Safer training

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In May 2004 I commissioned the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) to conduct an independent and searching review of the way the Armed Forces train our personnel.

I was keen that our training regime be exposed to close scrutiny and to use the findings of an inspection to build on and, if necessary, improve the way in which the Ministry of Defence (MOD) conducts its business in this critical area. I am grateful for the work of David Sherlock and the inspection teams of the ALI in undertaking this comprehensive and very detailed survey of Defence initial training.

There are many factors that have contributed to the successful performance of our Armed Forces, but the high quality of individual training and education that Service personnel undertake throughout their careers is pivotal. Young men and women who choose a Service career have every right to expect the highest standard of training and, within the constraints of a disciplined Service, should be afforded every opportunity to exploit their individual talents and skills to the benefit of Defence, as well as their own personal development.

In willingly opening up our training to the ALI’s independent oversight, we have taken a further step on the road to confirming quality performance as a fundamental goal of the Defence training organisation. The ALI has had unrestricted access to every aspect of the training environment and the statistics recording the scale of their endeavours are impressive. Such transparency is vitally important in demonstrating to the wider community that we seek to improve and I am personally convinced that independent inspection on a continuing basis is an essential part of that process. Realistically no organisation could experience such an intense scrutiny without blemish and Defence training is no exception.

I am fully committed to delivering any necessary improvements, whilst continuing to promote the best practice of MOD’s current training regime that is also highlighted in the report. An action plan will be put in place early, to take forward the recommendations under Ministerial direction. The stakes are high, in that we are preparing our young people for service in a hugely demanding environment. We would not be doing our best for them if training was not inherently robust, but we must always be alert to the experience of individuals for whom initial training is their first exposure to life away from the comfort of home. The central theme of the ALI Report is that, if we are properly to prepare our people for the unique demands of operations, then their training must be accorded the same priority. This key area will be studied against the backdrop of an environment for which there is no real comparator.

The report draws extensively on the views of trainees, parents, instructors, unit commanders, training agencies headquarters personnel and central policy staffs. It is hard hitting; I would not have expected otherwise. We have made significant progress in joining together the training effort of the three Services to exploit good practice,
but the ALI has identified inconsistencies in the application of policies and has highlighted shortcomings, which must be, and will be addressed. We need to find the balance between robust preparation for front line duties and the absolute necessity to treat our young people fairly and with due care. Our focus will be on ensuring that this is achieved.

We look forward to continuing our partnership with the ALI, to address those areas in which we are found wanting and develop further what we already do well.

The Rt Hon Adam Ingram MP
Minister of State for the Armed Forces
Preface

The Minister of State for the Armed Forces, the Rt Hon Adam Ingram, announced on 24 May 2004 the appointment of the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) to conduct an independent inspection of training establishments.

This followed a recommendation by the Surrey Police, in their report into the deaths of four young soldiers at Deepcut Barracks between 1995 and 2002, for independent oversight of the standard of care.

The ALI’s task was not to examine the events at Deepcut. The facts surrounding those tragic circumstances have been investigated by Her Majesty’s Coroners and the Surrey Police. The investigation by Nicholas Blake QC on behalf of the Ministry of Defence was in train at the time of writing. Our role was to evaluate the steps being taken to safeguard recruits in the armed forces today. In doing so, we hope to contribute to satisfying those most affected by past events, that lessons are being learned. We also hope that this report will go some way towards demystifying initial training for the benefit of future recruits and their families.

This report is the result of the most comprehensive survey of its kind ever undertaken by an independent agency. The ALI has had unhindered access to all relevant personnel, documentation, computer records and premises. We have interviewed over 4,500 recruits, amounting to half of those who were training with the armed forces at the time of inspection. We have spoken to over 2,000 staff and analysed over 450 questionnaires returned by the families of recruits. We have watched recruits in their training establishments and young soldiers in the field, in Basra, Iraq. We are grateful for their time and co-operation.

Inspectors were charged with investigating two main themes:

- The impact of initial training and the arrangements for care and welfare for recruits and their families
- The adequacy of the organisation of initial training and welfare for recruits and their families.

Many recruits are very young. Some are only 16 and away from their homes and families for the first time. But they are being trained for combat in due course. Those involved in training them must strike the right balance between taking every possible step to ensure that young people are fully prepared to survive in a war zone in a few months’ or years’ time, and taking care that they come to no immediate harm. There are sometimes difficult judgements to make.

Our approach has been to judge how well the inevitable risks are identified, managed and mitigated. It is an approach which is familiar to the armed forces, as well as to every civilian employer, and we recommend that it should be the basis on which the quality of welfare services should be judged.
In carrying out the review, inspectors considered the following questions:

- Is the welfare of recruits an intrinsic part of military training and understood to be the responsibility of everyone engaged in it?
- Are the risks to recruits analysed and managed in a consistent way, so as to mitigate them as far as possible?
- Is training in the armed forces structured in a way that promotes learning from experience, the sharing of good practice and continuous improvement?

The answer to all these questions is ‘No.’

The over-riding conclusion from our review is one of inconsistency. This exists among the three services, among establishments, and sometimes even within establishments. It exceeds anything that can be plausibly attributed to operational imperatives. The greatest areas of concern were found within the Army, but they were by no means confined to it. Training, and the care of young people undergoing that training, are not sufficiently well managed.

The phrase ‘duty of care’ formed part of the terms of reference for this survey. This phrase, almost meaningless in itself, has come to mean the provision of separate support services for young people in training. It is unhelpful to everybody concerned if welfare comes to be seen as the antithesis of effective military training. It is not. Managing the risks to recruits is the job of everyone involved in training.

A solution to most of the problems raised in this report has already been found somewhere in the armed forces. However, disconnection between the services, unnecessarily large numbers of training establishments and short-term postings, as well as weaknesses in management, all combine to inhibit a culture of continuous improvement. The fact that the risks remain high, despite the existence of identifiable remedies, relates in the end to the inferior status usually accorded to training. To improve the quality of training, as well as the welfare of recruits, this status has to change. With that change needs to come a more professional attitude to managing every aspect of a training establishment, its military, civilian and sub-contracted staff alike. Not everyone has the skills needed either to lead a training establishment or to train. They are not necessarily the same skills as those needed to succeed in combat, nor are they inferior. The combat success of the armed forces cannot, on its own, validate the quality of the training regime.

We consider that very great improvement could be accomplished in two or three years if some radical steps were to be taken to deal with this organisational dysfunction. Major structural changes are needed to improve initial training and better protect recruits. There is no shortage of goodwill in the armed forces. Nor is there an unawareness of most of the principal concerns raised in this report. Many of them have been set out in successive internal reports by the Directorate of Operational Capability since 2003 and some are being dealt with through current policy initiatives. Yet there is little evidence of systematic change and improvement, or consideration of the training and welfare regime as a whole, from top to bottom, in order to make it more coherent.
Our principal recommendations are intended to address this. We also make detailed recommendations, many of which can be embarked on now at establishment and training agency level.

This report is not the end of the ALI’s involvement with the armed forces. We have a formal agreement lasting at least four years. This study has allowed us to set a reliable baseline from which future progress can be measured. In the coming year, we will return, unannounced, to establishments where we saw things that troubled us; we will widen our reviews, ideally to include officer training; and we will assist the Ministry of Defence in carrying out our recommendations.

The goal we share with Ministers, with the armed forces, with recruits and with their families is not only safer training, but better training. We are convinced that the two things can be complementary.

David Sherlock
Chief Inspector of Adult Learning for England
March 2005
Summary

Leadership and management

The emphasis of the armed forces is on leadership rather than management. A succession of short-term postings of commanding officers to training establishments does little to promote continuous improvement. With a normal tenure of two years, commanding officers inherit the policies, practices and materials of their predecessors, with little incentive to do anything other than oversee the status quo. Few are significant budget-holders. Raising the status and reward associated with training would do much to ensure that taking responsibility for training the service-people of the future was seen by all as an honour, on a par with operational command.

There is a disconnection between strategy and practice. Decisions and policy from the top are too loosely connected to what happens on the ground. This has a marked effect on critical welfare and safety issues, including the prevention of bullying and harassment. Conversely, officers commanding establishments do not always implement the policies which do exist on these issues.

Management of training is undermined by a lack of reliable data, preventing commanding officers from gaining any rapid grasp of the problems they face or from setting verifiable targets for improvement. Figures for complaints, bullying and harassment, for example, are too low to be credible.

Where lessons have been learnt, most notably after the incidents at Deepcut, few mechanisms are in place for sharing this knowledge with other establishments or across the other armed services. This was also the case in relation to the many examples of good practice we found across all three services.

Selection and training of instructors

Instructors are usually recommended by their commanding officer rather than undergoing any formal selection procedure. Recent front-line experience is considered essential by all three services. As a result of this priority, fewer than half of all instructors receive any relevant training before taking up their posts. No checks are made on those working with over-16s for criminal records or suitability to work with young people. Some denigrate their time as an instructor as “babysitting”, while others would be pleased to stay longer than two years in order to develop good skills as trainers. Operational demand moves them on.

We considered carefully the observation often made by military personnel that there are too few staff to adequately supervise recruits. Given the ratio of staff to recruits at some establishments, it is more likely that the problem is one of inefficient deployment.

Equality of opportunity

Among senior officers there is a clear commitment to ensuring that equality of opportunity is an intrinsic part of the culture of the armed forces. This was not evident at establishment level. We found that equality and diversity were too often dismissed as ‘political correctness’, or as entailing simple compliance with legislation rather than being properly accepted as a means to ensure that the forces gain the greatest possible benefit from each recruit’s unique capabilities. The general understanding of equality of opportunity legislation, as described by service-people of all ranks to inspectors, is that it demands that everyone should be treated the same.

Comprehensive data on ethnicity, gender, nationality and religion are rarely sought or analysed. Racist taunts are often belittled in
importance by being dismissed as “banter” or excused as part of a tradition of nicknames. Inspectors heard women recruits referred to as being to blame for being harassed and as sexual predators responsible for inappropriate relationships with staff.

We conclude that this is a critical area for rapid improvement.

Recruitment

Recruitment practices were at times overzealous, contributing to the very high drop-out rate. Many recruits felt that they had been given a rosier picture of service life than they found to be the reality. They subsequently felt misled and disillusioned. Some had been recommended jobs which were inappropriate to their abilities in a misguided attempt to address specific staff shortages. A young person's initial contact with the armed forces was usually in attractive, modern careers offices, often in stark contrast to the training environment they found themselves in later. More opportunities for applicants to have a taste of service life before they commit themselves would contribute greatly to better-informed decisions.

Induction and literacy & numeracy support

All three services are aware of the need to ease the shock of moving from home life to 24-hour immersion in a new and strange environment. The care with which induction is specified and organised varies widely, however.

Many entrants to the services, and particularly to the Army, have very low levels of reading, writing, arithmetic and use of English. Induction sessions seldom diagnosed their problems with sufficient care to enable them to be addressed efficiently. The results can be very serious; for example a technician in Iraq asked for help because he was unable to read well enough to carry out his duty of making incendiary devices safe.

Contact with families

Practice also varied widely in involving families in settling in young people to a new life. Where it took place, contact with families was an important factor in alleviating recruits' homesickness, both immediately after joining and throughout initial training. We believe that the relationship with families, particularly where there is concern about the welfare of a recruit, needs to be managed with professional care and understanding, giving, if anything, a surfeit of information.

Accommodation

The circumstances in which recruits live vary widely. Some experience good accommodation and facilities which helped to assure them that they had joined an elite organisation. Others live in barracks little better than slums, with poor maintenance and cleaning making bad buildings worse. While we accept that adjusting to a more spartan environment may be necessary for anyone starting military life, some of the accommodation, particularly in Army establishments, was wholly unacceptable. Inspectors were often struck by the stark contrast between vast land holdings and poor-quality, badly maintained buildings. Current large-scale redevelopment and rationalisation plans have had the perverse effect of halting routine repairs. We agree with the Ministry of Defence view that the number and size of training establishments is no longer suitable for the relatively few entrants joining today's small, specialist armed forces.

Meals and recreation

The quality of meals was variable. Initial training is physically demanding and exhausting: the daily energy intake and dietary balance needed by recruits is similar to that needed by professional sportspeople. The last meal in the day was often in the late afternoon, leaving young people unfed for too long a period overnight. More care is needed in providing regular, appropriate nutrition. All training establishments were generally successful in preventing under-age drinking, but there was
considerable variation in establishments’ approaches to serving alcohol to over-18s. The minority of establishments which ban alcoholic drinks during initial training have shown marked improvements in behaviour and their example is worth following. Drug misuse was well controlled. Some establishments relied on bars and gaming machines as a source of money to improve recreational facilities, a practice which we consider unwise.

Support and welfare
We took particular pains to evaluate care and welfare provision and found that much has been done to improve it. Welfare staff, whether civilian or military, were strongly committed to their jobs and they were usually liked and appreciated. However, there was a clear need for better co-ordination, including shared access to more complete records, so that vulnerable young people do not slip through the net. A more professional welfare service is essential, including the general availability of skills such as counselling. Our over-arching conclusion is that welfare must not be seen as the preserve of a few allocated staff, but as the responsibility of everyone working in a training establishment.

Physical training
Improving the physical condition of recruits is a major goal of initial training. Physical education staff and facilities were invariably found to be good. Many young people arrived overweight or unfit, however, and the effort to meet the necessary standards in a short time was beyond a significant number. There are too many injuries and too many recruits leave because of unfitness. More flexibility is needed in scheduling initial training and planning each recruit’s physical regime.

Firearms
We found wide variations of approach in firearms training. To a degree, this is justified by the differing reliance each of the three services places on competence with a personal weapon. Nevertheless there was some laxity in safely storing weapons and accounting for ammunition, which we consider poses an unnecessary risk to the safety of recruits.

Bullying and harassment
The armed forces’ own data show that around three-quarters of all military personnel believe that bullying and harassment take place. Around one in ten reports having suffered it; that is, some 20,000 people across the three services. Much of this is tacitly or explicitly condoned as ‘traditional’, even though it is officially forbidden. Terms like ‘beasting’, ‘locker trashing’, ‘jailing’ and ‘tanking’ are used euphemistically to put a gloss of acceptability on activities which entail physical abuse, intimidation or humiliation. The newest recruits, women and people from minority ethnic groups are particularly vulnerable. Most bullying is done by recruits to other recruits. Group punishments carried out by staff, where several recruits suffer for the confessed or concealed misdemeanour of one, are forbidden but none the less happen. This can lead to animosity among recruits and further recriminations. Outside the armed forces bullying is regarded as gross misconduct subject to instant dismissal. We conclude that the armed forces do not carry through their avowed ‘zero-tolerance’ approach to bullying and harassment.

Complaints
The number of complaints recorded is too low to be credible. Confidential responses to the ALI from recruits’ families highlighted many cases where there were grounds for serious complaint, but few had been made. Recruits are often encouraged to reach reconciliation informally, for example through a handshake. This approach leaves victims vulnerable to continued suffering or to reprisals. The armed forces prefer complaints to be resolved at the lowest level, usually by junior non-commissioned officers. They are usually unrecorded and this lack of data results in a failure to identify problems or establishments which are ‘hotspots’ of bullying and harassment. Recent surveys of recruits’ experiences, using the independent MORI polling firm, are a promising sign.
Suicide and self-harm

Statistics show that suicide rates in the British armed forces are similar, overall, to those found in the forces of the United States and Australia, although the likelihood of suicide among men under the age of 20 in the Army is 1.7 times that of their civilian peers and several times that found in the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force. The lack of data held by establishments means that there can be no certainty whether individuals are ‘at risk’ or not. There is a clear downward trend in suicide rates in all three services, but better management of the risks is imperative.

Linking phases of training

All three services recognise the problems associated with delays between phases of training as a result of failures in planning, and are trying to reduce them. Filling these long periods with menial activity in an attempt to keep young recruits occupied can result in disillusionment and drop-out.

Leaving training

Early drop-out is very high, varying from about 15 per cent for the Royal Air Force to 47 per cent in the Royal Marines. Drop-out is frequently dismissed as inevitable, leading to complacency about addressing the root causes. Early drop-out is costly in terms of wasted money, wasted staff time and distress to young people. It should be addressed as a priority. When recruits decide to leave, in most cases, but by no means all, they are dealt with intelligently, speedily and with sensitivity.
Our recommendations for structural change are:

WE RECOMMEND that decisive action should be taken to make more attractive time spent as an instructor or leading a training establishment, and to reward it through the use of decorations, pay, promotion or other incentives valued in the armed forces. Training will never be uniformly excellent unless it is seen to be equally highly regarded and rewarded as time spent in the front line.

WE RECOMMEND that instructors should be selected through competition. Their suitability should be appraised through professionally conducted assessment centres and formal vetting for criminal records or previous misconduct with young people. They should always be trained as instructors before taking up their duties and should undertake continuous professional development and regular, formal performance appraisal thereafter. Their training should prepare them for support and welfare duties. Instructors should remain in post for longer than the two-year period usual now. The allocation should be flexed to make it possible for instructors to spend, say, three years in a training post followed by a year of operational duties. Increasing the ratio of professional trainers to people on short-term postings from front-line duty (whose task it should be to bring currency of experience without necessarily managing the training process) is for consideration.

WE RECOMMEND that commanding officers of training establishments should remain in post for more than two years, using flexibility of allocation in a similar way to that proposed for instructors. They should receive training in such generic management skills as finance, data-handling, personnel and equality and diversity before taking up their posts. Their roles should be defined more clearly and their performance assessed against objectives which include measured and continuous improvement. Commanding officers of training establishments should be given regular opportunities to work together and learn from each other, across all three services. We suggest that commanding officers of training establishments should be budget-holders, as they are already in the Royal Air Force, giving them the means to make improvements.

WE RECOMMEND that means be found to ensure more consistent implementation of the policies on training devised by the Ministry of Defence. An unbroken thread of responsibility should issue from the top, reinforced with routine checks that what is intended happens in practice. Policies also need to be ‘owned’ by those charged with implementing them, and better means need to be found to ensure that this is so. Our study shows that the armed services have much to learn from each other. Tri-service arrangements like the Director General Training and Education should be reinforced and extended.

WE RECOMMEND that the number of training establishments should be significantly reduced, in order to ensure that they are of a uniformly high standard, adequately resourced and properly staffed. The number of recruits passing through the initial phases of training each year is modest in comparison with, for example, a single further education college. The programme of rationalisation and closure established under the Defence Training Review should be accelerated, releasing funds to be reallocated to recurrent expenditure and new investment. While setting the ideal number of establishments needs further study, our survey suggests that the number in the Army, in particular, could beneficially be at least halved, while still allowing necessary distinctions to be safeguarded. The worst accommodation should be replaced now, rather than waiting for the outcome of wider rationalisation plans.

WE RECOMMEND that training and assessment in promoting equality of opportunity and
diversity should be a central element of the preparation of all training staff, military and civilian alike. Our findings suggest that, despite all efforts to date, the understanding and practices of the armed forces in relation to these matters are some years behind those of general society. Gender-, nationality- and racial-stereotyping, inappropriate language and too lax an attitude to harassment and bullying are still too widely accepted. Further effort to eliminate them is needed. Much more work is needed to establish a proper understanding that equality and diversity are practical management considerations, which could help to resolve the armed forces’ recruitment and retention problems.

WE RECOMMEND that managing the risks to recruits and safeguarding their welfare should be the duty of everyone involved in training. Our findings suggest that, while the work of those now involved in pastoral care is often of a high standard and is widely appreciated, it is unhelpful for it to be regarded as separate from other aspects of training. More specialised professional training is needed in, for example, assessment and remedial teaching of skills related to reading, writing, arithmetic and use of English; counselling; identification and support of vulnerable young people and those prone to self-harm; dealing with behavioural problems including bullying; and sexual health. A ‘one-team’ approach needs to be adopted in which the civilians involved in welfare can confidently share their perceptions and records with military training staff.

WE RECOMMEND that the involvement of families or partners, of entrants aged under 18 especially, be actively sought at every stage of recruitment and training. Our work suggests that this would pay substantial dividends in reducing early drop-out or undetected bullying. We are strongly of the view that greater sensitivity is needed in dealing with families in cases of serious injury or death among recruits. More consistent care should be taken in managing the transition back to civilian life of those who drop out during training, for whatever reason.

WE RECOMMEND that the processing and recording of complaints from recruits should be more formalised. Complaints are often dealt with at too low a level in the military hierarchy properly to reflect their seriousness. Protocols are needed to define the competency of successive ranks within the training staff to declare a complaint resolved. All complaints, whether amicably resolved or not, should be recorded and collated centrally, so that any patterns might be detected and addressed, changing the armed forces’ stance from a reactive one to one where they are able to anticipate emerging problems.

WE RECOMMEND that statistical data on all relevant aspects of the profile of applicants, entrants, those who progress and those who drop out, should be systematically collected, analysed and used for management purposes and evaluation at establishment level and centrally. These data should include those required to reveal any differentials according to gender, race, sexual orientation, faith or other factors affecting equality of opportunity. Those holding responsible positions in training should be trained in data management. Verifiable targets for improved performance in, for example, recruits’ rates of completion of training and progression, should be used to assess the performance of commanding officers and instructors.
Context

Assault course training at Army Training Regiment (ATR) Pirbright
Personnel statistics

There are just over 200,000 people in the armed forces, a figure that has remained stable for the past four years. For comparison purposes, in terms of national employment, this figure is lower than the number who work for Tesco, which has 326,000 employees. The Army accounts for more than half of the services’ personnel, with around 110,000 soldiers. The Royal Air Force has a little over 50,000 people, which broadly matches the number of employees in the Prison Service, and the Royal Navy a little under 40,000, which is close to the number of police officers in London’s Metropolitan Police Force. To maintain their numbers, the armed forces need about 25,000 new recruits each year, implying an average length of service of eight years. Some stay for only a few months and others for a whole career. Recruitment targets have been reduced for 2004-05, reflecting both the reductions planned in the Defence Training Review and difficulty in attracting suitable recruits.

Comparing annual intakes with total personnel, by service, is instructive as it shows the average length of retention. In the Royal Navy, an annual intake of about 5,000 is needed to sustain a workforce of 40,000, coinciding with the implied all-services average of eight years. In the Army, the corresponding figures are 15,000 and 110,000, implying an average retention of just over seven years. In the Royal Air Force, just over 4,000 recruits suffice to sustain a workforce of over 50,000, implying an average career of around 13 years. Retirement ages in the Royal Air Force are often higher than in the other two services.

In the Army, more than a third of all entrants drop out during the initial training period. That proportion represents between 5,000 and 6,000 of the 15,000 who entered. Informal estimates by senior officers suggest that it costs about £5,000 for the recruitment and initial training of each recruit. If that is so, the Army wastes about £30 million a year through early drop-out. These figures are speculative, both because of an absence of verified cost data and the many inconsistencies between the same personnel data from different sources. In the Royal Air Force, training drop-out is about half that in the Army, at about one in six. The Royal Navy falls in between, with about one recruit in five withdrawing. The Royal Marines have the highest drop-out rates.

The Ministry of Defence

The armed forces are funded and their policies set by the Ministry of Defence. It is headed by a cabinet minister, the Secretary of State for Defence, who is aided by three ministers as well as two under-secretaries. The Ministry has some 82,000 civilian staff spread throughout the United Kingdom.

The routine work of the military is the responsibility of six senior officers who hold elements of the armed forces’ budget. Three of them command operations on land, sea and air, respectively. The other three are responsible for all personnel matters, including training and welfare. They are the Adjutant General (Army), the Second Sea Lord (Royal Navy) and the Air Member for Personnel (Royal Air Force). Most training is the responsibility of three agencies: the Army Training and Recruiting Agency; the Naval Recruiting and Training Agency; and the Training Group Defence Agency (Royal Air Force). In addition there are specialist training agencies for disciplines like medicine and intelligence.

There are also central departments that influence training. Amport House is a training centre for chaplains which also delivers welfare training. There is an equal opportunities training and policy division in the Ministry. Training for equal opportunities advisers is carried out at Shrivenham in Wiltshire. This establishment publishes policies on equality of opportunity in the form of Defence Council Instructions, which all units are then required to follow. The various chains of command add their own requirements. Central edicts are issued on such things as the military interpretation of European working hours legislation and disability discrimination legislation.

A decade of delegation of responsibility for training to single services has been modified by the recent introduction of the Director General
Training and Education, based at the Ministry of Defence. The Director General has responsibility for developing and overseeing the implementation of policy and for finding opportunities for tri-service rationalisation. Nevertheless, the agencies continue to hold immediate responsibility for quality and the training budgets. The Defence Training Review proposes that some of the current training establishments be streamlined into six ‘Defence Colleges’, to enable a reduction in the number of establishments and greater investment in those which remain. Each of these colleges will deliver an area of work such as aircraft engineering or communications across all three services. The final aspiration is clear but for the time being, how it will be realised is still to be resolved.

Training establishments

Military training takes place at over 40 establishments throughout Britain, with a substantial majority in southern England. Some are in parts of the country which when they were first opened were rural, for example near London and in the Home Counties where the value of land and accommodation is now very high.

The Royal Navy has seven training establishments, with initial training concentrated in two, HMS Raleigh near Plymouth and HMS Collingwood near Portsmouth.

The Royal Marines have one establishment, at Lympstone in Devon, where officers and other ranks train together.

The Royal Air Force has nine training sites, with initial training concentrated at:

- Halton near Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire
- Honington near Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk
- Shawbury in Shropshire
- St Athan near Barry in Wales.

The Army has over 20 establishments, with initial training concentrated at:

- Bassingbourn in Hertfordshire
- Blandford and Bovington in Dorset
- Catterick and Harrogate in North Yorkshire
- Larkhill in Wiltshire
- Leconfield in East Yorkshire
- Lichfield in Staffordshire
- Pirbright, Deepcut (Princess Royal Barracks and St Omer Barracks) and Minley in Surrey
- Winchester in Hampshire

In addition, there are a small number of defence-wide training establishments, notably HMS Sultan in Gosport, Arborfield near Reading, and the Royal Air Force base at Cosford in Wolverhampton, all of which play an important part in initial training. Further complexity is added by specialist training establishments dealing with everything from hydrography to music, officer training, catering, animal handling and medicine.

These bases vary in size from 200 recruits to 2,000. It is apparent that they are a costly throwback to a time when the armed forces were much larger and even more separate than they are today.

