

FR20 Programme Update – May 2015

Foreword Assistant Chief of Defence Staff (Reserves & Cadets), Major General John Crackett



We continue to make good progress in the delivery of the FR20 Programme with 31 of the 40 White Paper recommendations now delivered. All three Services exceeded their Trained Strength targets for Financial Year 2014/15. There are now 24,630 trained Reservists and recruitment to the Reserves was 65% higher than the previous year. However, we cannot afford to be complacent as the targets will become increasingly challenging to meet. Improvements have been made in areas such as employer support and it is vital that we now ensure that these changes become embedded.

We will continue to provide updates on progress regularly, but if you have any questions on the programme please do contact us.

Reservists on Operations

Financial Year 2014/15 saw more than 1,000 Reservists called out into permanent service for operations and military tasks worldwide. Reservists have been mobilised for a wider range of operations and military tasks since the introduction of new powers under the Defence Reform Act 2014. For example, over 60 Reservists were called out in support of operations to combat the Ebola outbreak in Sierra Leone and, more recently, Reservists formed the core of the first short term training team to Ukraine. Reservists also continue to provide personnel in support of operations in Cyprus and the Resolute Support mission in Afghanistan. There are currently more than 300 Reservists called out for permanent service.

Overseas training opportunities

Reserve service offers a challenging and rewarding experience. As part of the improvements to the offer to Reservists, Reserves now receive high quality, challenging training, including more opportunities to train overseas.

In March 2015, Royal Marines Reservists took part in Exercise Hairspring, part of the Regular Cold Weather Warfare Course (CWWC) in Asegarden, Norway. The exercise tested their abilities to fight, move and survive 150km north of the Arctic Circle and introduced the Reservists to updated, modern equipment including a new ski system. Cpl Contaldi said: "Everyone that completes the CWWC successfully gains a whole new perspective not only on their own individual soldiering skills but also on their ability to operate as part of a team in what has to be one of the most demanding environments we work in."



In October 2014, Army Reserve medics travelled to California to train with colleagues from the US Navy for the first time. Around 200 Reservists from 201 (Northern) and 208 (Liverpool) Field Hospitals travelled to the US Naval Expeditionary Medical Training Institute in San Diego, where they were put through their paces in an exercise designed to test their new post-Afghanistan role.



In March 2015, RAF Reservists took part in Wintermarch 15, a joint exercise with the Norwegian Reserve Officers Federation to further develop their ability to operate under any conditions in any climate. Fifteen squadrons from across the UK took part in the training exercise in Norway's remote Hardangervidda region.

Reserve overseas training opportunities in 2015 include exercises in Australia, USA, Kenya, Cyprus, Gibraltar, France, Netherlands, Spain, Germany, Denmark, Italy, Slovenia and Croatia.



Defence Relationship Management

Defence Relationship Management (DRM) reached full operating capability on 1 April 2015.

DRM was established to facilitate partnerships between private sector organisations and Defence. DRM is able to identify and broker mutually beneficial associations by identifying matches between an organisation's brand values and Defence activities. It has identified 180 strategic accounts for engagement, more than 100 of which have been fully transitioned.

DRM hosted the first Partnering with Defence Employer Conference on 11 March 2015 at the Barbican, London. The conference was designed to bring together for the first time employers from the private and public sector with Defence personnel. A main theme for the event was discussions on how partnering can be mutually beneficial in building Britain's skills base, and developing and retaining talent. The event was attended by 112 employers, and talks were given by Fujitsu, Atkins Global, The AA, Manpower and Jaguar Land Rover – who provided examples of best practice as organisations who have worked closely with Defence.



Vodafone UK CEO Jeroen Hoencamp, pictured, signed the Armed Forces Covenant and announced their recruitment of ex-service personnel and Reservists: "We are very proud to play our part in supporting Her Majesty's Armed Forces. We already employ many former service personnel and today's commitment through the Armed Forces Covenant reinforces the close relationship that we have with the UK Armed Forces. We look forward to supporting both Veterans and Reservists in the years ahead."

500th Corporate Covenant

A London security and investigation company has become the 500th UK business to sign up to support the armed forces.

Westminster Security joined prestigious household names including Tesco, Asda, BT Group, Amazon UK and Rolls Royce in signing the Corporate Covenant and promising to do more for Britain's service personnel and their families.

The Corporate Covenant, which is part of the Armed Forces Covenant, is designed to allow businesses, charities and private sector employers to express their commitment to the armed forces by pledging support across a range of Defence Personnel issues. This is part of the MOD's effort to improve relations with employers.

Commenting on Defence's Employer Engagement activities, Maj Gen John Crackett said: "It is clear that efforts to develop mutually beneficial relationships with employers are now bearing fruit. The Corporate Covenant is tackling commercial disadvantage, employers are publically pledging their support to the armed forces and we are acknowledging this through the Employer Recognition Scheme."

Babcock Conference

On 25 February 2015 Babcock plc hosted a conference for their Reservist employees and their line managers. The conference, held at the Honourable Artillery Company Finsbury Barracks, sought to recognise the commitment of Reservist employees and to educate employees' line managers about the Reserves and the associated commitment. A number of Babcock Reservists spoke about their experiences in the Reserve Forces. Minister for Reserves, Julian Brazier said: "Since my appointment as Minister for Reserves, I have learnt that the support of employers such as yourselves is key."



