

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE TOP LEVEL MESSAGES: SEPTEMBER 2012

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MINISTRY OF DEFENCE TOP LEVEL MESSAGES

SECTION 1 – OPERATIONS

AFGHANISTAN

Top Line:

British forces are in Afghanistan for one overriding reason: to protect British national security by helping the Afghans take control of theirs. This means building up the capability of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) so that they can prevent terrorist organisations, including Al Qaeda (AQ) from returning and posing a threat to the UK and our allies around the world. The UK Government does not seek a perfect Afghanistan, but a stable Afghanistan, able to maintain its own security and prevent the return of international terror groups such as AQ.

- The UK does not seek a perfect Afghanistan. There will be many challenges. But Afghanistan today is quite different to only three years ago:
 - Afghan security force capacity and capability is up.
 - More people are able to achieve a basic standard of living and security.
- This UK is now in the final phases of its military mission. Transition to Afghan control, as agreed at Lisbon Summit in 2010, is on track, realistic and achievable.
- International forces are gradually handing over security responsibility to the Afghans who will have full responsibility in all provinces by the end of 2014. This process allows UK forces to shift their efforts from combat to a train, advise and assist role. But UK and International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF) will continue to operate in a combat role, albeit a reducing one, in support of Afghan forces until the end of 2014.

UK Forces levels:

- The PM announced on 6 July 2011 that the UK will be able to reduce its force levels by 500 - from 9,500 to 9,000 - by the end of 2012, reflecting the continuing progress that is being made in the ANSF.
- The troop drawdown leading up to 2014 will be steady and measured. As the PM said in December 2011, "I don't want to see some massive cliff-edge in 2014 - I don't think that's practical. But I don't think we need to make hard and fast decisions at this stage."
- **At NATO's Lisbon Summit in 2010, ISAF nations agreed the principles of transition, which espouse an "in together, out together" approach. As transition progresses, the mission will gradually change from combat to support and by the end of 2014 the Afghans will control their own security. For more than 50% of the Afghan population this is already the case.**

ANSF/Transition:

- As of 20 June the Afghan National Army (ANA) stood at 185,125, the Afghan Air Force (AAF) at 5,585 and the Afghan National Police (ANP) at 146,641. The ANSF are on track to reach their "surge" target numbers by the end of October. The ANSF's effectiveness continues to improve; this is allowing them to increasingly take the lead in operations.¹ UK and international partners continue to support the ANSF with operational training and mentoring.
- The ANSF have demonstrated that they can lead on security effectively and competently in areas that have already started the transition process. The third Tranche of areas to begin transition were announced by the Afghan Government on 13 May 2012 and are now being implemented. This means that Afghan security forces will soon have lead security responsibility for areas home to 75% of the population.
- As part of this process, in 2013, the 5th and final tranche of transition will begin. From this point the ANSF will be have lead security responsibility across the country.

¹ The Afghans currently lead on 40% of conventional operations

- Developing strong and capable Afghan security forces that will help foster enduring stability in the country is critical to our long-term strategy in Afghanistan. At the Chicago Summit in May 2012 NATO and ISAF partners made clear that they would play their part in the financial sustainment of the ANSF in the years after 2014.
- As part of this the UK has announced it will contribute £70m a year, from 2015, to help fund the ANSF in the years after our combat mission ends. The UK's level of funding will be kept under review and is expected to decrease over time as the Afghans' ability to fund their own security forces increases. The UK's contribution will form part of a wider funding pool of \$4.3bn that the international community and the Afghans are putting together to ensure that Afghan forces can maintain their national security.
- The UK will also, as part of our enduring legacy, take the coalition lead at the new Afghan National Army Officer Academy near Kabul.

Security:

- There will be challenges ahead, particularly for the ANSF, as they take the lead on more operations and the insurgency may target areas that transfer to Afghan-led security control. The insurgents are also likely to continue to plan high-profile attacks to try to generate publicity and undermine Afghan public confidence about security, regardless of the cost to civilian life.

Reconciliation, including with the Taliban:

- The UK remains committed to supporting the Government of Afghanistan in its efforts to achieve an inclusive and sustainable political settlement. This is a challenging process which will take time. We need a political process which ensures that all Afghans - if they give up violence, renounce terror and respect the Afghan constitution - can play a part in shaping a strong, democratic and constitutional state.

Supporting Lines:

- The UK is part of a UN mandated NATO-led international mission in Afghanistan supported actively by 60 countries, including several Islamic countries. The UK's conventional force level in Afghanistan is currently 9,500, out of a total ISAF force of around 130,000 personnel from 50 troop contributing nations.² Reflecting the continuing progress that is being made in building up the ANSF and in line with President Karzai's stated aim that the Afghans will have full security lead across the country by the end of 2014, UK troop levels will reduce to 9,000 by the end of 2012.
- The international strategy involves protecting the civilian population from the insurgents, building up the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) and supporting more effective governance at every level.
- UK troops working alongside other ISAF and Afghan forces continue to make progress by driving out the insurgents and extending the authority and influence of the Afghan Government in Central Helmand. Helmand's security situation remains complex and there will be more tough fighting ahead as gains are consolidated.
- The sustained growth in the Afghan state and the Afghan National Security Forces' strength, capacity and capability is the driving force of transition.
- As of 17 Aug 2012, a total of 425 British forces personnel have died while serving in Afghanistan since the start of operations in October 2001. As of 31 July 2012, 287 personnel have been Very Seriously Injured or Wounded, and 293 have been Seriously Injured or Wounded.

²Source: ISAF

OLYMPICS AND PARALYMPIC GAMES

Top Line:

Defence is playing its part in both the security and ceremony of this national event and is contributing specialist skills and equipment to assist in delivering a safe and secure Olympic and Paralympic Games. The total military contribution to the Games is 18,200 personnel from the Army, Royal Navy and Royal Air Force. Maritime, Land and Air assets around London and Weymouth have now been deployed for their safety and security roles.

