overseas and homeland operations.**
- d. **Revised processes are exercised routinely, not only in units, but also the SPO, SJC and LOC.**

26. To this end, we note that the Reserve Force and Cadets (RF&C) staff branch in the MOD is lightly manned when compared to previous years and had limited capacity to answer the demands created by Operation RESCRIPT, as well as the myriad of tri-Service issues, tri-Service TACOS being an example. We anticipate that more issues will need to be addressed following the publications of the IR and FR30. **We recommend that the MOD considers reviewing the capacity of the RF&C branch in order that it is manned adequately to meet the demands it is set.**

27. Employers were fully supportive throughout and understanding of the fluid nature of the accelerated mobilisation process. Nevertheless, even when key workers were mobilised or when mobilisations were turned off at short notice, they were empathetic and understood that the operational picture was constantly changing. This was underpinned by the routine, consistent and transparent engagement profiles that the Defence Relationship Management (DRM) team has with employers. Throughout the mobilisation process the Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) Gold Alumni Association (GAA), as the cohort advocating most strongly for the Armed Forces community, were regularly consulted to gauge the art of the possible in terms of volume and duration of reservist mobilisations. The end result saw only 10 appeals from over 2,700 mobilisations (only one of which followed the full legal process), which further supports the validity and efficacy of the DRM Employer Engagement model.

28. However, Operation RESCRIPT did reinforce the point that employers need to be engaged early. To this end the letter that went from the Assistant Chief of Defence Staff Reserves and Cadets (ACDS RC) explaining the MOD's approach was welcomed, but it arrived late and, therefore, was somewhat overtaken by events.

29. We commented last year that the MOD were considering a tiered mobilisation package in support of Defence Activity other than Operations (DAOTO)<sup>5</sup>, and recommended that this was developed further. As can be seen from SofS response, on reflection, the MOD considered that it is not practical in order to prevent dilution of the mobilisation package and protections. **Nevertheless, we still think, and recommend, that there is scope to consider developing a mobilisation package in support of those reservists deploying on shorter DAOTO, which is different to one that supports those on longer specific named operations, or those that are more akin to warfighting.**

### Training

30. We have commented before that not all courses are 'reserve friendly' in that the length or the frequency of a course makes it difficult for reservists to attend. We indicated above that consideration may be given to the Reserve taking on certain capabilities and equipments that are not often used. Key to the success of this would be how the requisite training is delivered through more modern distributed means harnessing simulation and synthetics, rather than attending long courses at Arms Centres.

5. DAOTO includes: Short Term Training Teams (STTT) to deliver capacity building activity; Short Term Engagement Teams (STET); visits (inwards and outwards), including high-level and senior level international engagement and ships; Defence exercises; support to export campaigns; trials including sea trials; exchange visits between personnel of allied countries; and activity such as defence education, battlefield studies, sports tours, band deployments, and adventurous training with an international engagement objective.



31. It is encouraging that lockdown demonstrated how much training could be conducted remotely or virtually; indeed, Royal Navy attendance rates went up and more training has been achieved through remote learning. They look to exploit technology and further develop these hybrids. As an example, much of the new entry training can be done remotely through the Defence Learning Environment. Similarly, for the seamanship training for the Offshore Patrol Vessels (OPV). We heard from the Director Land Warfare that a study on trade training has been initiated to redefine delivery of utility and capability. We note that responsibility for Army individual training and schools now resides within one command in the Army, which should bring greater coherence.
32. The Army has shown that certain courses can be modularised – we heard that the Royal Artillery’s Level 3 gunner’s course went from five weeks to five weekends; the Royal Engineers have particularly effective Combat Engineer and Troop Leaders’ courses. Training for the REME deploying with the Royal Yeomanry, paragraph 21b.(2) above, is another example. The clear feedback from units is that centralised training could be shorter, with greater use of remote learning and more intense training delivered over weekends and a full-time week. Qualified instructors could do more in a unit. We believe that better value for money might accrue were small numbers of instructors deployed from training schools to conduct training courses in reserve units, and where capital equipment is not a restraint. Fundamentally, we still believe much reserve training is too centralised and is having to conform to the accepted regular schools and branches practice, rather than considering more distributed models assured by the appropriate end standard. Furthermore, the training should be focused on what the reservist is being asked to deliver. For all three Services, **we recommend that their training courses, particularly those that are long, are adapted through modularisation, distribution, concentration and remote/virtual learning, and are assessed and measured on this basis.**
33. In summary, we believe that an opportunity now presents itself to examine, challenge and change how training is delivered for the Reserve, particularly, as we highlighted above, as the role and use of the Reserve is likely to evolve going forward. Not doing so – delivering training in a format more suitable for regulars – will present barriers to the Reserve developing and delivering the capabilities set **and limit the assessment of viable capabilities placed in the Reserve.**

### Frictions

34. The number of ‘frictions’ that cause unnecessary irritation are lessening but still exist. Although, they may seem minor points given the overall success of the FR20 programme and greater integration of the Reserve into the Whole Force, nevertheless, there are indicators that the journey is not completed. For the purposes of the report, we highlight two old ‘chestnuts’:
- Availability of Equipment.** Although this was an issue at the start of the FR20 programme, but initially resolved, units again are reporting that there is not enough equipment to issue to new recruits on arrival. This would seem to be backed up by the Reserve Continuous Attitude Survey (RCAS) where for the Royal Navy and Army were respectively only 55% and 54% satisfied with the availability of personal equipment, compared to 68% in the Royal Air Force.
  - Course Loading.** There is still a perennial problem in terms of the notice given to reservists that their place on a training course has been confirmed when juggling time off work and family commitments. As an example, a Royal Army Medical Corps corporal aiming for a promotion earning Command, Leadership

and Management (CLM) course in May has to engage with her employer in January to negotiate time off. She will not know until later in the year whether her bid is successful. If not, she misses out on promotion, the two-week earning bounty period (with consequent impact on annual bounty) and cannot go back to work as the rotas are already organised. The same impact results from short notice cancellation of courses. We judge that this is an issue that should be easily solved.

35. **Career Development.** We commented last year that the Army makes good use of reservist deputies and recommended that the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force consider adopting such a system. SofS replied confirming that this was taking place. We note that the majority of squadrons of the RAF Reserves are commanded by FTRS officers, many with considerable regular service. We also note that from the RCAS that overall satisfaction with opportunities for promotion across the three Services remains unchanged since 2015. In this year's survey, the Royal Navy having the highest at 46% and the Royal Air Force the lowest at 38%. However, officers in the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force are less satisfied with opportunities for promotion when compared to other ranks, 44% v 47% and 24% v 41% respectively, whereas the opposite is true for the Army (41% v 39%). **We continue to advocate that consideration should be given to developing the careers of the part time volunteer reservist, not only to prepare them for higher rank, but also to meet this demand for progression.**

