

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE TOP LEVEL MESSAGES
DECEMBER 2011

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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 Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) capability so that they can prevent terrorist organisation, including AQ from returning and posing a threat to the UK and our allies around the world, allowing British forces to gradually draw down. We do not seek a perfect Afghanistan, but a stable Afghanistan, able to maintain its own security and prevent AQ from returning.

Context:

The transition of security responsibility from international to Afghan forces is progressing well and on 27 November President Karzai's office announced the second tranche of areas to begin transition. This included Nad-e Ali, making it the second of the three districts within the UK's Area of Operation to begin transition, after Lashkar Gah, where British troops formally handed the lead responsibility for security to Afghan Forces on 20 July 2011. Tranches one and two together will see around 50% of the Afghan population living in transitioned areas.

Supporting Lines:

- Following his visit to Afghanistan at the start of July, the Prime Minister announced that the UK would withdraw 500 troops by the end of 2012, reducing the UK's enduring force level to 9,000. This decision took into account the conditions on the ground and military advice and was discussed at the National Security Council.
- It is vital to Britain's security that AQ, and other terrorist groups, are denied the ability to operate within or return to Afghanistan. A more stable and secure Afghanistan will help ensure a safer Britain and world.
- We cannot risk a spill over of instability into the wider region, particularly into Pakistan. We are working with Pakistan, a key regional ally, to achieve our shared goals of lasting stability and security within Afghanistan. Pakistan has made great sacrifices in fighting terrorism and is tackling the terrorist threat within its own territory particularly in the vital border regions. Pakistan has a crucial role to play in the fight against terrorism and in this we assure them of our full support.
- The UK is part of a UN mandated NATO-led international mission in Afghanistan supported actively by 60 countries, of which 49 are providing troops. Several Islamic countries are part of the mission.
- UK and NATO allies and partners in Afghanistan are resolved to see the campaign through to a successful conclusion. The international community has a clear, realistic, and achievable strategy, and a properly resourced campaign plan to deliver it. At the heart of the strategy is a process of transition from the international community and International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to the Afghan Government, with the continuing engagement and support of the international community.
- The sustained growth in the Afghan state and the Afghan National Security Forces' strength, capacity and capability is the driving force of transition, enabling first the transfer of security responsibility to Afghan Forces and subsequently the release of UK and ISAF forces.

- ISAF strategy, endorsed by NATO, involves protecting the civilian population from the insurgents, supporting more effective governance at every level, and building up the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). The ISAF coalition wants to transfer security responsibility for districts and provinces to Afghan control as soon as they are ready.
- The Prime Minister, during his visit to Afghanistan in early December 2010, set out the three priorities for 2011: maintaining the momentum that has been created through the military surge; beginning the process of transition to Afghan forces leading security operations; and accelerating the Afghan-led political process of reintegration and reconciliation.
- UK troops working alongside other ISAF and Afghan forces continue to make progress by driving out the Taliban and extending the authority and influence of the Afghan Government in Central Helmand. This is allowing the ANSF, with ISAF support, to protect the population, and the international community to help the Afghans extend governance. But we must be realistic: Helmand's security situation remains complex and there will be more tough fighting ahead as we consolidate gains.
- The Prime Minister is clear that there will not be British troops in a combat role or in the numbers they are now in Afghanistan by 2015. However, UK and international support for Afghanistan will not end in 2014. We and our allies will go on having a strong relationship with Afghanistan based on diplomacy, trade, aid and development. We shall also continue to support the development of the ANSF through training provided by the new officer training academy announced by the Prime Minister during his visit in July. The bottom line is clear: we don't want to be fighting in Afghanistan a day longer than necessary, and we believe that we have the right strategy to achieve this.
- Since 2001 there have been 390 UK military fatalities in Afghanistan.¹ 264 personnel have been Very Seriously Injured or Wounded, and 276 have been Seriously Injured or Wounded.²

Key Facts:

- UK commitment: The enduring UK force level in Afghanistan is 9,500, out of a total ISAF force of around 130,000 personnel from 49 troop contributing nations.³
- Security: As of 31 October 2011 ANA actual strength was 173,150, against a target of 171,600 and ANP actual strength was 139,070 against an October target of 139,159.⁴

LIBYA

Top Line:

