



Ministry
of Defence

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
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THE RT HON BARONESS GOLDIE DL
MINISTER OF STATE IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS

MSU/4/8/1/1/is

23 November 2021

Dear Jordan,

During the excellent debate of the Armed Forces Bill on 8 November, you asked for some further information about the retention rates for Under 18s in the Armed Forces. This question is best addressed by considering the average length of service of our service personnel. If we look across the Armed Forces over the past decade, it is clear that those who enlist before their 18th birthday choose to benefit from longer careers in the Armed Forces than those who join after 18. Individuals choosing to join under 18 will, on average, serve 3 - 6 years longer than those who enlist after their 18th birthday. In the RAF for example, those who join before their 18th birthday will serve, on average, for 22 years, compared to their over 18 counterparts who serve, on average, for 16 years. As well as allowing the Armed Forces to benefit from these individuals extensive experience, this we believe reflects the benefits of a service career to the individual, such as through life learning and development, which are maximised the earlier an individual chooses to enlist.

I am placing a copy of this letter in the Library of the House.

Yours sincerely,

Baroness Goldie

BARONESS GOLDIE DL

Baroness Massey of Darwen
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