Initial training

Initial training is divided into two ‘phases’. Phase 1 covers a general introduction to military life. It lasts 12 weeks in the Army (except at Bassingbourn where 17 weeks is normal, Catterick where a combined phase 1 and phase 2 course lasts 24 weeks and Harrogate, where phase 1 training lasts a year) and eight weeks in the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force (except at Honington, where recruits receive 18 weeks’ training and Halton where the course lasts nine weeks). Phase 2 covers technical and professional training and varies in length according to the complexity of the skills to be mastered. At Lympstone, phase 1 and phase 2 training are combined in a 32-week course.
The training and education process

Figure 1 presents training and education as a continuous flow through a service career. In practice, military life consists of two-year home postings punctuated by episodes of front-line service. During home postings, military personnel are prepared for the next period of service in the field or at sea. Recruits sometimes experience gaps between the end of phase 1 and the start of a suitable phase 2 opportunity. Young people in one of these gaps are known in the Army as ‘soldiers awaiting trade training’, or SATTs. The anti-climax after the intensity of phase 1 training, the boredom and tendency to be given menial jobs to fill time which would otherwise be aimless, are acknowledged to make time spent as SATTs particularly undesirable. Attempts have accelerated in recent years to eliminate gaps between phases and these are bringing some success.

Figure 1: The individual training and education process

Whole-life development

- Education, including:
  - basic and fundamental ICT skills
  - Modern Apprenticeships
  - Foundation degrees
  - Postgraduate education

- Accredited training undertaken through career and beyond including resettlement

Selection process

Initial training

- PHASE 1
  - Initial training on entry

- PHASE 2
  - Initial specialist training

First employment

PHASE 3 training

- Individual professional/career development training undertaken, as required, throughout service career

Resettlement training and advice before leaving the service
Differences between the services

The three armed services have evolved in somewhat different ways in recent years. While ‘tri-service’ initiatives – where army, navy and air force work together – have become more common, distinct traditions remain. The Royal Navy has always been a single service, with habits of centralised control extending back to the late seventeenth century. Technological change has led to a comparable degree of homogeneity in the Royal Air Force. In the Army, the adherence to ‘cap badge’ remains firm. These differences bring complexity to the otherwise commonplace observation that ‘everyone is a soldier in the end.’ An Army officer might base this thought on the necessity for everyone to be able to use personal weapons in close combat, whatever their day-to-day specialised trade. A similar phrase from a naval officer would probably allow for a more differentiated picture of the many skills required to operate a warship in action, only a minority of which would be directly connected with its armaments and none with personal firearms. Much the same would apply to the Royal Air Force.

These differences are not just matters of habit or sentiment. They relate, in the end, to the challenge of maintaining group cohesion. The fact that most sailors or air force personnel fight as a team inside machines, using a variety of technical skills, whereas the infantry unit, at least, consists of a group of people with much the same skills working separately but to a common purpose, places differing requirements on their training. Regimental loyalty in the Army is used to foster teamwork and a sense of distinctiveness.

Many implications for training flow from these ideas. First, recruits to the three services are trained separately, in order to consolidate their allegiances, regardless of whether the content of initial training is similar for all. Second, the Army maintains many small training establishments, increasing difficulties of consistency, efficiency, control and buildings maintenance while the other two services have rationalised their training establishments and gained significant advantages from so doing. Third, stamina are issues for all three services, strength is emphasised by the Army and the Royal Marines. Acquiring high levels of strength calls for steady and incremental physical conditioning. Without this investment of time there is a danger of temporary or permanent loss of recruits through, for example, lower limb stress fractures caused by carrying excessive loads. A culture which values physical strength arguably finds it difficult to find a place for women appropriate to their potential contribution, and exalts ‘hardness’ in a manner which can promote bullying. These are complicated issues which the armed forces are working through.

Pressures for change

The need for constant re-evaluation is imposed by changes in the nature of military roles in general, in combat and in warfare. The direction of change, in broad terms, is towards relatively brief outbreaks of combat, often against irregular troops, followed by more extended periods of peace enforcement; towards the more sensitively modulated use of force which the subtleties of these transitions demand; and towards the use of technologically more complex and more deadly weapons systems.

As in the world of work more generally, the armed forces have a place for fewer and fewer recruits without good literacy and numeracy, and without the capacity to master advanced skills. Recruits who meet these requirements and are willing to enter the Army, in particular, are hard to find.

A less compliant society and more inquisitive press and broadcasting media also place greater pressures on the armed forces for accountability. This is often uncomfortable where the need for operational secrecy is deeply ingrained. Groups of people who are separated from their fellow citizens by wearing uniform, by living and working apart in secure premises, by carrying out uniquely dangerous and disagreeable tasks, often react guardedly to what they perceive to be inappropriate demands for openness.

Two challenges arising from the gap between society in general and the armed forces are
potentially significant in this review. First, there is an obvious need to reverse the natural response to external pressure and to become more open to public interest; more transparent. Second, many studies have demonstrated that tensions arise from the widening difference between increasingly peaceful civilian life and service in a war zone. Recruits’ expectations of their treatment follow the same trajectory: they are ill prepared for what they see as verbal or physical abuse, poor living conditions or harsh treatment which appears in any way gratuitous. Tracking societal change is becoming more and more necessary, if training is to be efficient and appropriate. An urgency to prepare recruits properly for front-line service can easily be misinterpreted as brutality. Dealing with the necessary transition in the modern world may require changing the desired end-product, or the speed with which this product is shaped.

The level of care which has to be exercised over the safety of recruits is rising. Families and the public are no longer willing to accept, without question, that military training is dangerous and entails the injury or untimely death of young people, unless the risks have more obviously been considered, explained, managed and mitigated.
The training day

There is no such thing as a standard day’s training. The routines vary according to each service, how far each recruit has progressed and their specialism. Be that as it may, figure 2 shows a day which many recruits would regard as typical.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Background</th>
<th>What they said</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>06:00 hours</td>
<td>Recruits are woken by their duty corporal</td>
<td>Accommodation is dormitory style, with often 12 to a room or up to 30 in the Royal Navy.</td>
<td>‘This is the first time some recruits discover there are two 5.30s in a day.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‘I’ve never been as tired as this.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06:00-06:30</td>
<td>Wash and get dressed, ready to march to mess hall</td>
<td>Recruits wear uniforms most of the day.</td>
<td>‘The accommodation is cold, there are not enough showers and the toilet flooded.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06:30-07:15</td>
<td>Breakfast After breakfast march back to accommodation, led by senior man or woman in the group.</td>
<td>Meals are provided. Recruits can get additional food at the shop or coffee bar. Breakfast is later at weekends.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06:30-07:45</td>
<td>Prepare for inspection of kit and accommodation</td>
<td>Supervised by the troop staff. Uniform must be clean and pressed. Recruits are responsible for cleaning the accommodation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07:00</td>
<td>Sick parade</td>
<td>Recruits who feel unwell or have an injury report sick to the medical centre.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08:00-08:15</td>
<td>Inspection of kit by troop sergeant</td>
<td>Each recruit stands to attention by their bed, with their kit displayed. Sergeant emphasises standards needed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>If kit is not up to standard recruits receive additional training.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08:30-12:30</td>
<td>Training from instructors Medical checks Collecting kit</td>
<td>Training includes:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• military history</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• weapons training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• drill</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• physical exercise</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• NVQ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• beliefs and values</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• progress reviews</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:30-14:00</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>When training away from the barracks, recruits will have packed meals.</td>
<td>‘The chocolate custard at St Omer is great.’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This is a strict and demanding regime which is intended to change lives. Nevertheless, most young people take to it readily, and many, happily. A member of staff at Deepcut told the ALI, ‘The raw material now is better than it used to be, though the things they get up to these days are no different from 25 years ago.’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Background</th>
<th>What they said</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14:00-17:00</td>
<td>Training</td>
<td>Training places include: • classroom • gymnasium • parade ground • surrounding countryside • firing range • assault course overnight and outside e.g Dartmoor</td>
<td>‘Now I have completed phase 1, I feel like I have achieved something.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16:30-17:30</td>
<td>Evening meal</td>
<td>Meal times vary at establishments. Some units provide a fourth meal in the form of a high energy bar.</td>
<td>‘There’s not enough time to meet your mates and relax.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18:00-20:00</td>
<td>Homework</td>
<td>Recruits can change into tracksuits.</td>
<td>‘It’s good we can ring home especially when we feel homesick’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Additional training from staff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group meetings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Homework</td>
<td>Recruits carefully prepare their uniform and kit for the morning inspection.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personal time:</td>
<td>Recruits may attend hobbies and sporting sessions if available and they have time.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Phone home</td>
<td>Alcohol is not permitted for under-18s and some units have no alcohol.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Go to the coffee bar or shop</td>
<td>Recruits must march and salute their senior staff as they move about the unit.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do laundry</td>
<td>Recruits cannot leave the unit in the evening or at weekends until week 6, provided they have successfully passed testing.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23:00-06:00</td>
<td>Lights out</td>
<td>Duty corporal checks accommodation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recruits are expected to sleep.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Of their days, recruits said this to inspectors:

### SLEEPING
- ‘The beds are too small. My feet hang over the end.’  *HMS Raleigh*
- ‘I’ve never been as tired as this.’  *Royal Marines: Lympstone*
- ‘There’s not enough time for sleep.’  *ATR Winchester*
- The sleeping bags are excellent; you get better kip on exercise.’  *ATR Winchester*

### LIVING
- ‘The accommodation is awful. The ablutions stink.’  *Deepcut (St Omer)*
- ‘The accommodation is good.’  *HMS Collingwood*
- ‘Why do we have to clean our accommodation twice a day? Our time could be better spent.’  *HMS Sultan*
- ‘It’s a lovely place.’  *RAF Shawbury*
- ‘The accommodation’s bad. It’s cold, not enough showers and the toilets are flooded.’  *ATR Bassingbourn*

### EATING
- ‘There’s enough food, but the quality isn’t that great.’  *SEAE Arborfield*
- ‘I like the food here. The chocolate custard is great! It should be on every day.’  *Deepcut (St Omer)*
- ‘The evening meal’s too early.’  *RAF St Athan*
- ‘I can only eat chips and gravy. I’m not used to all the other stuff.’  *HMS Raleigh*
- ‘The food’s awful.’  *ATR Bassingbourn*
- ‘Why do we have to suffer plastic knives and forks; don’t they trust us?’  *ITC Catterick*
- ‘I hate paying for food that’s no good.’  *HMS Sultan*

### LEARNING
- ‘There’s too much to learn in too short a time.’  *HMS Collingwood*
- There are too many exams.’  *HMS Sultan*
- ‘The course is OK. The worst thing for me is having to keep doing my boots for parades!’  *ITC Catterick*
- ‘I like the extra help with maths.’  *RAF St Athan*
- ‘I get extra help if I’m struggling.’  *HMS Sultan*

### PHYSICAL TRAINING
- ‘It’s the first time I could fit in a size 10 dress. Yippee!’  *ATR Winchester*
- ‘They make you run on pure adrenalin.’  *ITC Catterick*
- ‘I knew it was going to be tough, but not this tough.’  *Royal Marines: Lympstone*
- ‘The new PT programme’s excellent. You get told a lot about what’s good to eat, how to look after yourself and keep fit.’  *SEAE Arborfield*
- ‘It’s great, getting fit.’  *RAF Halton*
- ‘We should have more upper body strength training.’  *RAF Honington*
- ‘The adventure training’s good. It gets you away and gives you a buzz.’  *RAF Honington*
### WELFARE

- ‘I’d like more opportunities to go home.’ **RAF Halton**
- ‘Our section commander is great; any problems at home or on camp and he’ll help you sort it out.’ **SEAE Arborfield**
- ‘I would use the padre instead of the divisional officer if I had a problem.’ **HMS Collingwood**
- ‘You can talk to your corporal about problems but the padre is better.’ **RAF Honington**
- ‘The padre’s a good laugh!’ **RAF Shawbury**
- ‘It’s good we can ring home when we’re homesick.’ **ATR Lichfield**
- ‘Racism here is no worse than civvy street.’ **ITC Catterick**

### RECREATION

- ‘There’s not enough time to meet your mates and relax.’ **ATR Lichfield**
- ‘The course is very tightly packed.’ **RAF Halton**
- ‘There’s not enough to do after hours.’ **HMS Collingwood**
- ‘The drinks in the bar are so cheap!’ **RAF Shawbury**
- ‘Where else can you have so much fun and get paid for it?’ **HMS Raleigh**
- ‘I like the chance to play rugby at weekends.’ **RAF St Athan**

### DISCIPLINE

- ‘They treat us according to the way we behave: do well and we get praise; do badly or mess about and we get extra work.’ **ATR Lichfield**
- ‘I like the discipline. It’s firm and fair.’ **RAF Halton**
- ‘I like the balance between respect and discipline. We get respect here. I don’t recognise this place from what’s on TV and in the papers. I have no gripes.’ **Deepcut (Princess Royal)**
- ‘I think the punishments are used fairly.’ **Royal Marines: Lympstone**

### MEETING EXPECTATIONS

- ‘They make the Army look more glamorous than it is. They told me lies at the recruiting centre.’ **ITC Catterick**
- ‘I’m scared about ship duty. I’m planning to leave before then.’ **HMS Collingwood**
- ‘I got wrong information from the recruiting office.’ **RAF St Athan**
- ‘I’m paid to work. I want to work. I don’t like doing nothing.’ **HMS Sultan**
- ‘It’s not as strict as I thought.’ **ATR Lichfield**
- ‘Raleigh is great. It’s the best thing I ever did; join up.’ **HMS Raleigh**
- ‘I love Army life. It really suits me.’ **Deepcut (Princess Royal)**
Evidence

This report is based on the most comprehensive evidence ever assembled on this topic. The ALI programme consisted of 24 inspections of training establishments, lasting about a week at a time. Seven of these inspections, at HMS Raleigh, HMS Collingwood, RAF Halton and the Army establishments at Catterick, Deepcut, Minley and Pirbright, were unannounced. Of these seven, those to RAF Halton, HMS Raleigh, Deepcut and Catterick were return visits. All phase 1 training establishments were inspected, most of phase 2 and a selection of phase 3. In addition, inspectors visited, among others:

- the training agencies of all three services
- seven armed services careers offices
- the police of all three services and the Ministry of Defence
- the Shaibah Logistics Base in Basra, Iraq
- the Black Watch and Royal Tank regiments after their return from Iraq to the United Kingdom.

A full list is included at Appendix 1.

We have placed a great deal of emphasis on interviewing recruits, alone or in small groups, without military staff present. In total, inspectors interviewed 4,764 recruits. To gather the views of families, we interviewed 233 parents and analysed 453 questionnaires completed by parents of recruits aged under 18. We also sought the views of training staff, interviewing 2,191 of them. We observed 353 training sessions or welfare support sessions, carried out by military and civilian staff. We spoke, by telephone, with 30 former recruits who had dropped out.

We made a point of observing, meeting and interviewing recruits throughout their days, including at weekends, in four establishments. We were there:

- at breakfast
- during room and kit inspections
- on the firing range
- during classroom lessons
- during guard duties
- during overnight exercises in the field
- in accommodation blocks
- in mess halls
- in the social areas
- in the learning centres
- at internet centres
- during sports activities
- while recruits did their laundry
- at curfew time
- in rehabilitation units
- in the medical centres
- after midnight, during bed-check routines.

We took photographs as we observed these activities. All the photographs used to illustrate points in this report were taken by inspectors.

To complement this direct evidence, we read extensively, including the many policy and survey documents produced by the armed forces and the Ministry of Defence, the proceedings of the Defence Select Committee of the House of Commons, and papers produced by the Surrey Police and others on the deaths at Deepcut. The inspection team included a serving police officer attached to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, who is also an associate inspector for the ALI, who had close liaison with the Surrey Police and who has expertise in the proper use of firearms. Two inspectors from the Commission for Social Care Inspection joined the team for a number of visits. The ALI's team consisted of 10 very experienced inspectors from a range of professional disciplines, including sports science, physical education, social care, management and basic skills; some had been senior military officers. In addition, we employed 13 ALI associate inspectors, who had additional training for this survey. They brought further breadth of professional background, including experience of the armed forces.

To give further assurance that recruits felt able to talk openly, ALI posters were put up at every training establishment, giving the number of a confidential contact line to inspectors. We also provided an ALI website for concerns and complaints. Nobody can be completely confident that they have an accurate impression of circumstances as complex as those in the armed forces. Having said that, our experience leads us to be sure that we have achieved a high degree of certainty and that our findings are reliable.
Terminology
The terminology in this report is our own but seeks to offer clarity to a general readership. In naming training establishments, we describe Army bases only by location, whereas those in the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force are designated by the service and location. For simplicity, we refer to all young people in training as ‘recruits’ whatever phase of training they are in.

We have tried to avoid using jargon. It is inevitable, however, that some words and phrases have been used which require interpretation for a wider audience. We have tried to do this in the text where possible, but a few terms require explanation outside the body of the report.

Basic skills for instance, can be defined as the ability to read, write and speak in English, and to use mathematics, at a level that enables a person to function and progress at work and in everyday life. Within basic skills, the terms literacy and numeracy are commonly used. In terms of adult learning, literacy broadly means the ability to speak, listen and respond; to read and understand; and to write well enough to communicate. Numeracy covers the ability to understand, calculate and use mathematical information, and interpret the results.

Gender-free and gender-fair are used to describe policies related to the physical training of women in the armed forces. In a gender-fair regime, women are set training goals appropriate to their physique. A gender-free approach applies the same performance criteria to women as to men.

The empowered officer’s role is to listen objectively to serious concerns that recruits may have. The role is independent of the chain of command and they are empowered to raise recruits’ concerns directly with the commanding officer of the training establishment.
Findings

Radio School recruits in her room at RAF Cosford
Leadership and management

Military training is led rather than managed. Individual functions and units are commanded, for short periods, within general policy guidelines. The variety of result broadly corresponds with the competence and drive of the commanding officer. The Surrey Police summary report on past events at Deepcut, published in March 2004, showed clearly that lessons learnt during the period 1995-2002 were neither sustained at Deepcut nor shared across the Army and the other armed services. This failure to secure incremental progress over periods beyond that of a single commanding officer’s posting, is a management weakness. While some progress has been made, notably by establishing the tri-service Director General Training and Education, developments in the armed forces tend to be driven by policy statements overseen by committees, layered according to the seniority of their members, rather than by individuals and small teams which are personally accountable for achieving defined results. In other words, the training regime is led by a complex bureaucracy and carried out by people more used to immediate action than steady improvement. It is not a recipe for developing a vision shared throughout the system and supported by an agreed level of commitment to achieving it.

A vital force in enabling managers to direct progress is the easy availability of reliable data. Individual officers and establishments have recognised deficiencies in this area. At RAF Shawbury, a Royal Air Force officer collects data on the prior academic achievements of those who fail to qualify as flight operations assistants and has shown a clear correlation between low literacy and numeracy and a likelihood of failure. At RAF Halton, data on each intake of recruits are collected and reviewed by officers and training teams to identify successes, failures and risks. The new quarterly tri-service training questionnaire, introduced only in November 2004, is being used to shape training at the Royal School of Military Engineering at Minley, but elsewhere, for example at Bassingbourn and HMS Collingwood, there is no impact so far. At HMS Collingwood, data produced for the Learning & Skills Council on recruits funded by them to undertake national vocational qualifications were not correlated with those related to phase 2 recruits more generally, missing opportunities to reduce bureaucracy as well as improve performance. Records of individual recruits are not retained after that person moves on. The data collected by establishments often omit analysis by gender, ethnicity or learning ability, and records are not kept of those who are given help with their literacy or numeracy. Performance data are seldom cross-referenced with information from welfare staff. Data on injuries are not routinely collected or analysed by rehabilitation teams, so that the reasons for harm might be identified and eliminated. Establishments collect data and send them to the central training agencies, regarding this as sufficient to obviate the need for their own data analysis and management. Little analysis, in fact, returns to establishments, which usually continue as they are, assuming that they would have been told of any disturbing trends.

Data requested by inspectors from central agencies often varied from those produced by the individual establishments and took some time to be assembled. They contained many gaps, where information is not held; for example neither the Royal Navy nor the Army was able to produce data relating to entrants from minority ethnic groups, such as their rate of early discharge for medical or other reasons or their vulnerability to harassment or bullying. The Army has only started to collect total annual figures for complaints on a standardised basis since January 2005, so that there are nil returns for all years to date. Data on the incidence of bullying and harassment were available only for phase 1 recruits and are recorded as 49 and 100 for the years 2002-03 and 2003-04 respectively. Given the outcomes of attitude surveys conducted by the armed forces and set out elsewhere in this review (see page 44), to the effect that around three-quarters of military personnel believe that there is bullying and harassment, these statistics are not credible.

The armed forces are under particularly intense pressure to demonstrate a high level of care for recruits aged under 18. Again, Army summary
We recommend consideration of the management techniques normally found in civilian training, including the creation of ‘data-rich’ management environments and the assignment of personal responsibility to commanding officers for achieving measurable goals.

We recommend longer postings to training establishments for commanding officers.

We recommend more tri-service initiatives, learning from each other wherever it is relevant to do so.

We recommend active steps to raise the status of training, through the use of rewards, including access to promotion.

Findings

Data on under-18s are largely unavailable, including the number recruited. Inspectors were able to infer the proportion of early withdrawals among under-18s by assembling information from a number of sources. The results are disturbing, showing the proportion who drop out during phase 1 training at 43 per cent in the Army, 44 per cent in the Royal Navy, 19 per cent in the Royal Marines (combined phase 1 and phase 2) and 27 per cent in the Royal Air Force. Both the differences between the three services and between under- and over-18s warrant careful analysis, as do discrepancies between the records of individual establishments and national averages, and between sections within establishments.

Early drop-out is costly in terms of wasted money, wasted staff time and distress to young people. It can be attributed to a variety of causes including inappropriate careers advice, insufficient physical fitness, failure to meet the standards set in training, unrealistic expectations on the part of the recruit, injury or ill-treatment. Good data management is vital in determining which of these was the cause. It is also vital to the improvement of efficiency, of equality of opportunity and as a means to help identify and eliminate harassment and bullying.

Selection and training of instructors

Instructors are usually recommended for this duty by their commanding officers after annual appraisal has suggested they might be suitable. All three services believe that only those with recent front-line experience are credible for appointment as instructors. The Royal School of Engineering at Minley bases its selection on a competitive application and interview process, as does the Royal Air Force base at Cosford for its training development co-ordinator posts. With the exception of those chosen to work with under-16s, such as the Army Youth Team, no checks are made for criminal records or suitability to work with young people. By contrast, civilian instructors, who vary in number from very few in phase 1 training to sometimes one-third of the total during phase 2, are subject to open recruitment and formal selection. Most are ex-servicemen themselves.

The result of these procedures is an instructional workforce which varies widely in attitude and competence. The better instructors describe training as ‘an important and worthwhile job’; they are praised by recruits for maintaining an appropriate balance between discipline and support, as well as for their knowledge and experience. Many told inspectors that they wished they could stay for longer than the average period of two years. At worst, some staff we interviewed resented being posted away from opportunities to distinguish themselves in the front line. They were not interested in the job and some brought destructive attitudes to it, including an inclination to repeat bad experiences they, themselves, had suffered as recruits. Some of these people were involved in fulfilling the services’ duty of care for recruits, which they derided as ‘babysitting’. It is possible for people who are unsuitable in terms of their attitudes, skills and, very occasionally, perverse interest in vulnerable young people, to be posted as instructors without adequate safeguards.

Fewer than half of all instructors are trained to do the job before they start. Of the 170 non-
commissioned officers brought in to improve care of recruits following the recommendations of the Director of Operational Capability, many came almost straight from front-line duty. The Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force made pre-posting training mandatory for instructors in April 2004. Nevertheless, instructors who have yet to be trained remain. The Army continues to see training in advance for instructors as an aspiration. The lack of pre-posting training means that new instructors often learn bad habits before being taught better. For example, at Lichfield Instructor School, some believed in the effectiveness of group punishments, which are specifically deplored by the Army.

The instructor training process itself varies among the three services. The Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force predominantly send instructors to the new Defence Centre for Training Support, which offers courses of up to three weeks, of which two days are devoted to learning how to care for recruits. The Army has training centres with different specialisms at Lichfield, Catterick and Leconfield. There is a specialist course for Royal Marines instructors at Lympstone, which emphasises coaching and leadership. The Army does not require instructors to take part in the two-day Care of Trainees course. There is no planned programme of continuous professional development for instructors and, if there was, instructors’ short postings would preclude a steady growth of their skills.

In these circumstances, inspectors were not surprised that training skills often seemed to be lacking. The focus of this study was on welfare rather than training, and only a small number of training sessions were observed. In those that were seen, teaching was frequently unsophisticated. Unfamiliarity with the use of visual aids, excessive use of formal presentation and too little opportunity for discussion to deal with questions, explore the application of new information and to check that everyone understood, were common. Half the training sessions observed at Lichfield, for example, were unsatisfactory. The benefits of a better-planned approach are plain to be seen. The Care of Trainees course for instructors is very well taught, with actors illustrating the circumstances instructors might encounter. Not only are instructors better prepared as a result, but they learn the value of vivid presentation from their own experience.

Much has been made of allegedly inadequate ‘supervisory ratios’: too few instructors to ensure that recruits are properly looked after. Commanding officers carry out a risk assessment to decide supervisory ratios. We found examples where, particularly outside normal working hours, there were, indeed, very few staff on duty. The ALI inspection team collected figures for the total number of staff, the number of training staff and the number of recruits present, for each establishment. These data were provided by establishments themselves and, in some cases, the training agency for the service concerned, either as verification or as the only source of statistics.
We recommend competitive selection for instructor postings, including vetting and testing to ensure suitability.

We recommend mandatory training for instructors before they take up their posts.

We recommend achieving full value from these investments by retaining able instructors in training roles for longer, giving them opportunities for continuous professional development and qualifications, and rewarding them for achievement.

We recommend the use of formal appraisals for instructors, against objectives which centre on high retention and achievement among the recruits for whom each one is responsible.

We recommend that the armed forces review the efficiency of staff deployment at training establishments.

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**TABLE 1.** Total staff, training staff and recruits at each establishment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Establishment</th>
<th>Total staff</th>
<th>Training staff</th>
<th>Total recruits on site</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lichfield</td>
<td>252*</td>
<td>242*</td>
<td>326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winchester</td>
<td>251*</td>
<td>170*</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAF Halton</td>
<td>951*</td>
<td>459*</td>
<td>953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catterick</td>
<td>1630</td>
<td>481</td>
<td>1343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAF Shawbury</td>
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<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>HMS Raleigh</td>
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<td>305</td>
<td>453</td>
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<tr>
<td>RAF Honington</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>34</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>86</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bovington</td>
<td>1214</td>
<td>45 (phase 2 only)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pirbright</td>
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<td>291</td>
<td>891</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harrogate</td>
<td>573*</td>
<td>280*</td>
<td>1202</td>
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**Note:** The figures in this table have been provided by the individual establishments and the training agencies. An asterisk (*) indicates that there was a substantial difference between the figures provided from these different sources; in these cases the figures provided by the establishments have been used.