Supporting Lines:

- **We are delighted the Olympic Games have passed off without incident and have been such a success for Team GB and the UK as a whole.**
- **The focus of the Government has always been to deliver a safe and secure Olympic and Paralympic Games that London, the UK and the world can enjoy.**
- **The police, military and G4S have delivered on that pledge for the Olympic Games. We are confident they will do so for the Paralympic Games.**
- **Planning for the Paralympics has been rigorous and we are committed to delivering the right mix of police, military and G4S on the ground that is necessary to maintain safety and security.**
- **The military contribution to the Paralympics will be appropriate to that event which is considerably smaller in scale to the Olympics with just 20 venues compared to 34 and 2.5 million number of tickets on sale compared to 6.6 million.**
- **Just as the Olympics, we believe it will be the sporting success of the Paralympics which will capture the attention of the UK public, rather than the reassuringly visible but proportionate security.**

Defence Contribution:

- In providing support to the police, and other civil and Olympic authorities, Defence is contributing up to 18,200 military personnel during the busiest part of the Games. This contribution includes the provision of a number of capabilities across the Maritime, Land and Air domains delivering specialist niche capabilities and expertise. For factsheets containing information about our capabilities, please see:
<http://www.mod.uk/DefenceContributionToGames.htm>
- Defence is supporting Olympic venue security operations, as well as ceremonial support and providing a small amount of real estate. A Military Contingency Force is available to provide resilience to the wider plans to maintain a safe and secure Games.
- Support to the Games is an important task for Defence in 2012. However, during The Games, Defence maintains its continued commitment to the protection of the UK, to current operations in Afghanistan, and to other standing commitments worldwide, including the ability to respond to the unexpected.

For more information about the Defence contribution to the 2012 Olympics Games please see:
<http://www.mod.uk/DefenceContributionToGames.htm>

SECTION 2 – TRANSFORMING DEFENCE

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SDSR AND DEFENCE REFORM

Top Line:

As set out in the Defence Vision:

Our mission endures - to protect our country and its values and interests abroad. To do this we must meet a complex range of threats and challenges in a rapidly changing world. We must adapt to stay ahead, configure our capability to address tomorrow's threats, build more versatile and agile forces for the future, and ensure our people have what they need to do what we ask of them. We cannot do everything on our own, so we must work effectively with our Allies and partners. And we must spend our budget wisely. We require leadership at every level of Defence; strong Armed Services and an effective Ministry of Defence working together to make Defence as a whole stronger; and modern, innovative ways of doing business.

We will make this happen through **Transforming Defence** to deliver:

- **Battle-winning Armed Forces**, smaller than before but able to reach across the world and operate across the spectrum from high-intensity combat to enduring stabilisation activity, who work with each other and with allies, equipped and trained for their task, their families well supported, trusted to shape their own future and manage their own resources within Defence;
- **A smaller, more professional Ministry of Defence** that supports Ministers in setting clear priorities for the outputs required of the Armed Forces and the Department, and holding them to account for meeting them; supports the Armed Forces deliver what they are tasked to do; and reports honestly and openly to Parliament and the public;
- **A hard-headed approach to what we can afford**, now and in the future, getting the most value we can from each pound of taxpayers' money.

Supporting Lines:

Transforming the front line: Battle-winning Armed Forces

The UK will remain one of the very few countries who can deploy and sustain a brigade sized force together with its air and maritime enablers, capable of both intervention and stabilisation operations almost anywhere in the world. All three Services have implemented the early force structure and capability changes set out in the SDSR, completing core elements of follow-on work, including the Reserves and Basing Reviews, Army 2020 and Future Reserve Forces 2020. There has been good progress on several major capability programmes.

- **Deterrent:** in May 2011 we approved the assessment phase for the programme to replace the Vanguard-class submarines.
- **Maritime environment:** the Royal Navy has implemented the SDSR force structure changes. Good progress is being made with the introduction into service of the Type 45 destroyers and Astute class submarines, and with the Carrier programme.
- **Land environment:** Army 2020 has designed an Army able to meet the Defence Planning Assumptions set out in the SDSR. It will remain the most capable Army of its class.
 - At its heart will be a Reaction Force of three large, well equipped and trained armoured infantry brigades and 16 Air Assault Brigade; and
 - an Adaptable Force of seven further infantry brigades, with the Reserve Forces as a core component, providing overseas capacity building to help prevent future conflict, military aid to homeland resilience, and follow-on forces for enduring operations.
 - Supporting Force Troops, such as Artillery, Engineers and Medics.

The MOD plans to spend about £1bn on 14 new Chinook Helicopters, and £5½ billion on the Army's core armoured vehicle programme over the next ten years, including the

Warrior Capability Sustainment Programme, the SCOUT Specialist Vehicle, and in due course, a Utility Vehicle, and improvements to the Challenger 2 Main Battle Tank.

- **Air environment:** Harrier has been withdrawn from service, and the airframes sold to the US. Tornado drawdown and Typhoon force growth remain on track. The RAF's Air Transport Force is being rationalised as quickly as possible to consist of only the most modern and capable aircraft types with C17, the new Voyager Future Strategic (transport) and Tanker Aircraft (FSTA), and A400M.
- **The Reserves:** will play a greater role in future, as set out in Future Reserve Force 2020, and we are investing an additional £1.8bn in them over the next 10 years. Reserves trained strength will grow by at least 50 per cent by 2018 to 30,000 in the Territorial Army, 3,100 in the Royal Navy and Royal Marine Reserves and 1,800 in the Royal Auxiliary Air Force.
- **Basing;** work has commenced on the Footprint Strategy, which seeks to identify the most cost effective approach to Future Force 2020 basing, and to achieve a strategic asset management of an affordable and sustainable infrastructure footprint. Comprising of the right size and quality, in the right place, to support operational capability.
- **Army 2020:** transforming the British Army for the future. On 5 July the Secretary of State announced the outcome of the Army 2020 review setting out how the Army will transform to become a smaller, integrated and more adaptable army than it is today. Achieving this will mean that the Army's ability to adapt and respond will be even more effective in the future. it will be set on a firm foundation of men and materiel, well-trained, well-equipped, and fully-funded. Driving this change is the need for the Army to redesign its purpose so that in the future it will be able to deliver a contingent capability for deterrence and defence, overseas engagement and capacity-building, while providing the necessary military aid as a UK-based Army to ensure homeland resilience. More information is available on the MOD website at <http://www.mod.uk/Army2020.htm>. The details of the reserve component structure and basing plan will follow.