#### Funding

36. As a result of the number of reservists mobilised for Operation RESCRIPT, we heard comments, probably unfounded, that the Reserve was proving to be too expensive as the cost of using the Reserve was alleged to be £75m, which, therefore, would amount to each reservist costing some £35k for either a three- or six-month mobilisation. We recognise that these are crude figures, but we doubt them – as do the Services – and we understand that different capitation rates models exist. This focuses attention, amongst some, of the cost of the Reserve solely at the point of use, an in-year cost – rather than the whole life cost of what is now and increasingly a key capability – and question their use. This would be at odds with the Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015 direction that *“we will continue to develop a 'Whole Force' approach ensuring that we use both the Regular and Reserve members of the Armed Forces.”* It is somewhat surprising that an agreed costing model now does not exist particularly as the 2011 Independent Commission into the Reserve stated the requirement for *“a transparent manpower cost comparison model as one of the factors to help planners achieve an optimal Whole Force manpower balance”*. We can only reiterate our recommendation in 2018 that **the MOD urgently produces a transparent and agreed costing method across all three Services to compare the cost of regulars and reservists drawing on the Land Military Capability Output Costs (LEMCOG)**. Until this is done, this question will continually arise causing unnecessary staff confusion when least needed and conflicting positions on whether the Reserve is affordable to use, or not. This is surely critical not only in times of use but when, as now, Defence is considering the affordability of capabilities as part of the IR process.
37. The Services account for the cost of mobilisation differently. The Royal Navy and Royal Air Force fund it from their overall manpower budget, while the Army has a specific budget with Field Army. We noted that financial pressures forced some difficult decisions for the Army and a £10m saving measure was taken against its Reserve budget. Nevertheless, the Army spent more on its Reserve mobilisation – from a budget of £12m to an actual spend of £20m in FY2019/20 and programming of some £42m in FY2020/21. What is heartening is the change

in message from the Army of one of the 'cost of using the Reserve' to one of the 'Whole Force cost of not using the Reserve', which we would endorse. Nevertheless, we would argue that setting a separate budget for mobilisation differentiates the Reserve and, whether intended or not, makes it vulnerable to in-year saving measures; it goes against the theme of being an integrated Whole Force. Indeed, with the requirement for military support to tackle COVID-19 reducing, Field Army did shorten the mobilisation period with an eye to protecting the mobilisation budget.

38. In 2018, we recommended that the MOD should consider the FR20 Commission proposal to establish a contingency fund to be available for short notice and limited duration operations. As this has not been implemented, it could be argued that this does not matter – it is for the MOD and single Services to decide how best to fund their Reserve – and, as demonstrably can be shown, funding has been made available. Nevertheless, our experience shows that as personnel change over what has been learnt or experienced before is lost. Of more importance, as we have commented before, is that the cost of the Reserve should be a core cost if it is to be integrated fully as an integral capability, rather than an add-on or optional cost.
39. **Reserve Continuous Attitude Survey.** Because we have reported later than normal, we were able to consider the results of 2020 RCAS, to which we draw the attention of the reader. We highlight that the *“overwhelming majority of Volunteer Reserves are satisfied with life in the Reserve in general, are proud to be in the Reserve, and would recommend joining it to others.”* Also, there have been no overall decreases in satisfaction compared to the 2015 baseline survey, and many increases.

#### Estate

40. In line with our previous recommendations, we welcome the review of the Reserve and Cadet Estate (Volunteer Estate) initiated at the beginning of August 2020 to identify opportunities to improve utilisation and deliver rationalisation and efficiency. The review has been directed by the SofS and is led by the Director of Army Basing and Infrastructure on behalf of Deputy Chief of Defence Staff (Military Capability). It reports against a tight deadline at the end of January 2021, and mainly will concern the Army's Volunteer Estate, given its size when compared to the other two Services.
41. Although the data resides in the RFCA's IT system, the Reserve and Cadet estate is not well understood across defence. As a first step, the review will confirm a common baseline – what is held, its location and its condition. Gaps, overlaps and opportunities to improve utilisation will be revealed once overlaid on the regular estate with the potential to share sites with other regular, reserve and cadet units, and other public bodies. The review recognises that this is not simply an exercise in reduction, but better utilisation with an eye on resilience, recruiting and representation. Should rationalisation, or optimisation, take place, then we anticipate sub-units and units will need to be moved. Such re-provision of accommodation will require a programme of work and funding.
42. Funding levels for maintenance remain broadly the same – parlous and barely adequate to conduct the necessary reactive maintenance and preventative maintenance, particularly the latter, in order to provide the accommodation of a standard to recruit and retain the reservist. Added to this are the increased costs and scrutiny associated with compliance, often necessitated by changing legislation, whether for asbestos, gas safety

management or fire risk assessments. It has to be done, but does increase the competition for finite funding. This means that, as we have reported before, **the standard of the Reserve estate is declining**; this highlights the importance of our recommendations below. To this end, we commend the efforts of the RFCA's estate staff using limited funding and monies generated from Alternative Venues to keep buildings open and available for training, as well as to 'freshen' them up to be attractive to those who wish to join the Reserve.

43. We reported last year on the flow of funds for the Army's FR20 programme – Project NEWBURY - because of the holdups caused by the process for approval – the 'exception, suspension' regime. We were assured by the SofS in his reply to last year's report that *"The 'exceptions, suspension' regime has been lifted for this year for the Army, with works required as part of FR20 being delivered under Project NEWBURY. In general, we are not aware of any systemic issues relating to the release of funding to the RFCAs for estate improvements."* However, while not subject to the same 'suspension regime', the Army has put some FR20 projects in NEWBURY on 'pause'. As examples, Horfield Army Reserve Centre (ARC) should have been completed in FY 20/21 for 7 Military Intelligence Battalion and Keynsham ARC in FY21/22 for 101 Battalion REME, both new FR20 major units. Due to the pause, which has not yet been lifted, Horfield may only be completed in FY21/22 along with Keynsham. Any further slippage may see these projects completed nearly 10 years after FR20 was announced. The same applies to the £4.3M rebuild of Dunfermline ARC for the Regimental HQ and two squadrons of 154 Regiment RLC, due to commence this FY, but which has been 'paused' with the indication that it will not be funded this FY. As a result, as we indicated last year, we expect that a number of elements will have to be re-visited as tender quotes will have lapsed, prices will have gone up and, indeed, the list of eligible companies to do the work may have changed as well. So, even if funded for FY21/22, completion is unlikely before FY22/23. There also are other examples elsewhere in the country. While we understand the financial pressures on the single Services and the need to balance finite resources, all exacerbated by the current COVID-19 crisis, it is nevertheless, disappointing, particularly for the units concerned – new units formed in 2014 will not have their full facilities available ten years after formation.
44. We also note that a number of reserve centres identified for disposal under the Army's Project CHERITON, still have not been sold, often because of a lack of funding to re-provide for other lodger units. Taking all these issues together, and given that Project NEWBURY is yet to be complete, some 10 years after initiation, **we recommend that:**
- a. **Any receipts raised through optimisation/rationalisation of the Volunteer Estate should be reinvested back into new estate or maintenance for the Volunteer Estate.**
  - b. **When the Volunteer Estate Review reports, and if a programme of work is proposed or required, funding is identified and ring fenced so that it is not subject to subsequent in-year budgetary pressures.**
45. On the more positive note, the new £11m bespoke HMS CAMBRIA in Cardiff Bay was handed over to the Royal Navy in February this year, on time and on budget, and replaces a 40-year-old facility at Sully near Barry, which has been CAMBRIA's hometown for nearly 75 years. This success is one of the last that will emanate from the Royal Navy's excellent programme to pump FR20 funding early into modernising and improving its reserve estate. The project was delivered by the RFCA for Wales in partnership with the Royal Navy and

Associated British Ports (ABP), who have offered the Navy a long-term lease on the waterfront site in Cardiff Bay. The complex will be used by Wales's Naval Reserve unit, HMS CAMBRIA, Royal Marines Reserves Cardiff and personnel from Wales' University Royal Naval Unit. Reservists will have access to state-of-the-art classroom suites, which facilitate distributed learning, shared accommodation facilities, administrative services, as well as social and fitness centres all under one roof. Similarly, a £1.8m refurbishment and remodelling of the Royal Air Force's national Air Cadet Adventurous Training Centre by Lake Windermere, doubling the number of bed spaces, was delivered on time and budget. Although part of the Cadet Estate, we mention it here as another example of how the RFCAs' locally managed expertise can deliver and such centres are often used by both regular and the reserve units for resilience operations, whether Operation RESCRIPT, or in response to floods or foot and mouth.