On 31 October NATO's Secretary General announced that following consultation with the new Libyan authorities, it has been agreed that there is no longer a need for NATO and its partners to conduct combat operations on a routine basis to protect Libyan civilians. Operation ELLAMY, the UK Armed Forces contribution to NATO's Operation UNIFIED PROTECTOR, has therefore concluded combat missions on 31 October. The operation to protect Libyan civilian lives began on 19 March with the unambiguous authority of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1973. Since the start of military operations, and as part of an 18 nation coalition, Royal Navy, Royal Air Force and Army Air Corps

¹ Correct on 15 October 2011

² Correct on 15 October 2011. Source: DASA

³ 17 Aug 2011 <http://www.isaf.nato.int/troop-numbers-and-contributions/index.php>

⁴ Correct on 31 October 2011

strikes have played a significant role in the enforcement of the UNSCR, the destruction of former regime forces and in enabling the liberation of the Libyan people.

Supporting Lines:

- Coalition actions have saved thousands of lives in Benghazi, Misratah and elsewhere in Libya, prevented Gaddafi from regaining power over Libya by force, and enabled the liberation of the Libyan people.
- At its height, approximately 4,000 UK personnel were deployed in the operation to enforce UNSCR 1973.
- At the request of the Libyan Authorities, NATO forces will retain surveillance patrols over Libya for a short time.
- Full details on the contribution of the UK Armed Forces as a part of the NATO led effort are available in the [November 2011 Top Level Messages](#).

SECTION 2 – TRANSFORMING DEFENCE

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SDSR AND DEFENCE REFORM

Top Line:

Transforming Defence will deliver the Future Force 2020 structure set out in the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR), supported by a smaller, capable and flexible department, within the resources available for Defence. It is our highest priority after operations and the programme is personally overseen by the Secretary of State.

Supporting Lines:

Transforming the budget – a legacy of affordability

- The Government has committed to bringing down the national deficit by reducing public expenditure. Defence is not immune from the UK's general financial situation. Despite a reduction in Defence spending, the UK expects to continue to be in the top four military spenders in the world and to meet the NATO target of spending 2% of UK GDP on Defence.
- In July 2011, the Chancellor agreed that the MOD may plan on the basis of an uplift in equipment and equipment support expenditure of 1% above inflation in the years beyond the current Spending Review period. Together with the other changes announced, such as the Basing Review and the Reserves Review, the Department has brought the long-term Defence programme broadly into balance.
- By tackling the imbalance in the Defence programme, the Government has been able to commit to a range of new equipment programmes for which funding had previously not been identified.

Key Facts:

- By 2014/15, the budget will reduce by around 8% in real terms compared to 2010/11.
- The cost of operations is additional to the Defence budget and is met from the Government's Special Reserve. In the last financial year, 2010/11, £3.9 billion was spent in support of operations in Afghanistan, Libya and Iraq.

- The cost of nine months of operations in Libya, through to December 2011, is estimated to be £160 million. The cost of replenishing munitions used in Libya is estimated to be £140 million. This was before the end of operations in October. A new estimate will be announced in early December, it is anticipated that this will be lower than those previously announced.
- Over the next ten years we will be spending over £150 billion on equipment