Transforming the organisation: A smaller, more professional Ministry of Defence

- **Implementing the recommendations of Lord Levene's Defence Reform Review** to create simpler, more effective operating model with:
 - Significant reductions in running costs
 - Smaller, more strategic Head Office
 - Greater freedoms, and accountabilities, in Commands/TLBs
- Have set up new defence operating model, new Joint Forces Command, new command structures for Navy, Army and RAF, and simplified Army regional structure.
- Set up Defence Business Services in partnership with Serco. New Defence Infrastructure Organisation also developing private sector partnership arrangements.
- The Materiel Strategy work has made a compelling case for reform of acquisition. We are now focusing on developing the Government-Owned, Contractor-Operated (GOCO) option to demonstrate whether the Value for Money case is conclusive. In parallel, we are developing a commercial strategy, engaging with industry to hone our requirement. This work will support decisions later this year on whether to proceed with GOCO, and to launch a competition for the private sector management company to run the organisation.
- The MOD is taking forward new set of behaviours under 'Be-Think-Do' framework:
 - Be a leader: improved business leadership
 - Think Defence: cross defence thinking
 - Do it better: better business practices
- Progress in reducing headcount against the SDSR baseline. By 1 April 2012 about 7,800 reduction (4.4%) in military trained strength and 14,700 (17.7%) in civilian workforce.
- The Head Office will focus more on providing strategic direction. It will no longer get involved in the day-to-day management of the front line commands, which will take over responsibility for managing their own budgets.

Transforming the budget: A hard headed approach to what we can afford

- **Defence budget is now in balance.** MOD is now living within its means and can plan for the future with a degree of certainty. Addressing the black hole in the defence budget, contributing

to reducing the deficit, and ensuring an affordable and deliverable equipment programme meant reducing the defence programme by about £74 billion over ten years.

- We must give people the kit and equipment they need. This is a moral imperative. That has meant biting the bullet and recognising that we have to have a smaller Army than before, but with real equipment and real fighting capability.
- Balancing the budget allows planning with confidence for the delivery of the major force elements in the SDSR. Around £160bn will be spent on equipment and equipment support over the next 10 years, covering our current commitments, the major SDSR equipment programmes, the deterrent, and equipment support costs. This will deliver Future Force 2020.
- MOD must now keep the budget in balance. As part of this, in line with Lord Levene's recommendations, increased budgetary responsibility will be delegated to TLB holders and clear Command Plans defining what they will deliver are being developed. The Permanent Secretary will hold TLB holders to account against these budgets and plans.

SECTION 3 – SUPPORT TO PERSONNEL AND MEDICAL

THE ARMED FORCES COVENANT

Top Line:

The Government recognises the need to ensure our Armed Forces, veterans and their families have the support they need and are treated with the dignity they deserve. A new tri-Service Armed Forces Covenant was published in May 2011, together with 'The Armed Forces Covenant: Today and Tomorrow' which detailed the steps being taken to support the Armed Forces Community. An interim report on the Covenant was published in December 2011. The first statutory annual report will be published towards the end of 2012.

Supporting Lines:

- The Covenant defines the principles of removing disadvantage and allowing special provision in some circumstances in the access to public and commercial services. This has set a framework for policy making and delivery across Government and will improve the support available for the Armed Forces Community.
- The Armed Forces Act received Royal Assent on 3 November 2011. For the first time, this places a statutory obligation on the Secretary of State to report to Parliament each year on the Armed Forces Covenant.
- On 20 December 2011, the Secretary of State made an interim report on the Covenant. This report made a number of new commitments; outlined progress towards delivering the pledges the Government made in 2010 and 2011; and highlighted a number of improvements that have been made under the Covenant. For further information, please see the Covenant website.
- As part of the Budget on 21 March 2012, the Chancellor announced a range of measures which further demonstrate the Government's commitment to honouring the Armed Forces Covenant, including £100m further investment in accommodation for Service Personnel and their families.
- Well over 100 communities across the UK from Cornwall to Moray have now signed their own 'Community Covenants'. £30M has been allocated to the Community Covenant Grant scheme over the four financial years from 2011-12 to 2014-15 and some £4M has been allocated to projects from the first four rounds of bids. The panel will consider bids again in September 2012.

MEDICAL SUPPORT

Top Line:

The support to personnel injured on operations is of an excellent standard. All Armed Forces personnel are supported by dedicated and comprehensive medical services, including mental health support.