## RESERVIST HEALTH

46. Defence Primary Healthcare (DPHC) has provided occupational health (OH) and rehabilitation services to the Reserve since 1 April 2014. Delivery has, since the outset, been provided against a backdrop of reduced resources and significant organisational change, as reported last year. Reserve OH services are delivered by six regional teams supported by an HQ element within DPHC. The teams are responsible for:

- a. Providing out of hours appointments for reservists in the evening and at weekends.
- b. Supporting unit health requirements (including providing data updates and attending Unit Health Committees).
- c. Creating electronic health records for reservists.
- d. Supporting force preparation for mobilisation and overseas training.

The Regional Reserve OH teams vary in size. The laydown of personnel does not necessarily reflect the population they serve. This has been dictated by difficulty in recruiting medical personnel. Part of the funding provided is currently used to resource DPHC staff to work overtime in out of hours clinics. Additionally, a small number of suitably qualified and experienced reservists are engaged to support out of hours activity.

47. In our report last year, we recommended that 'consideration is given to a means whereby reservists submit some form of annual health declaration and/or have routine medicals linked to birthdays.' To this end, we note that DPHC has asked the Clinical Advisory Board (CAB) to ask Chief of Defence People (CDP) to consider whether reservists should be required to make an annual declaration of their fitness as part of their units' administrative processes, and whether all reservists over the age of 30 should undergo periodic occupational health assessment; possibly 5-yearly. As we reported above, this requirement was bought into sharp relief by the recent rapid mobilisation for Operation RESCRIPT, which demonstrated gaps in information and preparedness in the reservist population.
48. We understand the difficulties faced by DPHC in maintaining an up to date record of reservist health when routine OH is provided by another organisation (NHS). As Operation RESCRIPT has shown, the assessment of the OH of a

reservist becomes a choke point when mobilising at mass and pace. Therefore, we re-iterate our recommendation that **reservists submit an annual health declaration**. It gives a baseline from which to start; those that declare themselves fit need no further assessments, while those that declare an issue can undergo further OH assessments. This has the benefit of concentrating finite resources to where it is needed. We also note the Royal Navy does undertake periodic medicals for its reservists, linked to age/ birthdays. **We recommend that, like the Royal Navy, the Army and Royal Air Force undertake periodic medicals for its reservists, linked to age/birthdays.**

49. In terms of delivering the medical services to the Reserve, DPHC report the following:

**Occupational Health.** *The period from April 2019–April 2020 saw a 41% increase in out of hours activity from 2,445 to 3,596 appointments. Latterly, the Reserve OH teams have responded positively to the challenge of supporting distributed mobilisation for Op RESCRIPT, necessitated by social distancing regulations, using novel and rapidly developed approaches to deliver effect. Over 2,000 reservists will have been mobilised and demobilised by the end of 2020. This has included the Reserve OH team facilitating the provision of 2,600 vaccination doses over a short period.*

*The recent rapid mobilisation of reservists has highlighted gaps in readiness. For example, 43% (828) of mobilised SP required a tetanus booster in order to comply with Standing Joint Command's Force Health Protection Instruction. Despite policy direction that all reservists must have a DMICP record, 14 SP were found not to have one and 9% (182) required a medical appointment to ensure that their Joint Medical Employment Status (JMES) was in date. These are policy requirements that should have been identified through routine unit G1 [administrative] checks. It remains vital that employing officers understand their role in occupational health and recognise that failing to comply with occupational health policy, some of which is mandated by legislation, increases employer risk as well as risks to the individual personnel.*

**Rehabilitation.** *Reservists are entitled to rehabilitation services when injured on military duty. Provision has changed since 1 April 2020. Entitled reservists may now self-refer to DPHC rehabilitation facilities for treatment on production of a single Service incident form and approximately 1,100 reservists attend for rehab annually. The contract that provided a means by which patients could receive private physiotherapy for injury incurred on duty has not been re-let as uptake was low and the contract did not represent value for money.*

**Dental Inspections.** *DPHC Dental offers assessment and any necessary restorative work for any reservist who is nominated for mobilised service (from up to six months prior to mobilisation), or who is being held at high readiness (R5, 30 days' notice to move, or less). This offer is well received, when reservists are aware of the entitlement, but DPHC continues to see low numbers of reservists accessing this service.*

**Mental Health.** *As reported last year, DPHC sees low demand for access to mental health care by members of the Reserve. The relevant instructions for access to mental health support by reservists has been redrafted providing greater clarity in how the services available can be accessed.*

50. Although, not without its challenges, reservists were mobilised at mass for Operation RESCRIPT. However, this demonstrated different approaches adopted by the three single Services. It also revealed gaps in understanding of the employer's risk, relating to medical readiness of the Reserve, as well as failures in unit administrative checks which should have highlighted any anomalies prior to mobilisation. This applies particularly to immunisations. The fact that the reservist is not vaccinated routinely to the same level as the regulars is not surprising as there is a cost involved and normally time before deployment to address this issue. But it does hamper rapid mobilisation, particularly for homeland defence. To overcome this issue, the MOD may wish to consider such mechanisms as vaccinating reservists to the same standard as regulars in accordance with Joint Service Publications number 950 at the end of their initial training. **We recommend that such innovations required to facilitate the rapid mobilisation of the Reserve for Operation RESCRIPT are developed further, codified and adopted by all three Services.** As with TACOS, it would be inexplicable if the three Services adopted different standards for their personnel on the same operation.

## ASSESSMENT

51. Despite the frictions commented on above, and although others exist, it was clear from our visits that where there is a good balance between training, career progression, operations and fun; manning is positive. Indeed, retention is improving in the Army. These aspects of reserve service – the offer – continue to feature in the top five reasons of the RCAS for joining and remaining in the Reserve. The positive upward trends in manning, utility and use of the Reserve continues since the nadir of 2012 when the FR20 Commission reported. Operation RESCRIPT has demonstrated that the Reserve can be relied on when needed.
52. We have commented that the IR and RF30 reports will, and must, provide the catalyst to complete the integration of the Reserve into the Whole Force. To this end, fresh, innovative thinking will be required if the capabilities of the Reserve is to be utilised fully. In the report we have made a number of, perhaps provocative, statements and recommendations that, if implemented, would give substance to the 'big ideas' in the RF30 Review and allow Defence to harvest the fruits of its investment first sown in 2012. However, without a supporting plan and programme, and resources, we suspect that they will remain just ideas, and we will keep reporting that lessons, while identified, are never learnt.





**Annexes:**

- A. External Reporting Provisions of the Defence Reform Act 2014.
- B. External Scrutiny Team: Terms of Reference.
- C. Secretary of State for Defence Response to 2019 EST report.
- D. Previous Report Recommendations – 2013 to 2019.
- E. Defence Statistics – Reserve Manning Achievement & Trends.
- F. 2020 Report Main Recommendations.
- G. Summary of Priorities for 2020/21 Work.
- H. External Scrutiny Team – Membership.



## EXTERNAL REPORTING PROVISIONS OF THE DEFENCE REFORM ACT 2014

The Defence Reform Act 2014 placed a responsibility on Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations to submit an annual report on the state of the UK's Reserve Forces under the following provisions<sup>1</sup>:

### 113A Duty to prepare report on volunteer Reserve Forces

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

1. Inserted in Part 11 of the Reserve Forces Act 1996 (reserve associations), after section 113.

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

### INTRODUCTION

1. The FR20 Report<sup>1</sup> was commissioned by the Prime Minister in October 2010 in recognition of the relative decline and neglect of Reserve Forces.

### PURPOSE

2. The Commission identified<sup>2</sup> a requirement for an annual report on the overall state of the Reserve Forces. It recommended that the Council of Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations (CRFCA) was best placed to meet this requirement, given its existing provision by (non-discretionary) statute to provide independent advice to the Defence Council and Ministers on Reserve Matters. The Defence Reform Act 2014 sets out the duty of the CRFCA to prepare annual reports of the state of the volunteer Reserve Forces. Roles and responsibilities in the production of the reports are set out in the Enabling Agreement<sup>3</sup>.