In almost every case, the number of training staff, as well as the overall number of staff, appears generous in relation to the number of recruits. It has to be borne in mind that these are 24-hour-a-day establishments. Nevertheless, the armed forces should consider whether apparent staff shortages are, in fact, the results of inefficient deployment rather than understaffing.
Equality of opportunity

At a policy level, the armed forces are committed to equality of opportunity. They have a wide range of documentation and have been publicly recognised for its quality. Nevertheless, equality of opportunity and diversity are too often dismissed in the armed forces as ‘political correctness’, or as simple compliance with legislation, rather than being more properly accepted as means to ensure that the services gain the greatest possible benefit from each recruit’s capabilities. Some establishments even fail their own service’s ‘compliance’ test. Every training establishment is supposed to have an up-to-date equal opportunities policy but not all do. Each service’s training agency offers guidance on these policies but it is not always reflected in local implementation plans.

Officers receive annual training sessions in fostering equality of opportunity. Following recommendations in the January 2003 report of the Director of Operational Capability, all recruits are given equal opportunities training during their induction. Booklets on equality are distributed to all recruits, but many are thrown away. The quality of training in equality of opportunity, for both instructors and recruits, varies widely from establishment to establishment and, at worst, fails to challenge or change inappropriate attitudes and behaviour.

The knowledge and level of commitment of each establishment’s equal opportunities officer often determines the quality of recruits’ training in this area. Some establishments have yet to appoint an equal opportunities officer. The use of the term ‘coloureds’ and a pin-up on one equal opportunities officer’s door suggest that, for some, this duty is not taken seriously and that their laxity will be taken as an example by young recruits. Training for recruits normally includes an introduction to current legislation, although at Deepcut it made no reference to discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or religious belief. Recruits are also told how to make a complaint.

Initiatives such as that at the Royal Marines’ School of Music, where equality training is entrusted to the chaplain, while well-meaning, give an impression that it lies outside the responsibility of those in the direct chain of command. The message that equality of opportunity is of peripheral importance is clearly conveyed by staff who judge ethnicity by skin colour; by officers who swear at recruits and seek deliberately to humiliate them; and by behaviour that demeans women, for example by displaying posters and computer screensavers of pin-ups. An officer who asked his female colleague if she objected to these images was surprised when she replied that she did.

The general understanding of equality of opportunity, as described by service-people of all ranks to inspectors, is that it demands that everyone should be treated the same. This misapprehension leads, for example, to women being made to carry the same packs as men, with no allowance made for differences of build or strength, with the result that they are 14 times more likely than men to suffer stress fractures in their legs. The same problem afflicts the youngest recruits whose bones are not yet fully mature. There are examples of the sensible exercise of discretion in this matter, for example at RAF Halton where women are given individual attention, and at Lympstone, where the Royal Marines’ training programme was revised following high rates of injury.

The emphasis placed on physical strength in many Army roles, especially that of the infantryman, can lead to the perception that the role of women in the Army is of less importance than that of men. Inspectors often heard women recruits referred to as deserving blame for being harassed and as sexual predators responsible for inappropriate relationships with staff. This confused perception of women appears less prevalent in the other two services, where women are often rightly valued for high technical skills, leadership and attention to detail, although surveys confirm that it is by no means absent. The presence of a growing number of women officers and senior warrant officers in the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force, successfully carrying out front-line roles, offers positive models for recruits which are less often available in the Army.

There are some examples where careful thought has produced immediate benefits, both for those from overseas and women. For example, a programme for Gurkha recruits unable to return
Findings

home during a holiday period included a tour of London, a visit to Cornwall and discussions with a Member of Parliament, making these recruits feel special while the others were away. At Bassingbourn and Pirbright, all-women platoons have been introduced on a trial basis in a particular attempt to reduce injury. The Bassingbourn platoon beat their male peers in a recent competition which included a test of their skill with weapons. Innovation is not without risk and things can go wrong, but if the armed forces are to excel in creating a culture of equality and diversity, more decisive action is required than is often taken at present.

Responses to the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 have been too slow. The armed forces have agreed with the Commission for Racial Equality a target for the representation of minority ethnic groups of 8 per cent by 2013 (compared with current representation in the general population of 9 per cent, according to the 2001 Census). The Royal Navy and Royal Air Force now have only 2.5 per cent of personnel from minority ethnic groups. The Army’s figure of 7.2 per cent is significantly better. These figures may, in fact, be wide of the mark. Confidential disclosure of ethnic origin is not compulsory for recruits. Comprehensive data on ethnicity, gender, nationality, religion and other points of difference are neither sought nor analysed. While application forms and feedback forms for recruitment centres use the designations of racial difference from the National Census, the armed forces’ police use a different ‘ethnic code’ introduced in 2003 (MOD Form 266A/B). This calls for witnesses to crimes to be identified as follows:

- White (skinned) European
- Dark (skinned) European
- Negroid
- Asian
- Oriental
- Arabian or Egyptian

These designations are unacceptable in the wider community.

In the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force, officer recruits from minority ethnic groups exceed proportionately those in non-commissioned ranks. The armed forces should quickly raise their targets to match minority ethnic representation of 16–19-year-olds in the community as a whole: that is, 13 per cent.

The use of nicknames in the armed forces is traditional and is sometimes used as an excuse for name-calling which may well be resented and is occasionally, in fact, racist. Simply banning such practices is not enough. Their offensiveness needs to be explained, with conviction, by leaders who are fully conversant with current good practice. The commanding officer at Winchester showed the effectiveness of this approach by explaining to instructors why a complaint from a parent about bullying had been justified.

Some establishments have substantial proportions of recruits from other cultures, but make little attempt to help them take a full part in service life. At Pirbright, 30 per cent of recruits are from overseas, from countries such as Fiji, Ghana, Samoa and Jamaica, as are about a quarter of Deepcut’s recruits. Provision for teaching English as an additional language is not offered routinely. There is no apparent acknowledgement of cultural or nationality groups, and little attempt to foster greater mixing and teamwork, for example through sports. Inspectors found that recruits who did not understand instructors’ strong regional accents were criticised for being insolent and accused of ‘playing the race card’ when they protested their innocence.

We recommend higher targets for recruitment of women and people from minority ethnic groups and positive action to achieve them.

We recommend that within guidelines set nationally for all three services, each training establishment should draw up its own action plan for equality, against the achievement of which the performance of the commanding officer should be monitored.

We recommend renewed attention to equality and diversity training for all training personnel, military and civilian.

We recommend that training establishments should accept a duty to be exemplary in furthering equality and diversity, playing a key role in changing attitudes over time throughout the armed forces.
Recruitment services

Recruitment centres are well equipped and attractive; a wide range of videos, computer presentations and brochures is available. Enquiries are managed methodically and careful records of each applicant are assembled. Recruiting officers are invariably enthusiastic about their work and are generally well prepared for it. They are, however, representatives of the interests of the armed forces, guiding applicants towards filling staff shortages, rather than being independent careers advisers. The materials they use sometimes paint a rosier, more action-packed picture of service life than many will experience if they join. More opportunities for applicants to have a taste of service life before they commit themselves, as happens with the Royal Marines at Lympstone and the gunners’ preliminary course at Honington, would contribute greatly to better-informed decisions. Of the 30 former recruits interviewed by the ALI who had dropped out of training early, a third said that they had not been made sufficiently aware of what military training might entail before they started.

The Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force recruit relatively small numbers of young people, to jobs which are technically demanding. They are able to be selective. The Army needs more recruits, but it has a much wider range of specialisms to offer, suited to applicants with a greater variety of educational background, including many who would not qualify for the other two services. Recruits who were asked by inspectors to look back on their experiences of recruitment had widely differing views, from satisfaction to disillusion. Where the recruiting officer happened to be from the specialism to which an applicant was attracted, the information given was accurate and detailed. Career brochures were often seen as unhelpful because they described things which a young person who had no previous experience of work would find hard to understand. Some information on important conditions of service was inaccurate or misleading.

Army recruits take the British Army Recruiting Battery of tests, which yields a ‘general trainability indicator’. Those who achieve the lowest scores above the minimum allowed are posted to the infantry. The higher the score
achieved, the wider the choice of trades. In practice, however, those choices can be strongly guided in the direction of specialisms where there are vacancies, rather than those which properly match the recruit’s potential. For some, who wish only to join the Army as a general aspiration, this matters very little. Others can find themselves committed, early on, to a career path for which they may not be ideally suited or in which they are not particularly interested.

The Royal Navy and Royal Air Force check the records of new recruits for criminal convictions; the Army does not, and relies too heavily on self-declaration. It is possible for people with criminal records to join the Army, pass through training and become instructors, without thorough investigation of their backgrounds.

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All three armed services are aware of the need to ease the shock of moving from home life to 24-hour immersion in a new and strange environment. The care with which induction is specified and organised varies widely, however. Induction handbooks produced by RAF Shawbury, RAF Cosford and HMS Collingwood are good, although an opportunity to discuss and explain the policies they set out would greatly increase their usefulness. Pocket-sized cards with contact names and numbers are often issued but, again, recruits say that more needs to be done to bring the information to life. For example, a recruit at RAF Halton told inspectors:

‘We need more team-building in the early weeks; it took me three weeks to learn everyone’s names.’

Sometimes, there appear to be gaps of such seriousness that they can lead to wastage of much of the effectiveness of initial training. Recruits have to commit themselves to four years’ service in the Royal Navy on the basis of voluntary visits to ships in dock. A phase 3 recruit at HMS Collingwood said:

‘Life on ship was a shock, nothing like I expected, and I didn’t like it.’

The array of acronyms used in the armed forces takes in roles, places, organisational units and equipment, all of which recruits need to become familiar with quickly, at the same time as adjusting to living away from home, new relationships and a new job. Gradual and careful introduction of new terms would help to reduce the stress of induction into a new way of life.

Preparation before joining pays handsome dividends. Time spent in the cadet force, the pre-entry courses for the Royal Air Force Regiment at Honington and the Royal Marines at Lympstone, the Army Youth Team, the year-long programme for young entrants at Harrogate before transfer to Catterick, and the introductory CD-ROM to RAF Halton, all help make induction a success. The induction process itself varies in length from three days at Winchester to two weeks at Lympstone. The content is nevertheless reasonably standard, including briefings from staff, tours of facilities, and introductions to the rules and the behaviour expected. In some cases, parents or partners are involved; this can be of significant benefit later, if recruits are homesick or in difficulty. As one young recruit at Bassingbourn said:

‘The parents’ weekend was really great. It helped me stay in training.’

We recommend a uniform approach to testing recruits across all three services, with regard both to their potential and their educational attainment, and to recording and analysing the data collected.

We recommend greater care in ensuring that a realistic picture of service life is presented, including making ‘taster’ experiences generally available.

We recommend that training establishments routinely provide feedback to careers offices on the quality and success rates of recruits.
The ALI’s experience in other contexts suggests that young people retain little they are told at induction. Everything is too unfamiliar to mean much and, usually, too much information is packed in. Knowledge and familiarity need to be built up gradually, over a period of weeks, with repeated reinforcement and testing. Sometimes that is done in the armed forces, with ‘buddies’ helping to explain and settle in newcomers. At Royal Air Force establishments and at the Royal Marines base at Lympstone, for example, recruits are visually identified with badges or coloured strips so that they can more readily be forgiven minor misdemeanours, such as failing to salute an officer when required. There are examples of less thoughtful practice, such as neglecting to ask recruits what they thought of their induction.

A significant failing of many induction programmes is that they do not reliably identify recruits’ literacy, numeracy or language problems. The results can be very serious. For example, a qualified technician in Iraq had asked for help from the new education centre because he was unable to read well enough to do his job of making incendiary devices safe, with any sense of security. Aptitude and intelligence are tested at armed forces careers offices but few educational qualifications are required, except for technical trades. In March 2004, the Army started to test the literacy and numeracy of every recruit. The minimum entry standard for infantry recruits is at entry level 2, the literacy ability normally expected of seven-year-olds. The Royal Navy and Royal Air Force test the English, maths and mechanical comprehension skills of recruits who have not achieved A* to C grades in the general certificate of secondary education (GCSE).

Inspectors found evidence that some applicants are helped to pass entry tests in order to keep up the number of new recruits. A young person who could not read the statement of ‘attestation’ – formally agreeing to join the service – had to be prompted and guided by the recruiting officer. Entry requirements have been lowered for specialisms which are in short supply, as seen in the reduced requirements for training as a flight operations assistant or a weapons technician at the Royal Air Force establishments at Shawbury and Cosford respectively. Additional learning support is provided for recruits at some establishments, but no modifications are made to training for recruits or students from overseas who speak English as an additional language. More and more establishments are introducing routine assessment of literacy and numeracy at the start of phase 1 and phase 2 training, but the full benefit will not be felt until better records are kept of learning needs, the help given and the progress made. Effective basic skills training depends greatly on comprehensive, well-informed encouragement at reviews.

There is much good practice from which to learn. The Royal Air Force establishments at St Athan and Honington give good literacy and numeracy support. Harrogate provides learning support assistants during everyday training sessions. An RAF St Athan recruit told inspectors: ‘the literacy club really helped me with my work.’ At RAF Cosford, there is sophisticated analysis of the way that each person prefers to learn, and individualised techniques are used, including mind maps, flash cards and learning logs. An instructor at Minley is trained to teach basic skills and a buddy system has been introduced so that recruits can learn from one another. Catterick offers a two-week literacy course at the end of training, at Darlington College. Nearly half those who take it improve from entry level 2 to entry level 3. At HMS Sultan, where there is an educational psychologist on the staff, the testing and support system is run at a high level.

**We recommend** the introduction of a standard set of guidelines for induction, including the use of follow-up sessions and tests to check that everything necessary has been understood.

**We recommend** that opportunities to show parents and partners round training establishments should be introduced everywhere, as part of settling in.

**We recommend** much more systematic approaches be adopted to testing for literacy, numeracy and English language problems, and to rectifying them.
Contact with families

Many recruits to the armed forces are young adults but for most it remains important that they maintain close contact with their families. The services themselves are very patchy in the way they work with families, sometimes limiting contact to celebrations like passing-out ceremonies or moments of trouble.

The better practice seen by inspectors involved a planned build-up in the familiarity of parents with service life and their involvement in supporting their children through its early stages. Good relations began at the recruiting centre with painstaking explanation of each young person’s future prospects. Nevertheless, it was those young people with relatives still serving in the armed forces who had the fullest understanding of service life. Some establishments followed up recruitment enquiries with family open days. RAF Halton is particularly good at welcoming the families of new recruits and showing them round. One parent told inspectors:

‘The open days are wonderful, because we get to see their rooms, where they eat and what they have done so far.’

At the Royal Marines’ base at Lympstone, there is a family day at the end of the third week of training. RAF Honington invites parents to visit once recruits are a few weeks into their training.

Such arrangements should be universally adopted. They contrast sharply, at the moment, with, for example, Lichfield’s letter of welcome followed only by an invitation to the passing-out parade 12 weeks later. The majority of establishments make no effort to involve parents for the two or three months of phase 1 training, unless there is a problem. Staff at Catterick contact parents only if a recruit is injured and, even then, no record is kept of what was said and little is done to follow up with progress reports. Just over one in seven of the parents we contacted said that their children had been bullied, harassed or discriminated against, and a number had dealt with young people’s reluctance to complain by doing it for them. To permit poor relationships between parents and their children’s employer to develop because opportunities for routine involvement and consultation have not been provided, is negligent.

Recruits are encouraged to keep in touch with their families by regularly phoning home. Foreign and Commonwealth recruits at Lichfield are given subsidised phone cards to help them do so. Just over half of the parents questioned by the ALI, however, said that they had not been given a contact number for the training establishment. Where a recruit shows clear signs of distress, there are many examples of personal initiatives by instructors to work creatively with parents:

‘I wanted to leave but the corporal talked to my mum, who persuaded me to stay.’

Parents whose children have done well are the best possible advocates for military life:

‘The Navy has managed to do in eight weeks something that my husband and I have been trying to do for the last 17 years. They have turned my son into a well-rounded young man.’

‘I believe that the Army has not only welcomed my son, but also welcomed his whole family.’

Parental pride can quickly turn to outrage when young people are mistreated. We were given the following example:

‘At one point a recruit damaged a locker. The NCO [non-commissioned officer] asked the room about it and when nobody owned up he went straight to my son and threatened to beat him up unless he told the NCO who did it. When he told the NCO, the rest of the room turned against him. I was very angry and thought that this had been done away with since I left the services.’

The power of the parental voice can cause considerable damage to the reputation of the armed forces, through websites or pressure groups. These phenomena are familiar to any
substantial employer in a controversial business area, and they need to be managed with professional care and understanding, giving, if anything, a surfeit of information.

We recommend that families should be kept involved regularly throughout initial training.

We recommend that the armed forces take steps to present themselves more openly to the public, and to families in particular.

Accommodation

The effects of persistent under-investment in accommodation for recruits are apparent, especially in Army barracks. In the poorest examples, such as Catterick and the St Omer barracks at Deepcut, inspectors found dilapidated, dreary and depressing living quarters, in which recruits had little personal space and not enough room for relaxation. Furnishings were often sparse and shabby; broken windows and holes in flooring had been temporarily boarded over. Run-down lavatories and shower facilities were common, even in establishments where the accommodation was otherwise satisfactory. There was often a shortage of hot water at peak times. Many recruits commented on the poor laundry facilities, a situation totally at odds with the impeccable standard of kit presentation they are expected to achieve. Royal Air Force and Royal Navy establishments generally provide better accommodation. The rooms at the Royal Air Force bases at Cosford and Shawbury, for example, are pleasant and comfortable, with personal possessions displayed. The pride that many recruits took in maintaining high standards at these establishments was plain to see. It seems obvious that the closer the accommodation is to normal domestic standards, the less likely young recruits are to be homesick. Where total refurbishment is already taking place as part of a planned programme, such as at Bassingbourn, the new accommodation is much better. Harrogate and Pirbright too, have some well-designed new living quarters.
When young people live too close to one another in poor conditions, the possibility of interpersonal and disciplinary problems arises. Unsecured lockers, or ones made of flimsy chipboard, do nothing to discourage petty thieving, another source of disharmony among recruits, and peer bullying. As one parent reported to the ALI:

'My son had property stolen because the lockers never locked properly. The food was very poor and I had to send him toilet paper because there was none.'

Notions that enduring such conditions will harden recruits for the rigours of active service are misplaced; rather they undermine the sense of pride in their chosen service that they are expected to develop during training.

Most training accommodation is adequate, if uninspiring. The relatively new training facilities, such as those at Winchester and Harrogate, are noticeably brighter, better equipped and more conducive to learning. Inspectors were concerned that many recruits have too little space for personal study in their living accommodation, with many of them having to use their bed as a desk or move to social areas, where there are distractions.

Many commanding officers have made significant efforts to improve accommodation. As with other aspects of the training regime, however, there is little consistency of approach. The absence of robust systems for identifying and rectifying problems leaves some unresolved. Commanding officers find it difficult to justify major works while approval for new buildings is pending, even when it is already significantly delayed. In the meantime, repairs and maintenance are carried out piecemeal. In most establishments, facilities management is handled at different levels of authority depending on the extent and cost of the work involved. Where work requires contractors to carry it out, even if it is classed as ‘very urgent’, delays are more likely to occur. At HMS Sultan, for example, we found five outstanding maintenance jobs that had been logged as ‘very urgent’ for six months before the time of inspection.

We recommend that commanding officers of training establishments should hold their own budgets for minor repairs and maintenance and be encouraged to attain high standards.

We recommend that the style of accommodation for recruits should be as close as is practicable to decent circumstances in civilian life.

**Meals and recreation**

Initial training and improving physical fitness are exhausting. The daily energy intake and dietary balance needed by recruits is similar to that of professional sports-people. Because recruits eat between bouts of heavy exercise, it follows that their meals should be easy to digest and taken often.

The quantity, quality and variety of food at training establishments differ widely. Some food is good, with extensive choice and attractive places to share a meal with others. At HMS Raleigh, the galley manager checks for special dietary needs before recruits join. In other places, poor diet is part of a pattern of living conditions which are neither conducive to peak physical performance nor to building pride in the service.

In most establishments, the last meal of the day is served in the late afternoon. While this is convenient for catering staff, it is contrary to the recommendations of the Director of Operational Capability. It fails to meet recruits’ needs for steady energy intake and nutrition to sustain muscular development and greater fitness. Some establishments issue snacks or energy bars. These are an inadequate substitute for an evening meal or supper.

All training establishments seek to prevent under-age drinking and are generally successful
in doing so. At HMS Raleigh, for example, under-18s who have been out for the evening are checked for signs of drinking by the duty officer. If such signs are found, the recruit is held in the sick bay overnight to prevent harm, before disciplinary action the following morning. Approaches to serving alcoholic drinks to over-18s vary. Some establishments have licensed bars and use some of the profits to fund welfare benefits for recruits. Others apply predetermined limits to the amount served. Yet others, Arborfield for example, impose an alcohol ban during initial training and report improvements in behaviour as a result. At Lympstone, most recruits choose not to drink because they feel it inhibits their physical performance.

There is little that can be done to prevent ‘binge-drinking’ among recruits in the latter stages of training, away from their bases. They are punished for being drunk or being late back as a result of drunkenness. It could be argued that excess is more likely after complete deprivation. Nevertheless, it would seem helpful to set consistent rules for drinking during initial training, across all establishments. The case for forbidding it altogether, for both behavioural and health reasons, appears to be worth considering.

During initial training, with time spent working out or running, health education messages concerning alcohol are likely to be well received.

Drug misuse is well controlled. Recruits are given random drugs tests at least once during initial training, in all three services. These often follow leave periods. There are also unannounced visits to establishments by drug control teams, with sniffer dogs and testing equipment. The teams have powers to forbid anyone leaving and to test samples from all ranks. Positive tests are uncommon.

In order to help renovate and improve their leisure facilities, many establishments raise money by offering bars, cafés and gambling machines. Some of these machines pay out prizes of up to £250. At Catterick and HMS Collingwood, the income from gambling machines used by recruits is around £300,000 and £120,000 a year respectively. The profits, which exceed £10,000 a month at Catterick, are used to benefit recruits. This income would be missed if it were to stop, but there is a conflict of interest between protecting young people and improving their leisure opportunities. Controlling the use of gambling machines by under-age
recruits is difficult, as is monitoring excessive use. Winning can make recruits vulnerable to intimidation, particularly by those who have lost heavily and are short of money. Borrowing from friends to gamble, in advance of pay, further increases tensions. Better ways of raising additional funds for leisure facilities and entertainment need to be found, which do not encourage potentially addictive behaviour or create reasons for friction among young people.

This point can be made all the more forcefully because most establishments have excellent leisure facilities. These include sports grounds, gyms, swimming pools, a ten-pin bowling alley at RAF Cosford, pool tables, television rooms with videos, libraries and computers. Instructing often go out of their way to keep recruits happy and constructively entertained. For example, at RAF St Athan, recruits play with the local rugby team. At Bassingbourn, the 16–18-year-olds are taken to the cinema. Initial training is short, intense and tiring and seems to offer a good opportunity to instil good habits in all aspects of life.

**We recommend** greater emphasis on good diet and nutrition in planning meals.

**We recommend** the universal adoption of a fourth meal, in the evening, to bridge the gap of more than 12 hours between supper and breakfast.

**We recommend** consideration of an alcohol-free rule at phase 1 training establishments.

**We recommend** that gambling machines should not be allowed at phase 1 training establishments.

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**Support and welfare**

Arrangements for securing the welfare of recruits have received a great deal of attention in the wake of the Deepcut inquiries. The resulting changes are necessarily recent and show signs of immaturity. Some changes are hampered by the lingering perception that training which is tough enough to create what one staff interviewee called ‘steely-eyed dealers of death’ cannot exist comfortably alongside what another described as ‘soft and fluffy’ care.

Welfare and support for recruits are primarily the responsibility of officers and non-commissioned officers in the chain of command. They fulfil their duties by dividing recruits into small groups led by junior non-commissioned officers, which are aggregated by stages into larger gatherings led by increasingly senior non-commissioned and commissioned officers. This well-established pattern is similar in all three services, although different terminology is used. On to this command structure have been grafted non-commissioned and commissioned officers with specific welfare duties, carried out particularly during the hours when recruits are not under instruction. A non-commissioned officer with duty of care responsibilities described his job to inspectors as ‘like being a professional dad’. In the larger establishments, and out of hours, cover by duty of care military staff is often thinly stretched, at between one to 130 and one to 200 recruits. Staff work long shifts and frequent weekends.

Outside the chain of command are military and civilian welfare staff. These usually include a welfare officer, an equal opportunity adviser who is normally also the ‘empowered officer’ who deals with care and support matters, a chaplain, WRVS (formerly the Women’s Royal Voluntary Service) workers, and a range of other provisions such as the Army Welfare Service and the Salvation Army who are present on some establishments. In very formal hierarchies like the armed forces, there is real value in having alternative, civilian, sources of welfare advice, however good may be the relations between recruits and their military instructors. They offer different perceptions, a safety net and, ideally, different aspects of professional expertise. Recruits value greatly the civilian welfare staff, whom they often find more approachable than their military counterparts.
In addition there are less personal welfare services. These include helplines provided by the armed forces or by groups like the Soldiers’, Sailors’ and Airmen’s Families Association (SSAFA), and cards with emergency contact telephone numbers which are issued to recruits. Initiatives like HIVE (Help, information and volunteer exchange), an information point carrying comprehensive lists of local support services and contact details, are valuable additions to welfare provision. Better access to payphones and opportunities to use mobile phones also help new recruits, in particular, to deal with homesickness or unhappiness.

Some of these services are highly praised by young people. The WRVS is particularly popular, offering as it does recreational facilities such as television, computers, books, videos and pool tables, accompanied by the chance to talk informally about personal matters and anxieties. The WRVS is hard pressed to meet the demand, however, and its staff are seldom professionally trained in, for example, equality or counselling and advisory services. The provision of counselling services is not part of the WRVS’s current contract. Recruits are, in any case, often too busy to make full use of the WRVS during their first weeks in the services, when they may need them most.

Recruits’ willingness to confide in chaplains is mixed; this problem is minimised where chaplains offer secular services, such as the coffee bars at HMS Collingwood and the Royal Marines base at Lympstone. Officers designated as empowered officers are rarely effective, recruits either preferring to use those in the chain of command or being told that they should do so. Empowered officers have to be contacted by telephone and appointments made to see them; as a result, two out of the three at Catterick, for example, only responded to requests rather than taking the initiative to seek improvements. At Pirbright, they were ineffective. Many recruits do not understand the purpose of the role and many troop commanders fail to make use of it. There are not enough women officers in key positions to support women recruits. Officers from minority ethnic groups are under-represented.

