

Service Life and Culture Factsheet

The Armed Forces holds a duty to the Queen, the Government and ultimately the nation for the defence of the realm. This often comes at personal sacrifice to the individual, having to give up certain freedoms that are taken for granted by the general population, for example, separation from families and home. Our Armed Forces are obliged to drop everything in times of crisis to keep the country safe, deploying around the globe and often at short notice, with the possibility of injury or death, or as in the fire strike and national disaster relief closer to home.

The families of service personnel also suffer, having to move home constantly, having to put their carers on hold, having their loved ones away for long periods of time and the worry when they are deployed. This often leads to these service families being disadvantaged compared to the civilian population.

On joining the Armed Forces service men and women accept a commitment to serve whenever and wherever they are needed, whatever the difficulties or dangers may be. Such commitment imposes certain limitations on individual freedom, and requires a degree of self-sacrifice. Ultimately it may require members of the Armed Forces to lay down their lives. Implicitly it requires those in positions of authority to discharge in full their moral responsibilities to subordinates.

1. Oath of Allegiance

Selfless commitment is reflected in the wording of the Oath of Allegiance which is taken on attestation. In it, members of the Armed Forces agree to subordinate their own interests to those of the unit, Military and Nation, as represented by the Crown.

"I swear by almighty God (do solemnly, and truly declare and affirm) that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, her heirs and successors and that I will as in duty bound honestly and faithfully defend her Majesty, her heirs and successors in person, crown and dignity against all enemies and will observe and obey all orders of her majesty, her heirs and successors and of generals and officers set over me"

Irrespective of private beliefs, this Oath embodies the context in which the British Military fights and operates. It expresses the loyalty of every member of the Armed Forces to the Sovereign as the Head of State. These relationships find expression in the Colours, Standards and other emblems of Regimental, Squadron and Corps spirit, which derive from the Sovereign. Personal commitment is the foundation of military service.

Armed Forces members must be prepared to serve whenever and wherever required and to do their best at all times. This means putting the needs of the mission and of the team before personal interests.

2. Structure of the Services

Over the past few years the services have been restructured in light of the last 2 defence and security reviews to take into account of the various threats facing our country and the advances

in technology and equipment. The way in which our Armed forces are equipped and structured today is vastly different to that of the cold war.

2.1 Royal Navy

The Royal Navy comprises of 77 surface ships and Submarines, its 3 core roles are:

- Warfighting (conduct, or be ready to conduct, warfighting at sea and from the sea)
- Maritime Security (protect the free, safe and lawful use of the sea where it's vital to UK prosperity and security)
- International Engagement (Promote UK interests by developing international partnerships)

Royal Navy Branches:

- Fleet Air Arm
- Royal Marines
- Surface Fleet
- Submarine Service
- Royal Fleet Auxiliary

2.2 British Army

The British Army is the principal land warfare force of the United Kingdom. As of 2017, the British Army comprises just over 80,000 trained regular personnel and just over 26,500 trained reserve personnel.

The British Army consists of the General Staff and the deployable Field Army and the Regional Forces that support them, as well as joint elements that work with the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force. The Army carries out tasks given to it by the democratically elected Government of the United Kingdom. Its primary task is to help defend the interests of the UK, which consists of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. This may involve service overseas as part of a North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) force or any other multi-national deployment. Soldiers may also be deployed on United Nations (UN) operations and used to help in other emergencies.

- **Reaction Force** - The Reaction Force will provide a high readiness force that will undertake short notice contingency tasks and provide the Army's conventional deterrence for Defence. Given the high readiness nature of this force it will comprise predominantly Regular Forces.
- **Adaptable Force** - The Adaptable Force will comprise of a pool of Regular and Reserve Forces. It will be used for a wide range of tasks that will include providing HQ's and units for enduring operations.
- **Force Troops** - Supporting the Reaction Force, Adaptable Force and Specialist troops, which will provide a wide range of capabilities from a centralised pool of Regular and Reserve Forces, such as Artillery, Logistics, Military Intelligence, Medical and Engineering
- **Integration** To maximise capability the Army is fully integrated with Regular and Reserve soldiers, civilians and contractors as part of the whole force. The Reserves will be used routinely, rather than in extreme circumstances, for defined tasks and

capabilities including providing troops for enduring stabilisation operations and defence engagement overseas.