Transforming the front line – Future Force 2020

- In May this year, formal approval to begin the assessment phase for the programme to replace the Vanguard-class submarines was granted, along with the start of a review of alternatives to the Trident system. Progress has also been made on implementing the new nuclear assurances policy and the reduction in our nuclear weapon stockpile to no more than 180 warheads.
- **Maritime environment:** the Royal Navy has fully implemented the SDSR force structure changes. We have decommissioned HMS Ark Royal, four type 22, the amphibious landing ship RFA Largs Bay, the tanker RFA Bayleaf and the stores ship RFA Fort George. We are making good progress with the introduction into service of the new and highly capable Type 45 destroyers, with the Astute class submarine programme, and with the Carrier programme.
- **Land environment:** the SDSR announced that the Army would be rationalising headquarters, converting one operational divisional headquarters to a force preparation role and removing one deployable brigade. The Army is on track to meet its commitments to reduce holdings of Challenger 2 tanks by around 40% and to reduce AS90 vehicles by around 35%. Progress towards building Future Force 2020 capabilities includes a planned increase in Defence funding between 2015 and 2020, meaning about £1 billion will be spent on 14 new Chinook Helicopters and £1 billion on refurbishment of the Army's fleet of Warrior vehicles.
- In the **air environment** the Harrier has been withdrawn from service, and the airframes successfully sold to the United States. Tornado drawdown and Typhoon force growth remain on track. The new Voyager Future Strategic (transport) and Tanker Aircraft (FSTA), which has started UK trials and will replace TriStar and the VC-10. A400M production remains on track.
- The **Reserves** will play a greater role in future. Following the report of the Future Reserves 2020 Study Commission, around £1.5bn will be invested over the next ten years to meet its immediate recommendations to place the Reserves on a healthy footing. It will allow a progressive adjustment of the Regular/Reserve balance while maintaining the land forces capability set out in the SDSR.
- The three Services have announced **redundancy** programmes and a first tranche of MOD civil servants have accepted voluntary early release as we reduce by around 22,000 Service personnel and 25,000 civil servants by 2015. Our civilian workforce has already fallen by almost 10% compared to the SDSR baseline and it is on track to meet the SDSR commitment of a total fall of around 32,000 by the year 2020.
- The SDSR announced the intention to bring back half of the UK military personnel from Germany by 2015 and the rest by 2020, and to deliver £350 million per year from estate rationalisation, while reflecting reductions in RAF equipment based around the UK. In July, the Defence **Basing** Review made clear how these strategic, long term changes would affect the military footprint. RAF Marham will remain as a base for Tornado GR4 aircraft while RAF Leuchars will become an Army base. The Typhoon force will grow at RAF Lossiemouth, while Kinloss will become home to Army units. Work in the coming year will develop the detailed plans required to implement these changes.

Transforming the organisation – Defence Reform

- Lord Levene completed his **Defence Reform** review of MOD's structure and corporate culture to identify the changes needed to deliver the Future Force 2020 in June 2011. The Department has agreed his recommendations and is implementing them in full. It is anticipated that a new blueprint for the MOD in December.
- This will ensure that:
 - It is clear who is responsible and accountable for taking decisions and delivering outputs within their budgets
 - Financial management across Defence is significantly tightened.
 - Military capabilities are integrated on a 'joint' basis where that is right
 - The necessary leadership is provided with the right behaviours
 - Enabling functions are provided effectively, efficiently, consistently and where appropriate on a collective basis
- To Date the Department has:
 - Set up the new Defence Infrastructure Organisation;
 - Set up the new Defence Business Services Organisation;
 - Appointed the first Commander Joint Forces Command, which stands up on 1 April 2012;
 - Introduced a new Army Command Structure;
- Work has been taken forward to improve defence **acquisition**, including:
 - Lord Currie's review of single source contracts, potentially saving up to £200M a year;
 - Publishing a Green Paper on Equipment, Support and Technology for UK Defence and Security. We aim to publish a follow-up White Paper.
 - Bernard Gray, the Chief of Defence Materiel, is developing a new Materiel Strategy and has set out options for the future of the Defence Equipment and Support Organisation;
 - Work continues to review and renegotiate up to 500 contracts with a value of £8Bn.

SECTION 3 - EQUIPMENT AND LOGISTIC SUPPORT

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

- Over £5.1 billion 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

- On 25 October 2011, the Prime Minister was joined by the Defence Secretary and the Head of the Army to announce that the Army's Warrior Infantry Fighting Vehicle will benefit from a £1 billion upgrade. The Warrior Capability Sustainment Programme (WCSP) will extend the

vehicles' service life to beyond 2040, ensuring that Warrior will continue to play an essential role in the future conduct of land operations. The upgrade programme includes an enhanced turret incorporating a 40mm cannon, fire on the move capability, electronic upgrades to support digital systems, and improved protection. This follows the fielding of the Warrior Theatre Entry Standard (Herrick) in June 2011, worth a total of around £40M.

- In September 2011, MOD announced that the enhanced CVRT2 - Combat Vehicle Reconnaissance (Tracked) - fleet is now operational on the front line in Afghanistan.
- Deliveries of Protected Mobility Vehicles to Afghanistan continue. Over £2 billion for more than 2,000 new Protected Mobility Vehicles has been approved since 2006.
- On 30 November 2010, the Government announced a £180 million contract to buy the next generation Light Protected Patrol Vehicle (Foxhound). The first vehicles are scheduled to be delivered for training by the end of 2011 and deployment to Afghanistan should commence in 2012.

Counter- IED (C-IED)

- In June 2010, the Talisman Counter-IED system was unveiled. Bought as a UOR, worth more than £180 million, it comprises a combination of vehicles providing an effective route proving and clearance capability.