This plethora of services has the potential to meet a wide variety of needs, but it is not well co-ordinated. All the establishments have welfare committees that bring together all those concerned. In some cases, and notably at Deepcut, these are used well to identify and monitor recruits who are seen to be at risk, whether of failure, depression, self-harm or suicide. The fact that the welfare committee is chaired by the commanding officer of the establishment sends an important message about the importance of care for recruits. A recent review of welfare arrangements in the Royal Air Force has resulted in a Care Directive, which specifies the required services. Some establishments, but not all, issue recruits with handbooks setting out welfare, as well as training, programmes. There are very few fully trained welfare staff, however; when staff encounter serious problems they have to call in specialists. Records of sessions between WRVS staff or chaplains and recruits are sometimes not kept at all, or kept separate from those maintained by military staff. While there is sometimes a need for professional confidentiality, the resulting gaps in information about recruits at risk can jeopardise their well-being, where a more tightly knit system of support would have intervened. The continuing high proportion of early leavers from the Army compared with the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force - around one-third of all recruits - suggests that there is considerable scope for better support.

Arrangements for recruits under the age of 18 are differentiated from those made for their older peers. A curfew is imposed and regular checks that young recruits are in their beds are made throughout the night at, for example, Deepcut. Duty staff sleep in the same barrack blocks. New approaches to dealing with the welfare of young recruits are being tried, and adopted or dropped according to their success. For example, an experiment which separated under- and over-18s at Deepcut was halted when the behaviour of the under-18s deteriorated sharply without the moderating influence of more mature recruits. Recruits aged under 18 at RAF Halton are particularly well cared for. Nevertheless an undercurrent of feeling remains among military staff that no distinction should be made between
under- and over-18s. There is, however, an appropriate additional focus on the needs of new recruits regardless of their age. They receive regular progress reviews from instructional staff which touch on welfare issues.

The picture found by inspectors was one of promising change, where the immaturity of many recruits was being recognised and reflected in improving arrangements for their care. These arrangements are not yet watertight, with some recent initiatives, such as empowered officers, showing signs of breakdown. Recruits are not yet protected by a fully coherent welfare system, in which the roles of all those involved are made clear and a fail-safe approach to applying the system is adopted. Closer and more productive connections between better-trained professional welfare staff and military training personnel remains the goal.

We recommend that comprehensive welfare frameworks be introduced at every establishment, setting out clearly the duties, lines of accountability and powers of everybody involved, civilian and military.

We recommend that civilian and military welfare staff should work as a team, sharing information and records.

We recommend that the empowered officer role should be terminated.

We recommend that all instructors should be trained in welfare matters.

We recommend that civilian welfare staff should be selected or trained to provide professional services in care.

Physical training

Initial medical screening of recruits is usually done by a general practitioner before they leave home. Medical assessment depends too heavily on self-declaration of conditions which might make military service problematic. The results are a worrying unreliability in identifying concerns serious enough to prompt early medical discharge, for example asthma, heart murmur, poor eyesight or problems with their feet. The rate of medical discharge rose steadily throughout the 1990s in all three services. That rate nevertheless varied significantly from establishment to establishment.

Recruits often join the armed forces unfit, overweight or poorly nourished, despite encouragement to get fit before joining up. Of the early leavers we spoke to who had been medically discharged, the largest proportion were those who said they had been too unfit to do well. Achieving physical fitness is, necessarily, a central and challenging aspect of initial training. There are usually five mandatory physical training sessions a week, in the gym or running. Facilities are invariably very good indeed, with marching and assault courses supplementing the activities usually available in civilian life. Physical training instructors are expert in their field, but their preparation does not cover welfare matters.

The standards applied to assessing physical fitness appear confused. For example, some Army recruits are expected to run 1.5 miles in 11.5 minutes at the end of phase 1 training, but to cover the same distance a minute faster on entry to phase 2. Not only is there no reason to suppose that this improved performance should occur naturally, but the time lapse between phase 1 and phase 2 training often leads to a decline in fitness. In one case, at RAF Cosford, recruits had to complete 16 successive 100-metre runs with a minute’s recovery time between each one. Many found it too severe a test. Recruits usually enjoy getting fit, success lies in instructors striking a balance between pushing them to do well and causing injury.

A study in 2002 showed that, in all three services, women are twice as likely as men to be medically discharged through injury (Geary et al., 2002). The problem has been exacerbated by change from a ‘gender-fair’ policy, through which women were set training goals appropriate to their physique, to a ‘gender-free’ approach, prompted erroneously by a conviction...
TABLE 2. Rates of injury and gender differences under the ‘gender-fair’ and ‘gender-free’ regimes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site of Injury</th>
<th>Gender-fair cohort Incidences per 10,000</th>
<th>Gender-free cohort Incidences per 10,000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achilles tendonitis</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knee pain</td>
<td>58.0</td>
<td>50.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Back pain</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>151.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tibial pain</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>37.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress fracture – tibia</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress fracture - foot</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>50.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress fracture – pubis</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>126.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress fracture – femur</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>25.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All sites</td>
<td>118.0</td>
<td>467.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Gemmell 2002, summarised from the original.

In the forces that equality of opportunity demands it. For example, in young women fractures of the tibia rose over a five-year period from 12.6 incidences per 10,000 recruits, to 231.2. Stress fractures of the feet and legs have also increased. At Pirbright, 26 per cent of all recruits who are injured have stress fractures in the lower leg. There are good examples of physical training tailored to the capacity of each individual. For example, at Honington, Bassingbourn and RAF Halton, thoughtful adjustments are made which avoid acute stresses and strains. At Minley and at the Royal Marines establishment at Lympstone, systematic attempts are being made to monitor and reduce serious injury, with some success.

Nevertheless, most establishments need rehabilitation units to deal with a substantial number of injured recruits. Recruits are often reluctant to report sick, for fear of being held back from completing initial training with the rest of their entry group; 40 per cent of recruits in phase 2 at Deepcut were carrying injuries from phase 1, for example. In some cases, insufficient specialist attention is given to helping rehabilitation. For example, although the unit at Catterick was well below capacity when visited by inspectors, there were nearly 30 recruits to each instructor. There are poor records on rates of recovery. Where they do exist, for example at the Royal Marines’ establishment at Lympstone, they show that, with appropriate care, 80 per cent of recruits can be helped to recover from injuries and resume progress towards full military effectiveness. Where physiotherapists, doctors, physical training instructors and other rehabilitation staff work closely together, recruits’ recovery is often better managed and monitored.

Some medical discharge is inevitable but it could be reduced through better pre-entry screening, more flexibility in tailoring the training regime to each person and closer management of the processes involved. The cost of medical discharge, both to the armed forces and the recruit, is high.

We recommend that the armed forces exercise greater control over pre-entry physical testing, and reduce reliance on self-declaration.

We recommend a review to eliminate anomalies in the standards required for physical fitness and to set them accurately in accordance with the work recruits are to do.

We recommend abandonment of the ‘gender-free’ approach to training women and the restoration of ‘gender-fair’ regimes.

We recommend more systematic use of data on fitness, the training undertaken, injury and rehabilitation.
The development of familiarity with weapons is a vital part of basic training for all three services and, in particular, for the Army. In the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force there is less need to develop expertise in using a personal weapon. For Army recruits, the aim is that, by the end of phase 2, care and use of a personal firearm should be second nature. In the front line, soldiers keep their weapons to hand and learning to do so without harm to themselves or others necessarily features in the training regime.

There are risks inevitably associated with the use of powerful automatic rifles by young people, some of whom are still adolescents. Those risks are managed in widely differing ways in different training establishments. At one extreme are arrangements at HMS Raleigh. There, weapons, ammunition and the firing range on which they are used are all within a secure perimeter, with a single entrance. Recruits are checked in and out and exhaustive checks are made to ensure that no firearms or ammunition are taken away. At the other extreme is the Army establishment at Catterick. There, inspectors found weapons lying without close guard in recruits’ sleeping accommodation during mealtimes. Against regulations, some live ammunition was retained by recruits after firing practices, a proportion of which was surrendered anonymously in amnesty bins. Live rounds were also routinely discarded in the undergrowth on the exercise area. Despite the fact that recruits at Catterick were in the latter stages of training, when they might be expected to care responsibly for their weapons, these practices, regarded by inspectors as negligent, were still happening. During an unannounced inspection by the ALI some six weeks after our first visit, we found that procedures had been reviewed but no additional steps to give greater security had been taken, such as installing lockable weapons racks. Live ammunition was still being surrendered in the amnesty bins or thrown away. Most training establishments fall between these two extremes and, almost everywhere, firearms are used safely. At several training establishments, there is experimental use of lasers as firearms simulators, which have the potential to allow training in safe circumstances. While they can never substitute...
entirely for live firing, some reduction in the 10 million rounds a year used at Catterick, for example, would ease the control problems.

Practice varies in relation to night-time armed guard duty by recruits. This duty can involve guarding a gate with others or ‘prowling’ the perimeter of a deserted base with one other person for about two hours at a time. There is no consistent implementation by commanding officers of the policy governing armed guarding by under-18s. As a general rule, guarding should be carried out by the military provost guard service, and this is the case at all Royal Navy and most Royal Air Force and Army establishments. At HMS Raleigh, for example, under-18s are seldom asked to do guard duty and, if they do, are equipped only with torches and whistles. At RAF Halton, recruits carry out guard duty but are unarmed, working with a more experienced person, who is armed. At Deepcut, inspectors found two 17-year-olds armed with automatic weapons on guard together at night. Guard duties at night are sometimes carried out between full training days and before examination days, when fatigue is likely to diminish alertness and impair performance. Where it is undertaken by recruits, it is not used as an opportunity for training and is seen as a chore. Young people between phases of training often end up doing guard duties. There is some unsatisfactory practice in relation to checking weapons after guard duties. The top rounds in a rifle magazine should be checked for telltale marks indicating that they have been fed into the breech; this is not always done.

**We recommend** that the Army further reduces the risks associated with young people using firearms, including the provision of more secure storage away from firing ranges and by greater use of simulators.

**We recommend** that uniform practice be adopted across all three services on deployment of recruits as armed guards at night.

**We recommend** that night guard duties for recruits should be avoided when they fall between training days.
Bullying and harassment

Bullying and harassment have been carefully defined by the armed forces. They are officially deplored, with ‘zero-tolerance’ policies required of training establishments. Nevertheless, bullying has been seen as ‘traditional’ and terms like ‘beasting’, ‘locker-trashing’, ‘jailing’ and ‘tanking’ are used to put a gloss of acceptability on activities which are forbidden yet still take place.

In January 2005 the Ministry of Defence commissioned a confidential survey of recruits in the armed forces, conducted by the independent polling organisation, MORI. In the survey of Army recruits, ill-treatment was found most often during phase 1 training, confirming the ALI’s findings. It was most often experienced by women and people from minority ethnic groups, with around one in ten personnel suffering bullying, discrimination or harassment. Data are not yet available for the Royal Navy or Royal Air Force.

### TABLE 3. Incidence of bullying or harassment in Army training schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training Establishment</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>% claiming bullying</th>
<th>% claiming harassment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>All schools</strong></td>
<td>8,003</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phase 1 Recruit schools</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bassingbourn*</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lichfield*</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winchester*</td>
<td>617</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pirbright*</td>
<td>1,082</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harrogate*</td>
<td>502</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catterick*</td>
<td>1,296</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phase 2 Trade schools</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bovington*</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larkhill</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chatham</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minley*</td>
<td>372</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kneller Hall</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blandford</td>
<td>444</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Wallop</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training Support Regt Deepcut (Princess Royal Barracks)*</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training Support Regt Deepcut (St Omer Barracks)*</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DLSS Deepcut</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marchwood</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinerton</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worthy Down</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chichester</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arborfield*</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bordon</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tri-Service Schools</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leconfield</td>
<td>596</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*training establishments inspected by the ALI

Source: MORI
The survey also confirmed inspectors’ conclusions that there are ‘hotspots’ among the Army establishments we visited, where bullying and harassment are most common. Among phase 1 establishments these were Bassingbourn, Harrogate, Winchester and Pirbright, with only Lichfield significantly better than the average. Among phase 2 Army establishments, one of the worst records was at Deepcut (St Omer). The least bullying and harassment during phase 2 takes place at Bovington.

The findings of Continuous Attitude Surveys conducted across the armed forces in 2003 are given in table 4.

### TABLE 4. Armed forces attitude survey findings 2003

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Army</th>
<th>RAF</th>
<th>Navy</th>
<th>RM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bullying</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you believe that bullying exists in the service?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>officers</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-officers</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td></td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you believe that you have been the subject of bullying in a service environment?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>officers</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-officers</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td></td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Harassment</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you believe that harassment exists in the service?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>officers</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-officers</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td></td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you believe that you have been the subject of harassment in a service environment?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>officers</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-officers</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td></td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings

The fact that some three-quarters of officers and other ranks believe that bullying and harassment take place; that up to around one in ten have suffered themselves; and that there is a marked difference between the threat posed to officers and other ranks should all be matters of serious concern. The lower figures recorded for the Royal Marines are noteworthy. Surveys of the parents of current recruits conducted by the ALI revealed an average of about 10 per cent suffering bullying or harassment. The problem appears not to be diminishing despite the attention given to it. Most of the bullying is done by recruits to other recruits.

Some parents responding to the ALI’s questionnaire clearly see bullying as systemic, tacitly condoned by many in authority, and as passing from generation to generation through junior non-commissioned officers who permit or encourage recruits to bully each other. Among comments made were:

‘Bullying still seems to be prevalent within the armed forces, but many recruits feel it is not worth reporting the abuse as often more than one corporal is present when the abuse takes place and they all close ranks and deny anything took place.’

‘When I rang about the bullying an officer investigated the case but as soon as he had gone the bullies [other recruits] threatened my son. I rang three times but the bullying didn’t stop. There is not enough out-of-hours supervision and this is when the bullying occurred. My son’s corporal noticed his bruises but didn’t enquire about them.’

Responsible civilian employers regard bullying as gross misconduct and respond by summary dismissal. Similar steps have not been applied by the armed forces. Where bullying is dealt with informally, at the lowest level, bullies often go unpunished, with nothing placed on their records. ‘Conventional’ military bullying and harassment were found by inspectors at a number of establishments. Group punishment, where several recruits suffer for the confessed or concealed misdemeanour of one, is forbidden but nevertheless happens. A recruit who had recently left the armed forces told the ALI:

‘Beastings were common and individuals were not singled out, but I think collective punishment could lead to recriminations against some recruits from other recruits.’

At Pirbright and Harrogate, locker trashing, where recruits’ personal lockers are opened, the contents strewn about, dirtied, broken and sometimes thrown from windows, is used to punish poor work or misdemeanours. ‘Tanking’ is specific to Lympstone, where recruits to the Royal Marines are made to jump into an outdoor tank full of murky water, in all weathers, for trivial offences like ‘not listening’. At Pirbright, recruits reported examples of group punishment or inappropriate punishment to inspectors, some of which resulted in injury; for example, an instructor had picked up a large stick and hit recruits on their helmets. One was hit so hard that his helmet slipped over his head and cut his face.

Everyday housekeeping is often the focus of harassment. While it is clearly necessary for the armed forces to instil higher standards of cleanliness and neatness than many teenagers display at home, the extent and the means can often seem extreme. For example, at HMS Raleigh, recruits are given a diagram, with precise measurements which correspond to their personal space on board ship, showing how clothes are to be ironed, folded and laid out on a bunk for morning inspection. Some recruits claim that they cannot meet the standard demanded unless they prepare their kit the night before and sleep on the floor.

We recommend that a genuine zero-tolerance approach to bullying and harassment be adopted at training establishments, including clearly defined and appropriate disciplinary measures.

We recommend that a tri-service approach be taken to reviewing discipline and punishment, seeking a consistent balance between standards common in civilian life today and real military necessity.
Complaints

The numbers of complaints recorded on central databases, and those of most establishments, are too low to be credible. Among 453 confidential responses to the ALI from recruits’ parents, 63 showed clear grounds for serious complaint but, of these, only 20 complaints were actually made: 17 by recruits and the rest by parents. In 30 cases, recruits had experienced repeated bullying and harassment.

The culture of the armed forces prefers problems to be resolved at the lowest level, an approach which does not necessarily bring long-term benefit. Disputes and complaints are tackled by junior non-commissioned officers and left unrecorded, often inappropriately. Even in cases of serious assault, sexual and racial harassment, or other bullying, perpetrators and victims are asked to ‘shake hands’ as a complete resolution. This approach leaves victims vulnerable to continued suffering, or to reprisals from other recruits for having brought the problem into the open. Many feel it does not pay to complain.

That conclusion is reinforced when attempts are made to trivialise the importance of conflicts. At Deepcut, one recruit complained that he had been threatened with a knife by another. The incident was recorded in detail by a sergeant. It was then represented to inspectors as having involved only nail-clippers. The impression is created that inappropriate aggression is acceptable, either because military recruits know no better or because they are entering a profession which sometimes demands violence.

Inspectors often found complaint records which were illegible or so garbled as to be incomprehensible. In most establishments, complaints can be recorded in many different places; they are often kept separately and are not cross-referenced. Aggrieved recruits slip through the net without anyone knowing they have suffered repeated problems. We were seldom able to follow a clear evidence trail showing that incidents had been referred up to those with the right level of authority to resolve them properly. While there are established procedures, which recruits are told how to use during induction, in practice complaints are stifled by tacit or explicit disapproval and by misguided attempts to secure harmony. Much more precise instructions need to be given to all staff in training establishments about the type of complaint which can be dealt with at each level. Every complaint should be recorded and analysed centrally to reveal patterns of behaviour that need to be discouraged and places where they are most commonly found.

Suicide and self-harm

Suicide can only be regarded as the ultimate failure of any system of welfare and risk management. While any suicide is a tragedy, and that of a young person especially so, inspectors have tried to establish whether suicide rates in the British armed forces are abnormal in relation to:

- the general population in this country
- other British young people
- armed services in other western countries with a recent combat history
- and among the three services.

The data have been collated from several sources, notably the Samaritans, the World Health Organisation and specialist statistical services in the armed forces themselves.
These comparisons show that significantly more young people (under the age of 20) in the British Army commit suicide than do their peers in the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force. Given that the Army has a large majority of male personnel, its suicide rate is comparable with that of British men in general, but above the average for young people under 20 of both sexes. The Defence Analytical Services Agency concludes that men under the age of 20 in the Army are 1.7 times as likely as their civilian peers to commit suicide. The suicide rates in the United States of America and Australia follow a similar pattern of relationship between their armies and men in the general population as do those in Britain. The marked exception is that those in the United States and Royal Australian Air forces and navies do not follow the same, favourable, below-trend patterns as do those for British air force personnel and sailors. It is reasonable to conclude that conditions in the British Army present a higher risk of suicide among young people than are found in the comparable civilian population, and that steps to mitigate the risks are less effective than in the Royal Navy or the Royal Air Force.

Within the Army, observers of its higher suicide rate, compared with the other services, cite the easier availability of personal firearms as a compelling reason. There is justification for this view. Suicide with a firearm is nearly seven times more common among Army personnel than among the British population in general, and nearly four times as common in the Army as it is in the Royal Navy or the Royal Air Force. In

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>USA</th>
<th>Australia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General population</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General population (male)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General population (female)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General population (under 20)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armed forces (Total)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army (under 20)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>10</td>
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<tr>
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<td>5</td>
<td>not known</td>
<td>not known</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navy</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>not known</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

by 52 per cent, with firearms deaths falling from 47 in the five-year period 1992–96, to seven in the five years 1997-2001. If they persist, these trends are very encouraging.

The poor quality of data precludes sound comparisons of the rates for self-harm with those for suicide across the British armed forces. An ‘at-risk’ register of recruits is kept at some training establishments, but by no means all. There can be no certainty that those assigning young people to, for example, guard duty at night, know whether they are ‘at risk’ or not. Where there are data, for example at the Royal Air Force establishments at Halton and Cosford, a number of incidents of self-harm are recorded but no suicides. It is probable that there are significantly more incidents of self-harm in all three services than there are suicides, and that the well-established link between self-harm and suicide could be used to improve monitoring aimed at further reducing the latter.
the 18 years before 2002, Army suicides through firearms declined by 56 per cent and by gas poisoning by 70 per cent whereas suicide by hanging increased by 70 per cent. Overall, suicide through the use of a firearm accounted for about one-third of all Army cases. These are reasons, not for complacency, but for still more robust control of firearms and ammunition in the Army, and better management of the risks.

**We recommend** that the Army studies the methods used by the other armed services to minimise self-harm and suicide.

**We recommend** that incidents of self-harm are carefully recorded and that comprehensive data are kept at each establishment and nationally.

**We recommend** the consistent and thorough use of ‘at-risk’ registers, with open access to all who need to see them.

**Linking the phases of training**

The problems associated with failures in planning phase 1 and phase 2 as a seamless progression are well understood in all three services. As a corporal at RAF Halton put it to inspectors: ‘It’s not good to have our recruits sweeping up leaves instead of attending training.’ Skills learnt during phase 1 growing rusty, loss of fitness and the depressing effect of menial activity are all recognised as likely consequences of lengthy pauses between initial training and trade training. A sense of acute anti-climax can occur when a period of inactivity follows a high point such as a passing-out parade.

The success with which each service deals with the problem varies. The Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force, with their smaller and more selective intakes, are usually able to schedule recruits’ start dates so that training progresses smoothly through the phases. For example, marine engineers join only once a year and Royal Air Force weapons technician and police recruitment involves very little waiting time. Army recruitment, however, more often involves taking applicants when they are available, with inevitable peaks and troughs in demand for each phase of training and for the many different specialisms available in phase 2. Even in those circumstances, progression can be made smoother, with care. At Deepcut, the waiting period for entry to logistics courses has fallen by a third in the past two years. There were 200 recruits waiting for logistics training in August 2004. When the ALI first inspected Deepcut in November 2004, this number had dropped to 40.

Certain practical steps can contribute to improvements. The fact that the Royal Air Force and Royal Navy have sharply reduced the number of training establishments makes it easier to keep cohorts of recruits flowing evenly, as does the provision of phase 1 and phase 2 courses at the same place. Pre-entry courses, such as those available for Royal Marine commandos, the Royal Artillery and physical training instructors, help to reduce disappointment, high drop-out and disruption to groups of recruits as they progress. Close co-ordination between the staff of phase 1 units and their receiving phase 2 establishments helps greatly. Where pauses cannot be avoided, it is helpful to have well-organised ‘holding’ groups with plenty of interesting work to do, such as the Aircrew Development Flight at RAF Halton. It is also important that recruits’ records are complete and are transferred promptly, so that phase 2 staff know each person’s starting point.

The pressure points in the system at the moment are at Deepcut; Bovington; Minley, where inspectors saw over 200 recruits awaiting training mixed with more mature soldiers awaiting disciplinary hearings; and at Arborfield, where one recruit in seven had to wait for a suitable course and was filling time painting or laying razor wire.

**We recommend** continued attention to smoothing progression through training, taking advantage of a reduction in the number of establishments, better records and more professional management of training.
Leaving training

The armed forces now have set times when recruits may freely resign, before they agree a long-term contract. The proportion of early leavers is high, particularly among young recruits. There is a degree of acceptance that this has always been the case and will remain so. It is regarded as an inevitable part of the process of and cost involved in recruitment. The fact that no clearly identified cost is associated with it allows complacency. There are few comprehensive data identifying detailed reasons for leaving but surveys, including the telephone survey conducted by the ALI, suggest that most early leavers find that service life is not for them soon after they experience it. Some come back to try again when they are older. The small number of early leavers in the ALI’s survey means that the statistics should be treated with caution, but they suggest that some three-quarters of them do not have the opportunity to fill in an exit questionnaire and so provide information which might reduce drop-out.

Recruits strongly dislike ‘back-classing’, the name usually given to halting their progress until they have overcome some learning problem or recovered from injury. Back-classing is a common prompt for early drop-out. In most cases, those who want to leave are dealt with sympathetically. The Royal Navy applies a two-week cooling-off period, when unhappy recruits can talk to their families and consider their options before taking the step to leave. At Winchester, the Army keeps those who have said they want to leave in training for a while, so that they can reflect without falling away from friends in their entry group. At Catterick, leavers are helped by a local further education college to perfect their curriculum vitae, ready for jobs outside the service.

There is no shortage of advice from commanding officers, instructors and welfare staff. In emergencies, this can extend as far as advising on personal problems, helping to find a home and working with charities to furnish it, as inspectors found at Lichfield.

Many establishments have some form of ‘holding company’ to which those who want to leave are sent. This has the advantage of allowing the services to concentrate their support and, at Deepcut for example, an officer who has been in post for the unusually long period of over three years and fully understands the issues, is in charge of early leavers. Having said that, assignment to a holding company can feel like an unpleasant segregation. In some cases, the lack of anything of substance to do and the inevitable sense of transition, if not failure, make it an unhappy time which, fortunately, seldom lasts much more than a week.

We recommend that exit interviews and questionnaires should be standardised and comprehensive data built up on the reasons for early drop-out, including any correlations with age, gender, race and educational or other background.

We recommend that the strategy for reducing early drop-out needs to be enforced, including falling targets to be met, year on year.

We recommend that a systematic approach be adopted to ensure that recruits are given as realistic a set of expectations as possible, including site visits or sea-time, before they join or as an early ‘taster’ experience.

We recommend that accurate costs of recruitment and training be produced, showing clearly the impact of early drop-out.
Detailed recommendations

Leadership and management

We recommend consideration of the management techniques normally found in civilian training, including the creation of ‘data-rich’ management environments and the assignment of personal responsibility to commanding officers for achieving measurable goals.

We recommend longer postings to training establishments for commanding officers.

We recommend more tri-service initiatives, learning from each other wherever it is relevant to do so.

We recommend active steps to raise the status of training, through the use of rewards, including access to promotion.

Selection and training of instructors

We recommend competitive selection for instructor postings, including vetting and testing to ensure suitability.

We recommend mandatory training for instructors before they take up their posts.

We recommend achieving full value from these investments by retaining able instructors in training roles for longer, giving them opportunities for continuous professional development and qualifications, and rewarding them for achievement.

We recommend the use of formal appraisals for instructors, against objectives which are centred on high retention and achievement among the recruits for whom each one is responsible.

We recommend that the armed forces review the efficiency of staff deployment at training establishments.

Equality of opportunity

We recommend higher targets for recruitment of women and people from minority ethnic groups and positive action to achieve them.

We recommend that within guidelines set nationally for all three services, each training establishment should draw up its own action plan for equality, against the achievement of which the performance of the commanding officer should be monitored.

We recommend renewed attention to equality and diversity training for all training personnel, military and civilian.

We recommend that training establishments should accept a duty to be exemplary in furthering equality and diversity, playing a key role in changing attitudes over time throughout the armed forces.

Recruitment services

We recommend a uniform approach to testing recruits across all three services, with regard both to their potential and their educational attainment, and to recording and analysing the data collected.

We recommend greater care in ensuring that a realistic picture of service life is presented, including making ‘taster’ experiences generally available.

We recommend that training establishments routinely provide feedback to careers offices on the quality and success rates of recruits.