2.3 Royal Air Force

- **Number 1 Group** Headquarters is the coordinating organisation for all front line, Fast-jet Force Elements and as such has functional responsibility for the teeth arm of the Royal Air Force today. Whether it is homeland defence of the UK airspace utilising the Typhoon, operational flying in Afghanistan in the Tornado GR4, or exercising with NATO partners, the unified focus of the 12,000 personnel within Number 1 Group, based across 8 flying stations and one support unit, is being ready for operations, and when called upon providing the battle-winning edge.
- **No 2 Group's** role is to generate and employ military capability. The speed and global reach of 2 Group's Air Mobility and Force Protection force elements allow the UK to rapidly deploy sustain and recover its Armed Forces in response to developing security and humanitarian crises. **Air Mobility** is a core airpower role. At short notice the RAF can move air and ground combat forces to, from and around multiple theatres of operations, over strategic distances. Air Mobility is a key enabler for the combat operations that the RAF undertakes in its own right as an independent combat arm, as well as those undertaken with the British Army, the Royal Navy and Allied Forces during Joint and Combined Ops.
- **No 22 (Training) Group** is responsible for delivering the training and education for the RAF and elements of the RN and Army, in order to underpin the military effectiveness of Defence. The Group operates a 'cradle to grave' model starting with engagement and ending with resettlement.
- **Number 38 Group** has been reformed and has a fresh role; the new Group brings together the Royal Air Force's Engineering, Logistics, and Communications and Medical Operations units. These units provide essential support to the Royal Air Force, enabling it to deliver operational effect. Although many of Number 38 Group's deployable squadrons are stationed at Royal Air Force Wittering, the Group also has operational units and personnel at Royal Air Force Brize Norton, Royal Air Force High Wycombe and Royal Air Force Leeming.
- **83 EAG** has under its command 6 Wings (5 in the Middle East and 1 in Afghanistan), forming a diverse and compelling mix of capabilities. This enables the RAF to offer the very best support to the Land Forces across the entire spectrum of Air Power roles Attack, Air Mobility, Control of the Air and Intelligence
- **THE RAF REGIMENT** the ground fighting force of the Royal Air Force. The RAF Regiment provides a range of Force Protection effects underpinned by its air-minded ground fighting capabilities.

3. Reserves

Reservists play an important role in supporting the armed forces. It is now common for reservists to be deployed, as equals, alongside their regular colleagues – and this applies to all elements of the armed forces. An understanding that they are a reservist will help support them, their families. Reserve roles are diverse; as well as taking part in operational deployments; reservists are called out to help to deal with emergency situations in the UK. At every stage of a reservist's career, there are obligations for both reservists and employers. It's

important to be aware of these as some are governed by law (e.g. the legal right to reinstatement in civilian jobs after a period of mobilised service).

There are 2 main pieces of legislation to be aware of:

- a. The Reserve Forces (Safeguard of Employment) Act 1985 (SOE 85) provides reservists who have a liability to be mobilised with 2 types of protection:
- b. Protection of employment: the Act provides protection from unfair dismissal and makes it a criminal offence for an employer to terminate a reservist's job without their consent solely or mainly because he or she has a liability to be mobilised.
- c. Rights to reinstatement: the Act provides a legal right to reinstate the reservist to their job, subject to certain conditions
- d. The Reserve Forces Act 1996 (RFA 96), sets out the call-out powers under which reservists can be mobilised for full-time service

4. Service Culture

Research conducted in both the UK and USA reports that when serving in the armed forces, people form a military identity. Veterans often describe military culture in terms of stoicism, self-reliance, and prioritizing the needs of the unit over the needs of the individual. Ex-armed forces personnel also often see the people they served with as an-other family and talk about the strong bonds they had. Being good at your job is part of the military identity and being competent in what you do is seen as a source of self-respect

Unlike the rest of the population the Military is paid every day for 24 hours a day and can be called upon to work these hours when required (selfless commitment).

Service Culture is strongly based on its values and standards. The Service's values and standards demand a degree of commitment and self-sacrifice. Which goes beyond that normally expected from other citizens. This commitment is essential to that ethos of the Military and contributes directly to the maintenance of operational effectiveness. Commanders at every level must lead by example, and encourage their subordinates to live by its Values and to live up to its Standards. Even when leaving the Service's you can expect that many will uphold these same values and standards in civilian life