### ROLE

3. The CRFCA External Scrutiny Team is to report to the Secretary of State for Defence on the state of the volunteer Reserve Forces and provide independent assurance to Parliament.

### MEMBERSHIP

4. After consultation with the MOD, the RFCAs will appoint the Chair of the CRFCA External Scrutiny Team. The Chair will be appointed for a maximum of five years.
5. Membership of the External Scrutiny Team should be no greater than eight, to be decided by the Chair after consultation with the MOD through VCDS. It should provide representation from the three single Services, appropriate Regular and Reserve experience and independent expertise. Whilst its composition may change, the External Scrutiny Team must retain the expertise that enables the Chair to perform his duties effectively. The membership should include at least one member who is able to assess the provision made as regards the mental welfare of members and former members of the Reserve Forces.

### BASELINE AND METRICS

6. 1 April 12 is to be taken as the baseline date from which progress of the Future Reserves 2020 Programme will be assessed.
7. RF&C will undertake coordinating activity with the single Services to ensure that the External Scrutiny Team has the assistance it requires to enable them to assess trends based on MOD manning and demographic information (such as age). Metrics to be routinely monitored are to be agreed in consultation with the MOD but may include:
  - a. Outflow rate and return of service;
  - b. Fit for Employment; Fit for Role; Fit for Deployment;
  - c. Percentage achieving bounty;
  - d. Gapping levels of Regular, Reserve, FTRS and Civilian Permanent Staff who support the Reserve community.

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

2. Para 104 (p. 43).

3. Enabling Agreement dated 7 October 2014.

## ASSESSMENT

8. The External Scrutiny Team's report is to be set in the context of the ability of the Reserves to deliver capability required by Defence, and should assess the state of the Reserves including:
  - a. progress against delivery of the FR20 Mandates and in the context of the recommendations of the FR20 Report, the condition of the Reserves.and beyond the FR20 Programme:
  - b. the recruiting of members for the volunteer Reserve Forces;
  - c. the retention of members of those Forces;
  - d. the provision of training for those Forces;
  - e. the upkeep of land and buildings for whose management and maintenance the Associations are responsible.
9. CRFCA will be involved in the development of the Programme through the Reserves Executive Committee.

## ACCESS

10. RF&C will assist in facilitating access to serving military personnel, sites and furnishing additional data as required.

## COSTS

11. Funding to cover the External Scrutiny Team's total personal expenses in the order of £9-10K pa<sup>4</sup> has been agreed. RF&C will provide advice on the submission of claims and recovery of expenses.

## MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS

12. Media engagement, if necessary, is to be conducted through MOD DDC in conjunction with RF&C.

## DATE AND FREQUENCY OF REPORTS

13. The External Scrutiny Team shall present a report to the Secretary of State for Defence annually, reflecting the requirements of the Defence Reform Act 2014.
14. The Secretary of State for Defence will deliver the report to Parliament.

4. This is recognised as an early estimation and reflecting steady-state costs beyond Yr1. CRFCA can bid for further funding as required as part of GIA.



## SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DEFENCE RESPONSE TO 2019 EST REPORT



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4.4.2.10

30 January 2020

*Dear General Lator,*

Thank you for the External Scrutiny Team's 2019 report. I am sorry for the delay in providing this response.

I believe there is real value for the Department in having this type of independent scrutiny of the Reserves and I am most grateful to you and your team for the hard work that has gone in to producing the report. Specific comments on each of the recommendations can be found at the Annex to this letter but I would also like to take the opportunity to respond below to some of the other observations the team has made.

I welcome the Team's conclusion that the FR20 programme has been a success and that the Reserves are on a far healthier footing now than in previous years. While the report is correct in pointing out that we have yet to achieve the overall trained strength target set out in 2013, Defence is committed to increasing both recruitment and retention and we are seeing continued steady growth towards these targets. I am grateful for the recognition of the hard work and commitment that has brought this about.

The report makes particular reference to two areas of ongoing concern: the utility of Reserves in the Whole Force and the conditions under which they are used on operations and exercises. 2018/19 was another very successful year for the Reserves in terms of their overall contribution to Defence operations. More than 500 Reservists were called into permanent service and provided notable support to Defence operations at home and overseas, including in Cyprus, Afghanistan, as part of the Enhanced Forward Presence in the Baltics and on Global Counter-Terrorism and Counter-Piracy tasks. Maritime Reservists also routinely fill logistics posts on board the Royal Navy's Flagship, HMS Queen Elizabeth.

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The effective utilisation of the Reserve Forces is an ongoing priority and, as the size of the Reserve Forces continues to grow, so too does their importance within the Whole Force. Removing barriers to the use of reservists is key. With the introduction this year of a Call-out Order covering Defence Activities other than Operations (DAOTO), we can now bring reservists into permanent service for an even greater range of tasks than hitherto. This has increased the opportunity for mobilisation for delivery of specific outputs, such as Short-term Training Teams and broader Defence Engagement activity, allowing us to better capitalise on Reservist knowledge and skills.

We are also working to improve the utility of the ex-Regular Reserve, looking to widen opportunities for those who have left Regular Service whose skills and experience can continue to be used in a Reserve capacity, suiting both the needs of the Individual and Defence. This includes providing greater visibility of job opportunities as well as working to better communicate the potential utilisation of Volunteer Ex Regular Reserve (VERR) days, which is being pursued at Service level. The ability to retain skilled personnel in a Reserve capacity holds continued benefits for Defence. Further to this we intend to introduce a digital jobs portal to increase the visibility of opportunities for Reservists and Ex Regulars to take up commitments.

Turning to the team's comments on Conditions of Service, I agree that where Reservists from different Services are working alongside each other within the same function or on the same task, it is appropriate that as far as reasonably possible they should receive the same level of reward. Where we are employing Reservists full-time, we need to ensure that their commitments properly reflect what they will be expected to do, while still enabling the Services to make full use of their abilities. To achieve the genuinely "Whole Force" ethos, Reservists cannot feel disadvantaged or taken for granted when they are doing comparable work to Regulars or other Reservists.

I am pleased to be able to report that in the last 12 months we have agreed further governance around Full Time Reserve Service commitments. A set of Tri-Service definitions for Home and Limited commitments have been agreed, which will ensure a harmonised approach across the three Services. I expect a similar agreement around Terms of Service for those on Full Commitment to be reached in the near future.

Whilst the decision of when to mobilise Reservists remains with the front line commands, lessons from Exercise SAIF SAREEA III have highlighted the requirement for greater tri-Service parity in how Reserves are employed. For this to be achieved, planning for future Defence activity should include the mechanisms the Services will be using to employ their Reserves.



I am very keen that we develop the ways in which we can better utilise reservists to deliver Defence outputs on a routine basis, increasing the range of tasks for which Reservists can be used. As part of the Whole Force it is entirely appropriate that they can, and should, help to share the burden with the Regular forces. This can only increase their value to Defence and wider society and, in turn, help to maintain and grow motivation among Reservists. I also believe that this will help further improve respect and understanding between the Regular and Reserve forces.

We are determined that the Reserves must not be allowed to fall back into the state of relative decline that prevailed in 2011; the External Scrutiny Team plays an important role in ensuring that we continue to deliver what we have promised to reservists. I am optimistic that the Team will be able to report on continued positive progress in this respect. Our Reserves are increasingly integrated as a part of the Whole Force and make a vital contribution to Defence operations at home and overseas. While there may be some changes to the ways that we use them in future (perhaps to fill an even greater number and range of niche and specialist roles than they do at present) I cannot see a time when the Reserves will not be needed. And we will continue to look for ways to make it easier to utilise them and to ensure they are appropriately rewarded and recognised.

Thank you once again for the report.



**THE RT HON BEN WALLACE MP**

**Annexes:**

- A. Response to specific EST recommendations.