Supporting Lines:

Seriously Injured Personnel

- Medical care for wounded personnel is of a very high standard. The extraordinary quality of care given to the Armed Forces was recognised by the House of Commons Defence Committee in its December 2011 report. The recent Care Quality Commission report (June 2012) recognised as exemplary the management of trauma at the field hospital in Afghanistan and the subsequent rehabilitation of patients, both at Regional Rehabilitation Units and at the Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre (DMRC) at Headley Court. Overall the CQC found areas of good practice across all of the services inspected with the highest levels of compliance with standards relating to respecting and involving people, the provision of effective, safe and appropriate care and treatment, and in all aspects of dental and mental health services.
- Operational casualties whose injuries are serious enough to require further treatment back in the UK are aeromedically evacuated as a matter of priority. The Queen Elizabeth NHS Hospital in Birmingham is the primary reception hospital for military patients evacuated to the UK from overseas. The state-of-the-art facilities, operating in partnership with the NHS, offer injured troops the best possible care in a Military Ward, subject to clinical need.
- Patients requiring further rehabilitation care (including prosthetics) can be referred to the DMRC at Headley Court in Surrey. DMRC has recently benefited from the delivery of the Jubilee Rehabilitation Complex. This bespoke two-building complex provides an additional 48 beds, allowing the Unit to accommodate a total of 144 ward-based patients and the associated rehabilitation facilities. This new build will enhance DMRC's capability to meet the Services' rehabilitation needs to the end of current operations.

Prosthetics

- Recent Service leavers who have lost a limb while serving will, where clinically appropriate, be entitled to receive from the NHS equivalent standard prosthetic care to that provided by Defence Medical Services. Dr Andrew Murrison MP led a review in 2011 to examine NHS prosthetics services for veterans now and for the future. The Prime Minister announced that the Government is investing up to £15m to support Dr Murrison's key recommendations, including the introduction of national specialist prosthetic and rehabilitation centres for amputee veterans. Interim arrangements are now in place, but the specialist centres will be open next year. For further details please see [A Better Deal for Military Amputees](#).

MENTAL HEALTH

Service Personnel

- The MOD provides mental healthcare for those Armed Forces personnel who need it, primarily through 15 military Departments of Community Mental Health (DCMH) across the UK (plus centres overseas), providing out-patient treatment. In-patient care, when necessary, is provided in specialised psychiatric units under contract with the NHS.
- In May 2010, the latest phase of a King's College study into the effects of deployment on mental health confirmed continuing low incidence rate of probable post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) for the UK Armed Forces. Alcohol misuse and common mental disorders were the most prevalent mental health problems. Service personnel are generally no worse off as regards mental health disorders compared with available data for the civilian population. Deployment on operations was associated with a small increase in symptoms of PTSD in Reservists, and Regular personnel in combat roles were more likely than those in support roles to report probable PTSD. The number of times that a member of the Armed Forces deploys to theatre does not increase their risk of developing common mental health disorders.
- The Armed Forces Mental Health Strategy provides a framework for the Chain of Command, DCDS (Personnel & Training) staffs and Defence Medical Services to coordinate policy and focus efforts and resources to optimise levels of mental health in the Armed Forces. It also covers the duty to ensure that Service families receive appropriate support and that veterans in need of help are appropriately catered for through the NHS and in partnership with others.

Veterans

- The NHS delivers veterans' healthcare, with priority treatment for Service-related conditions, subject to the clinical needs of all patients.
- MOD complements NHS services by providing a Medical Assessment Programme and by £3m annual funding of treatment by the Combat Stress charity of war pensioners with service-related mental health disorders.
- The Reserves Mental Health Programme for Reservists who have deployed on operations since 2003 provides a full mental health assessment by military specialists carried out at the Reservist and Mobilisation Centre at Chilwell, Nottinghamshire. Where the person has a disorder caused by operational trauma, DMS treatment is provided at one of the military DCMHs. The patients are not entitled to ISP admission.
- Armed Forces Networks bring together the NHS, MOD and military charities. They champion the Armed Forces, their families and veterans within their areas, ensure veterans are able to access services and ensure that this community are not disadvantaged and, where appropriate, are given special treatment in accessing health and social care services. The Armed Forces Networks, MOD and the Department of Health work closely with the Devolved Administrations who have their own arrangements.
- Where a Serving person has had a mental health problem identified at the time of discharge that requires referral to a DCMH, that person may access care in a UK DCMH for up to 6 months beyond their discharge date.³

PAY AND ALLOWANCES

Top Line:

The Government is determined that members of the Armed Forces should receive a remuneration package commensurate with the vital role they play. The outcomes of the SDSR and the Spending Review are having far-reaching consequences in reducing Defence expenditure, although the full impact on pay and allowances is not yet clear. It is critical that change in these areas does not impact on the MOD's ability to attract, recruit and retain high calibre individuals.

Supporting Lines:

- The tax-free Operational Allowance (OA) for Armed Forces personnel serving in qualifying operational theatres was doubled on 6 May 2010.
- As part of measures to tackle the budget deficit, the Government's 2010 Emergency Budget announced a pay freeze for 2011/12 and 2012/13 for public sector workers, including the Armed Forces, except for those earning £21,000 or less who should receive at least £250 in these years. As part of the Autumn Statement announced on 29 November 2011, the Chancellor confirmed that the public sector pay freeze will end in 2013/14. However, pressures on the public finances and the need to protect jobs means that public sector pay awards, including those for the civil service and Armed Forces, will average at 1% for the two years following the pay freeze. Incremental progression will continue for eligible Service personnel during the pay freeze and the further period of pay restraint. The 2012 Armed Forces' Pay Review Body (AFPRB) report was published in 13 March 2012.
- Reductions in the Service Personnel allowances package (totalling £250m of the £880m spend) were announced on 20 January 2011.

PENSIONS

Top Line:

The Armed Forces Pension Schemes are widely recognised as good quality pension schemes which compare favourably with other public and private sector schemes. The

³ JSP 950, Leaflet 2-7-2, Section 11, paragraph 11.3.

AFPS are designed to reflect the special features of Service life, provide adequate retirement income and protection for dependants, and encourage retention as a key part of the overall remuneration package for Service Personnel.