4.1 Effect of Military Culture on Families

The services expect a great deal from their families. Their personnel are expected to provide unlimited liability; this means that they might face serious injury or death during their service to the nation. They will periodically be required to deploy on operations, sometimes at very short notice, at times for protracted periods, or have only recently returned from previous separation and sometimes all three. There is often little or no choice for the Service person or their family in this separation. Their military career will also necessitate directed relocation within the UK or overseas. There are also the day to day realities of service life, working long or unsociable hours with the associated impact that this can have on the family, such as child care responsibilities. All this places considerable additional pressure on service families; this combination of pressures is not faced in almost any other profession. For those Regular service families living in the community away from a Service environment (outside the wire) can be a

greater issue, not only are they separated from their service partner, but also the service welfare support. The families of Reservists are in a similar situation, especially when their service partner is deployed

5. The Services Values, Standards and Ethos

5.1 Royal Navy Ethos

“By necessity, we operate many miles from our home ports, bases and families in the UK and therefore must bring everything we need with us in order to achieve our missions. The Royal Navy is a ‘can-do’ organisation and will attempt any mission we are given with the means we have available to us. The ethos of the Royal Navy is defined as:

“The enduring spirit derived from our people’s loyalty to their ship, unit or team sustained by high professional standards and strong leadership, that gives us courage in adversity and the determination to fight and win”.

It is what we do and how we do it.”

The Naval Service Core Values

- Commitment
- Respect for Others,
- Discipline
- Courage
- Integrity and Loyalty

5.2 The British Army Ethos

“The spirit which inspires Soldiers to fight. It derives from, and depends on, the high degree of commitment, self-sacrifice and mutual trust which together are essential to the maintenance of morale”

Army’s Values and Standards

- Courage
- Integrity
- Respect for Others
- Discipline
- Loyalty
- Selfless Commitment

5.3 The Royal Air Force Ethos

“Our distinctive character, spirit and attitude that is necessary to pull together as a team, in order to deliver air power no matter the challenges or environment. We place unit and Royal Air Force success above self and strive to be courageous in the face of adversity and risk. Sustained by strong leadership, high professional and personal standards, we are bound by a strong sense of tradition and belonging to an organization of which we are immensely proud.”

Royal Air Force Core Values

- Respect: Mutual and Self Respect,
- Integrity: Moral Courage - Honesty - Responsibility – Justice,
- Service: Physical Courage - Loyalty - Commitment – Teamwork,
- Excellence: Personal Excellence - Discipline – Pride

6. Service Life

One of the key elements that help shape Military Culture is the values and standards of the services that they live their lives by, common trends are:

Structured Life:

- Training - Unit Role, Personal, Career progression
- Routine - Service life is very structured, and usually planned well in advance
- Fitness:
 - The vast majority are fit individuals with free access to fitness
 - Ability to play most sports to the highest level including adventure sports
- Mobility:
 - Naval families are the most static, but have longer periods of deployment.
- Accommodation - In most cases service accommodation is subsidised, within the UK rent for service married accommodation is taken out of service pay leaving the individual service family responsible for any council tax and applicable service charges. However, overseas this is taken out of the service persons pay at source. For those in single living accommodation all charges are taken out of the service persons pay at source.
- Good pay:
 - A guaranteed monthly income

6.1 Service Life - Behaviour

- Clear command structure and decisive leadership
- Dependable co-worker's and management (trust and loyalty)
- Work Through: The service culture is to work through setbacks and problems, this manifests in the individual as working through injury and issues where perhaps they should seek help and assistance
- Trust: in those in Command and those who they work with
- Self-esteem: Pride in their Service and Unit (its and their) achievements
- Work-Live-Socialise with work colleagues - Within the services a social life both on and off duty is a key element of service culture. Unlike virtually every other walk of life service personnel live, work and socialise together. This is seen in the form of functions within the messes and clubs within units and vessels at sea, also when off duty service personnel will socialise within their various rank structures.
- Gallows Humour
- Welfare Support - The nature of military activity and way of Service life set Armed Forces communities apart from many areas of civilian society. The critical connection between welfare and operational effectiveness affirms that the support provided for Service personnel and their family is "core" Armed Forces business. Within the services there is a wide range of support for healthcare, spiritual needs, money concerns and all aspects of life and welfare. Welfare is a leadership responsibility and therefore a chain of command function; although each service has its own welfare organisations and structure within formations and units, all commanders at every level are responsible for the welfare and wellbeing of the service personnel they command, the lack of this level of support may be a very real issue for people when leaving the Military and venturing into the civilian world.
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- Health - All regular service personnel have free medical and dental treatment including prescriptions

7. Tri Service Resettlement

Every year approximately 22,000 personnel leave the services and return to civilian life. The vast majority of service leavers have a successful transition to civilian life and do not need additional support. However, some do experience difficulties, just like other members of society. This might happen shortly after leaving the service or many years later. In these cases, support is available, both from the Government and local authorities, statutory organisations and the third sector. The Veterans Welfare Service (VWS) is part of the Ministry of Defence's Veterans UK support function and provides one to one welfare advice across the UK.