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 upgraded Lynx Mk9A Support 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.
- On 22 August 2011, the Defence Secretary announced a contract award for 14 new Chinook helicopters. The contract with Boeing to supply the Chinook heavy lift helicopters will provide a capability and resilience for operations now and in the future. Already the largest fleet in Europe, this new contract will bring the UK's overall number of Chinooks to 60.

ISTAR

- The UK Reaper Remotely Piloted Air System (RPAS) programme has now provided over 28,500 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. 41,500 of those hours have been flown in Afghanistan.
- On 6 December 2010, the Prime Minister announced that funding will be made available to enable further increases in the UK Reaper RPAS capability. RAF Waddington in Lincolnshire has been selected as the preferred location for the basing of a key element of this additional capability, the Ground Control Stations. The decision to base the Ground Control Stations at RAF Waddington was informed by the fact that the Station is the RAF's ISTAR Hub with the required flying supervisory chain of command. Work has already commenced at RAF Waddington in preparation for the stand up of XIII Squadron, the arrival of the UK Reaper Ground Control Stations and associated equipment in 2012.
- At this stage there are no plans to base or fly UK Reaper aircraft in the UK as the aircraft are specifically required to be based in Afghanistan to support UK and Coalition Forces under Urgent Operational Requirement. However, in the future, as the Ground Control Stations will be based within the UK, RAF crews will be able to fly the UK Reaper aircraft remotely from the UK.

- The MOD intends to begin relocating 39 Squadron from Creech Air Force Base (AFB), Nevada to RAF Waddington once XIII Squadron is operational. The relocation of 39 Squadron will be phased to ensure there is no disruption to UK Reaper support to current operations. While there are a range of benefits of being collocated with the USAF at Creech AFB, the manpower requirements of 2 squadrons (39 and XIII Squadrons) will require qualified crews to be available for additional tours of duty on Reaper to reduce the training burden; in the long term, this requires both squadrons to be based in the UK.
- The Future Force 2020 will include strategic surveillance and intelligence platforms capable of providing wide area coverage as part of a broader ISTAR capability.
- Sentinel R1 aircraft have been integral to operations in Afghanistan and Libya. Providing wide area, all weather battlefield mapping of activity on the ground and able to conduct and support the full spectrum of 'scan, cue, focus' Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) collect activity.
- The Government has taken the difficult decision to take Sentinel out of service post Op HERRICK. Once Sentinel is withdrawn from Service, the loss of this platform will be mitigated through a range of other capabilities.

Tornado GR4

- The Tornado is making a key contribution to operations in Afghanistan and Libya and has recently passed the one million flying hours mark. It provides a reactive, scalable, and precise range of effects that is currently unique to this aircraft.

Typhoon

- Typhoon is playing a vital Air Defence role in the UK and Falkland Islands and until very recently to operations in Libya. It is capable of being deployed in the full spectrum of air operations, from air policing, to peace support, through to high intensity conflict.

Rivet Joint/Airseeker

- On 19 March 2010, the MOD signed a bilateral agreement with the US Government to procure three RIVET JOINT aircraft and associated training and ground systems, known collectively within the UK as AIRSEEKER, to replace the Nimrod R1 aircraft. AIRSEEKER is scheduled to enter service in 2014. Prior to AIRSEEKER entering service, the UK's airborne signals intelligence capability and core competencies are being sustained under the auspices of the AIRSEEKER Co-Manning agreement; under this agreement UK personnel commenced deployed operations on co-manned USAF Rivet Joint aircraft in June 2011.

Strategic and Tactical Lift

- When the future strategic (transport) and tanker aircraft (FSTA) enters service with the RAF it will be known as Voyager.
- Preparations for the formal entry to service of Voyager are now well advanced. The first two Voyager aircraft, of 14, converted for these roles are undergoing flight testing.
- Voyager will replace the Air to Air Refuelling (AAR) capability and the passenger Air Transport (AT) work currently undertaken by the RAF's VC-10 and TriStar fleets.
- Voyager will provide enhanced levels of availability, reliability and comfort for passengers and will be considerably more capable and efficient than its predecessors.
- Voyager will be provided through a PFI service contract. Industry will own and manage the aircraft assets and provide the training services and approximately 25% of the manpower; however military missions will be flown by and under the control of the RAF.
- 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 A400M joining the RAF's fleet of seven C17 aircraft and Voyager. The UK will gradually withdraw legacy fleets such as the C130 Hercules, Tristar, VC10 and existing Comms Fleet Aircraft as soon as new capabilities are introduced.