Supporting Lines:

- A new Armed Forces Pension Scheme (currently referred to as Future AFPS) will be introduced from April 2015. As a part of this a Consultation exercise was launched on 29 March 2012 during which Service personnel were asked their views on the new scheme. External stakeholders, including the Central Advisory Committee on Pensions and Compensation, the Forces Families Federations and the Forces Pension Society, were also consulted.
- An outline scheme design was published in July 2012, giving Service personnel and external groups a further opportunity to submit comments. The main features of the new scheme, including some examples, are set out and explained in the Outline Scheme Design Document which is accessible from the [MOD Website](#)

REDUNDANCY

Top Line:

SDSR announced a reduction of 17,000 posts from the Regular Armed Forces (5,000 each RN and RAF and 7,000 Army). A further reduction of 12,000 to the Army was subsequently announced as a result of the Three-Month Exercise (3ME). Whilst reduced recruiting and fewer extensions of service will account for some of the reductions, a redundancy programme is also underway to ensure the right balance of skills is maintained across the rank structures. The outcome of the SDSR will also result in a reduction of the number of civilian personnel by around 25,000 by 2015 and a further 7,000 by 2020.

Supporting Lines:

- In September 2011, 2,860 Service personnel were notified of their selection for redundancy in Tranche 1, of whom 62% were applicants. Most of those selected will have left by the end of September 2012.
- On 12 June 2012, 3,800 Service personnel were notified of their selection for redundancy in Tranche 2, of whom 72% were applicants. Applicants will leave by 11 December 2012, while non-applicants will leave by 11 June 2013.
- Tranche 2 is the last major tranche for the RN/RM and RAF, although a small number of redundancies may be required for senior officers on completion of the Senior Liability Review and the Defence Medical Services 20 study.
- We still have some way to go to bring the size of the Army down to 82,000 and decisions on what is necessary to achieve this are yet to be taken, but we won't compromise the mission in Afghanistan.
- Those serving in, preparing to go to, or on leave having returned from Operational Allowance (OA) earning locations such as Afghanistan on the notification dates are exempt from selection, unless they are applicants.
- Service personnel selected for redundancy will receive the resettlement package to which they would have been entitled if they had completed their entire engagement, to assist their transition to civilian life.
- For the civilian workforce, the Department is committed to achieving the necessary reductions without recourse to compulsory redundancy wherever possible although this eventuality cannot be ruled out. The first Voluntary Early Release Schemes (VERS) launched in spring 2011, attracted applications from almost 14,000 staff, around 7,800 of whom were offered early release and just under 6,000 accepted (excluding RFA and SCS). A further two-year VERS was launched on 7 November 2011 and some 12,500 applications (excluding RFA and SCS) were received. Departmental selection panels considered applications between January and May 2012.
- Around 5,900 applicants for this second VERS have already been selected for release. Formal offers have been made and accepted by over 2,800 so far with further offers to be made in

accordance with published timescales. Over 3,100 applicants have been placed on reserve lists and these applications will be periodically reviewed.

- The Trade Unions were consulted prior to the launch of the civilian schemes.
- As a result of specific establishment closures and drawdowns and other discrete business changes some redundancies will occur where the required reductions cannot be made by voluntary early release. The TUs are being consulted as these arise.

RECRUITMENT

Top Line

No matter what the size of the Armed Forces there is a standing requirement to recruit around 10% of personnel per year to maintain manning balance and recruiting effort continues unabated. There is a combined recruiting target for the three Services in excess of 21,500 for the current year. With a significantly increased requirement for Reserve Forces in support of FR20 that total is expected to increase to over 30,000 in future years.

Supporting Lines

- The Armed Forces depend on high-quality young people wanting to join the Services and are still recruiting and training to replace those personnel who leave the Services at the end of their contracts.
- Overall, there are some 300 specialist employment areas open to recruits on joining the Armed Forces with some 2500 courses ranging from 2 days to 2 years producing the highly trained servicemen and women required to enable the Forces to live, move and fight. A vast range of qualifications is on offer and the MOD scheme is the largest Apprenticeship programme in the UK delivering about 13,000 Apprenticeship completions a year, of which some 2,000 are advanced Apprenticeships
- Service advertising campaigns to attract people continue with both RM Other Ranks (cinema) and Army Infantry campaigns running in Sep and Oct. There is sustained concurrent Reserves campaign (Sep 12-Mar 13) running for both the Maritime Reserves (RNR and RMR) and the RAF Reserves. The Maritime Reserves campaign will build upon the 2012 Q1 'Your spare time transformed' proposition.
- The Armed Forces are actively seeking applicants from the UK Ethnic Minority (ME) Communities who form a growing proportion of the UK population and who represent a pool of talent that is not fully tapped into by the Armed Forces at present. We are currently investigating a number of different approaches, particularly to those who influence potential UK ME recruits, while also looking to other organisations for examples of best practice.
- Despite the challenge of meeting the combined recruiting target, the Armed Forces are looking to make significant savings in the cost of recruiting operations. For example, the Army is now partnering its recruiting operations over the next 10 years with Capita under the Recruiting Partnering Project contract which will save in the order of £250m.

THE RESERVES

Top Line

The Reserve forces have a vital role in delivering the UK's national military capability and have made a substantial contribution to operations in the recent past. As we move forward the Reserves will be an integral part of the Whole Force

Supporting Lines

- We are investing an additional £1.8bn in the Reserves over the next 10 years to stabilise, reinvigorate and grow the size of Reserve Forces by around 50%.
- We will better harness the talents of the Reservists, expand their roles and deliver enhanced training and supporting equipment, thereby maximising their utility and enabling better integration with the Regular Force.

- At the same time, we are developing a closer relationship with employers, based on a partnership approach, to better meet the needs of Defence, the employer and the Reservist; the Public Sector, as a major employer of Reservists, will play its full part in this.

ARMED FORCES COMPENSATION SCHEME (AFCS)

Top Line

The AFCS provides compensation for injuries, illness and death arising from Service since 6 April 2005. War pensions are paid to veterans with injuries caused by their service prior to this date.

