



Ministry
of Defence

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
FLOOR 5, ZONE B, MAIN BUILDING
WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2HB

Telephone 020 7218 9000 (Switchboard)

RT HON DR ANDREW MURRISON MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE AND MINISTER
FOR DEFENCE PEOPLE, VETERANS AND SERVICE FAMILIES

PQ 192470

13 October 2023

Dear John,

Thank you for your Parliamentary Question (192470) of 5 July 2023, asking whether any food banks are operating at UK military bases. You will recall that I responded on 11 July to advise that it would take time to collate accurately the requested information. I am now able to respond substantively to your question.

As a result of a canvass of Service establishments, I can report that there are currently no food banks operated by the Ministry of Defence in UK Military Bases for the sole use of serving personnel. However, military bases often have close links to their communities – which Defence encourages - and as a result Service personnel may be involved with food banks. These foodbanks across the UK significantly vary in nature from those only accessible to those with a need, to those where everyone is encouraged to use surplus food or food that is no longer in its best before date (but still safe and edible), in order to reduce food waste. Volunteering for and use of such food banks by Service personnel and their families is a private life matter.

Where food banks and food exchanges operate local to a base, they do so on a voluntary community basis and are available for all of the community; the Ministry of Defence does not keep a record of such voluntary based food banks and exchanges which may be around the estate but has confirmed that none operate on a UK military site for the sole use of serving personnel. Any voluntary food bank distribution is off the working site and available for the whole community. I hope you would want to join me in applauding any volunteers, Service or civilian, who help in this way.

Everyone, including personnel in the Armed Forces, have been impacted by the rise in inflation and the cost of living. While the use of food banks by Service personnel is a private life matter, the single Services always encourage personnel to raise any welfare concerns they may have with their management or welfare support who would be able to signpost them to the range of support available.

The Rt Hon John Healey MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

We have worked hard to introduce a range of measures to support our personnel; at the end August, all Service personnel received a pay award, backdated to 1 April, which provided effective pay increases of between 9.7% for the most junior ranks, 5.8% for officers at one-star rank, and 5.5% for senior military. In addition, charges for Service Family Accommodation (SFA) will remain fixed at the 2022 rates throughout Financial Year 2023-24 and not increased in line with the rental element of the Consumer Price Index.

In the last five years the Armed Forces have received a cumulative pay award of 14.9%. I hope you will agree that, combined with the 33% of Service personnel also benefiting from incremental pay rises, the increase to starting salaries (after training) to £23,496 and the freeze on SFA and food charges, this represents a fair settlement for the Armed Forces.

In addition to the pay award, the Ministry of Defence (MOD) has continued to freeze the daily food charge for our personnel, and the availability of free wrap-around childcare is increasing across Defence, with families able to save around £3,400 per child per year.

A copy of this letter has been placed in the Library of the House.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Murrison". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial 'M'.

RT HON DR ANDREW MURRISON MP