Joint Combat Aircraft: Lightning 2

- The Government remains committed to the US led Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) programme. The UK plans to transition to a combined fast jet fleet of JSF, named the Lightning 2, and Typhoon aircraft in the medium to long term.
- The UK plans to deliver the Carrier Strike capability from around 2020.

Defence and Security White Paper

- A future White Paper will set 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 in early 2012.

Type 45 Destroyers

- The first Type 45, HMS Daring, entered service on 31 July 2010. The second in class, HMS Dauntless, was formally commissioned into the Royal Navy on 3 June 2010 and has recently completed her Hot Weather Sea Trials. HMS Diamond (Ship 3) was declared In-Service on 12 July 2011. Dragon (Ship 4) has successfully completed sea trials and was accepted off contract on 31 August 2011. Defender (Ship 5) has successfully completed her Propulsion and Drive Motor Trials and has commenced her first set of sea trials. Duncan (Ship 6) launched on 11 October 2010 and is currently being fitted out on the Clyde.

Submarines

- The first in class of the new Astute Submarines, HMS Astute, was commissioned into the Royal Navy in August 2010 and is currently undergoing further sea trials before she is declared operational. In November 2011, Astute successfully demonstrated the submarine's capability to prepare for and launch Tomahawk Land Attack Missiles. This is a critical milestone to ensure that ASTUTE is ready for Operational Handover. Boat 2 (Ambush) was named on 16 December 2010 and launched in January 2011. Artful (Boat 3) and Audacious (Boat 4) are under construction at Barrow. The keel laying ceremony for ANSON (Boat 5) took place on 13 October 2011.

Ice Patrol Ship

- On 21 March 2011, HMS Protector was named as the temporary replacement for HMS Endurance, the Antarctic and South Atlantic ice patrol and survey vessel. She was commissioned in June 2011 and deployed on 28 November to the Antarctic.

Air Defence

- RAF air defence assets including Typhoon aircraft, radars and command and control systems, are held at continuous readiness 24/7, 365 days of the year to guarantee the security of UK sovereign airspace and NATO-monitored airspace.

SECTION 4 – 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, setting out the key relationships between the Armed Forces, Government and the Nation. It was accompanied by 'The Armed Forces Covenant: Today and Tomorrow' which sets out the specific steps being taken to support the Armed Forces Community.

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. A number of improvements have already been achieved for Service families under the Covenant, such as: retention of NHS waiting list place following a move, beneficial changes to the Schools' Admissions Code and the Armed Forces Bereavement Scholarship Scheme. For further information, please see the [MOD website](#).
- As the Prime Minister proposed in June 2010, the Armed Forces Act has enshrined the principles of Armed Forces Covenant in law. This is the first time that the existence of the Covenant has been recognised in law. It received Royal Assent on 3 November 2011.
- In August 2011 MOD launched the Community Covenant Grant scheme. The aim of the Community Covenant Grant Scheme is to support projects, at the local level, which strengthen the ties or the mutual understanding between members of the Armed Forces Community and the wider community in which they live.
- £30m has been allocated to the scheme over this and the following three financial years. Almost half £1m has been awarded to projects from the first round of bids considered in October. The panel will consider bids again in December and March 12.
- Work continues on further issues and it is important that personnel and their families understand the provisions made within the Covenant and remind service providers of their responsibilities where they perceive that they are not being correctly upheld. An interim Armed Forces Covenant Report will detail the progress so far and will be released shortly.

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

- 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, which opened in June 2010, is the primary reception hospital for military patients evacuated to the UK from overseas. The new facilities offer injured soldiers the best possible care in a designated Military Ward, subject to clinical need.
- Patients requiring further rehabilitation care (including prosthetics) can be referred to the Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre (DMRC) at Headley Court in Surrey. DMRC has 96 established in-patient beds with a further 20 beds being made available as a sensible contingency in the short term. In order to ensure continuity of services out to the end of current operations, a plan is maturing to bring the in patient capacity at DMRC to 144 with appropriate therapy space and supporting infrastructure.
- Birmingham hospitals and Headley Court have the ability to manage increased casualty numbers, including mobilising additional military medical staff and providing extra bed spaces.