## **RFCA EXTERNAL SCRUTINY TEAM RESPONSE TO SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS**

Below are the MOD responses to the specific recommendations within the 2019 External Scrutiny Team report.

**19.1 The MOD and the Services do not take further savings measures from the FR20 £1.8bn funding, given the FR20 programme trained strength targets have been missed and ask MOD and all Services to clarify what funding remains, and plans to spend it over the next four years. (Paragraph 7)**

We remain committed to delivering the trained strength targets set out in the FR20 Programme with funding remaining until 2022, and the Services are delivering this through their individual Command Plans. TLBs need to manage resources carefully throughout the year in order to remain within Parliamentary Control Totals and any such measures are only taken after very careful consideration of all the alternatives. FR20 funding continues to be spent exclusively on Reserves betterment, more specifically on: funding for additional Reserves manpower, additional Reserve Service days, increased mobilisation, increased employer engagement and communication, introduction of national relationship management, new and modernised equipment (such as synthetic and augmented reality training equipment), introduction of additional Reserve units and squadrons, infrastructure development and increased occupational health provision and rehabilitation services for those injured during training.

**19.2 That: the Services determine what is the optimum percentage of Reservists within a deployed force (between 5-8%), which meets the requirement to mobilise Reservists to sustain the Whole Force Model, while being sustainable in the long-term, and fund this accordingly in their annual spending programme. (Paragraph 12)**

Whilst Mobilisation remains a key mechanism for utilising Reservists, Defence actively seeks to encourage the effective utilisation of Reservists across the full spectrum of Defence Activity, using the full range of Terms of Service available. The development of the Call-out Order for Defence Activities other than Operations (DAOTO) has increased flexibility to mobilise Reservists for a wide range of activities both at home and overseas, such as the provision of short-term training teams and wider Defence engagement activities that previously would have been out of scope. Work continues in building flexibility to facilitate the use of Reservists to better integrate them into business as usual activities.

**19.3 That they [initiatives to allow for mobilisation on training tasks and a tiered mobilisation package for DAOTO] are developed further as a matter of priority, particularly the tiered mobilisation package as it would broaden the range of manning levers available to Commander, and thus enhance the utility of the Reserve, and answer the requirements to modernise, exploit and use the Reserve more efficiently as identified by the Commission. (Paragraph 16)**

To prevent the dilution of the mobilisation package and protections afforded to Reservists whilst mobilised, we believe that it is not practicable to try to vary the terms under which reservists are called into permanent service. Communicating the ability to mobilise Reservists for bespoke and short-term tasks within existing policy frameworks is key to removing the barriers to mobilisation currently perceived by front line commands and TLBs.

**19.4 That: The three Services review their ongoing support arrangements for Reserve recruiting, to ensure the successful lessons of FR20 are not discarded; and RSUSOs are taken onto units' permanent strengths now in recognition of the vital role they play. (Paragraph 18b)**

The Services continue to work independently to improve the recruiting process and reduce the time of flight from application to Phase 1 training. Within the Army, the responsibility for Reserve inflow has now been passed to Home Command following the closure of Op FORTIFY, with Fd Army retaining the responsibility for retention. This brings all aspects of recruitment under a single command, increasing the ease at which this can be controlled and improvements made where necessary. Additionally, regimental Sub-Unit Support Officers have been extended in their existing posts until 31 March 2021 as part of the continuing recruiting effort. Further to this, the AFRP will draw on lessons learned from recent sS recruitment experiences, along with good practice from other Government Departments and industry and allies', to shape the future tS recruiting operating model.

**19.5 That similar work being done by the Australians and Canadians to minimise the steps in the [recruiting] process (including introducing a one-stop shop) is studied closely before the contract is re-let. We further recommend that ambitious targets should be set – one month if there are no issues, and six months if there are, and success or failure should be judged on these targets. (Paragraph 19)**

The AFRP have established links with both the Australians and the Americans and follow-up visits are planned for early in the New Year to get a better understanding of their recruiting models, helping to inform the development and decisions about a future recruiting model; there has not yet been any engagement with the Canadians.

AFRP will seek to optimise the recruiting process to enable candidates to move through at speeds based upon their own needs; reducing blockers to quick progress where it suits the candidate. However, failure to meet the required standards, or conflicting priorities of candidates, may continue to introduce delays to the process.

**19.6 That the Services continue the drive to adapt their Service policies and practices to take account of the needs of the Reservist. (Paragraph 21)**

The single Service Reserve policy areas continue to work with Defence to ensure the fitness for purpose of policy, this includes systematic reviews of access to Accommodation and remuneration. They have also been working closely with Reserve Forces & Cadets and the Modernising Terms of Service team in a comprehensive review of Full Time Reserve Service commitments. This review seeks to develop, update and refine Reserve policies and practises to consider the needs of the Reservist but also to ensure there is a pan-Defence approach where appropriate.

**19.7 We recommend that the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force consider adopting such a system in order to ensure reservist knowledge and input is considered during policy formulation and operational planning, and be able to grow a Reservist (part time) two star officer. (Paragraph 22)**

Both the Naval Service and the Royal Air Force continue to consider the development of a Part Time Volunteer Reservist (PTVR) two star pathway with the decisions on how this may be achieved resting with the single Service personnel areas. Beyond this, reservists are well represented at multiple levels across Defence and maintain the opportunity to contribute to and influence policy development both at Command and at Head Office level. There are established PTVR and FTRS desk officer posts and, less formally, civilian employees who are members of the Volunteer Reserve are able to share their experience.

**19.8 Identified and approved FR20 [infrastructure] projects are not subject to the 'exceptions, suspension' regime in order that agreed funding for the estate is spent as intended and not delayed. (Paragraph 25)**

The 'exceptions, suspension' regime has been lifted for this year for the Army, with works required as part of FR20 being delivered under project NEWBURY. In general, we are not aware of any systemic issues relating to the release of funding to the RFCAs for estate improvements.

**19.9 That the three Services further promulgate the OH, rehabilitation, dental and mental health services in order to make Reservists fully aware of the medical services available to them. (Paragraph 27)**

Further action is being taken to ensure the correct promulgation through the Chain of Command of information about the range of services available. This includes the distribution of information from the Senior Health Advisor (Army) to its units within the Field Army; similar exercises are being conducted within the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force.

**19.10 That consideration is given to a means whereby Reservists submit some form of 'annual health declaration and/or have routine medicals linked to birthdays'. (Paragraph 29)**

Defence Primary Healthcare (DPHC), which is a Joint Force Command Joint Medical Group asset, delivers the Reserve Occupational Health Service (OHS) for Defence. The topic of reporting and monitoring Reserve medical standards is a live area where policy development is being considered. DPHC are looking at ways in which the oversight of medical standards within the Reserve Forces can be effectively monitored in the future. This work is ongoing.