The VWS works alongside in-service welfare providers and closely with local authorities, voluntary organisations, service charities and the Department for Work and Pensions. This ensures that those leaving the services and existing veterans and their families receive all the information and assistance they need to access the appropriate services and benefits.



Telephone: 0808 191 4218

Website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/veterans-uk>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/veterans-welfare-service>

Figure 1

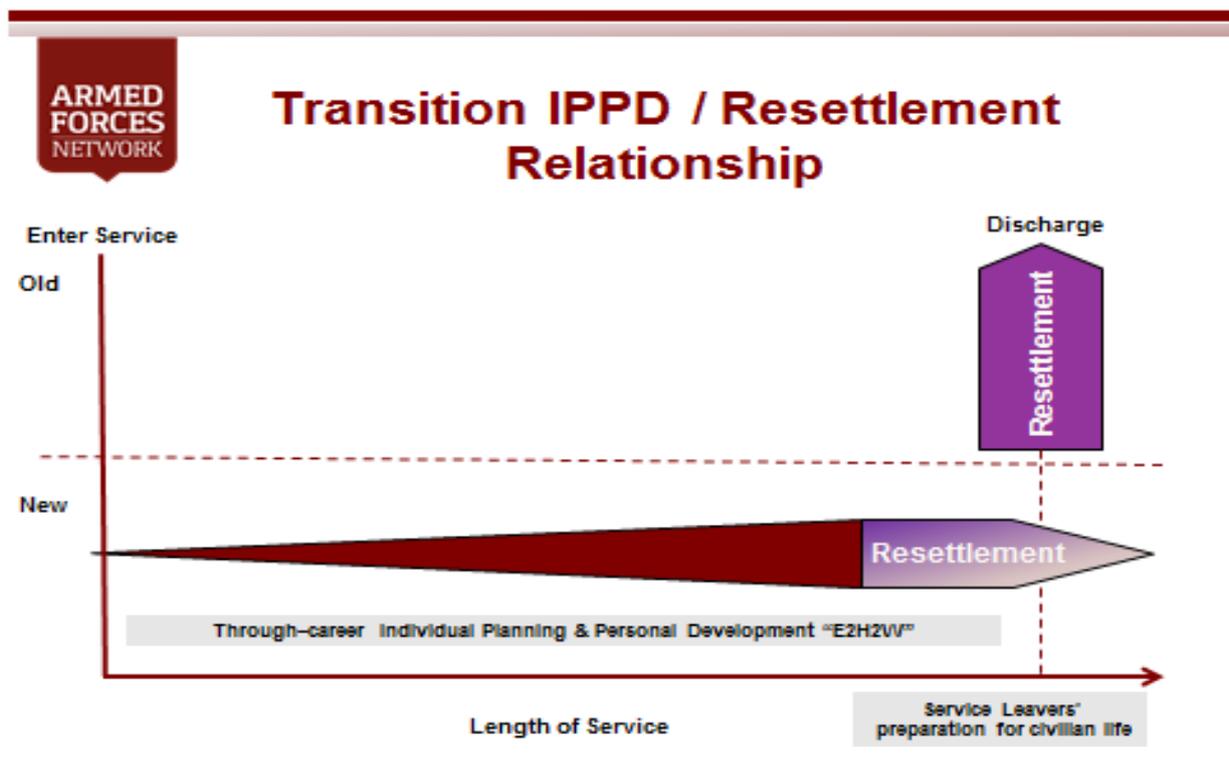


Figure 1 – this shows the old resettlement system where there was no prior preparation until Service Leavers entered their formal resettlement window. Service Leavers were then hit by a wall of activity which was daunting and often required more time than was available, whilst the resettlement grants were generous (28 days graduated resettlement time, terminal leave, enhanced learning credits, etc.) time was lost trying to work out what you wanted to do,

identify courses, juggle work commitments etc. The bottom half of the figure shows the Transition: IPPD model. Ideally by the time service leaver enters their resettlement window

They will have planned savings, possibly a house and will have gained accredited qualifications. The aim is for service leavers to “hit the ground running” by the time they enter their resettlement phase.