Supporting Lines:

- The AFCS provides compensation for members of the Armed Forces where illness, injury or death is caused by service. All awards provide a tax-free lump sum for pain and suffering, the size of which reflects the severity of injury or illness. Lump sum awards range from £1,200 to £570,000.
- For those with serious injuries and illness, the AFCS also provides a tax-free, index-linked monthly payment, paid from discharge until death known as the Guaranteed Income Payment.
- The AFCS also provides benefits to eligible partners and children of Service personnel who die as a result of service.
- An Independent Medical Expert Group (IMEG) was established during the Lord Boyce Review of the Scheme in 2010 to advise on the appropriate levels of compensation for several specific injuries and illnesses, including mental health. The IMEG's first report was published on 9 May 2011. The IMEG is now looking at how to best compensate for hearing loss, mental health problems and service-caused illnesses. Its findings will be published this year.

HOUSING

Top Line:

Defence recognises the importance of providing decent living standards in maintaining morale on the front line and, despite the current financial challenges, continues to invest and target efforts on the most pressing accommodation issues. Military accommodation arrangements continue to represent good value for money for members of the Armed Forces, with charges well below market rates. A three year SOFA (Service Family Accommodation) upgrade pause will take effect in 2013. However, elemental upgrades to bathrooms and kitchens are still programmed.

Supporting Lines:

- Significant progress has been made on accommodation and will continue, within the financial constraints which now exist.
- Establishing the new Defence Infrastructure Organisation shows the Government's commitment to improving the way estates and infrastructure services are delivered.

Armed Forces Home Ownership Scheme (Pilot): an MOD £20m, 4-year pilot shared equity scheme was launched in January 2010. To enable full-time permanent members of the Armed Forces who wish to remain in the Forces, and who have between 4 and 6 years' service, to buy a property in England. As at end of June 2012 (FY 2012/13), the scheme attracted 2,397 applicants who were assessed as being eligible in principle. Of these, 186 had completed by 30 June 2012.

Extended eligibility for priority status to affordable housing schemes: in June 2011, the Housing Minister, Grant Shapps MP, announced that the highest priority will be afforded to Service personnel for all types of social housing in England. This work is currently in the consultation phase with the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) hoping to enact as

secondary legislation in 2012. Service personnel have also been placed in the highest priority for access to the new FirstBuy scheme, which is designed to assist first time buyers.

Housing adaptation grants: seriously injured personnel in receipt of AFCS or War Pension Scheme (WPS) payments can access substantial grants to adapt their home for their disability. AFCS and WPS lump sum payments are not considered to be income when means-testing for Housing Adaptation Grants.

Disregard to compensation payments: AFCS lump sum payments are not considered to be income when assessing for affordable housing.

Local Connection: previously, Local Connection legislation meant that Service leavers received no recognition for having lived and worked in an area when applying for social housing. This has been amended in England, Scotland and Wales.

Priority Housing for Injured Service Personnel: ex-Servicemen and women who are seriously injured have priority for specially adapted social homes.

Service Families Accommodation: 94% of UK Service homes are now at the top two standards (of four) for condition⁴, with families no longer required to live in properties at the lowest standard, although some still choose to do so. As part of the Budget on 21 March 2012, the Chancellor announced £100m of further investment in accommodation for Service personnel and their families. This funding will be available for Financial Year 2013-14. Council Tax Relief was also doubled in the Budget to some £600 for an average 6-month deployment. This will continue to be paid at a flat rate to all eligible personnel. This uplift came into effect on 1 April 2012.

EDUCATION

Free Further or Higher Education: Service leavers with six years' service, and who have previously been members of the Enhanced Learning Scheme, can apply for funding to cover tuition fee expenses for an additional qualification. This is up to and including degree level courses.

School Place Allocation: The School Admissions Code is designed to recognise the needs of Service children.

Special Educational Needs: local authorities and schools have received guidance reminding them of their obligation to ensure continuity of support. **Troops to Teachers:** as part of the Schools White Paper, released in November 2010 by the Department for Education, the Government announced plans to develop a 'Troops to Teachers' programme which will sponsor Service leavers to train as teachers.

WELFARE

Top Line:

The welfare needs of Service personnel and their families remain a key priority. The Government is committed to providing the best possible support to deployed personnel and their families through the Deployed Welfare Package.

Supporting Lines:

Families: The Armed Forces have long-standing welfare structures in place to support Service families, including welfare officers, information and advice offices, chaplains, trained social workers, and other specialists. Families form a very important part of the Armed Forces community;

⁴ Reference here is to Standard for Condition, not Grade for Charge.

they support Service personnel throughout their career and at times of enhanced stress, such as during deployments. As with other civilians, Armed Forces families rely on the range of Government department and Local Authority provision for things such as health, social care and education and the MOD works in partnership with these organisations to address areas of disadvantage for Service families. Many Service charities supplement the government funded support and provide families with an invaluable service, often in close coordination with the MOD. .

Operational Welfare: the Deployed Welfare Package is kept under constant review to ensure it meets the needs of both the Service person and their dependants. Free phone calls are available for 30 minutes per week. Wi-Fi access has been extended in operational areas, texting and internet facilities have been improved in Forward Operating Bases and the Families Welfare Grant doubled in the April 2012 Budget to provide an additional £2m per year to support families of those deployed. This will allow local commanders to enhance the direct support that they provide for families while their loved-ones are deployed.

Post: MOD and the Royal Mail continue to operate the Enduring Families Free Mail Service (EFFMS) for friends and families to send packages of up to 2kg to named personnel in Afghanistan as well as HM Ships in support. In April 2012, the Royal Mail issued 'shadow post codes' for all BFPO locations to help personnel serving overseas, or on ships and submarines, and families by improving access to products and services from the internet. It will also help personnel maintain a UK credit history recognised by financial service providers.