## PREVIOUS REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

### SUMMARY OF 2013 REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Recommendation 13.4**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## SUMMARY OF 2014 REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## SUMMARY OF 2015 REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



## SUMMARY OF 2016 REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## SUMMARY OF 2017 REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## SUMMARY OF 2018 REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

**Recommendation 18.1** Given the challenging recruiting environment encountered by the three Services and the failure of the DRS, we recommend that the MOD and Services do not take further savings measures from the FR20 £1.8bn funding to manage FY18 in-year financial pressures. (Paragraph 15)

**Recommendation 18.2** We would welcome an update on the proposed revisions to JSP 950 when these actions are completed. (Paragraph 22)

**Recommendation 18.3** Given the criticality of DRS to the inflow of applicants to recruits, we recommend that 'Hypercare' is continued until all three services are confident that DRS works as intended reducing the 'time of flight' between application and being loaded on a Phase 1 recruit training course. (Paragraph 26)

**Recommendation 18.4** Linked to paragraphs 16-26 above, until the frictions in the recruiting system are ironed out, whether induced by DRS or Service policies, we recommend that Op FORTIFY measures, such as the RSUSO, are continued beyond FR20 until the Services hit their trained strength FR20 targets and they are confident that manning is on an even plateau. (Paragraph 27)

**Recommendation 18.5** We recommend that the three Services continue to examine that their courses – particularly those run by Training Schools – policies and processes and are adapted to take account of the needs of the reservist. (Paragraph 32)

**Recommendation 18.6** We recommend that MOD produce an agreed costing method to compare the cost of regulars and reservists, drawing on the above work and that done by the Land Environment Military Capability Output Costs (LEMCO), and examine the opportunities to further increase their utility and value to Defence. (Paragraph 36)

**Recommendation 18.7** We continue to recommend that MOD should consider the option to restore the FR20 Commission's proposal to establish a contingency reserve fund to be available for short notice and duration operations. (Paragraph 37)

**Recommendation 18.8** That the Reserves Estate Strategy be re-invigorated and accelerated, continuing to draw on local and regional expertise. We further recommend that priority is given to ensuring adequate funding is made available to sustain the existing Reserve estate until the new strategy is implemented. (Paragraph 49)

## SUMMARY OF 2019 REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

**Recommendation 19.1** The MOD and the Services do not take further savings measures from the FR20 £1.8bn funding, given the FR20 programme trained strength targets have been missed and ask MOD and all Services to clarify what funding remains, and plans to spend it over the next four years. (Paragraph 7)

**Recommendation 19.2** That: the Services determine what is the optimum percentage of Reservists within a deployed force (between 5-8%), which meets the requirement to mobilise Reservists to sustain the Whole Force Model, while being sustainable in the long-term, and fund this accordingly in their annual spending programme. (Paragraph 12)

**Recommendation 19.3** That they [initiatives to allow for mobilisation on training tasks and a tiered mobilisation package for DAOTO] are developed further as a matter of priority, particularly the tiered mobilisation package as it would broaden the range of manning levers available to Commander, and thus enhance the utility of the Reserve, and answer the requirements to modernise, exploit and use the Reserve more efficiently as identified by the Commission. (Paragraph 16)

**Recommendation 19.4** That:

- a. The three Services review their ongoing support arrangements for Reserve recruiting, to ensure the successful lessons of FR20 are not discarded; and
- b. RSUSOs are taken onto units' permanent strengths now in recognition of the vital role they play. (Paragraph 18b)

**Recommendation 19.5** That similar work being done by the Australians and Canadians to minimise the steps in the [recruiting] process (including introducing a one-stop shop) is studied closely before the contract is re-let. We further recommend that ambitious targets should be set – one month if there are no issues, and six months if there are, and success or failure should be judged on these targets. (Paragraph 19)

**Recommendation 19.6** That the Services continue the drive to adapt their Service policies and practices to take account of the needs of the Reservist. (Paragraph 21)

**Recommendation 19.7** We recommend that the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force consider adopting such a system in order to ensure reservist knowledge and input is considered during policy formulation and operational planning, and be able to grow a Reservist (part-time) two star officer. (Paragraph 22)

**Recommendation 19.8** Identified and approved FR20 [infrastructure] projects are not subject to the 'exceptions, suspension' regime in order that agreed funding for the estate is spent as intended and not delayed. (Paragraph 25)

**Recommendation 19.9** That the three Services further promulgate the OH, rehabilitation, dental and mental health services in order to make Reservists fully aware of the medical services available to them. (Paragraph 27)

**Recommendation 19.10** That consideration is given to a means whereby Reservists submit some form of annual health declaration and/or have routine medicals linked to birthdays. (Paragraph 29)



## DEFENCE STATISTICS - RESERVE MANNING ACHIEVEMENT & TRENDS<sup>1</sup>

### Headline Figures

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

	2014 1 Apr	2015 1 Apr	2016 1 Apr	2017 1 Apr	2018 1 Apr	2019 1 Apr	2020 1 Apr	Change 2019/2020
<b>All Services</b>								
<b>Total strength</b>	28,150	30,810	34,760	36,220	36,260	36,400	37,010	+ 600
<b>Trained strength</b>	<b>23,360</b>	<b>24,630</b>	<b>27,270</b> II	<b>31,360</b>	<b>32,200</b>	<b>32,560</b>	<b>32,920</b>	<b>+ 360</b>
<b>Maritime Reserve</b>								
<b>Total strength</b>	2,850	3,160	3,540	3,560	3,600	3,850	3,870	+ 20
<b>Trained strength</b>	<b>1,870</b>	<b>1,980</b>	<b>2,350</b>	<b>2,560</b>	<b>2,760</b>	<b>2,830</b>	<b>2,870</b>	<b>+ 50</b>
<b>Army Reserve</b>								
<b>Total strength</b>	23,580	25,440	28,670	29,940	29,710	29,470	29,930	+ 460
<b>Trained strength</b>	<b>20,060</b>	<b>21,030</b>	<b>23,030</b> II	<b>26,660</b>	<b>29,960</b>	<b>27,070</b>	<b>27,300</b>	<b>+ 230</b>
<b>RAF Reserves</b>								
<b>Total strength</b>	1,720	2,220	2,540	2,730	2,950	3,080	3,200	+ 120
<b>Trained strength</b>	<b>1,440</b>	<b>1,620</b>	<b>1,890</b>	<b>2,150</b>	<b>2,480</b>	<b>2,660</b>	<b>2,740</b>	<b>+ 80</b>

Source: Defence Statistics (Tri-Service)

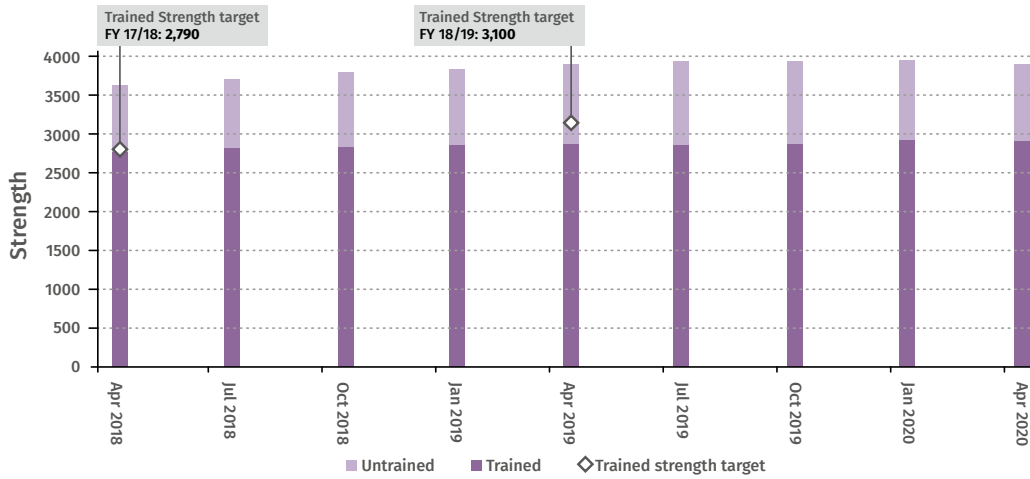
### Appendices:

1. Maritime Reserves
2. Army Reserves
3. RAF Reserves
4. Officer data
5. Accompanying notes to tables

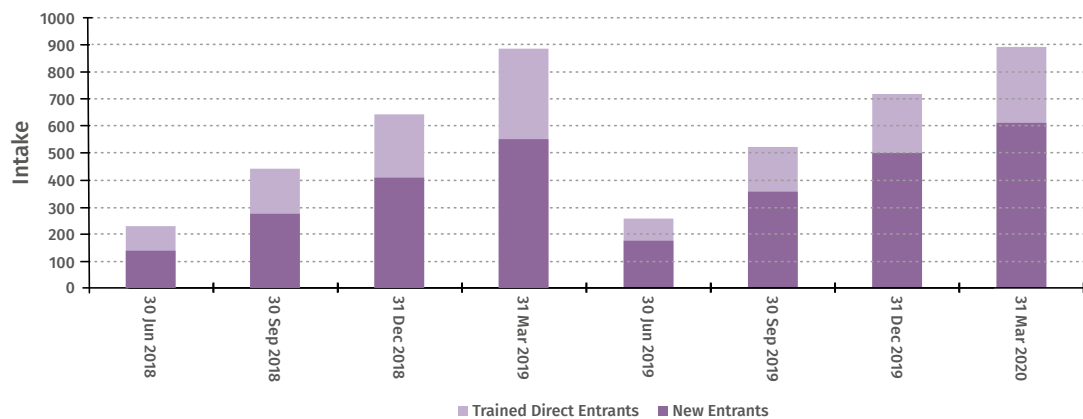
1. Data is drawn from the Defence Statistics Report as at 1 Apr 2020.