Induction and literacy & numeracy support

We recommend the introduction of a standard set of guidelines for induction, including the use of follow-up sessions and tests to check that everything necessary has been understood.

We recommend that opportunities to show parents and partners round training establishments should be introduced everywhere, as part of settling in.

We recommend much more systematic approaches be adopted to testing for literacy, numeracy and English language problems, and to rectifying them.
Findings

Contact with families
We recommend that families should be kept involved regularly throughout initial training.

We recommend that the armed forces take steps to present themselves more openly to the public, and to families in particular.

Accommodation
We recommend that commanding officers of training establishments should hold their own budgets for minor repairs and maintenance and should be encouraged to attain high standards.

We recommend that the style of accommodation for recruits should be as close as is practicable to decent circumstances in civilian life.

Meals and recreation
We recommend greater emphasis on good diet and nutrition in planning meals.

We recommend the universal adoption of a fourth meal, in the evening, to bridge the gap of more than 12 hours between supper and breakfast.

We recommend consideration of an alcohol-free rule at phase 1 training establishments.

We recommend that gambling machines should not be allowed at phase 1 training establishments.

Support and welfare
We recommend that comprehensive welfare frameworks be introduced at every establishment, setting out clearly the duties, lines of accountability and powers of everybody involved, civilian and military.

We recommend that civilian and military welfare staff should work as a team, sharing information and records.

We recommend that the empowered officer role should be terminated.

We recommend that all instructors should be trained in welfare matters.

We recommend that civilian welfare staff should be selected or trained to provide professional services in care.

Physical training
We recommend that the armed forces exercise greater control over pre-entry physical testing, and reduce reliance on self-declaration.

We recommend a review to eliminate anomalies in the standards required for physical fitness and to set them accurately in accordance with the work recruits are to do.

We recommend abandonment of the ‘gender-free’ approach to training women and the restoration of ‘gender-fair’ regimes.

We recommend more systematic use of data on fitness, the training undertaken, injury and rehabilitation.

Firearms
We recommend that the Army further reduces the risks associated with young people using firearms, including the provision of more secure storage away from firing ranges and by greater use of simulators.

We recommend that uniform practice be adopted across all three services on deployment of recruits as armed guards at night.

We recommend that night guard duties for recruits should be avoided when they fall between training days.

Bullying and harassment
We recommend that a genuine zero-tolerance approach to bullying and harassment be adopted at training establishments, including clearly defined and appropriate disciplinary measures.

We recommend that a tri-service approach be taken to reviewing discipline and punishment, seeking a consistent balance between standards common in civilian life today and real military necessity.
Complaints
We recommend universal reporting of complaints, whether locally resolved or not, in order to allow collation and management, both in each establishment and nationally.

We recommend that clear protocols be prepared on the level at which different types of complaint may properly be dealt with.

We recommend the introduction of carefully designed systems which allow the processing of complaints to be traced.

We recommend that senior officers encourage complaints to be made and registered, as an important means of driving up standards.

Suicide and self-harm
We recommend that the Army studies the methods used by the other armed services to minimise self-harm and suicide.

We recommend that incidents of self-harm are carefully recorded and that comprehensive data are kept at each establishment and nationally.

We recommend the consistent and thorough use of ‘at-risk’ registers, with open access to all who need to see them.

Linking the phases of training
We recommend continued attention to smoothing progression through training, taking advantage of a reduction in the number of establishments, better records and more professional management of training.

Leaving training
We recommend that exit interviews and questionnaires should be standardised and comprehensive data built up on the reasons for early drop-out, including any correlations with age, gender, race and educational or other background.

We recommend that the strategy for reducing early drop-out needs to be enforced, including falling targets to be met year on year.

We recommend that a systematic approach be adopted to ensure that recruits are given as realistic a set of expectations as possible, including site visits or sea-time, before they join or as an early ‘taster’ experience.

We recommend that accurate costs of recruitment and training be produced, showing clearly the impact of early drop-out.
Summary reports

Weapons-handling at 3 Royal School Regiment of Military Engineering, Minley
HMS Collingwood

HMS Collingwood, in Fareham, Hampshire, is the Royal Navy’s Maritime Warfare School and offers phase 2 and phase 3 training. Phase 2 recruits join Collingwood from HMS Raleigh. The school incorporates training previously conducted at HMS Dryad and HMS Excellent, as well as other units including the Defence Diving School, the Royal Marines School of Music, the Hydrographic School, the Meteorology School and the Physical Training School.

Annually, some 25,000 personnel pass through the school. Including its officers, it represents about 10 per cent of all naval personnel on any one day. Phase 2 recruits have their own accommodation area, attend lessons in the main teaching block and use the establishment’s sporting and social facilities.

Judgements

Completion rates are good. Recruits are well supported by the divisional system of supervision common in the Royal Navy. Divisional officers and their assistants keep in touch with recruits throughout the day and evening. Most recruits are confident about using the chain of command or the chaplaincy for advice and support. Recruits at risk are identified promptly and supported well, using a traffic-light code to identify the degree of risk. Disciplinary incidents involving recruits are recorded clearly by staff, followed up, and the actions taken are noted.

Divisional staff do not routinely share information on recruits with instructors. There are no civilian welfare staff on site but a civilian social worker is being appointed to the chaplaincy service. Discipline and remedial training are managed adequately. The transition of recruits who have to repeat aspects of their training and are put back a class is well managed.

Recruits make a smooth transition from phase 1 training. Their induction is well planned and managed, and covers important areas of welfare. They get an induction pack that includes a clear account of the Navy’s equal opportunities policy and its response to harassment and bullying. There is, however, too little discussion of these matters during the induction period.

There is no planned support for recruits whose literacy and numeracy skills are weak. Records of recruits’ learning needs are not passed to HMS Collingwood quickly enough. Recruits are not assessed when they start their phase 2 training and staff respond slowly to their needs. The good literacy and numeracy resources in the learning centre go to waste as recruits do not use them.

Few recruits withdraw from training, and the number withdrawing for medical reasons is exceptionally low. Recruits who are thinking about leaving the Navy are interviewed and given time to consider their decision. Although the reasons for their departure are carefully recorded, the information is not used in the overall quality assurance of recruits’ experience.

Instructors and duty of care staff are not selected and trained thoroughly enough. Instructing is seen as a way of filling time between duties on board ship. There are no checks on naval instructors’ suitability to work with young people or on their criminal records. The civilian instructors, one-third of the total, are properly trained and selected. Some of the duty of care staff have not received appropriate training on the care of recruits.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of phase 2 recruits</th>
<th>Number of under-18s</th>
<th>Number of phase 3 recruits</th>
<th>Number of military staff</th>
<th>Number of civilian staff</th>
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<td>303</td>
<td>50</td>
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86 per cent of recruits completed their training successfully in the past full year.

Unannounced inspection 6 – 9 December 2004
Recruits’ accommodation is well maintained, clean, modern and attractive. It is inspected regularly. There are good shower and lavatory facilities. There is a wide choice of good food. Recruits have access to sports facilities, plenty of social areas, and to the internet.

Medical support for recruits is good. The health centre is modern. Appointments are readily available and staff offer a wide range of preventive health services. Recruits are looked after well when they are ill, but there are few facilities for those who are not fit enough to return to their cabins but do not need hospital care.

Management of alcohol for under-18s is satisfactory. A curfew operates, which is monitored by staff regularly during the night. The under-18s have their own club, managed by the chaplains, which does not serve alcohol.

Access to gambling machines is unregulated. Although the machines are clearly marked as out of bounds to under-18s, their use is not monitored. The machines generate a profit of £1,300 per week, much of which is put back into the facilities, but there has been no research into whether they are leading to debt among recruits.

Access to firearms and ammunition is satisfactory. All weapons and ammunition are kept in secure storage on site. Separate weapons are provided for parade training, weapons handling and live firings on the range. Recruits are only issued with ammunition on the outdoor range, and then only at the firing point. They do not take part in guard duties.

Recruits do not get enough time to rest after being on late duty watch. This often leaves them tired and unable to perform effectively in class. Recruits do not take part in enough physical activities and make sufficient use of the good sporting and recreational facilities. Staff recognise this concern and plan to increase the amount of physical training in the timetable.

The approach to equality of opportunity is superficial. Staff do not understand the wider implications of equality and diversity. They do not see the need to monitor recruits’ performance and welfare using equality indicators such as gender, ethnicity, age, home town or learning ability. They ‘treat everyone the same’ and do not understand why they should monitor and respond to individual needs and differences. There are inappropriate posters in staff rooms and areas for recruits. The system for processing bullying or harassment complaints is sound, but complaints are not always handled appropriately.

Data are not used effectively to evaluate welfare and duty of care arrangements. The results of exit interviews are not analysed. HMS Collingwood collects data on its apprentices for the local Learning and Skills Council but keeps it separate from the data on course performance. The management information systems are incompatible. Instructors are monitored using yet another database, which is not kept up to date.
HMS Raleigh

HMS Raleigh, in Plymouth, Devon, is the Royal Navy’s only phase 1 training establishment for ratings (junior sailors). It also provides phase 2 submarine training, logistics and seamanship, which were not inspected. The establishment comprises the Royal Naval Logistics School, the Royal Naval Submarine School and the Specialist Training and Recruit School. Raleigh is also home to the band of Her Majesty’s Royal Marines.

Phase 1 training lasts for eight weeks. Recruits are security-screened before they can join the Royal Navy, and checks are made on their fitness, health, eyesight, attitude to drugs and levels of literacy and numeracy.

Judgements

Completion rates are good. HMS Raleigh has a comprehensive system for monitoring and communicating recruits’ progress. Poor performance is noted by the divisional staff and acted upon. Course evaluations take place regularly during and at the end of each course. Instructors see the results and make changes accordingly. Data on recruits’ performance are routinely collected, but there is no monitoring of success by ethnic group.

Training is well organised. Strategic planning identifies the establishment’s future needs. Significant improvements have been made to ensure that most recruits transfer smoothly between phase 1 and phase 2 of their training. Recruits awaiting medical examinations, those with long-term injuries, and those waiting to start their trade training follow a good training programme which allows them to improve their literacy, numeracy and naval skills. Some recruits are given inaccurate and inappropriate information by their armed forces careers office. They are advised to buy items that they do not need. In a few cases, medical screening carried out before they join the Royal Navy fails to identify health problems which prevent recruits from completing their course.

Recruits are well supported by the divisional system (system of supervision) which governs staff. Recruits are happy to turn to their leading hands and divisional officers if they have a problem. Staff, however, deal with problems and complaints at the lowest level. They do not record them and do not pass them up the chain of command. Senior staff are unaware of the frequency or nature of such issues. A carers’ forum regularly reviews training, medical and welfare issues and shares best practice.

Instructors are well trained and monitored. Recruits, instructors and divisional staff are well informed about recruits’ progress. Records are maintained and used well. Instructors tell divisional staff if the recruits are struggling with training, and the divisional staff often provide good extra training support.

Equality of opportunity is not sufficiently reinforced throughout the training. All new staff attend equality training during their induction and those who have a specific role in this area, such as equal opportunities advisers, receive extra training. However, some staff, including a number at senior level, openly use inappropriate language. Recruits attend a training session on equality of opportunity given by the chaplain at the beginning of their programme. They do not see it as an integral part of their naval training. The session outline does not refer to recent
legislation on sexual orientation, religion or belief. The Royal Navy is bound by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, which confers a statutory duty to produce a race equality plan. As yet, no such plan has been produced.

**Practical training is particularly well supervised,** and recruits understand their progress. Supervision and the general promotion of safety are good. There are appropriate briefings, and clear, detailed risk assessments are completed for all activities. *When physical training, such as press-ups or additional duties, is given as a punishment, it is not formally recorded by staff.* This contravenes the instructors’ code of practice.

**Access to firearms and ammunition is well managed.** There are clear processes and procedures to ensure that recruits only handle firearms under close supervision. Different senior officers are responsible for the armoury and the ammunition bunker. Weapons can never be taken to the accommodation blocks, and recruits are only issued with ammunition when they are training on the firing range. Recruits are not required to carry out armed guard duties.

**Access to alcohol is managed well on site.** Recruits aged under 18 cannot buy alcohol on site. No alcohol is available at the on-site shop. All recruits under 18 are required to hand in their identity pass when leaving the establishment and collect it from the gatehouse on their return. However, some manage to buy alcohol and if the duty officer suspects they have been drinking, they are sent to the sick bay for an assessment and held there overnight. Recruits are regularly tested for drug misuse. There are no *women regulators* (naval police) at HMS Raleigh, so male regulators may have to search and interview women recruits.

**Accommodation is satisfactory.** Accommodation blocks are sparsely furnished to provide a realistic parallel to ship-board life, but they are well decorated and are kept exceptionally clean by the recruits. There are good sporting facilities including a swimming pool. Recreational facilities for non-sporting activities are very limited at weekends. *Food is of good quality but there is not enough of it.* Too many of the recruits interviewed chose not to eat meals in the galley, preferring to buy burgers from the bar or other food from the shop.

**Too much pressure is put on recruits when items of kit go missing.** Some items are mislaid, borrowed or collected by staff which leads to recruits failing inspections of their kit.

### Update following unannounced return visit

The *management executive* responded positively to the inspection and identified actions for improvement.

An officer had been appointed to review the adequacy and *supply of kit.*

A *care skills course* had been introduced for instructors. Supervision of recruits while eating has increased although the quality of food is still criticised by recruits.

*Recruits waiting for courses* to start have a new opportunity to shadow staff on board ships and there is a new dedicated physical training instructor attached to the group.

*Equality of opportunity* is still not reinforced sufficiently and data is not analysed adequately.

A *new woman regulator* is scheduled to join the team in June 2005.

Some medical problems have not been dealt with to the satisfaction of the recruits.

A new procedure for recording loss of personal items has been put in place to try to alleviate the theft that takes place.
HMS Sultan

HMS Sultan is in Gosport, Hampshire. It is the largest of the Royal Navy’s training establishments, with up to 3,000 service and civilian personnel. The focus of the inspection was on phase two recruits at the School of Marine Engineering and the Air Engineering and Survival School.

The School of Marine Engineering is organised into three training groups: marine engineering officers, marine engineering artificers and marine engineering mechanics. The Air Engineering and Survival School is part of the Defence College of Aeronautical Engineering. It is headed by a commander and made up of six training groups including the initial training group, which provides basic training for air engineer mechanics and artificer apprentices in aircraft servicing, refuelling and movement.

Judgements

Completion rates for marine engineering mechanics, submariners, and marine engineering artificers are very good. Those for air engineering mechanics are too low. Recruits make good progress. However, all recruits follow the same programme irrespective of their previous work experience or qualifications. Instructors provide effective remedial training to support recruits who have failed examinations. All recruits who withdraw from courses early are given support, advice and counselling by designated welfare and resettlement staff and course officers.

The transition from phase 1 to phase 2 is satisfactory. Staff from HMS Sultan visit HMS Raleigh to talk to phase 1 recruits about the training. There is some good individual support for recruits with learning difficulties, but it is sometimes slow to start. Recruits are unable to experience life at sea on a working ship before committing themselves to four years’ naval service. Most recruits have a chance to visit ships, but some only visit historic vessels and do not get to meet serving sailors or see inside the kind of vessel they will work in.

Instructors’ recruitment, induction and selection are unsatisfactory. They may have to wait up to six months before they can attend courses in defence instructional techniques, care of trainees, and coaching and mentoring. Too many are teaching recruits before they have done so. Instructors are formally assessed once a year, and given written and verbal feedback. Those judged unsatisfactory are mentored and coached.

Support for recruits aged under 18 is good. They have a midnight curfew and their beds are checked to ensure compliance. Communication with their families and guardians is good, and their leave arrangements are carefully checked to ensure that they are going to an agreed address. New measures are being introduced to monitor under-18s’ absence from the site. Identity cards have recently been introduced to prevent underage drinking, but staff do not always check them. There are gambling machines in the laundry area and although under-18s are not permitted to use them, access is unregulated.

Welfare arrangements are satisfactory. Recruits are effectively supported by divisional officers and leading hands, though some have not attended the Care of Trainees course. The chaplaincy is the main source of support and advice outside the chain of command, and trainees know how to contact its staff. Chaplains do not record the details of their contacts with...
recruits. A **carers’ group** meets every two weeks. Its members include civilian and naval personnel involved in the welfare of recruits, but not senior staff, or divisional officers with specific welfare responsibilities. It provides some good support for recruits with complex welfare needs.

**Rehabilitation procedures for injured recruits are unsatisfactory.** HMS Sultan does not have a qualified remedial physical training instructor. There is little co-ordination of care between the medical staff and the physical training instructors. There is no written rehabilitation plan for an injured recruit to share with sports staff; recruits are expected to work out their own exercise regime. Recruits who have failed the Royal Navy fitness test are supposed to attend remedial physical training sessions, but their attendance is not monitored efficiently.

**Recruits at risk of failing to complete their training are not adequately monitored.** There is no detailed register of recruits at risk. The carers’ group adheres too strictly to confidentiality guidelines and does not minute its meetings. Its effectiveness relies too much on the memories of individual members. **Recruits’ records** are held in several different departments, and are not co-ordinated to identify trends or underlying problems. Divisional officers do not use a set format for their records or file them centrally. Some keep more detailed records than others. There is no standardised system for recording punishments.

**Accommodation, food and laundry services are satisfactory.** In one of the old accommodation blocks, however, lavatories are regularly blocked and overflowing. Most minor damage is repaired quickly. About 45 per cent of recruits do not take breakfast. Various strategies have been tried to deal with this but without success. Short meal periods make it difficult for recruits to get involved in some sports activities. Sporting and recreation facilities are good and well used by staff and recruits. Gym shoes issued by the Royal Navy are not adequate and do not prevent dangerous slipping.

**Access to firearms and ammunition is managed appropriately.** Weapons are only used in training exercises on site. All recruits have a weapons handling test every two months. They

are not required to carry out armed guard duties.

**Complaints are not adequately recorded or passed up the chain of command.** Staff deal with them at the lowest possible level and are not adequately monitored while doing so. Many recruits are reluctant to complain for fear of reprisal. Arrangements for **equality of opportunity** are satisfactory. There is some good informal promotion of equality during teaching sessions.

**Data management is good.** There are monthly surveys of recruits that include questions on welfare support, discrimination, harassment and bullying. Recruits also take part in a post-course discussion group. Feedback from this is recorded and passed on to instructors and senior staff. If recruits have commented on ineffective teaching or inappropriate behaviour by an instructor, prompt action is taken to deal with this. All recruits who withdraw from training complete an exit questionnaire.
Commando Training Centre Royal Marines (CTCRM) Lympstone

Commando Training Centre Royal Marines (CTCRM) Lympstone is the home training establishment for all Royal Marine commandos and the only one that trains recruits. Commando training falls under the remit of the Royal Navy. There are no women recruits.

The commando training wing consists of five different companies, each divided into troops. The same small training team works with each troop throughout the training programme. Each company is commanded by a major assisted by a company sergeant major. Specialist physical training and drill instructors, who are experienced Royal Marines, are attached to each company.

Judgements

Completion rates are poor. Only 56 per cent of the recruits who started their training in 2002-03 completed it, and the proportion fell to 50 per cent in 2003-04. Senior officers have identified this as a major problem. Actions taken to deal with it include interviews with personnel services officers and changes to the physical training regime. It is too early to judge whether these initiatives are working, but so far this year fewer recruits have withdrawn than in the past. In 2004, the biggest single reason recruits gave for leaving was a dislike of the Royal Marines’ lifestyle. Few recruits leave for medical reasons.

Recruits are effectively introduced to military routines, practices and expectations during a two-week foundation programme. They are encouraged to support each other, their team and the corps and are linked with a ‘buddy’, for whom they are responsible. However, the arrangements for the care and supervision of under-18s during the course are inadequate.

They stay in accommodation with older potential recruits who have not had security or criminal record checks.

Recruit training is purposeful and well structured. All instructors use the same clear and detailed guidance for delivering training, and there are specifications for individual training sessions. Recruits and training staff are very clear about the standards required and are well motivated. Team spirit within troops is generally strong and troop sergeants are alert to any changes in morale.

Some recruits are given incorrect information by armed forces careers offices on rates of pay and the equipment they need. There is no psychological testing during the selection process and some recruits are accepted for training even though recruiting staff have doubts that they can cope with it. In the second week of their training recruits are interviewed by personnel services officers. They often speak freely during these meetings and some are put on an ‘at risk’ register as a result. The Royal Navy’s maths and English test is not an effective measure of recruits’ skills. It is so out of date that some recruits do not understand the questions. Recruits with learning problems are not given enough support. One recruit with dyslexia was told to ‘work harder’.

Most practical training sessions are well supervised and subject to detailed risk assessments. Recruits are tested throughout the course, and instructors often provide additional support in the evenings and at weekends.

Theory sessions are too formal and often disjointed. Recruits are sometimes bored and miss vital information.
Physical training instructors sometimes punish recruits by making them jump into a static cold water tank. Whole teams of recruits may be ordered to jump into the tank as a result of misdemeanours by one or two of them. These punishments are not recorded or monitored.

Training teams in all companies closely monitor recruits’ progress, giving them regular feedback on their strengths and areas for improvement. However, individual training records often hold insufficient background information about recruits’ development and progress.

Monitoring of recruits’ welfare is uncoordinated and too informal. A carers forum and duty of care working group are relatively new and do not yet complement each other. Training teams use different approaches and this has a negative effect on some recruits’ morale.

Recruits who are injured or who fail physical fitness tests are well supported. They are assigned to a rehabilitation company where qualified remedial instructors take them through individual programmes of treatment and physical training. Recruits continue to attend military skills training, but also follow a progressive programme of physical training until they are fit.

The four-week cycle of activities is not enough to maintain the motivation of recruits with longer-term injuries. Despite a good programme of health education, some recruits are reluctant to seek medical help as they do not want their training to be held up.

The approach to equality of opportunity is simplistic. There is an assumption that staff and recruits will read the equal opportunities policy and booklets provided and follow their guidance. Although the establishment has equality advisers, there are no training sessions to reinforce or update important messages. The advisers do not hold regular meetings to consider matters that affect the establishment, training teams or recruits.

Staff maintain good links with recruits’ families. Telephone conversations between staff and parents are recorded. There is a families’ day during the course when parents can meet staff and learn about the difficulties the recruits face. Recruits are encouraged to contact their parents each week. They have a long-weekend leave every six weeks.

Weapons are sometimes stored unsafely in recruits’ accommodation, in lockers that are not securely fastened. Systematic processes and procedures are strictly applied to ensure recruits can only draw firearms from the armoury under the close supervision of the training team. Recruits are not required to carry out armed guarding duties.

Accommodation, food and clothing are satisfactory. However, the laundry and drying facilities are inadequate. Chaplains provide good 24-hour support.

Instructors are well trained. Good emphasis is put on coaching as a method of support. However, some staff doubt the value of the Care of Recruits course, which they view as irrelevant to an all-male environment.
Royal Marines School of Music (RMSoM)

The Royal Marines School of Music (RMSoM) is housed in HMS Nelson at Portsmouth. It is under the control of Portsmouth Naval Base and the Maritime Warfare School at HMS Collingwood. It offers phase 1, phase 2 and phase 3 training to recruit musicians and buglers wishing to join the Band Service. Recruits can join the RMSoM from the age of 16. Phase 1 basic military and physical training lasts for 15 weeks. At phase 2, music training is emphasised. The course for musicians lasts 32 months and the one for buglers lasts 24 months. Each recruit has their own practice room and is assigned a civilian professor of music. They also have a Band Service non-commissioned officer instructor for each instrument that they are learning. There are five bands that they can choose to join. Some recruits have the opportunity of attending opera, ballet and orchestral concerts in London.

Judgements

Completion rates are very good. Recruits receive expert practical and academic tuition. Instructors are checked for criminal records but visiting professors are not. Each recruit has at least one individual lesson a week with their music professor. The professors set very precise objectives which the instructors refer to when supporting recruits between lessons. Practical music training is supplemented by well-supervised academic classes.

Recruitment and selection of recruits are particularly effective. A colour sergeant from the School of Music attends recruitment events around the country. There is a thorough four-day audition process. Applicants who fail this are given clear feedback on how to improve their performance and invited to re-audition in the future. Most recruits received detailed and accurate information from the armed forces careers offices.

Recruits make good progress and are closely monitored. They are formally assessed twice a term by their professors, who give them specific detailed feedback on what they need to do to improve. They know what they have achieved, and their success is celebrated. Staff maintain reliable records on each recruit’s progress. Recruits have notebooks which are used effectively for communications between professors, instructors and the recruits themselves.

The four recruits in the rehabilitation troop, two of whom have been injured since October 2004, have little purposeful activity to occupy them. They have continued their musical training, mainly on their own initiative. Remedial physical instructors from CTCRM Lympstone are supposed to support their rehabilitation, and the recruits spend every morning carrying out an exercise programme. This is not geared to their individual needs and does not relate specifically to their injuries. Some recruits are understandably demotivated and feel stigmatised by other recruits. The establishment’s carers’ forum has not yet discussed this situation.

Teaching is thoroughly assessed. Instructors and professors are scheduled to have annual assessments, although the professors’ work patterns sometimes make this difficult to achieve. Observations are a key element of the assessment. Staff in the same role are divided into groups of three, who observe each another. They attend training sessions before they carry out an observation. There is no formal way of gathering feedback from individual recruits.

92 per cent of recruits completed their training successfully in the past full year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of phase 1, phase 2 and phase 3 recruits</th>
<th>Number of under-18s</th>
<th>Number of military staff</th>
<th>Number of civilian staff</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>86</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>27</td>
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Number of phase 1, phase 2 and phase 3 recruits: 86
Number of under-18s: 10
Number of military staff: 19
Number of civilian staff: 27

Royal Marines School of Music (RMSoM) Inspected 31 January – 2 February 2005
about their instruments, professors or instructors.

**Instructor training and development are satisfactory.** For 81 per cent of instructors, a posting to the School of Music was their first choice. All phase 1 instructors have attended a two-week training programme at Lympstone. Phase 2 and 3 instructors are recruited for their musical ability. All instructors are required to attend courses in defence instructional techniques, care of recruits and mentoring but only half have done so. The selection of professors is highly competitive, and they are appointed on the basis of their knowledge, experience, musical expertise and teaching ability.

**The School of Music has a weak approach to promoting equality of opportunity.** Some recruits and staff have little understanding of policies relating to the subject. Some do not remember being given a copy of the equality of opportunity and diversity booklet at induction. The policy is not covered in any depth at induction or at other times during the training programme. The Royal Navy specifies that all staff must have annual training on the misuse of alcohol and drugs, but equality of opportunity is not afforded the same degree of importance. The School of Music has general recruitment targets but these do not refer to recruits from minority ethnic groups. There are no recruits from minority ethnic groups, and there are no targets or strategies for recruitment from under-represented groups.