7.1 Individual Planning and Personal Development (IPPD)

Transition IPPD is about developing life skills and resilience in our Service Community to enable individuals to resolve own issues (where possible) prior to discharge using in-Service support. Transition covers 5 main pillars **E**mployment **E**ducation **H**ousing **H**ealth & **W**elfare (**E2H2W**)

7.2 Transition IPPD: Monitoring and Assessment

Transition IPPD is a key element of the chain of commands’ duty of care to its Personnel. It is therefore extremely keen to monitor the Transition IPPD progress being made by all Service personnel and assess their preparedness to leave the Service. This will be done using a simple tool called HARDFACTS. HARDFACTS is a check list that can be considered by the chain of command and Service personnel periodically throughout their military career and as they become Service Leavers at the end of their career. The HARDFACTS tools can be downloaded from the Transition IPPD website. It is strongly recommended that all Service personnel become familiar with these tools which are designed to complement their personal Transition IPPD and successful establishment back into civilian society.

HARDFACTS: **H**ealth and Stress, **A**ccommodation, **R**elocation, **D**rugs and Alcohol, **F**inance, **A**ttitude **C**hildren & Family, **T**raining and Education, **S**upporting Agencies

7.3 Early Service Leaver

Early Service Leavers (ESLs) are services personal who leave before completing four years of service. Service personal that are compulsorily discharged regardless of their length of service lose any entitlement to Resettlement support they may have accrued and also become ESLs. ESLs can face a challenging transition to civilian life therefore it is important that they use the support that is available to them. The Future Horizons Programme is the official resettlement service for Early Service Leavers (ESLs) which is delivered through the Career Transition Partnership on behalf of the MOD. It is designed to help ESLs find Employment, Education & Training Opportunities. It also provides specialist help on housing, health and debt according to individual needs. ESLs work with an allocated Employment Advisor to access support which remains available after discharge. More information is available at:



www.ctp.org.uk

www.ctp.org.uk/futurehorizons

7.4 Enhanced Learning Credits (ELC)

This is done by earning Enhanced Learning Credits whilst in service and they are available up to 5 years post discharge.

- Feeling of Loss and Fulfilment - A Service leaver, and to some extent their family, might feel they are losing their vocation, identity and status when leaving the Service to which they have been physically and emotionally committed. It may be perceived that civilian work lacks the same sense purpose and fulfilment that a Service career provided
- Family Support - The Service leaver may not be the only person affected by this change. The instinctive reaction of the close family is often to want to protect and look after the emotional needs of the Service leaver who may be so swept up with their own emotions and actions to recognise their family's needs.
- Adjustment - There will be a period of the whole family adjusting to new routines and new ways of doing things. The Service leaver may be at home a lot more than previously experienced. While this may be welcome, it could also present a challenge to the family routine which might cause frustration.
- Insecurity - Until a Service leaver feels established in civilian society, their life may appear uncertain and unpredictable when compared to the stability and security of life in the Services.
- Competition at Work - There may be a difference between career progression in the military and civilian employment which should be understood if the Service leaver is not to be disadvantaged. Career management in the military is undertaken by the chain of command with courses, postings and promotion largely based on annual evaluations with limited involvement from Service personnel. Competing with their peer group by excelling in their job and demonstrating potential is reflected in Mid-Year Appraisals and annual evaluations. From a Service person's perspective competition is not obvious and is largely goal-orientated based on personal pride rather than seeking personal advantage over colleagues. Trust and confidence in colleagues, mutual support and an over-riding commitment to the task is the military way.
- The Person in the Military versus The Military in the Person! - Service leavers join civilian life with unique and valuable experience, transferable skills, discipline and personal qualities which distinguish them from the civilian workforce. There is a marked difference between bringing positive military qualities into the civilian workplace and a Service leaver behaving like a soldier in a civilian work place. Some employers, industries and sectors place great value on the military demeanour whilst others may use this 'difference' to reinforce preconceived ideas about the military and view it as a potential problem or reason why a Service leaver might not fit in.

- The workplace - Service leavers have left an institution with a unique culture and ethos, values and standards, a common bond and a commitment to the cause and to colleagues which is absolute. The civilian workplace can be different where few of the characteristics of military service might be present.
- Two points stand out which may cause Service leavers frustration and disappointment; first the camaraderie with work colleagues is likely to be different with a greater focus on individual achievement and personal satisfaction. The second, which is linked to the first, is that the level of mutual support may not be so apparent and the assumption that your colleagues 'have got your back covered' may be misplaced.