# Maritime Reserve

## Maritime Reserve Strength



## Maritime Reserve Cumulative Financial Year to date Intake

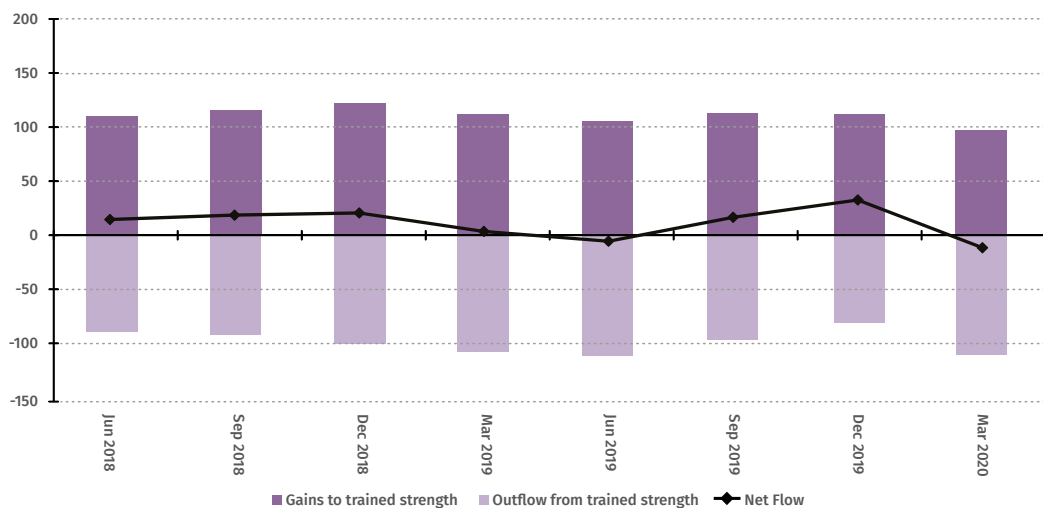


**Note:**

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

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

## Maritime Reserve Quarterly Gains to Trained Strength and Trained Outflow



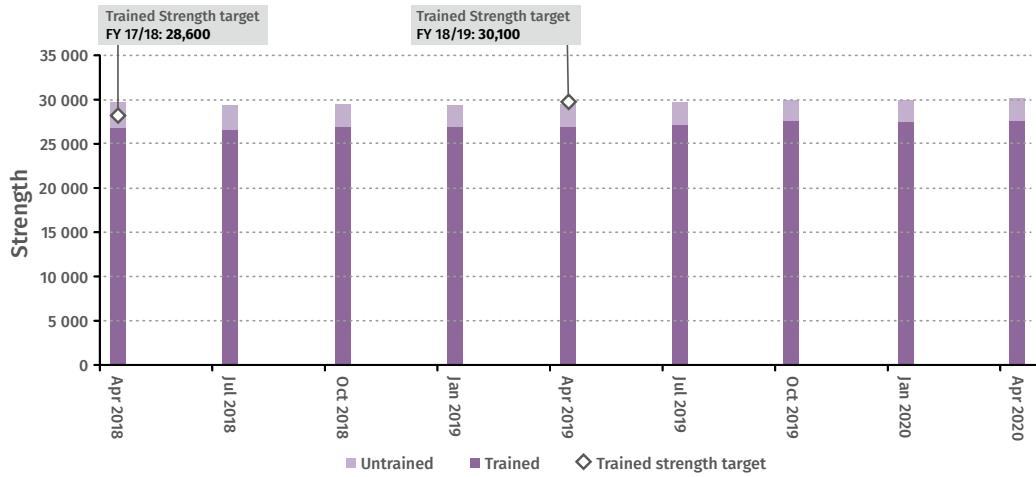
**Note:**

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



# Army Reserve

Army Reserve Strength



Army Reserve Cumulative Financial Year to date Intake



**Note:**

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

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

Army Reserve Quarterly gains to Trained Strength and Trained Outflow



**Note:**

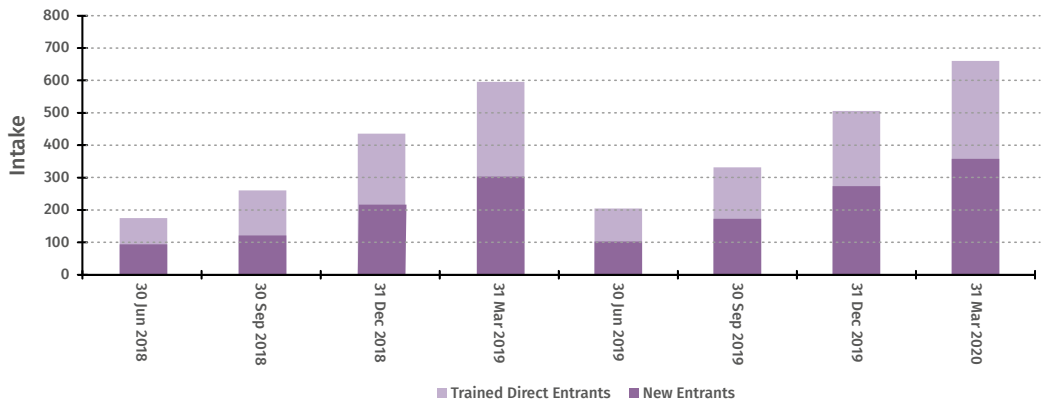
**Gains to trained strength** figures comprises personnel who complete Phase 1 (post-October 2016) training and personnel who enter directly onto the trained strength of the Army Reserve. Break in series represents the **change in definition of Army Trained Strength** in October 2016 from Phase 2 to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

# RAuxAF

## RAF Reserve Strength



## RAF Reserve cumulative financial year to date Intake



**Note:**

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

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

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



**Note:**

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

## Officers

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

	1 Apr 2014 to 31 Mar 2015	1 Apr 2015 to 31 Mar 2016	1 Apr 2016 to 31 Mar 2017	1 Apr 2017 to 31 Mar 2018	1 Apr 2018 to 31 Mar 2019	1 Apr 2019 to 31 Mar 2020
<b>Officers strength at start of period</b>	<b>840</b>	<b>900</b>	<b>1,040</b>	<b>1,120</b>	<b>1,160</b>	<b>1,230</b>
<b>Intake to Officers</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>160</b>
from another part of the Armed Forces of which	140	210	180	140	180	150
Rank to Officer in the Maritime Reserve	30	80	50	60	70	60
Regulars	80	80	100	70	90	70
University Service Units	10	10	10	~	~	10
No previous service	10	10	20	~	10	10
<b>Outflow from Officers</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>140</b>
to another part of the Armed Forces of which	30	20	20	20	20	40
Regulars	10	~	10	10	10	20
Left the Armed Forces	60	60	100	100	90	110
<b>Officers strength at end of period</b>	<b>900</b>	<b>1,040</b>	<b>1,120</b>	<b>1,160</b>	<b>1,230</b>	<b>1,250</b>