**Recruits are aware of the complaints process.** Serious complaints are dealt with satisfactorily. They are recorded and referred to the equal opportunities adviser at HMS Nelson. Minor complaints and problems, however, are dealt with at instructor level or recruits are told to sort them out themselves. These complaints are not recorded.

**Food is adequate** although some recruits complain that there is too little variety, particularly in the evening. Many recruits choose to buy their own food, and some do not eat breakfast. This can present problems particularly when they are undergoing physical training early in the morning. Clothing and equipment supplied is generally satisfactory. Some recruits choose to purchase their own musical instruments but most are provided by the School of Music and are very good. **There is a spacious and clean laundry area with sufficient washing machines and dryers.** A gambling machine in the laundry is not supervised. Medical support is satisfactory. **Recruits do not have access to firearms and ammunition.**

**Welfare support systems are satisfactory and recruits have confidence in them.** Recruits are well aware of welfare and duty of care procedures. There is one female instructor, and women recruits can turn to her for support if they wish. Chaplains do not record their contacts with recruits. A multi-disciplinary care forum meets regularly to discuss general medical, social and psychological problems affecting recruits. **Staff understand that recruits’ welfare is a collective responsibility.**

**Arrangements for the care and supervision of recruits under 18 years of age are inadequate.** During inspection, 11 per cent of recruits were aged under 18. Duty officers conduct random checks of the accommodation blocks and recreational facilities during the evenings and at night, but do not check individual beds. Recruits must sign in and out of the base during evenings and weekends. This process is not adequately monitored or enforced to ensure that recruits aged under 18 keep to their curfew. There are no checks on whether recruits have been drinking when they return from an evening out. Under-18s drink alcohol in HMS Nelson’s bar.
Royal Air Force (RAF) Cosford

Royal Air Force (RAF) Cosford is the headquarters of the Defence College of Aeronautical Engineering, one of six defence colleges across the country. It is run by an executive board that includes the commandant, the director of support and the director of training. Training for aircraft and support trades is organised into three wings. The aerosystems mechanical training wing and the electro-avionic training wing make up No 1 School of Technical Training. The military training wing comprises the RAF School of Physical Training and three outdoor activity centres.

The organisation of training at RAF Cosford has been in transition since July 2004. Under the new arrangements, training will be provided to the Army, Royal Navy and Royal Air Force through contractors, while recruits will be managed by their respective services.

Judgements

Overall, completion rates are good. First-time pass rates for phase 2 recruits are too low at 62 per cent and those for under-18s are significantly lower than the average.

Recruits’ transfer and induction from phase 1 training is well managed. All recruits are briefed by non-commissioned officers from RAF Cosford before they leave RAF Halton, and comprehensive records of their experience follow them. They have a well-structured 10-week induction programme reinforced by a comprehensive induction handbook. Recruits aged under 18 have their own recreation facilities.

Instructors, mentors and training development co-ordinators provide good welfare support. Mentors are always available for their recruits, and see them at least once a week. Good support is also provided by staff outside the chain of command. These include members of the Soldiers’, Sailors’, Airmen and Families Association social workers, the chaplaincy and external agencies. A health and well-being committee has recently been set up to consider the major health issues which affect recruits at Cosford. It is too early to judge its effectiveness.

Arrangements for signing in and out of the base are not yet working properly, and a new system is currently being piloted to tighten them up. Recruits resist signing in at the gate after midnight, particularly if they have been drinking. At busy times they walk straight past the guards, and they are often abusive when challenged.

Recruits with additional learning needs are well supported. Most of the learning support staff have attended dyslexia, dyspraxia and dyscalculia awareness sessions. Instructors make good use of a variety of tools and techniques to help individuals with specific learning difficulties. Recruits identified as being at risk of failing to complete their course for mental health reasons can be referred to an educational psychologist to identify how best they may be supported.

Physical training instructors do not routinely check whether recruits have injuries before exercise sessions begin. Injuries sustained during training sessions are not always recorded in the accident book. Some activity sessions do not include sufficient warm-up and cool-down time and others place excessive physical demands on the recruits. RAF Cosford has excellent sports and leisure facilities although there is limited access to facilities at the weekend. Physical training instructors often use individual and group punishments, usually
press-ups, for minor misdemeanours during training. **These punishments are not recorded** and are not subject to any guidelines. Some instructors apply punishments more rigorously than others.

Some instructors have inadequate training skills, although they are well qualified and have demonstrated competence and expertise in their technical field. Civilian instructors do not receive formal mentoring or training in the supervision of recruits. Physical training instructors are selected for the job but do not have training in welfare and duty of care even though they will be responsible for recruits’ welfare.

**Accommodation is generally satisfactory**, although it takes too long to complete repairs. Some of the lights in showers and bathrooms have not worked for some time, and there are broken showers and lavatories. Recruits are expected to keep their accommodation clean. They have to buy their own cleaning materials as they are not allowed to use those in the cleaners’ stores. Recruits are not trained in cleaning up bodily fluids such as blood and vomit, and do not have access to gloves or protective clothing. **On-site laundry facilities are limited** to a contracted launderette service. **The quality of food varies.** It is good in one restaurant. Many recruits prefer to buy sandwiches from the on-site shop.

**Medical support is good.** There are well-staffed medical and dentistry centres on site and recruits have 24-hour access to a doctor. All recruits who are injured are assessed by the physiotherapist and a physical training rehabilitation instructor. They are given an exercise programme to follow, although they do not always use it. **Data on the incidence of injuries are not gathered systematically and used to improve physical training.**

**Alcohol is banned** in the barracks, but punishments for alcohol consumption are not applied consistently. Under-18s are not allowed to buy alcohol on site, but bar staff sometimes fail to check recruits’ ages before serving them. There is no routine monitoring of the **gambling machines** and their use by under-age recruits.

Access to firearms and ammunition is managed appropriately. Effective procedures ensure that recruits can only handle firearms under close supervision. Weapons are issued for full days, and when not in use are stored in locked racks in the guardhouse or regiment training block. Ammunition is counted out from the armoury store and any left over is counted back in. The top round in each magazine is marked with a red pen so that it is easy to see whether it has been loaded. **Security and guarding arrangements are satisfactory.** It is the station commander’s policy that phase 2 recruits carrying out guard duty are not armed but are accompanied by an armed airman. Recruits have to take part in the common skills training programme before they complete a week of guarding duties. This sometimes means missing part of their training.

Recruits’ complaints are not adequately recorded or passed up the chain of command. Staff use their own discretion to determine whether a complaint is justified and whether it is significant enough to be recorded, or referred up the chain of command. Recruits are not given sufficient information on the complaints and appeals procedures at induction. Approximately 10 per cent of recruits interviewed said they had no confidence in the complaints system.

**Equality of opportunity is not sufficiently reinforced with staff and recruits.** Many staff know little about the establishment’s equal opportunities policy and its implications, although most are committed to treating recruits fairly. Inspectors heard staff, including a number of senior officers, using inappropriate language. RAF Cosford has taken no positive action to promote race equality. It has not produced a race equality scheme despite its obligations under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. **The establishment does not know the ethnic background of its recruits.** Although staff collect extensive data on all aspects of recruits’ performance and experience, the absence of information on ethnic origin means that they cannot be sure that no discrimination is taking place.

A useful care directive has been produced which outlines the establishment’s policies, procedures and general approach to recruits’ welfare. **The executive team provides clear strategic direction on the welfare of recruits.** A
new committee to oversee welfare policy has been formed. Training development co-ordinators have been appointed. They will offer recruits guidance and advice, and closely monitor their academic performance and welfare needs.

**Management information is regularly collected.** Staff collect data on discharges, complaints, and incidents of self-harm, bullying and harassment, and analyse by recruits’ age and gender but not by ethnic origin. In one training school the results of analyses have led to course improvements and recommendations to review the entry standards for technical training courses. The other training schools have not taken such action. **Recruits are asked for their views** on each course and their responses are analysed and evaluated, but there is insufficient cross-school analysis to identify common points. Each course has performance targets which are monitored at squadron level. Wing commanders effectively use a traffic-light system to identify and focus on poorly performing courses.
Royal Air Force (RAF) Halton

Royal Air Force (RAF) Halton is near Aylesbury in Buckinghamshire. It provides training for more than 24,000 airmen and airwomen each year. Several units use RAF Halton’s premises but are separate to the main training activity.

Phase 1 training takes place in the recruit training squadron and the airmen development flight. Recruits follow a nine-week programme. If successful they either move to other stations for phase 2 training or stay at Halton to train for the police, logistics, administration or catering trades.

Phase 2 training is provided on site by units of the defence colleges. Recruits move into the airmen development flight if their phase 2 course is delayed, they are on sick leave, or have been sent back a stage from a phase 2 course. Most stay for seven weeks, but some stay for up to 18 months. Phase 3 training is advanced specialist training including management courses for staff who have been in service for many years.

Judgements

Completion rates are very good for phase 1 and phase 2 recruits. RAF Halton manages welfare and the duty of care particularly well. There is clear direction from the station commander and his team for the care of recruits. Policies and procedures are clear and are effectively implemented. New initiatives to improve the welfare of recruits have yet to be fully tested. Training activity is systematically audited through observation, and regular feedback is sought from recruits, but there is no evaluation of how the duty of care is being carried out.

Staff provide good support for recruits in all phases of training. They are trained to identify individuals who are experiencing problems. Instructors provide additional training and support in a sensitive manner, and try to limit the number who have to re-take part of the course.

Recruits aged under 18 are supported particularly well. They are segregated from other recruits, closely monitored, and are not allowed to drink alcohol. Recruits are not allowed to carry weapons on guard duty. There are effective systems to prevent any unsupervised handling of firearms, ammunition and other explosive devices by recruits and staff.

Recruits’ literacy, numeracy and language problems are not identified early enough. Most armed forces careers offices test recruits’ literacy, numeracy and key skills. Recruits are also asked if they have any additional learning needs, but some do not disclose this information in case they are turned down by the Royal Air Force. Some recruits’ problems are not identified until they start their phase 2 training. RAF Halton plans to introduce diagnostic testing for phase 1 recruits with the option of referring them for further assessments and support. Support is quickly provided once problems are identified. However, literacy and numeracy support is only available one evening each week, and some recruits only receive 30 minutes of support a week.

Staff at RAF Halton maintain records well and transfer them promptly to the recruits’ next establishment. Phase 2 recruits have the useful opportunity to visit operational units and meet aircrew who are doing the jobs that they hope to do. Instructors provide good additional training to help recruits progress through a tightly packed programme, but there is little time for additional activities or relaxation.
Recruits experience delays of between a few days and several months before their phase 2 courses begin. During this time the recruits’ skills decrease and some lose motivation after the intensive activity of phase 1. Their programme is not sufficiently structured to make good use of their time. This is also a problem for recruits in the rehabilitation flight.

Data are used effectively to review recruits’ performance, although the establishment does not routinely collect data on recruits’ ethnicity. The management team makes good use of data to evaluate recruits’ performance and identify how effectively the duty of care is exercised. For example, data on each phase and flight are used to find out why recruits withdraw early from training. It is reviewed regularly and effectively, and trends are identified and investigated with staff.

Instructors are well trained before they start their job. Their training includes relevant courses on coaching and the care of recruits. Not all RAF personnel regard instructing as a desirable profession.

Food and accommodation are satisfactory. Recruits are well supported by their corporals and shown how to wash and iron their clothes. Practical training is well supervised.

Medical screening at recruitment fails to identify many recruits’ health problems. Between 10 and 15 per cent of the medical reports contain errors of judgement. Some reports arrive late at RAF Halton so that by the time errors are identified it is too late to prevent unfit recruits joining the service. In other cases, RAF Halton’s medical team has identified a health problem which was missed at the recruitment stage. Some recruits are reluctant to seek medical attention because they are worried that they may have to go back a stage in their training if they are ill or have an injury.

Update following unannounced return visit

The management executive produced an action plan following the first inspection.

Staff have developed a training package for contracted doctors in the careers offices to improve the quality of recruits’ medical assessment which has yet to be tested.

An evaluation of duty of care arrangements has been developed similar to the evaluation of training that already existed.

Assessment of recruits’ literacy and numeracy problems remains an area to improve, although a new assessment tool will be piloted with recruits in April.

Rehabilitation for injured recruits is now more structured. Recruits who remain for longer than four weeks still experience a lack of activity, however.

The average length of stay for recruits waiting to start their phase 2 training has reduced slightly to 26 days but recruits who are put back a stage can wait up to three months for their course to begin.
Royal Air Force (RAF) Honington is near Bury St Edmunds in Suffolk. It houses some of the operational units of the RAF Regiment, and is the headquarters of the force commander. The RAF Regiment provides ground and short-range air defence for RAF aircraft.

The training wing at Honington is responsible for most of the training for regiment personnel. All recruits are men. The training wing is also responsible for physical education, the standards flight, and a support flight that, among other things, provides assistance to the recruits’ field exercises. It has administrative staff and an officer who is responsible for training development advice.

For administrative and support purposes the recruits are divided into sections consisting of about 12 recruits, led by a corporal.

**Judgements**

**Completion rates are too low.** In the last full year, the completion rate was 62 per cent, but it has now returned to the previous level of less than 50 per cent. Sixty-four per cent of the withdrawals are voluntary, and most take place at the first available opportunity. The role of the RAF Regiment is a difficult one. High standards of performance and physical fitness are needed to work in war zones but difficulties in recruiting have led to the entry standards being lowered. Training staff have analysed when recruits are most likely to withdraw from the course, and have made changes to deal with this. Analysis of the data has revealed that recruits from some armed forces careers offices have a much lower completion rate than others. This information has been passed back to the recruiting organisation for investigation.

**RAF Honington has tried several initiatives to improve completion rates, with insufficient success.** The ‘potential gunner acquaintance’ course runs for 36 hours over three days. It is intended to improve the retention rate for recruit gunners by giving applicants a taste of the demands of service life and training, and allowing the regiment to identify those who are obviously unsuitable. All applicants must attend the course, and at the end of it a recommendation as to whether to accept them is passed to the relevant armed forces careers office. Some recruits report that the course is misleading and does not give potential recruits a true reflection of the rigour of the course. Some recruits are not given enough information by the armed forces careers offices and underestimate the demands of phase 1 and 2 training and of service life.

**Recruits’ safety is managed effectively.** They do not carry out armed guard duties and are always supervised during weapons training. Weapons are returned promptly to the armoury at the end of each training session. Live ammunition is only used under close supervision on the firing range, or during the live firing exercise at the end of the course.

**Support for recruits who have specific learning difficulties is good.** Most training staff have a positive approach and use a range of tests, procedures and support to encourage recruits to develop.

**Recruits’ medical records arrive too late.** Some recruits report to the establishment with injuries that prevent them from starting the course. Recruits have a medical check-up at the start of their training and this can identify problems which need further treatment or restrictions to
their training programme. The rehabilitation flight offers a generally satisfactory environment for recruits who have medical or training problems, but periods of inactivity have led to some recruits becoming demotivated.

Staff work hard to improve the training and the recruits’ experience. The training squadron, standards flight and training development officer are constantly reviewing problem areas and putting them right. Recruits are asked for feedback, and this is analysed and acted upon. Managers use data about recruits and their progress effectively to identify where action is needed to improve care and welfare.

Welfare arrangements are satisfactory. Recruits are supported by the chain of command and by the establishment's wider services, including chaplains, medical staff, police, and staff from voluntary organisations. Recruits have their own alcohol-free recreational area and their food and accommodation are generally satisfactory. Many of the accommodation blocks do not, however, have enough showers and there is not enough hot water at peak times.

RAF Honington’s instructor training strategy is good. Instructors have appropriate pre-employment training and take further short courses during their posting. After they attend courses, instructors are thoroughly debriefed. They use their new knowledge in the classroom and share it with their colleagues. Each instructor is observed four times a year, at least once in the field and once in the classroom.
Royal Air Force (RAF) St Athan

Royal Air Force (RAF) St Athan is near Barry in South Glamorgan. It is the only school for Royal Air Force ground engineering technicians. Most recruits follow advanced apprenticeships or national vocational qualifications (NVQs) in electrical, mechanical and motor vehicle maintenance, workshop production or aircraft painting and finishing. They come from phase 1 training at RAF Halton and other establishments. The school offers phase 2 and phase 3 training. Phase 2 training takes between 14 and 18 months.

The school has an accreditation and engineering principles squadron which provides basic engineering training to all trades; a training development and support squadron which provides administrative support; and an engineering training squadron which provides trade training and is responsible for the immediate welfare of the recruits. The engineering training squadron is further divided into the electrical flight, the mechanical flight and the painter and finisher flight.

Judgements

Completion rates are good and first-time pass rates are particularly good at 85 per cent. Of the 2003-04 intake, only 6 per cent have withdrawn and the first-time pass rate remains high. Recruits who fail their course or who withdraw temporarily for medical reasons follow useful programmes that prepare them to rejoin training.

Recruits are not given enough information about their phase 2 training before they come to RAF St Athan. Some are given incorrect information about the length of courses, the accommodation and the leisure activities available. Staff from RAF St Athan do not routinely visit RAF Halton to talk to potential trainees.

Support for trainees with literacy or numeracy problems is good. Recruits receive help from a dyslexia specialist or the key skills tutor. Almost all those who complete their training gain key skills awards at level 2.

Training is not adequately co-ordinated. During the week of inspection, recruits reported that they had two kit inspections, two block inspections and an examination. Physical training sessions, including swimming lessons, often take place immediately after breakfast. Physical training instructors do not always perform adequate warm-up and cool-down routines. Some recruits have a poor understanding of how they are progressing. There are no routine progress reviews for recruits aged over 18 and recorded interviews are held by exception, usually when problems arise.

Instructors are appropriately trained and their lessons are observed annually. There is, however, no systematic recording of the observations. RAF training staff are expected to remain in post for three years but some of the non-commissioned training officers regard their post as an interruption to their operational work.

Welfare arrangements are satisfactory. There is good communication between civilian and military welfare services on matters affecting recruits’ welfare. The health centre is good but there is no overnight care and it offers little health education.

Consumption of alcohol by recruits aged under 18 is not adequately monitored. Alcohol is available to recruits at the social club and at the

**Summary reports**

**Royal Air Force (RAF) St Athan**

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<th>Inspected 10 - 13 January 2005</th>
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<tr>
<td>Number of phase 2 recruits</td>
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87 per cent of recruits completed their training successfully in the past full year.
establishment’s shop. Bar staff do not routinely check the age of recruits and duty non-commissioned officers do not systematically challenge **under-18s who are drinking**. Senior officers are aware of this problem. There are no signing-in or signing-out procedures for recruits leaving the site. No one knows who is on site during evenings and weekends.

**Equality of opportunity is not adequately promoted and monitored during training.** There is over-reliance on the single induction session to reinforce equality of opportunity. There are course evaluations during and at the end of each course, but these focus on the training rather than recruits’ wider experience. **There is little promotion of the complaints process,** and some recruits are reluctant to complain. Staff are encouraged to deal with complaints at the lowest possible level. Recruits do not know who they might contact outside the chain of command. Senior officers have little understanding of the range of incidents which are being dealt informally.

**No record is kept of physical exercise and parade duties being used as punishments.** Staff are unaware of the need to record such punishments. Whole group punishments are sometimes used.

**Accommodation and facilities are generally satisfactory,** clean and well maintained. Storage lockers for personal equipment are not secure enough. There has been some petty thieving. There is limited access to leisure facilities during the evenings and weekends. There is a recreational bar that does not serve alcohol but it is not always open, and there is too little information about other clubs and societies. **Food is good** but the evening meal is served too early and there are limited facilities for refreshments in the evening.

**Access to weapons and ammunition is closely supervised.** Rifles are stored safely and securely. Weapons are signed out of the armory by a non-commissioned officer. They are never taken to the accommodation blocks and are returned to the armory during meal times and when not required. Ammunition is properly accounted for. Recruits complete two weeks of guard duty and are properly trained and well supervised.

**Data are not routinely analysed to review performance by gender or age.** Reports are produced regularly for the management executive meeting. Accident and near-miss recording and analysis are satisfactory. Data on accidents are analysed to identify trends, and action is taken and followed up.

**New initiatives to support recruits are yet to be fully tested.** Course mentors and duty officers provide help with minor welfare problems and supervise recruits. Although they are conscientious in their approach they have no terms of reference or job descriptions, and few have had training in welfare. Duty of care officers are responsible for recruits’ welfare outside working hours. None has yet attended full duty of care training.
Royal Air Force (RAF) Shawbury

Royal Air Force (RAF) Shawbury, in Shropshire, is the central air traffic control school for the RAF. The inspection focused on the 17 flight operations assistants who were attending RAF Shawbury after completing their phase 1 training at RAF Halton. The course lasts eight weeks: five weeks of theory followed by practical training in simulated air traffic control rooms and extensive testing. Recruits also begin work on key skills awards and a national vocational qualification (NVQ) in information technology, and aim to complete them when they are in post.

RAF Shawbury has four squadrons: a basic training squadron for air traffic controllers (Royal Air Force, Royal Navy, and foreign and Commonwealth students); a flight operations squadron which includes the flight operations school where the 17 recruits are based; an advanced training squadron for postgraduate students; and a computer systems squadron which maintains the simulators for air traffic controller courses.

Judgements

Completion rates are good. Recruits who fail to become flight operations assistants choose alternative trades rather than leave the Royal Air Force, and in the past 18 months, only one recruit has withdrawn from the service. Training groups are small and instructors frequently provide additional tutorials to complete the programme. Recruits have a tightly packed programme which meets the training objectives but makes little allowance for additional learning required or unforeseen absence such as sick leave.

Recruits are not adequately tested before they begin the course. There are no academic entry standards even though the course is highly academic in content. Recruits with poor literacy and numeracy are not always identified at recruitment or during phase 1 training. The course co-ordinator has identified that recruits who struggle with the course have poor general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) results in maths and English. This useful analysis has not altered the entry requirements for the course. Recruits report that the information given by armed forces careers offices does not adequately prepare them for training or give sufficient insight into the trade.

Staff provide good support throughout the complex and challenging training programme. They communicate effectively about recruits. Recruits receive a comprehensive handbook and are given frequent feedback on their performance. Instructors are on duty during the evenings and can be contacted during the night. Recruits are confident in their instructors and turn to them first before seeking further support from the chaplain, medical centre or HIVE (help, information and volunteer exchange). The HIVE centre only opens between 0900 and 1400 hours, which are peak training times, making it difficult for recruits to get to it. Recruits can use a confidential post-box if they do not want to approach somebody directly. There is no civilian voluntary organisation on site to ensure access to trained civilian counsellors independent of the military. Recruits are effectively encouraged to look out for each other and to report their concerns. Many are worried about the volume of work required to pass the course. Recruits are not involved in guard duty and do not have access to firearms.

Instructor training is good and places a strong emphasis on coaching recruits. Most instructors
are highly motivated volunteers for the job and have appropriate technical skills. Managers have no control, however, over the selection of trainee instructors. Instructor training and development is well structured and takes place over a period of five to six months. Instructors follow a three-week course and are then mentored by a standards officer in each flight. Each instructor is formally observed twice a year. The results are recorded and remedial action is taken if necessary. Examples of good practice are collected internally and from other training establishments, and shared at formal meetings. Potential instructors have to demonstrate presentation skills and technical knowledge at a pre-selection panel before they are appointed. They are not, however, checked for criminal records, and records of previous experience are not transferred to the new establishment.

Recruits, particularly those who need additional help with mathematics, English and computing, do not make good use of the learning centre. There is a quiet study room in the library but the recruits do not realise they can use it.

Recruits have good opportunities to maintain and develop their physical fitness. The sports and fitness facilities are good and recruits are given customised training to build on their level of fitness at arrival.

Accommodation and food are satisfactory. Recruits live in mixed accommodation blocks which are modern and attractive. They receive three substantial meals a day which include a high proportion of carbohydrate. Fruit and salad are freely available. Recruits who leave the site are monitored adequately. The teaching accommodation needs some refurbishment, particularly of its ventilation. It is too noisy to have windows open during training sessions as there are frequent helicopter flights.

Facilities are mostly satisfactory, although there are not enough social areas that do not serve alcohol, and there is no shop on site in the evenings. Most recruits spend a considerable time in the evenings revising, and they have little time for socialising. They travel home at weekends.

Data are not reviewed locally to identify trends by gender, age or ethnicity. There is no formal evaluation of the welfare and duty of care arrangements. Recruits are asked for feedback on their course but this is not used to review the training formally at strategic level. Feedback on phase 1 training is not collated or passed back to RAF Halton. Some staff maintain their own data on recruits to help review performance.
The School of Electronic and Aeronautical Engineering (SEAE) Arborfield trains technicians who are joining the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, and a few Royal Marines and Royal Air Force personnel. Most of the school became part of the Defence College of Electro-Mechanical Engineering in April 2004, with elements joining the Defence College of Aeronautical Engineering at the same time.

New recruits arrive at Arborfield from phase 1 training units and stay for two years. Most of them come from ATR Pirbright, but some young recruits come from the Army Foundation College at Harrogate. The vast majority of training is academic and technical. The establishment also hosts a significant number of experienced soldiers undergoing phase 3 specialist equipment or career and trade training course.

Technical training is mainly taught by civilian staff employed by a contractor. Military staff are responsible for the general command and care of recruits.

Judgements

Completion rates are too low. On average, only 63 per cent of recruits complete their formal training. A further 21 per cent move on to other Army units for training in new careers. Recruits are actively involved in discussing their future trades and postings, though some are frustrated to find their choices limited by the needs of the service. Discharge and reallocation of recruits is generally handled satisfactorily. Recruits who have to change trade can get support, but not all of them use it.

Recruits joining SEAE Arborfield are not given sufficiently detailed information about the system for streaming them into different trades, or the academic hurdles they may face in taking up the trade they have chosen. Most do not know that there are limited opportunities to re-sit courses and if they are unsuccessful they may have to consider another trade or leave the Army.

Recruits are under considerable pressure throughout their training and particularly in the initial courses. They receive very good support during this period from the academic staff, including regular additional evening tutorials and help with individual problems. They also have mentors drawn from the military technical staff.

Too many recruits are inactive or wasting time while waiting for their course to begin. They do not have enough physical training. There can be well over 100 recruits waiting to join courses at any time. There are opportunities for them to use their time productively including taking part in short courses and detachments.

Welfare services are comprehensive. Recreational facilities are good and most are close to the accommodation blocks. There is a café, internet suite, large-screen TV rooms, pool tables, arcade games and gymnasium and fitness suites. They have been extensively refurbished and are popular with the recruits. There are bars on site, but the recreation building is alcohol-free and is well used and liked by recruits.