Rest and Recuperation (R&R): on 22 July 2010, the Government announced steps to maximise R&R for Service Personnel. Those deploying for six months will remain eligible for one period of 14 days R&R. Those who lose out on more than 24 hours of R&R, whether as a result of operations or as a result of disruptions to the airbridge, will be granted additional Post Operational Leave in lieu to compensate.

SECTION 4 - EQUIPMENT CAPABILITY

Top Line:

Success in Afghanistan is the top priority for Defence and the Government is fully committed to ensuring that the campaign is properly resourced, funded and equipped.

Supporting Lines:

- Significant improvements have been made in the equipment provided to UK Armed Forces on operations. Operational Commanders have a wide range of helicopters, protected vehicles, weapons, unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) and other key equipments at their disposal.

Key Facts:

Afghanistan Operations

- Around £5.6bn has been approved through the Urgent Operational Requirement (UOR) process on equipment to meet emerging threats and requirements for Afghanistan since Operation HERRICK began.

Protected Vehicles

- Deliveries of Protected Mobility Vehicles to Afghanistan continue. Over £2bn for more than 2,000 new Protected Mobility Vehicles has been approved since 2006, including the recently announced contract to buy 100 more next generation Light Protected Patrol Vehicle (LPPV), Foxhound.
- In September 2011, MOD announced that the enhanced CVRT2 - Combat Vehicle Reconnaissance (Tracked) - fleet is now operational on the front line in Afghanistan.

- The fielding of the Warrior Theatre Entry Standard (Herrick) in June 2011, worth a total of around £40m which included the provision of a flexible modular armour system, an enhanced seating system, mobility improvements, and enhancements to the vision system.

Foxhound

- The Foxhound Light Protected Patrol Vehicle was deployed to Afghanistan in June 2012.
- Foxhound's V-shaped hull helps it withstand explosions and provides unprecedented levels of blast protection for its size and weight. It is light and agile and designed to move freely through the narrow alleyways, tracks, bridges and culverts in Afghanistan.
- The MOD has committed £270M for 300 Foxhound vehicles with General Dynamics Land Systems: Force Protection Europe which will sustain around 750 UK jobs.

Counter- IED (C-IED)

- The Defence Secretary has reaffirmed the government's commitment to the MOD's C-IED policy, including the enhancements agreed by the previous Government. C-IED capabilities continue to be bolstered, and work to institutionalise C-IED within wider defence is progressing well.

Personal Protection

- In July 2011, deliveries of the third and final tier of the multi-tiered pelvic protection system for troops in Afghanistan began. The three-tiered system of clothing and armour helps mitigate the effects of IED blasts.

Helicopters

- The fleet in-theatre includes the Chinook, Merlin and Sea King Support Helicopters, upgraded Lynx Mk9A Utility helicopters and the Apache Attack helicopter.
- In November 2011, the Merlin celebrated its 2nd anniversary of operations in Afghanistan. The Merlin is an all-weather, day-and-night, multi-role helicopter, used in both tactical and strategic operational roles, and performs tasks in Afghanistan which include picking up casualties and flying resupply missions.

ISTAR

- The UK Reaper Remotely Piloted Air System (RPAS) programme has now provided over 35,000 hours of high quality, persistent armed Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) support to UK and ISAF forces in Afghanistan.
- The Hermes 450 unmanned air system has provided over 50,000 hours of support to UK Forces since it entered service in 2007.

For more information on ISTAR please see the [June 2012 Top Level Messages](#).

Defence and Security White Paper

- On 1 February 2012 the MOD published a White Paper on "[National Security Through Technology: Technology, Equipment and Support for UK Defence and Security](#)", setting out the Government's approach to acquiring equipment, support and technology in the defence and security domain over the next five years.

Independent review of single source pricing regulations: The "Yellow Book"

- In October 2011, Lord David Currie's independent review of single source procurement was published. It is now out for public consultation, due to complete later in 2012.
- The MOD will spend around £160bn on equipment and equipment support over the next ten years. This means the Department will invest in cutting edge equipment across the spectrum of capability areas.

Royal Navy

Key messages:

- The introduction into service of the six Type 45 Destroyers and seven Astute class submarines is progressing well, as is the construction of Queen Elizabeth Class Aircraft Carrier programme.
- Defence Secretary Philip Hammond during a visit to Devonport Dockyard on Monday 26 March 2012 confirmed a £350m contract to refit and refuel HMS Vengeance, securing the future of 2,000 British jobs.
- On 22 February 2012 it was announced that four new Military Afloat Reach and Sustainability (MARS) tankers have been ordered to replace existing Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) single hulled tankers, which are planned to enter service from 2016.
- HMS Protector was named as the temporary replacement for HMS Endurance on 21 March 2011 the Antarctic and South Atlantic ice patrol and survey vessel. She was commissioned in June 2011 and deployed on 28 November to the Antarctic.

Expenditure over the next 10 years:

Ships - £18bn

- Completion of the two Queen Elizabeth aircraft carriers;
- Completion of 6 state-of-the-art Type 45 Destroyers with the Samson RADAR and Aster missile combining to offer an unparalleled air defence capability;
- Design and development of the Type 26 frigate, which will replace the Type 23;
- Further work on the Maritime Afloat Reach and Sustainability programme, which will provide a fleet of new, modern vessels for the Royal Fleet Auxiliary.