Source: Defence Statistics (Tri-Service)

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

	1 Apr 2014 to 31 Mar 2015	1 Apr 2015 to 31 Mar 2016	1 Apr 2016 to 31 Mar 2017	1 Apr 2017 to 31 Mar 2018	1 Apr 2018 to 31 Mar 2019	1 Apr 2019 to 31 Mar 2020
<b>Officers strength at start of period</b>	<b>4,350</b>	<b>4,490</b>	<b>4,840</b>	<b>5,100</b>	<b>5,410</b>	<b>5,600</b>
<b>Intake to Officers</b>	<b>620</b>	<b>760</b>	<b>690r</b>	<b>750</b>	<b>660</b>	<b>780</b>
from another part of the Armed Forces of which	550	640	600	670	600	700
Rank to Officer in the Army Reserve	80	100	110r	120	130r	160
Regulars	250	320	300	290	280	350
University Service Units	140	170	140	140	110	130
No previous service	70	110	90	80	60	80
<b>Outflow from Officers</b>	<b>470</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>430</b>	<b>440</b>	<b>480</b>	<b>440</b>
to another part of the Armed Forces of which	130r	130r	160r	140	150	150
Regulars	60	70	100	80	90	90
Left the Armed Forces	350r	280	270r	300	330	290
<b>Officers strength at end of period</b>	<b>4,490</b>	<b>4,840</b>	<b>5,100r</b>	<b>5,410</b>	<b>5,600r</b>	<b>5,940</b>

Source: Defence Statistics (Tri-Service)

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

	1 Apr 2014 to 31 Mar 2015	1 Apr 2015 to 31 Mar 2016	1 Apr 2016 to 31 Mar 2017	1 Apr 2017 to 31 Mar 2018	1 Apr 2017 to 31 Mar 2019	1 Apr 2019 to 31 Mar 2020
<b>Officers strength at start of period</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>390</b>	<b>430</b>	<b>530</b>	<b>620</b>
<b>Intake to Officers</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>140</b>
from another part of the Armed Forces of which	70	90	80	150	130	130
Rank to Officer in the RAF Reserve	10	20	10	~	20	20
Regulars	40	60	60	110	80	90
University Service Units	~	-	~	-	-	-
No previous service	10	~	~	20	20	10
<b>Outflow from Officers</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>80</b>
to another part of the Armed Forces of which	10	20	10	40	30	20
Regulars	~	~	~	~	10	10
Left the Armed Forces	20	30	30	30	30	60
<b>Officers strength at end of period</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>390</b>	<b>430</b>	<b>530</b>	<b>620</b>	<b>680</b>

Source: Defence Statistics (Tri-Service)

## Accompanying Notes to Tables

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

### Rounding

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

### Symbols

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

## EXTERNAL SCRUTINY 2020 REPORT - MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- 20.1** That all three Services develop and maintain Financial Incentives to recruit ex-regulars, particularly for those trades and skills that are expensive to train and develop, acknowledging this is a cost effective method for manning the Reserve. (Paragraph 15)
- 20.2** That the Reserve, through embedded part-time reserve staff posts should be involved in all aspects of the Whole Force:
- a. Across all Defence Lines of Development (DLOD) – particularly force design, and development.
  - b. In the MOD (Secretariat Policy Operations (SPO)) – the MOD’s operations cell – Standing Joint Command (SJC) Headquarter (HQ) and Land Operations Centre (LOC).
  - c. As operational staff of higher HQs. (Paragraph 19)
- 20.3** That an assessment is made on the requirement for an uplift of personnel to meet the workload of managing a mobilisation and that additional personnel are mobilised to reinforce the RHQ of the mobilising unit, as enablers, before and throughout deployment. (Paragraph 21b(1))
- 20.4** That the issue of the provision of REME support to equipment heavy units, whether for training or operations, is revisited as the current process does not appear to be working. (Paragraph 21b(2))
- 20.5** That:
- a. The Services and the MOD review their plans for mobilisation so that it accommodates individuals as well as mobilising large numbers/units at short notice and rapidly.
  - b. Reserve mobilisation expertise (staff posts with experience and expertise) is integrated into such areas as the SPO, SJC and LOC by creating embedded part-time reservist posts within those organisations.
  - c. The process for pre-mobilisation medicals is reviewed and appropriate standards adopted for overseas and homeland operations.
  - d. Revised processes are exercised routinely not only in units, but also the SPO, SJC and LOC. (Paragraph 25)
- 20.6** That MOD considers reviewing the capacity of the RF&C staff branch in the MoD in order that it is manned adequately to meet the demands it is set. (Paragraph 28)
- 20.7** That there is scope to consider developing a mobilisation package in support of those reservists deploying on shorter DAOTO, which is different to one that supports those on longer specific named operations or those that are more akin to warfighting. (paragraph 29)
- 20.8** That the requisite training courses are adapted through modularisation, distribution, concentration and remote/virtual learning, and are assessed and measured on this basis. (Paragraph 32)
- 20.9** That the MOD urgently produces a transparent and agreed costing method across all three Services to compare the cost of regulars and reservists drawing on the Land Military Capability Output Costs (LEMCO). (Paragraph 36)

**20.10** That:

- a. Any receipts raised through optimisation/rationalisation of the Volunteer Estate should be reinvested back into new estate or maintenance for the Volunteer Estate.
- b. When the Volunteer Estate Review reports, and if a programme of work is proposed or required, funding is identified and ring fenced so that it is not subject to subsequent in-year budgetary pressures. (Paragraph 44)

**20.11** That Reservists submit an annual health declaration. (Paragraph 48)**20.12** That, like the Royal Navy, the Army and Royal Air Force undertake periodic medicals for its reservists, linked to age/birthdays. (Paragraph 48)**20.13** That such innovations [medical] required to facilitate the rapid mobilisation of the Reserve for Operation RESCRIPT are developed further, codified and adopted by all three Services. (Paragraph 50)

## SUMMARY OF PRIORITIES FOR 2020/21 WORK

In addition to the formal requirements set out in the Reserve Forces Act, the themes below will be examined during the 2020/21 reporting period. It takes accounts of visit that we were unable to complete because of COVID-19.

### Policy Review

- Optimisation of the Reserve Estate
- Implementation of the RF30 Review

### Capability

- Mobilisation, including medicals
- Training – modular and distributed models
- Continued integration and utility of the Services' reserve element in accordance with statements/plans made by the Services' Boards
- Squadron structures of the RAF Reserves

### Manning, Recruiting, Retention

- Manning targets
- The recruiting pipeline
- Effectiveness of the ReMSOs
- Delivery of the 'Offer'

### Specific Visits

- RFCA arranged visits to units in: Wales, South West England, South East England
- Headquarters RN, Army, RAF, Headquarters 1 Division
- Arms/Trades/Specialist sponsors of Phase 3 training – both at the training establishments and staff within Service headquarters
- Mobilised reservists to 3 Commando Brigade
- Mobilised reservists for the Off Shore Patrol Vessels
- Land Information Assurance Group, Joint Cyber Unit – Corsham
- Exercises with a significant reserve presence, for example JOINT WARRIOR and AGILE STANCE



## EXTERNAL SCRUTINY TEAM – MEMBERSHIP

**Chairman:**

Major General (Retd) S F N Lalor CB TD

**Members:**

Rear Admiral (Retd) C J Hockley CBE DL

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

Brigadier (Retd) P R Mixer OSTJ QVRM TD DL

Captain (Retd) I M Robinson OBE RD RNR

Colonel (Retd) G Straughan OBE TD

**Clerk:**

Major General (Retd) J H Gordon CB CBE





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