Implementation of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. All officers and recruits have a training session on equal opportunities and their rights and responsibilities to the Army and to each other. Staff emphasise the importance of diversity. Equality of opportunity is covered in detail during recruits’ leadership training. Most recruits are well aware of how to make a
complaint. There is a list of named contacts for religious groups. A room is temporarily allocated for prayer meetings for one Muslim group and plans have already been agreed to create a dedicated prayer room in the near future.

Routine information on recruits is not shared effectively between all interested parties. The technical training staff keep detailed records of recruits’ progress but only pass information to duty of care staff if a recruit is making exceptionally poor or good performance. The duty of care staff may have little indication that a recruit is struggling until he or she fails an important test and faces a review board. The chain of command cannot easily access records kept by duty of care staff in order to monitor how recruits are being employed or supported.

Staff are supportive but have too little training on duty of care matters. Staff have appropriate initial formal training, but once in post, they are subject only to informal supervision, with no formal monitoring or development. Monitoring of technical staff is satisfactory. Sharing of good practice is satisfactory at management level, but not at junior staff level.

Data are managed well at management executive level, with detailed reports on the establishment’s overall performance being considered at weekly meetings. There is no routine analysis of performance by age, gender, or ethnic group, or monitoring of the total length of time recruits spend at Arborfield.

Recruits’ access to weapons, ammunition and explosives is controlled adequately. Some recruits carry out guard duties at night and this has an unsatisfactory effect on their performance in training in the following day.

Support from medical staff is satisfactory. Most injuries result from sports activities and there are relatively few medical discharges. Laundry facilities are adequate and the quantity and quality of food is satisfactory. Some domestic accommodation is below standard. There are problems with heating, hot water, security of lockers and reliable power supplies.
Army Training Regiment (ATR) Bassingbourn is in Cambridgeshire. It provides phase 1 training for recruits who are under 17 years of age at entry. The current course, which has been in place for about a year, is 17 weeks long. Thirty per cent of recruits move to phase 2 training in the Royal Logistical Corps and 29 per cent into the infantry.

Bassingbourn has four companies, each split into platoons. The platoons are divided into sections of about 12 soldiers under the direct supervision of a corporal. A remedial platoon deals with injured recruits who are waiting for a new course; those who are re-taking part of their course for training reasons; and those awaiting discharge.

Bassingbourn also houses other small organisations, including an Army Youth Team which has a general recruiting role.

Judgements

Completion rates are satisfactory. There are very few formal medical discharges, though some voluntary withdrawals may be triggered by medical concerns. Around 3 per cent of recruits are discharged because of medical problems found on detailed examination when they arrive. Medical support is good.

Some recruits do not receive sufficient information from armed forces careers offices before they enlist. Many recruits and some non-commissioned officers believe that the choice of career offered often reflects the Army’s need to fill trades rather than the recruits’ aptitudes and abilities. Some recruits had received incomplete advice on pay and conditions of service. The Army Youth Team provides a good range of activities that help potential recruits aged 14 to 16 understand Army life.

The overall approach to recruits’ development is well managed. The establishment has a number of clear, relevant and well-enforced policies that apply specifically to young soldiers and are implemented effectively. The design of the course, with its additional leave, training time, and funded activities, helps motivate recruits and build their confidence. Staff relate well to their recruits, and adopt a firm but supportive approach. Problems are quickly identified and most are dealt with well. There is good, sensitive routine communication with families and guardians. A parents’ day takes place a few weeks into training.

Support for recruits with literacy and numeracy difficulties is patchy. The identification of recruits’ needs, and the plans for support classes, are good, but there are long gaps between classes, making it difficult for the recruits to learn or make progress.

Most recruits make good use of the chain of command for support, but all are aware of the alternatives. There is a full-time welfare officer, and recruits have access to chaplains, the WRVS and the Salvation Army’s Red Shield service. A welfare officer is involved in recruits’ induction and they are given his telephone number, which can be used day or night. The two full-time WRVS workers have dealt with 230 welfare problems during the past year, most of them resulting from adjustments to Army life. Recruits have inappropriate access to some gambling machines.

Instructor selection is inadequate. Most instructors are enthusiastic volunteers, but some are posted with little or no experience in training. They receive training in care and

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Inspected 13 – 17 December 2004</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of phase 1 recruits</td>
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77 per cent of recruits completed their training successfully in the past full year.
welfare on the pre-employment training course, but there is little reinforcement of this when they get to Bassingbourn. There is insufficient monitoring and support for instructors as they carry out the many activities outside the formal training programme. Some staff are under excessive pressure. Long hours, exposure to difficult welfare problems, and the fear of being accused of inappropriate behaviour, means that some experience particularly high stress levels. They have an inadequate range of strategies to deal with recruits and their problems.

Physical training is good and makes appropriate allowances for the relative youth of the recruits. There are effective strategies for reducing the number of injuries and for dealing with those that occur. The length of the course allows for a rather more gradual approach to meeting the physical training standards. Exercising in boots is kept to a minimum, and training shoes are worn for many activities to avoid the dangers of stress fractures to recruits’ legs. Recruits have a good range of additional sports and hobby activities within their training, including adventure training and a battlefield tour.

Access to, and handling of, weapons and ammunition are satisfactory. Recruits do not carry out armed guard duties. Physical training staff are involved in weapons’ training, building recruits’ strength so that they are strong enough to handle their weapons safely and effectively.

Rehabilitation and remedial support is well resourced and managed. Injured recruits have a detailed individual rehabilitation plan, based on a thorough assessment of their injuries. The recruits take part in special activities which maintain their motivation and broaden their experience. Recruits generally return to training in a positive frame of mind. Discharge procedures are managed effectively.

Accommodation is satisfactory. Recruits are housed in barrack rooms with up to 16 recruits in each room. Most domestic accommodation has been refurbished but there are still some unsatisfactory areas that are due to be redeveloped. Food varies in quality and quantity, and comes in for routine criticism from the recruits.

The approach to equality of opportunity is satisfactory, although there is little attempt to relate equality to the broader aspects of military training and life. Some inappropriate posters are displayed in accommodation which is used by women for part of the day.

Data are not used effectively. A significant amount of data are collected at local level, much of which is passed to the Army Training and Recruiting Agency. However, there is insufficient effective analysis of this data, and thus it leads to little in the way of improvement.
Royal Armoured Corps (RAC) Bovington

Inspectors 31 January – 4 February 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of phase 2 recruits</th>
<th>Number of under-18s</th>
<th>Number of military staff</th>
<th>Number of civilian staff</th>
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<tr>
<td>165</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>45</td>
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80 per cent of recruits completed their training successfully in the past full year

Royal Armoured Corps (RAC) Bovington is six miles west of Wareham in Dorset. It is part of the Armour Centre of the Royal Armoured Corps. The Bovington site also houses the Army School of Recruiting, the Royal Navy School of Recruiting, and the RAC Training Regiment.

Bovington’s training squadron is responsible for the welfare of phase 2 recruits. Crews of armoured fighting vehicles (AFV) receive specialist training through the AFV Driving and Maintenance School, the AFV Communications and Information Systems School, and the AFV Gunnery School. Recruits are organised into troops led by a corporal who reports to a senior non-commissioned officer.

Judgements

Completion rates for recruits are good. Many of those who fail the course transfer to other Army trades rather than leaving the service. Most phase 2 recruits arrive with literacy and numeracy skills above entry requirements but support is available if they need it.

Induction for recruits is well established and lasts three days. All recruits are made aware of the empowered officer and the welfare services. Good, clear reports about each recruit arrive with them from their phase 1 establishment. Staff from Bovington visit phase 1 establishments to prepare recruits for phase 2 training.

Recruits’ welfare needs are supported well by the training squadron, by competent and well-qualified counsellors and by the WRVS. Detailed weekly meetings are chaired either by the commanding officer of the regiment, or the officer commanding the training squadron, and attended by the welfare staff, the chaplain and WRVS representatives. Recruits’ problems are dealt with quickly and effectively. Parents and families are given contact numbers for the chain of command and for welfare officers; records are kept of discussions between them. Families are invited to regular open days. Recruits have access to a very well-equipped, alcohol-free WRVS centre, with televisions, DVDs, a relaxation area and pool tables. Sports facilities are good but few recruits use them outside their formal physical training sessions. There is little for recruits to do at weekends.

Remedial physical training is poorly managed. Recruits who fail the physical assessment must attend up to four one-hour remedial physical training sessions a week until they pass. The assessments are only held on alternate Saturdays, and recruits have to pass twice, so this can take some time. They also attend the sessions that are part of their course. The remedial physical training sessions are held in the evenings, and when added to the hour of compulsory revision, the cleaning duties and the time taken to have an evening meal, they leave recruits too little time to relax.

Medical facilities are satisfactory. All injured recruits are assessed by a doctor and the rehabilitation physical training instructor and given a good progressive training programme, which is monitored regularly. However, the medical, physiotherapy and rehabilitation staff do not meet regularly to discuss treatments, or analyse trends in training injuries.

Accommodation is clean, tidy, warm, well maintained and fit for purpose. Recruits share six-bedded rooms with good, lockable under-bed lockers. The self-service laundry is adequate and inexpensive. However, there are too few quiet
study areas in the accommodation. Recruits have to revise in the corridors. Food is plentiful. There is always fruit and a good range of vegetables, although the packed lunches are inadequate.

Recruits aged under 18 are closely monitored. They must sign out when they leave the establishment and their beds are checked after curfew. Video surveillance cameras are fitted in the bar area and around gambling machines and any recruit under 18 seen playing the machines is dealt with quickly. Recruits must provide proof of age before they can be served at the bar, but there are no checks on whether they have been drinking when they return from an evening off site.

Access to firearms is closely supervised. Weapons are never taken to the accommodation blocks. Ammunition is only available on the gunnery range and is strictly accounted for at the end of an exercise. All recruits carry out sentry duty at the front gate. They are given training that is appropriate for this role, but does not prepare them for future guarding duties.

Recruits are aware of their progress. Trainers complete daily feedback logs for each recruit, which are retained on their personal files and copied to the planning staff, the troop leader and, in the case of driving and maintenance, to the regiment. Specialist trade training schools have well-resourced teaching areas and well-qualified staff. Most recruits spend no more than 14 days waiting for courses to begin during their 23 weeks at Bovington.

Instructors have not been adequately trained. Staff are required to complete a week-long phase 2 instructor training programme, but some have been unable to attend as there have been too few places. Instructors are also supported by mentors, and welfare non-commissioned officers benefit from a week-long handover with the staff they replace.

Complaints are fully investigated by the empowered officer and appropriate action is taken. When a matter is considered serious or an instant resolution is found, the situation is formally recorded and passed up the chain of command. A discipline register is also kept, and monitored weekly. Records of self-harm incidents are kept by the training squadron and the welfare and medical staff, but they do not work together effectively to co-ordinate the data. Data are not recorded separately for phase 2 recruits or under-18s.

Recruits and staff are aware of the clear polices on equality of opportunity, diversity, and bullying and harassment. Equality of opportunity is reinforced during recruits’ induction and throughout their training. Subcontractors are expected to provide up-to-date equality training for their staff, but contract managers do not check the content of these courses.

Data are collected regularly. Recruits’ progress and achievement are monitored daily and evaluated at monthly conferences with the training staff. The number of medical cases, discharges and absences without leave are recorded, monitored, analysed against previous trends and discussed at welfare meetings. Performance is not analysed by ethnicity or age.
**Infantry Training Centre (ITC) Catterick**


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of phase 1 and phase 2 (combined programme) recruits</th>
<th>Number of under-18s</th>
<th>Number of military staff</th>
<th>Number of civilian staff</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1,343</td>
<td>525</td>
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73 per cent of recruits completed their training successfully in the past full year

Infantry Training Centre (ITC) Catterick is in North Yorkshire. It is the only infantry training establishment in the Army. No women are trained in the infantry. Recruits follow the combat infantryman’s course which combines phase one and two training. Recruits move directly to the field army when they leave Catterick.

There are four training battalions at Catterick, each of which consists of companies divided into sections of about 12 men.

**Judgements**

Completion rates are satisfactory overall. They are too low, however, on paratrooper courses, where they stand at 23 per cent. Recruits who join Catterick from Army Foundation College Harrogate are more likely to be retained and complete their programme than those recruited directly. The combat infantryman’s course is particularly strenuous. It requires high levels of physical fitness and strength. **Recruits’ initial medical assessments fail to identify some significant problems** and 26 per cent of leavers are discharged for medical reasons each year.

**Staff provide good support for recruits.** A duty officer is always available and an effective handover system ensures that duty officers are fully aware of anything that has happened. Non-commissioned officers work successfully to establish a strong sense of regimental loyalty in their charges. **Recruits regularly use the civilian welfare services.** There are monthly meetings between all the welfare services and the chain of command. Recruits’ families are encouraged to telephone permanent staff if they have concerns, but staff do not always keep records of such contacts.

**Staff work in a supportive way with recruits awaiting discharge or transfer.** They have good links with civilian support agencies and voluntary associations. The number and profile of recruits passing through the discharge system are monitored and evaluated. There is no specific guidance or policy on dealing with absence without leave that causes immediate concern. Even when there are indicators that suggest a potential problem, such as a history of self-harm, the police are not informed for six days.

**Recruits with literacy difficulties make good progress.** Recruits at or below entry level two attend a two-week college course at the end of their training. Approximately 70 per cent of recruits take a national vocational qualification (NVQ) at level 2 in public services. The course is closely linked to the combat infantryman’s course, with additional background knowledge taught by college staff.

**There is insufficient purposeful activity for recruits in the detention centre.** They do not return to their training units during the day as policy requires. **The training for recruits on guard duties is inadequate.** There are no established training objectives for these duties.

**Access to firearms and ammunition is unsafe.** Procedures for the use and storage of weapons and ammunition are strict. However, weapons are issued for a full day, and during mealtimes or when lessons are timetabled they are often held in the recruits’ accommodation. Inspectors found weapons which were unsupervised. Some ammunition is not returned to the amnesty boxes when it should be. These practices combine to form a potential risk to recruits.
Practical training is well supervised. Recruits are given good coaching by instructors during field activities. Throughout the training programmes, recruits work towards specific objectives and are given clear feedback on their progress. Instructors keep detailed records of recruits’ achievements.

Induction for new instructors is inadequate. It is not run frequently enough. Instructors are selected from the field army as soldiers who demonstrate good management and leadership qualities. They do not always have appropriate skills to work with young recruits, however. The training they receive fails to provide the necessary skills.

Accommodation is poor. Maintenance systems are badly managed and the maintenance contracts are inadequately monitored. Accommodation is old and cramped, with poor lighting and not enough lockable storage. There are too few showers and lavatories are often left blocked for some time. They smell badly and windows cannot be opened. Too many maintenance jobs are waiting to be completed. Recruits share rooms in groups of up to 10. The cookhouse and domestic accommodation are being rebuilt but will not be complete until 2007.

Food is generally adequate, but many recruits purchase extra food in the evenings as no late evening meal is available. Packed lunches for recruits on the ranges are particularly poor. Recruits are expected to attend all meals but many do not. Recreational facilities for recruits are adequate. Recruits aged under 18 have no access to alcohol on site.

Gambling machines on the site are not adequately monitored and under-18s use them regularly. A number of recruits admitted spending large amounts of money on the machines and borrowing money to play. Drug testing is regular and randomly timed.

Medical support for recruits is good and timely. The senior medical officer has designed a clear set of operating procedures for issues including potential and actual self-harm. Detailed records are kept of all such cases as well as of injuries. Common themes and data are collected to identify trends. Recruits in rehabilitation are kept well occupied and encouraged to rejoin the training programme when they recover. However, the rehabilitation gym is small and cramped with apparatus, and there are not enough rehabilitation instructors to cope with the large numbers of recruits with injuries.

The use of data is unsystematic. Insufficient use is made of information on recruits’ progress. No analysis is made by recruits’ ethnic origin, for example. Data are not collected systematically on health and safety, medical issues and complaints. There is some analysis of accidents but the documents used for recording accidents do not capture the age, gender and ethnic origin of those involved, so these areas cannot be analysed. Many complaints by recruits are resolved informally and not recorded.

Update following unannounced return visit

Guard training has been planned. A training programme has been devised which takes account of the inexperience and youth of recruits. The programme is yet to be provided for all recruits and has not been evaluated.

Accommodation remains poor but building work is progressing. Maintenance jobs are still taking too long. Additional high-energy bars have been introduced in an attempt to compensate for lack of food in the evening.

A new training and leadership programme has begun which encourages instructors to be more aware of the welfare needs of recruits.

Access to gambling machines remain problematic although discussions have taken place and recommendations have been made to try to restrict access.

Contact with families by staff is still not recorded adequately.

Support staff do not share good practice on identifying and investigating complaints.
Recruits in the detention centre continue to have little meaningful activity.

Weapons continue to be taken into accommodation and are guarded by one recruit. Large amounts of ammunition continue to be returned to the amnesty boxes around the site.

Some key welfare posts are inappropriately staffed. Junior officers do not have enough experience to work with recruits. Some key posts such as the chaplain and senior medical officer have not been filled or have been subject to excessive turnover.
Princess Royal Barracks & St Omer Barracks Deepcut

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of phase 2 and phase 3 recruits</th>
<th>Number of military staff</th>
<th>Number of civilian staff</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>820</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>88</td>
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87 per cent of recruits completed their training successfully in the past full year

Princess Royal and St Omer Barracks are part of the Deepcut Garrison in Surrey. Princess Royal barracks is the headquarters of the Defence College of Logistics, which provides training for phase 2 recruits and phase 3 soldiers. Phase 2 recruits are part of 25 Training Support Regiment. The regiment has four squadrons, each divided into three troops of soldiers. Troops are divided into sections of 10 to 12 soldiers. Most trainees come to the establishment from Pirbright Army Training Regiment.

Trainees attend courses in 14 different trades including pioneers, supply, postal, driving and catering. New groups of trainees are inducted into the barracks each week. Ten per cent of the soldiers are women and 25 per cent are from foreign and Commonwealth countries. Facilities include a gymnasium, sports fields, two bars, a medical centre, a learning centre, a shop and a social centre run by the WRVS.

Judgements

Trainees’ completion rates are good and improving. Fewer than 10 per cent withdraw from the Army. Staff manage the large numbers of trainees effectively, so that most wait days rather than months to start their training. This is partly due to an increase in the number of driver training places available. Trainees are monitored effectively as they progress through their training. Those who have to go back a stage because of illness, or who need remedial training, are carefully matched to training courses to keep delays to a minimum.

Recruits waiting for training are used for guard duty. Some under-18s and inexperienced recruits carry out guard duty together, which is inappropriate. Recruits have passed the necessary weapons test and will be on operational duty at the end of their phase 2 training. Guard duty is not used as part of a structured training programme. Recruits do not enjoy it and try hard to avoid it, although only those waiting for training or posting to duty are required to do it.

Welfare arrangements for recruits are effectively co-ordinated. More staff to support recruits and the restructuring of squadrons has enabled more attention to be paid to recruits’ needs. Recruits at risk of self-harm and those causing concern are monitored closely. Troop staff watch for changes in recruits’ mood or behaviour, and the medical officer, chaplain and WRVS staff also identify those whom they consider to be at risk. The records of those ‘at risk’ are detailed, confidential and up to date. Duty staff are briefed regularly on recruits’ status, but this information is not shared with the host establishment when recruits are on courses away from the barracks. There is good emphasis on a coaching style of training and, specifically, on pastoral and general support for recruits.

Civilian support services are a vital alternative to the chain of command. WRVS staff provide a good, impartial listening service, and will direct trainees to specialist agencies if necessary. They manage confidentiality well and involve the chain of command where appropriate. The empowered officer and the Army Welfare Service are less well used than the WRVS.

The suitability of instructors and support staff to work with young people is not adequately checked before they are appointed. Many non-commissioned officers with duty of care responsibilities have come direct from operational duty and have not had sufficient
training to fulfill their role effectively. Some staff view the role of instructing as undesirable and secondary to operational duty. Staff work very long hours. Some have become demotivated and acknowledge that their performance can suffer because of tiredness.

**Driving instructors are not adequately monitored while instructing trainees.** Recruits spend considerable time with contracted driving instructors during their training. Army staff do not liaise with the contract drivers about recruits at risk or those causing concern. Contracted staff are not trained to the same standard as military trainers and do not have sufficient emphasis on coaching or care of recruits. Disciplinary issues are not recorded such as rounding up tuition hours, inappropriate language or verbal abuse of recruits.

Complaints and issues of equality and diversity are not adequately dealt with. Some recruits have little confidence in the chain of command to handle complaints effectively. A ‘zero-tolerance’ approach to bullying, harassment or inequality is promoted strongly throughout the regiment. **Staff have not, however, had enough recent training to enable them to recognise bullying or harassment.** Phase 2 recruits receive a short training session on equality during their induction week. It does not refer to recent legislation and is not backed up by further formal sessions. The clear procedures and guidelines for responding to complaints are clear, but are not always followed by staff. Staff in the lower ranks are encouraged to resolve recruits’ problems. They sometimes make inappropriate decisions and do not resolve the complaint satisfactorily, record the complaint accurately or pass it up the chain of command. Where investigations have taken place, reports do not identify how complaints were finally resolved or what action was taken. In many cases the detail of a complaint remains only in the memory of staff, who are posted to new jobs every two years.

**Recruits aged under 18 are well cared for.** They are closely monitored by duty staff. Weekend curfews are rigorously enforced and staff take prompt action to find anyone who is missing or late. At weekends, recruits are checked every two hours during the night.

**Accommodation is unacceptable.** It has not been well maintained and is now dilapidated and depressing. Recruits live in barrack blocks with between four and eight to a room. They have very little personal space and some social areas are too small for the number of recruits living in the block. Barracks are in a poor state of repair, with broken lavatories and showers. Some barrack blocks and floors within blocks are being refurbished and are empty or out of use. St Omer accommodation has been poorly maintained as the barracks have been under threat of closure for several years. **Security arrangements in the recruits’ accommodation have improved,** with a resultant decrease in thefts and loss of items. The furniture in rooms used for training is old and worn and the rooms too basic for comfort.

**The rehabilitation troop provides good support to injured recruits.** They follow a specific programme of development which is closely monitored and recorded. Of the 116 recruits treated in the past 12 months, 99 per cent have successfully rejoined their troop and resumed training.

Access to firearms and ammunition is satisfactory, with close monitoring of recruits and good adherence to Army protocols. **Food provided is satisfactory.** Alcohol is only available to over-18s in the bar on production of an identity card, and there are regular patrols by duty staff and nominated recruits to ensure that there is no drunkenness or under-age drinking. Health and medical facilities are satisfactory. Recruits can easily get to see medical staff, and they receive prompt service. There are good links with local external medical and hospital services.

There are no formal arrangements for the assessment of recruits’ literacy and numeracy as they enter phase 2 training. The 85 per cent or so of recruits who follow apprenticeships as part of their training get satisfactory tuition in literacy, numeracy and key skills. Recruits whose trade training does not include literacy and numeracy are less well served.

**Arrangements for recruits who leave the Army are good.** Recruits are kept productively employed in squadrons until their future has
been decided. Those who are being discharged or withdrawing from training move to a specialist squadron in which the ratio of staff to recruits is good. Most discharges are handled promptly and with due regard to the needs of the recruits. There is good communication with leavers’ parents.

Data are not used effectively to monitor the welfare of recruits. The proportion of recruits withdrawing from training is not routinely analysed by gender, ethnicity, age, squadron or trade. There is little comparative analysis between the two barracks. The rehabilitation instructor has analysed some useful data on types of injury, and their incidence and recurrence, but the results have been little used to date. Similarly, there has been some analysis of the entries in the guardhouse occurrence book to try to identify trends. Most data is sent to the Army Training and Recruiting Agency without sufficient local analysis. There are a number of good new initiatives to improve the recruits’ welfare, but these have yet to be fully tested.

Update following unannounced return visit

Staff have responded particularly well to the inspection findings and are making progress in several areas.

Driving instructors are being more closely monitored and recruits are moving swiftly through the training.

A major refurbishment of St Omer barracks is now in progress. Four of the accommodation blocks have been redecorated, newly carpeted and furnished.

Recording of complaints has improved and there is more careful monitoring of the resolutions made by staff at the lower ranks. Four weeks into the new system and the number of complaints recorded is equal to the previous total for the year.

Staff understanding of equality of opportunity remains unsatisfactory.

Guarding duty takes better account of recruits at risk.
The Army Foundation College (AFC) Harrogate

The Army Foundation College (AFC) was rebuilt in the late 1990s and officially opened in 2002. It takes recruits aged between 16 and 17 who have achieved higher entry test scores than the average. In the past, most have gone on to infantry, artillery, armoured corps and guards training before joining front-line units, but from September 2004, the college began taking technical entrants and these now make up half the intake.

Recruits are organised into sections of about 12, led by a corporal. Four sections are grouped into a platoon, run by a junior officer and a sergeant, and five or six platoons make up a company. The annual programme comprises 25 weeks of military training during which recruits take part in leadership and initiative training and vocational education, as well as a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Property maintenance, catering, many support services and much of the academic training are run by civilian companies, as part of a private finance initiative.

Judgements

Completion rates are satisfactory. Harrogate provides recruits with a good insight into their future training and Army life. Recruits visit phase 2 training establishments and operational units to see how their training will develop. The induction covers appropriate welfare matters, but includes some waiting about, which recruits find demotivating. During the first six weeks there are weekend recreation activities to assist team building. Parents are involved with training during the first six weeks.

Recruits do not receive accurate information at the armed forces careers offices about the proportion of military to technical training in their programmes, and some are disappointed. Some technical recruits do not have the required minimum examination grades in English and mathematics. Those who need support are given it, sometimes in their own time.

There is an excellent range of additional sports, skills and physical training linked with personal development and, in some cases, leading to formal qualifications. They range from Arabic to car maintenance. Activities are well supervised, and many lead to subsidised trips abroad. Recreational facilities, including a well-equipped gymnasium and swimming pool, are very good and well used by recruits.

Recruits have sensitive and constructive support from the staff. Most section commanders are seen as approachable. Recruits value their advice and help. There is a very good leadership and initiative programme which helps to develop recruits and some of the permanent staff. The recruits are notably confident and well motivated. They recognise, and are proud of, their achievements.

Some staff behave inappropriately to recruits. A few formal complaints have been made over the past year, and dealt with satisfactorily, but recruits report that there have been other incidents that have not been the subject of formal complaint. These range from physical abuse to collective punishments or throwing of recruits’ kit around rooms during locker inspections.

The suitability of staff to work with young recruits is not adequately checked. Some staff are volunteers who have been carefully selected by their regiments. Others may be posted with little regard to their suitability. Postings are short, partly for career reasons and partly because of
the workload, giving staff little time to improve their skills.

**Recruits are supervised satisfactorily.** They must sign in and out of the establishment. During the early stages of the programme there are plenty of staff available to support and supervise them. The staff work very long hours, particularly during the first six weeks, and it is difficult to maintain this level of support.