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 to examine NHS prosthetics services for veterans now and for the future. The Prime Minister announced that the Government is investing up to £15 million to support Dr Murrison's key recommendations, including the introduction of national specialist prosthetic and rehabilitation centres for amputee veterans. The MOD will work closely with NHS specialists and the Department of Health (DH), service charities, the Devolved Administrations and others to ensure that prosthetic services are delivered in the most effective way for the benefit of the veterans population. This can be viewed on the DH website www.dh.gov.uk under [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 our 15 military Departments of Community Mental Health across the UK (plus centres overseas), which provide 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 the mental health of personnel confirmed the continuing low incidence rate of probable 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 (AFMHS) provides a framework for the Chain of Command (CoC), DCDS(Personnel & Training) staffs and the Defence Medical Services (DMS) to coordinate policy and focus effort and resources to optimise levels of mental health in the Armed Forces. It applies primarily to serving personnel and Reserves, but it also covers our duty to ensure that Service families receive appropriate support and that ex-Service personnel, who are in need of help, are appropriately catered for through the NHS and in partnership with others. The mental health and the wider mental wellbeing of Service personnel have a direct impact on their morale, motivation and moral judgement which ultimately underpins capability. The overt and clear ownership of mental health by the Chain of Command (CoC) is an important factor in its management.

Veterans

- The NHS is responsible for delivering 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 (with a similar service for Reservists) and by its £3m annual funding of treatment provided by the mental health charity Combat Stress for war pensioners with mental health conditions caused by service.
- In England, Armed Forces Champions in Strategic Health Authorities and regional Armed Forces Networks are bringing together the NHS, Service charities and others, to meet the needs of the Armed Forces community in their area.

Dr Andrew Murrison's Report, 'Fighting Fit: A Mental Health Plan For Servicemen and Veterans'

- The MOD is working closely with the DH to take forward the recommendations in Dr Andrew Murrison's independent report, 'Fighting Fit', which was released in November 2010 and can be viewed on the [MOD website](#).

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 our 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. Libyan land mass, air space and territorial waters were added to the areas for which OA is in payment, backdated to the date of the UN resolution. Now that the operation is completed, the Department is reviewing its eligibility criteria for OA.
- 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. The Government however, stated that all those earning £21,000 or less should receive a minimum increase of £250. It is in this context that, for those earning above £21,000 a year MOD will not submit evidence or seek recommendations for a 2012 pay award. MOD will, however, provide evidence to the AFPRB about recruitment, retention, any targeted measures proposed for particular groups and other aspects of the remuneration package such as food and accommodation charges. The 2012 AFPRB report is expected to be published in March 2012.
- Reductions in the Service Personnel allowances package (totalling £250 million of the £880 million spend) were announced on 20 January 2011. The announcement was a result of the requirement set out in the SDSR to reduce expenditure on Armed Forces and Civil Service allowances.
- As part of the Autumn Statement on 29 November 2011, the Chancellor announced that public sector pay awards, including those for the civil service and Armed Forces, will average at 1% for the two years following the public sector pay freeze which will end in the financial year beginning 2013/14.

PENSIONS

Top Line:

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

- In 2010 the Government invited Lord Hutton to conduct a fundamental structural review of public service pension provision.
- Lord Hutton's Independent Public Service Pensions Commission published its final report on 10 March 2011. The report recommended a number of significant changes to public service pension provision aimed at ensuring that public service employees will have continued access to good quality, sustainable and fairer defined benefit pension schemes. For further information, please see the [MOD website](#).

REDUNDANCY

Top Line:

Following the SDSR, the shape and size of the Defence workforce (both military and civilian) is being addressed. The UK's Armed Forces are being restructured to meet current and emerging threats and so are undergoing some changes including a reduction in the combined size of the Royal Navy, the Army and the RAF by some 17,000 by 2015. Some of this reduction is being achieved through measures such as slowing down recruitment but the Department estimates that up to around 11,000 redundancies will be required. Planning is underway for Future Force 2020, which will see a further reduction in the size of the Army from 2015. 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:

- The Armed Forces redundancy programme will reduce the number of Service personnel while maintaining a satisfactory balance of skills and experience throughout the Armed Forces to enable delivery of operational requirements.
- The Royal Navy, the Army and the RAF published comprehensive documents for their personnel, detailing the branches and trades from which they are seeking to make redundancies in this first tranche and have made selections from those who applied and from non-applicants. Individuals were informed in September 2011 if they were to be made redundant in this first tranche. All three Services will run up to four redundancy tranches; the released documents only cover the first tranche.
- Transition of those selected for redundancy will be managed through the appropriate resettlement package.
- All tranches will be complete by the end of March 2015.
- 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 reductions will be managed by a range of measures including natural wastage, restrictions on external recruitment which have been in place for some time, and a Voluntary Early Release Scheme (VERS) which was open for applications in spring 2011. Letters notifying individuals of the outcome of their VERS application were sent on 30 June 2011.
- The Trade Unions were consulted prior to the launch of the scheme.
- The compensation payable is determined in accordance with the rules of the Civil Service Compensation Scheme (and equivalent arrangements for members of other pension arrangements – such as Teachers, Burnham Lecturers and NHS grades).
- It is unlikely that these measures alone will be sufficient to achieve the full reductions required and further action is currently being considered which may include a further early release scheme(s) and/or more targeted schemes. A consultation document has been issued to the MOD Trades Unions on proposals for a new VERS, which on current planning will be in November and run for two years from 1 April 2012.

RECRUITMENT

- The Armed Forces depend on high-quality young people wanting to join the Services for rewarding and exciting careers. Despite the reduction in the overall numbers of Service personnel, the Armed Forces are still recruiting and training to replace those personnel who leave the Services at the end of their contracts.

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 covers all serving and ex-Service personnel and may provide a tax-free lump sum for pain and suffering, the size of which reflects the severity of injury or illness that has been sustained. Lump sum awards range from £1,200 to £570,000. The AFCS also provides benefits to eligible partners and children of Service personnel who die as a result of their service.
- For serious injuries and illness, the AFCS also provides an income stream known as the Guaranteed Income Payment (GIP). This is in addition to the lump sum and is a tax-free, index-linked monthly payment, paid from discharge until death. The GIP is an enhancement to an individual's ill-health pension, paid to recognise that the injury or illness was sustained as a result of service. The scale of the payment is based on the severity of the injury, and age and salary on discharge.
- 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 Group'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 in the next year.

HOUSING

Top Line:

The MOD 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 SFA (Service Family Accommodation) upgrade pause has recently been announced, taking 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 to give the Armed Forces the best possible facilities in which to live, work and train.

Armed Forces Home Ownership Scheme (Pilot)

- An MOD £20 million, 4-year pilot shared equity scheme was launched in January 2010. The scheme is eligible to 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. In FY 2010/11, the scheme attracted 1,300 applicants who were assessed as being eligible in principle. Of these, 105 had completed by 30 Sep 2011.

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 early 2012. Service personnel will have also been placed in the highest priority for access to the new FirstBuy scheme, which is designed to assist first time buyers. The first Service person to purchase a property under the FirstBuy scheme recently completed his purchase, and this was highlighted in the media.

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

- The vast majority of UK Service homes are now at the top two standards (of four) for condition⁵, with families no longer required to live in properties at the lowest standard, although some still choose to do so.

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 (SEN)

- 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. Any changes proposed to Terms and Conditions of Service will take into account the impact on

⁵ We refer here to Standard for Condition, not Grade for Charge.

welfare support. The Government remains committed to providing the best possible support to deployed personnel and their families through the Deployed Welfare Package.

Supporting Lines:

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.

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 2 kg to named personnel in Afghanistan as well as HM Ships in support.

Rest and Recuperation

- On 22 July 2010, the Government announced steps to maximise Service personnel's rest and recuperation.

Deployed Welfare Package

- The MOD provides a comprehensive Deployment Welfare Package throughout the year to all personnel deployed on operations. Over the Christmas period (defined as 22 Dec-2 Jan inclusive) this package is enhanced. Personnel are provided with an additional 75 minutes of telephone calls; 30 of which is publicly funded and the other 45 minutes provided by Paradigm Services Limited. The MOD will send over six tonnes of festive food, as well as Christmas decorations, to Afghanistan to provide deployed personnel with Christmas dinner and festive cheer. The Scots Band will also visit theatre in Dec 11, following the extremely successful visits by RM Band Portsmouth (Aug 11) and the Para Band (Dec10/ Jan 11). During their visit, the Scots Band will provide shows in several FOBs and PBs as well as carol concerts, church services and support to the main BSN Christmas day ceremony. Christmas boxes from the charity UK4U will also be issued to all deployed Service Personnel irrespective of where they are deployed.

DMC Secretariat & New Media

Please direct any queries to 020 7218 9228