Submarine and Deterrent - £37bn

This covers all costs relating to the submarines themselves, nuclear propulsion costs and the costs of the strategic weapon system. This includes:

- The completion of the remaining 6 Astute Class attack submarines;
- Necessary costs arising from the requirement to replace the Vanguard class ballistic missile submarines, subject to a decision to be taken in the next Parliament;
- The ongoing costs of the strategic weapon system;
- A small amount of money at the end of the decade allocated to the requirement to scope a potential future underwater capability to replace Astute

Submarine Reactor Core contract

- The MOD has awarded Rolls Royce a £1.1 billion contract to produce new reactor cores for the Royal Navy's nuclear submarines and upgrade the plant where they will be built.
- The nuclear reactor cores will be used to power the seventh and final Astute Class submarine and the first of the Royal Navy's next generation of nuclear deterrent submarines, known as the Successor Class.

Army

Key Messages

- The Department plans to spend £5.5 billion on the Army's core armoured vehicle programme over the next ten years. This programme includes the Warrior Capability Sustainment

Programme, the SCOUT Specialist Vehicle, and in due course, a Utility Vehicle, and improvements to the Challenger 2 Main Battle Tank.

- Forces in Afghanistan have benefited from over £2.8 billion worth of investment in protected and armoured vehicles, significantly improving protection levels for those troops deployed.
- MOD has recently announced a contract for an additional tranche of Foxhound Light Protected Patrol Vehicles, taking the total to around 300 vehicles. The first vehicles arrived in Helmand province in June and British Army crews and commanders are training with the new vehicles at Camp Bastion before the platform heads outside the wire.

Expenditure over the next 10 years:

Land Equipment - £12bn

- An upgrade to our fleet of Warrior Infantry Fighting Vehicles, to maintain that capability with enhanced lethality out until 2040;
- Continued development of the family of Future Rapid Effects System vehicles, including Scout and Utility variants, which will replace a wide range of legacy armoured and protected vehicles.

Royal Air Force

Key messages:

- The RAF continues to move towards a combined fleet of Typhoon and JSF, two of the world's most modern and capable multi-role combat aircraft. JSF is a fifth-generation stealth aircraft which will represent a step-change in the UK's combat air capability. Typhoon is already delivering Air Defence for the UK and the Falkland Islands, and its ground attack capabilities were instrumental to allied operations over Libya.
- In February the Prime Minister announced the purchase of an additional C17. The aircraft will be delivered for initial use in July 2012 and will immediately provide additional support for our troops conducting pre-Deployment Exercises ahead of Afghanistan tours. In January 2013, it will be fitted with a modern suite of Defensive Aids (as fitted to all RAF C17s) and will be used to provide rapid, reliable and highly protected air transport for our troops.
- In December the purchase of 2 second-hand BAe 146 aircraft from TNT Airways S A was approved as an urgent operational requirement. The two BAe 146 aircraft will supplement the hard-working C130 Hercules fleet in providing safe movement between bases for troops in theatre. These aircraft are currently being upgraded for deployment to Afghanistan by BAeS Regional Aircraft and Hawker Beechcraft Ltd.
- In August MOD signed a contract for 14 new Chinook helicopters. The RAF will receive the first aircraft in 2013 and the delivery will be complete by the end of 2015. The first of the new Chinooks will enter into service with the RAF in May 2014, making an immediate contribution to the flexibility of the UK Chinook capability.
- Work with Eurocopter continues, in order to deliver upgraded Puma helicopters with new, more powerful engines and a digital cockpit. The first of these new helicopters is due to be delivered to the RAF early next year.

Expenditure over the next 10 years:

Combat Air - £18bn

This sector covers fast jets, Unmanned Aerial Vehicles and military flying training, including procurement of training aircraft. This investment includes:

- continuing investment in Typhoon to bring Tranche 2 & 3 aircraft fully into service. Further investment to develop and further enhance the aircraft's multi-role and ISTAR capabilities is a priority for the future;
- increasing investment in the F35 Joint Strike Fighter – a state-of-the-art fifth generation aircraft which will incorporate cutting edge stealth technology;
- a growing investment in unmanned aerial vehicles, including through co-operation with France.

Air Support - £14bn over ten years

This sector covers all large aircraft, including transport, air-to-air refuelling and large ISTAR platforms. This investment includes:

- The A400M future generation of strategic/tactical air transport aircraft;
- Bolstering our strategic airlift capability with the purchase of an additional C17 to bring the fleet up to 8 aircraft
- The brand new Voyager transport and air-to-air refuelling aircraft, which will replace the aging VC10 and TriStar fleets;
- New Rivet Joint Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance aircraft will provide us with a state of the art airborne SIGINT collection capability following the retirement from Service of the Nimrod R1 last year.

Hercules Integrated Operational Support

A £350M MOD contract with Marshall Aerospace has been signed to maintain the Royal Air Force's Hercules aircraft will help support operations in Afghanistan with greater resilience through continuing maintenance of the fleet.

The Hercules Integrated Operational Support (HIOS) contract saves the MOD £170M by replacing several short-term contracts with one agreement to provide the maintenance of the whole Hercules fleet until the end of 2015. The contract will support 500 UK jobs.

Other

Helicopters: - £13bn

- The purchase of an additional 14 Chinook helicopters as confirmed by the Secretary of State in July 2011;
- Completion of the Life Extension Programme for Puma;
- An upgrade of our Apache attack helicopters, to maintain their capability until 2040;
- The completion of the Wildcat programme, which will replace our existing Lynx helicopters, with separate variants for the Navy and Army.

Weapons - £11bn

- Investment of around £7bn in the complex weapons sector which will deliver a wide range of weapons, in the short term including the Future Local Area Air Defence System, which will be based on the Sea Ceptor missile, and the Future Air-to-Surface Guided Weapon (heavy) which will equip the Royal Navy's new Wildcat Helicopters.

Joint and other

We are spending over **£4bn** on C4ISTAR capabilities over the next ten years, including significant investment in new Cyber capabilities.

In addition:

- Information Systems over £15bn
- Naval Bases £4.3bn
- Joint Supply Chain £1.1bn
- Logistics & Commodities £400m
- Safety & Engineering £300m