Financial assistance for employers improved

The Statutory Instrument 2015/460 regulations amending the Reserve Forces (Call-Out and Recall) (Financial Assistance) Regulations 2005/859 came into force on 27 March 2015. These amendments provide further assistance to the employers of Reservists and self-employed Reservists during periods of mobilisation and limit the maximum assistance available to individual, non-specialist mobilised Reservists.

Employers of Reservists are now entitled to claim for handover costs, specialist clothing and some of the costs of training a replacement, whilst self-employed Reservists can now claim for some of the expenses they incur in order to effect the cessation of their business as a result of mobilisation.

In addition to amending the 2005 Regulations, the process for claiming assistance has been improved – one change being the introduction of an easy to follow claim form.

New recognition for Reserve Service

Volunteer Reserves will be able to use the letters VR after their names after 10 years of service. This will allow them to identify publicly their contribution to the armed forces and the skills and experience gained as a Reservist. These letters will follow their name, alongside any other qualifications or awards.

The post nominal will be for all members of the Reserves, regardless of rank or service, and will be backdated to 1999. The new award demonstrates appreciation for the commitment of the Reserves.



Armed Forces Pension Scheme 2015

The Armed Forces Pension Scheme 2015 (AFPS15) was launched on 1 April 2015 and all Reservists who did not opt out moved on to the scheme. Under AFPS15, all paid service, including Man Training Days, will contribute to an individual's pension pot.

Chief of Defence Personnel, Lieutenant General Andrew Gregory, said: "A pension which reflects the unique nature of Service life is a crucial aspect of the offer that attracts and retains Service personnel. As a result, the Armed Forces Pension Scheme 2015 is among the very best Public Service pension schemes available."

Successful Armed Forces employment programme extended

A programme that helps jobseekers who are interested in the Armed Forces get into work is currently being rolled out following a pilot scheme.

The Armed Forces Employability Pathway (AFEP) allows eligible jobseekers to take part in a one-week introductory course to the Armed Forces, followed by specific pre-employment training and work experience with a civilian employer.

Delivered through Job Centre Plus and the Work Programme, 9 AFEP trial schemes across the north of England and Scotland have allowed more than 220 people to take part in team building, problem solving, communications and personal resilience training.

Many of those have gone on to pursue careers in the Reserve forces, while others have used the skills and confidence gained from the initiative to secure civilian jobs. The scheme will be rolled out across the UK throughout this year.



The first AFEP, which took place at Altcar Training Camp in Liverpool at the end of April 2015, saw 15 Job Seekers commence the programme. Of these, 11 expressed an interest in joining the Armed Forces, nine of whom were specifically interested in the Reserves.

Jobseeker's Allowance concession for Reservists

Jobseekers who become Reservists are now able to boost their contribution to the Armed Forces and train for longer without having to end their benefit claim.

Reservists claiming Jobseeker's Allowance could previously train for 15 days without it affecting their benefits. Following new rules introduced 1 April 2015, new Reservists can train for 43 days – nearly three times longer – in their first year to better consolidate their skills, and in recognition of the valuable contribution this makes to the country.

The new rules will build on the world-class Reservist training to help jobseekers to learn new skills, improve their leadership abilities and ultimately make them more attractive to future employers.

Civil Service Reservists

The White Paper, *Reserves in the Future Force 2020: Valuable and Valued*, included a specific measure that the public sector should lead the way with the revitalisation of the Reserve Forces. To this end, the Civil Service Reserves 1% Challenge was launched in March 2014. The Challenge is, by April 2019, for 1% of the total Civil Service workforce to be Reservists. Set as a challenge, not a target, the objective is to galvanise departmental action to increase the number of Reservists. Departments have updated their HR policies to provide clear guidance to HR managers, managers and staff regarding support for existing Reservists and potential recruits. For example, all departments provide a minimum of 10 days' extra paid leave each year to support the Reservist's training commitments, with some offering as many as 15 days.



Joining the Reserves can provide fantastic development opportunities which could benefit a civilian career. Reservists can develop new skills as well as enhance their leadership capability which can help to progress a career in the Civil Service. Civil Servants will be able to find out more about how Reserve service could benefit them at one of the regional Civil Service Reserves 1% Challenge awareness raising events taking place this year, the first of which will be in Birmingham on 24 June 2015.

Reserves Day 2015

As part of the activity running up to Armed Forces Day, Reserves Day takes place on 24th June and is an opportunity to recognise the valuable contribution Reservists make to our Armed Forces. Formerly known as 'Uniform to Work Day', Reserves Day provides an opportunity for the whole of the UK to celebrate our Reserve Forces.

The contribution Reservists make to our Armed Forces and the challenges of balancing both civilian and military careers often go unrecognised, so this year we want to encourage as many people as possible to show their support for our spare-time troops.

If you employ a Reservist you could invite them to wear their uniform at work and recognise the valuable skills Reservists bring to your organisation. If you're already in the Reserves, you could wear your uniform at work on the day or get involved with a Reserves Day community engagement event to show pride in your Reserve service. To find out more, go to www.armedforcesday.org.uk/reserves-day.



Q4 2014/15 Quarterly Personnel Report

Reserve strength and recruitment numbers from Q4 of the Quarterly Personnel Report 2014/15 published on 14 May 2015 are available at the link below.

www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/426880/QPR_Apr2015.pdf

Minister for Reserves, Julian Brazier said: "We knew that changes to our Reserve forces would not happen overnight, but two years into our five year plan I am delighted that we are beginning to turn a corner and make real progress."