**Medical support and health advice are good.** There are very clear medical protocols for handling cases of threatened or actual self-harm. Injured recruits are given individual remedial programmes that they understand and follow. Good analysis of injury data has led to changes in some training practices. However, there is **insufficient support for the recruits with long-term injuries** or other problems who have to move to a holding platoon. There are no established staff in the holding platoon. Recruits have to work on their own for periods of time and are often bored because they do not have enough to do.

**Learning support in the education classes is extensive.** Recruits are given helpful financial advice and the establishment manages the payment of their salaries to limit the amount of money they have access to in the first few weeks.

**Accommodation is new, purpose-built and well maintained.** The showers and lavatories are good. Recruits have satisfactory sleeping accommodation, individual desks, and sufficient space and power points. Maintenance is generally prompt and to a satisfactory standard, though recruits feel that the system of charging for all damages is sometimes unjust. Food is satisfactory.

**Physical training is good** and allows for the progressive development of young recruits. It is regularly evaluated and improved by the staff. All activities and facilities are regularly risk-assessed and there are few injuries. However, the **assault course is poorly planned** and maintained and the landing areas are compacted.

**Unauthorised access to weapons is a risk.** Weapons are sometimes taken into domestic accommodation where the procedures for controlling them are not always followed. Recruits do not carry out armed guard duties.

**Some fighting, vandalism and bullying goes unreported and unchecked.** Staff deal appropriately with much of this behaviour when it comes to their attention. Some recruits have been involved in serious disciplinary and criminal matters, often while on home leave. They are dealt with individually, and generally receive appropriate support backed up by punishment where appropriate.

**Data on equality of opportunity are not monitored.** Data are not routinely shared with staff. Equality of opportunity is promoted through compulsory staff training and posters in the classroom. Recruits know the process for making complaints.

**Welfare support services are satisfactory** and include the WRVS and the chaplain, who are in regular contact with the staff. No alcohol is available on site and recruits returning to the establishment are checked for signs of drinking. Recruits at risk of self-harm are monitored and discussed at regular welfare meetings.

**There is no routine oversight of welfare matters at a strategic level.** Recruits’ welfare is substantially devolved to the chain of command. The commanding officer takes ultimate responsibility for welfare, and has a clear and inspirational vision for the future of the establishment. The welfare officer carries out some reviews of the provision. Recent new initiatives that are intended to improve the welfare of recruits, such as guidance to staff and welfare meetings, are still to be fully tested.
Army Training Regiment (ATR) Lichfield

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of phase 1 recruits</th>
<th>Number of under-18s</th>
<th>Number of military staff</th>
<th>Number of civilian staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>326</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>68</td>
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</table>

81 per cent of recruits completed their training successfully in the past full year

Army Training Regiment (ATR) Lichfield is in Staffordshire. It is one of six Army establishments which offer phase 1 training for recruits. Each year approximately 1,400 recruits train there. Recruits follow the common military syllabus and live in accommodation blocks on site, with between eight and 12 recruits to a room. Their basic training lasts for 12 weeks and those who are successful move to phase 2 training at other establishments.

The regiment has four squadrons: a headquarters squadron with administration and management responsibility, and three training squadrons, each with five troops of between 20 and 48 recruits. Each troop is divided into sections led by corporals.

ATR Lichfield also houses the Initial Training Group Instructor School which provides training for Army instructors, the recruitment selection centre which provides a two-day selection course for potential recruits aged from 16 years upwards and the Army Youth Team which provides residential courses for school pupils considering joining the Army.

Judgements

Completion rates are good. A third of recruits withdraw during training, a significant proportion of them for medical reasons. Some recruits are not asked for sufficiently detailed medical and personal histories before they join the Army, and some are medically discharged in the first week of initial training as a result of pre-existing health conditions. There is no management information to identify trends among recruits who withdraw early.

Data are not used effectively to evaluate the experience of recruits. Statistical data are collected and collated at establishment level and some are fed into the Army’s central management information system. Results are not passed back to local level in a form that would help to identify problems or highlight trends among any particular groups of recruits.

The recruitment selection centre provides potential recruits with a good introduction to Army life. They experience basic training, take a range of tests and stay overnight in the barracks. They are well prepared and clearly understand the process. However, they do not have a chance to talk to existing recruits, and for some, the experience is too brief to enable them to make a decision about joining the Army. The Army Youth Team is a good initiative to encourage young people to join the Army.

Recruits are well supervised during physical training and off-site exercises. Good attention is paid to their health and safety. Access to firearms and ammunition is managed well. There are well-established and effective procedures to ensure that recruits can only gain access to weapons, or use them, under strict supervision.

Civilian and military staff work well together to support recruits during their phase 1 training, particularly those aged under 18. Great emphasis is placed on preparation for eventual active duty, but this is generally well balanced by the staff’s recognition that recruits need plenty of support to achieve this goal.

The tightly packed programme leaves insufficient time for some recruits to overcome their homesickness, or to relax and develop away from the rigours of training. Some do not have time to use the recreation services during the early part of their training.
Recruits are sometimes punished in inappropriate ways, by writing lines or performing press-ups, for example. There is too little communication with recruits’ families, although staff sometimes telephone parents when there is a problem. Discussions with recruits and parents are not always placed on the recruit’s record.

Medical and rehabilitation support for recruits who are ill or injured during their initial training are good. Staff ensure that they are not put under undue pressure to return to training before they have fully recovered. Recruits who need additional recovery time or personal development to complete their training are placed in the rehabilitation troop. They are coached effectively, given basic skills training and encouraged to take open learning courses. This helps to speed their recovery and makes good use of their time.

Recruits leaving the service are well supported but the process takes too long and recruits are sometimes given menial tasks to perform while they wait.

Accommodation and facilities are generally satisfactory. However, rooms are too basic. Space for writing is inadequate and there are too few showers for the numbers of recruits.

Support for recruits’ literacy and numeracy problems is good. Potential recruits’ literacy and numeracy skills are tested at the armed forces careers offices and additional testing takes place in week three of the programme. Recruits receive the results of the tests in writing. Additional training sessions are provided by staff from a local college. Recruits who have poor English skills, however, are not routinely given additional support, and there is no policy for such training.

Training for instructors varies. There is some good training in which policy is promoted well and good development takes place. A clear link is made between a good instructor and a highly performing recruit. There is also some poor training with a narrow range of teaching styles. Some trainee instructors express inappropriate views on the duty of care of recruits such as valuing group punishment when it has been outlawed. These misplaced views are challenged by trainers.

Many trainee instructors are appointed without appropriate pre-employment training. Following training they are not adequately assessed on their ability to train and work with recruits. They are not monitored by the Instructor School when they take up their post. There are no women trainers or trainers from minority ethnic groups at the Instructor School.

There is insufficient continuous professional development for trainers and instructors to raise the standard of instruction. Formal feedback on the course identifies concerns by subject and not by trainer.
3 Royal School Regiment of Military Engineering is based at Gibraltar Barracks in Surrey. Most recruits are on a 10-week phase 2(a) course in combat engineering, involving bridging, mine warfare, water supply, watermanship and demolition. The school is staffed by personnel selected from the field army.

During inspection, 148 recruits were in the continuation training troop, also on site, awaiting further trade training. A further 74 recruits were on driver training courses away from the barracks.

Judgements
Completion rates are very good. Recruits are guided well from phase 1 to phase 2 training. The personnel selection officer from Gibraltar Barracks visits recruits in the third week of phase 1 training, discusses their trade preferences and notes any welfare concerns. Recruits can also spend a day visiting the regiment; those who take part in this find it very useful.

The procedures for selecting and training instructors are good, and unique in the Army. There is a long-standing tradition of selecting the most able soldiers to be instructors, in terms of their professional knowledge and their ability to communicate and manage others. The instructor-training programme is extensive. Training staff are highly motivated and skilled, and see their posting as a positive career move. Instructors give good practical help and encouragement to help recruits complete work to a high standard. They closely monitor recruits’ work and give feedback on how it can be improved. Their coaching skills are good.

Recruits get good support to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. A number of instructors have had relevant training, and there is also an informal ‘buddy’ system that links recruits who experience difficulties with those who are more able. Instructors make good use of specialist resources for recruits who are dyslexic.

The systems for co-ordinating and monitoring matters of recruits’ welfare are too informal. Complaints, incidents and welfare problems are not systematically recorded. Staff do not use the same criteria to decide whether a matter is trivial or serious. The Army’s policy on recruits aged under 18 is not implemented properly. Few staff are aware that it exists, and the non-commissioned officers who have day-to-day responsibility for recruits do not have copies.

Arrangements for the promotion and practice of equality of opportunity are inadequate. The establishment does not have a trained equal opportunities adviser. Its policy on equality of opportunity is out of date and does not refer to recent relevant legislation. There is no equality of opportunity action plan. Equality is given a low profile in training, welfare and duty of care.

The physical training programme is well organised and structured. Fitness levels are assessed at entry and recruits are kept well informed of their progress. Actions that they need to take to improve their performance and personal fitness are clearly explained to them. The sports and recreational facilities are good, and include all-weather playing surfaces, a swimming pool, and squash and tennis courts.

Accommodation is poor. Many of the blocks are old and awaiting refurbishment. Repair and maintenance work is often delayed.

Medical support for recruits is good and the medical facilities are satisfactory. A training
injuries review group meets every three months to identify any significant trends in injuries. A useful range of preventive educational programmes is offered, including programmes on sexual health, drugs, alcohol and smoking.

**Recruits have access to a good range of welfare and recreational facilities, staff and services** including a shop, WRVS staff, a cinema that shows up-to-date films, a chaplain, and a Christian recreation and catering facility. **Duty officers who support recruits out of hours have not been adequately trained** for their role and do not fully understand it or appreciate its importance.

**The continuation troop contains an inappropriate mix of recruits.** Some are waiting to begin their trade training while others are awaiting disciplinary action, civilian court appearances or discharge, or undergoing medical rehabilitation. They share accommodation and there are problems with boredom, low morale and discipline, as the disaffected and demotivated recruits influence the others.

**There is no system for collecting data from all functions,** and in particular those involving recruits’ welfare and duty of care. However, the commanding officer makes good use of information that comes from a monthly tri-service survey of recruits. A detailed action plan is produced, which outlines the specific responsibilities of officers for dealing with issues within defined timescales.
Army Training Regiment (ATR) Pirbright is one of six Army establishments which offer phase 1 training for recruits. The regiment has eight sub-units, including six training sub-units which each comprise between four and six training teams. Training teams have up to 48 recruits and are divided into four sections led by corporals. The corporals report to a sergeant, who reports to a junior officer. The training sub-units are led by an officer commanding, who reports to the senior management of the establishment, which is led by the commanding officer. This is the chain of command. Phase 1 training lasts for 12 weeks and successful recruits move on to phase 2 training at other establishments.

Judgements

Overall, completion rates are satisfactory. The rate for under-18s, which stands at 70 per cent, is too low. Similarly, the first time pass rates are too low, at 62 per cent overall and 56 per cent for under-18s.

Potential recruits are not assessed rigorously enough. Insufficient account is taken of their literacy and language skills. Overseas recruits, who make up 30 per cent of recruits, must pass a literacy test and an interview, but some still have significant difficulty in understanding their instructors. They get no introductory training and insufficient language support. Some armed forces careers offices give incorrect information, such as telling recruits to buy equipment they do not need. Some recruits are accepted for trade training and then allocated to a different trade just before they arrive. Recruits’ medical records are not always available when they arrive at the establishment; this delays their training. Some recruits have been discharged on arrival after pre-existing medical conditions were identified, despite having been passed as medically fit during recruitment.

Recruits with literacy and numeracy problems do not receive sufficient help. Forty per cent of them are below level 1 in literacy and numeracy, and 11 per cent have a reading age of seven or less. During the past twelve months, 20 per cent of recruits have been identified as having dyslexia. The structure of the 12-week training programme and the lack of qualified staff mean that few recruits have any extra support. Only six recruits were receiving literacy support at the time of the inspection.

Physical training is good. The intensity of training is increased gently to allow the recruits time to adapt, and they are given careful instructions in order to prevent injury. Session timetables do not, however, take account of the amount of drill that the recruits do each day.

Injured recruits are well supported. They are given a clear activity programme to follow, designed for their specific injury. Their progress is monitored carefully and they are interviewed each time they visit the remedial gymnasium. The incidence of stress fractures is high. Data are not maintained on trends behind these injuries.

Recruits who fall behind with their training receive good support. Section commanders provide additional individual instruction, often in their own time. Recruits who have failed a test twice are given good individual remedial tuition and retake the test after one or two weeks. If successful, they join another troop to pick up their training where they left it. Most go on to complete their training successfully.

Non-commissioned officers (NCOs) have too little training in instructing recruits and
managing their welfare. The course they attend before appointment and a two-day induction on arrival do not provide enough information on working with women, under-18s and recruits from overseas. They are expected to attend an instructors’ course within two months of appointment, but some wait up to four months. A mentoring system is only applied for new physical training instructors. Instructors are expected to grade recruits’ performance but are not given any significant training on how to do this. All instructors are observed at least once a year and given constructive advice to improve their teaching but they do not receive sufficient support in their work. Their teaching resources are poor. There is little recognition of the positive work they do or of their excessively long hours. Poor performance is often highlighted but achievements are rarely celebrated.

Accommodation, welfare and recreation facilities are satisfactory. Many of the sports and recreation facilities are not, however, available at weekends. Food is adequate in quality and quantity. Management of under-age drinking is adequate. There are few disciplinary problems involving alcohol. No alcohol is available to buy on site and recruits only have one weekend off site during their training course. Medical staff, WRVS workers, and the chaplain hold few meetings to review recruits’ welfare. Few recruits use the empowered officers.

Recruits’ welfare and progress are not adequately monitored. Central incident records are incomplete. The chain of command is not aware of serious incidents that affect recruits’ welfare. Staff tend to work in isolation and there is little sharing of information across the establishment. Section commanders have different approaches to welfare matters, leading to inconsistency, confusion and inappropriate treatment. Records of progress are not maintained consistently. The criteria for awarding grades are not clear. Recruits who make poor progress usually receive clear warnings about their performance, but overseas recruits often do not understand why they have to repeat sections of the course. Recruits are not adequately supervised when waiting to leave the Army.

Management of firearms and ammunition is unsatisfactory. Recruits take weapons into their accommodation blocks, either to clean them or to store them before booking them back into armoury. This is inappropriate. Having said that, the potential for unauthorised possession of ammunition is small. Recruits do not carry out guard duties.

Gambling machines are too easily accessed by recruits. Staff do not check the age of users. The machines generate an average monthly profit of around £4,500, which is used to buy goods and services which benefit recruits, such as television sets.

Many recruits are reluctant to complain. The central incident log contains allegations of bullying, harassment and physical assault, few of which have resulted in formal complaints which have been investigated. Insufficient investigation of instructors who have repeatedly been accused of unacceptable behaviour takes place, because there have been no formal complaints. Some complaints have been mishandled, and there has been inadequate recording, insufficient investigation and inappropriate resolution of serious incidents involving assault and racial abuse.

Additional remedial training given as a punishment by instructors and regimental police is not always recorded. Group punishments are given for individual misdemeanours, and in some cases the perpetrator is made to watch while colleagues are punished. Lockers are often emptied and their contents strewn around.

The approach to equality of opportunity is unsatisfactory. The equality and diversity policy and action plan are not specific to Pirbright and do not refer to current legislation. Little action has been taken to promote race equality. Regimental police officers receive no training in equality. Some instructors have had no equality training although they have been in post for six months. Officers do not know what proportion of recruits are black British. Inspectors observed staff using intimidating and inappropriate language with recruits.

The strategic management of the regimental police is poor. Four regimental police officers have supervisory, administrative and disciplinary
roles. There are no explicit job criteria for the role. They do not receive any specific training in dealing with young recruits or in equality. There have been a number of recent incidents and allegations involving the regimental police. Regimental police maintain the daily occurrence book. It contains a number of entries relating to bullying, harassment and assaults, but these are not recorded in a consistent way and do not show the action taken.

**Poor use is made of data.** They are not used to examine potential areas of concern, or analysed with a view to improving performance. Data on self-harm are not routinely collected. Trends in performance are not analysed by gender, age or ethnicity. There is no register of recruits at risk of failing to complete their training, and no forum to review individual welfare cases. There is no analysis of recruits’ reasons for withdrawing from training, although the rates have increased over the past three years.
Army Training Regiment (ATR) Winchester

Army Training Regiment (ATR) Winchester is one of six Army establishments which offer phase 1 training for recruits. The regiment has four companies/squadrons. The headquarters company is responsible for administration and management, and the remedial platoon. Three training companies/squadrons support a total of 15 training teams. A team has between 20 and 40 recruits and is divided into three or four sections, each led by a corporal. Phase 1 training lasts for 12 weeks and successful recruits move on to phase 2 training at one of over a dozen other establishments. Recruits follow the common military syllabus.

Judgements

Completion rates are good. There is a well-structured system for monitoring recruits’ progress, which is applied effectively. The recruits’ immediate commanders produce a weekly progress summary, using a wide range of objective measurements such as fitness, weapons proficiency and discipline. The completed records are used well by the chain of command to identify any individual concerns.

Recruits’ records are not always available at Winchester before they arrive. Information from the careers office or the recruitment selection centre is not used to plan training and support for recruits. For example recruits’ literacy, numeracy and language skills as identified by the armed forces careers office do not always match up to those identified by staff at the unit. This can lead to confusion and inappropriate assistance, or at least to wasted effort.

Although the processes for literacy and numeracy support are generally satisfactory, there are some inconsistencies in practice.

Attendance at support classes is optional. The intention is that each recruit should achieve at least a level 1 qualification in literacy and numeracy within three years, but recruits have little time during training to make any significant progress.

Recruits are supervised well in training and exercise, and in social areas. Facilities, procedures, staff and training all contribute to providing a safe and generally supportive environment, motivating recruits and keeping them focused on success. The personal health and safety of recruits is reinforced during all briefings. No alcohol is available to recruits of any age and this appears to have led to a drastic reduction in the number of cases of minor indiscipline. Men and women are trained together.

Group punishments are given, although this contradicts Army policy. Punishments are not always recorded and some recruits view their treatment as bullying. Formal complaints by recruits are treated seriously. Allegations of bullying, when made, are investigated thoroughly, and the action taken is appropriate.

Equality of opportunity is not sufficiently promoted, particularly within the main training course. Recruits have one training session on the topic, which also covers the complaints procedures.

Physical training is good, with some very good facilities for the main training programme and for rehabilitation work. Demands placed on recruits are carefully increased during the training period. There are some inappropriate discrepancies between the prescribed fitness standards at ATR Winchester and the next levels of training. During phase 1 training, recruits are

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of phase 1 recruits</th>
<th>Number of under-18s</th>
<th>Number of military staff</th>
<th>Number of civilian staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>280</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>72</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

80 per cent of recruits completed their training successfully in the past full year.
expected to be able to run 1.5 miles in a specified time, yet in phase 2 the running times required increase for some recruits and decrease for others depending on the career they have chosen.

Instructors arriving at Winchester are often poorly prepared for their roles. They come from a wide variety of backgrounds and most have demonstrated previous competence and expertise in their technical field. Their teaching skills, however, have rarely been assessed. Instructors are inadequately monitored. Instructors should be observed teaching and assessing twice a year but this does not routinely happen. Results of observations are not used to improve performance. Inappropriate behaviour, language or conduct are not consistently identified and corrected. Unqualified instructors should be supervised when working with recruits but this does not always happen.

Accommodation is generally good, although there is sometimes a shortage of hot water and too few showers for busy periods. Internal fittings are deteriorating. Food is satisfactory, although some recruits have to rush their meals. The procedures for safe handling of weapons and ammunition are satisfactory. Recruits only have access to weapons for specific, supervised training activities.

Staff provide good support for recruits who leave training early. Each leaver has an action plan and a final interview with the commanding officer to confirm that they have made arrangements for future employment and domestic life.

Data are not used to identify trends in referrals to the welfare services or to review action that has been taken. There is almost no analysis at establishment level of completion rates by gender and ethnicity, points of withdrawal in the course, or withdrawal rates between companies, to identify potential care and welfare issues.
Appendices

Directions home – signpost made by the Scots Guards in Shaibah Logistics Base, Basra, Iraq
Appendices

Establishments and organisations visited during the survey

**Army establishments**
- Armour Centre, Royal Armoured Corps, Bovington (including Recruiting Officer School)
- Army Foundation College, Harrogate
- Army Training Regiment Bassingbourn
- Army Training Regiment Lichfield
- Army Training Regiment Pirbright
- Army Training Regiment Winchester
- Black Watch Regiment, Battlebury Barracks, Warminster
- HQ Army Welfare Service, HQ Land Command, Salisbury
- Infantry Training Centre Catterick
- Lichfield Recruiting Selection Centre
- Royal School of Military Engineering, Combat Engineering School, Minley
- Sandhurst Officer Cadet School

**Royal Air Force (RAF) establishments**
- RAF Halton
- RAF Honington
- RAF St Athan
- RAF Shawbury

**Royal Navy establishments**
- Commando Training Centre, Royal Marines, Lympstone
- HMS Raleigh
- HMS Sultan
- Maritime Warfare School, HMS Collingwood
- Royal Marines School of Music

**Training agencies**
- Army Training and Recruiting Agency, Upavon, Wiltshire
- Naval Recruiting and Training Agency, Portsmouth
- Training Group Defence Agency, RAF Innsworth, Gloucester

**Defence agencies**
- Director General Training and Education
- Directorate of Service Personnel Policy Strategy
- Directorate of Service Personnel Policy Service conditions
- Defence Naval Recruiting
- Defence Centre of Training Support (and Amport House, Andover)

**Police forces**
- Defence Police
- Navy Police
- RAF Military Police
- Royal Military Police

**Armed Forces Careers Offices**
- Grimsby
- Hull
- Lincoln
- Bloomsbury, London
- Manchester
- York

**Defence establishments**
- Defence College of Aeronautical Engineering, Arborfield
- Defence College of Aeronautical Engineering, RAF Cosford
- Defence College of Logistics, Deepcut
Appendix 2

A questionnaire survey of the parents of recruits aged under 18

The Adult Learning Inspectorate sent out approximately 1,000 confidential questionnaires to the parents of recruits aged under 18. By this means parents were asked for their opinions and experiences of the way the armed services care for recruits at training establishments. Four hundred and fifty-three questionnaires were returned to the Adult Learning Inspectorate (a return rate of 45 per cent).

Status of trainees

- The proportions of the recruits covered by the responses was: Royal Navy 27 per cent; Army 52 per cent; Royal Air Force 17 per cent; Royal Marines 4 per cent.
- 407 recruits were male (90 per cent) and 447 (99 per cent) were white; two recruits were of Asian ethnicity and four were of mixed ethnicity.
- 211 recruits were still in basic training (47 per cent); 197 (44 per cent) were in technical training; 20 (4 per cent) were with operational units; 14 (3 per cent) were waiting to re-enter training, three of them due to injury, and 11 (2 per cent) had left the services.

Information provided to parents/recruits before starting training

- 57 parents (13 per cent) felt that they had not been given enough information about general service life before their son or daughter left for training.
- 37 parents (8 per cent) felt that their son or daughter was not given enough information about what the training would involve before they left home.

Information provided to parents during the training

- Before their son or daughter left for a training establishment, 38 per cent of parents were given a contact address so that they could write to them; 62 per cent were given an address after arrival.
- 83 per cent of parents were given the contact name and address of training staff.
- 52 per cent of parents were given a unit telephone number for contact purposes; 52 per cent had only a recruit’s mobile phone number; 1 per cent had no telephone number.
- Asked whether they were easily able to contact their son or daughter during training, 88 per cent said yes.
- 8 per cent had trouble contacting their son or daughter directly. In 12 of these instances it was because of poor mobile phone reception on the training unit.
- 163 parents (36 per cent) contacted the training unit of their son or daughter. Of that number 90 per cent reported that their contact with the training unit was very good or satisfactory, while 12 parents (7 per cent) felt that were dealt with ‘poorly’. Four parents tried to contact a training unit without any luck.

Son’s/daughter’s preparation before training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Well prepared</th>
<th>Adequately prepared</th>
<th>Not well prepared</th>
</tr>
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<td>Physically prepared</td>
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<tr>
<td>Understanding of regime</td>
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## Problems experienced by trainees during their training

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<tr>
<th>SERVICE</th>
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<th>Harassment %</th>
<th>Discrimination %</th>
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<td>RAF (n=77)</td>
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<td>Tri-service AVERAGE</td>
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## Problems reported by gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>SERVICE</th>
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<th>Harassment %</th>
<th>Discrimination %</th>
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<td></td>
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<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>17</td>
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<td>Female Tri-Service (n=45)</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
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## Quality of care/support/facilities during training

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<th>Very good</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>Unsatisfactory</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
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<td>The way armed services cared for son/daughter</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>Care support</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social facilities</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>Accommodation</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
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Appendix 3

Questionnaire

The Adult Learning Inspectorate
Welfare and Duty of Care Survey of Ministry of Defence Training Units

The Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) is a civilian organisation which inspects post-16 education and training provided in colleges, jobcentres, learndirect centres, prisons, adult and community providers, and by employers, in England. We are now carrying out an independent survey of Royal Navy, Royal Marine, Army and Royal Air Force training units. We have been asked to look particularly at how the military cares for recruits while they are training.

The survey work includes visits to training units and interviews with recruits and staff. Using this questionnaire, inspectors are also seeking views from the parents of recruits under 18 years old. We would be grateful if you would take a few minutes to complete the questionnaire and return it in the FREEPOST envelope provided.

The ALI will not pass your answers and comments to the Ministry of Defence or any of their units. We will keep them in confidence but a summary of the answers will contribute to a final report on how the Ministry of Defence cares for recruits. The ALI will present the report to the Minister for the Armed Forces by Easter 2005.

If you want to contact us about any aspect of this survey, please feel free to call the ALI's main office on 0800 376 1818. Alternatively, you can e-mail us at dutyofcareinspections@ali.gov.uk.

The questionnaire is anonymous, but if you would like an inspector to contact you, please provide your name, address and telephone number:

Name: ____________________________
Address: __________________________
Telephone number: _______________________

Thank you.

How to complete the questionnaire

- Please tick the box that best answers the question
- Please write your comments or the details needed in the space provided
- Please leave any questions that you cannot answer
- Please return your completed questionnaire in the FREEPOST envelope provided
The following questions ask for details on your son or daughter who joined the services:

Question 1
Are you your child's Father/ Guardian [ ]
Mother/ Guardian [ ]

Question 2
Is your child Male [ ] Female [ ]

Question 3
When s/he joined the services, how old were they? [ ]

Question 4
Which branch of the services did they join? RN [ ] RM [ ] Army [ ] RAF [ ]

Question 5
When did they join? [ ] Month/Year

Question 6
Which one of the following best describes your son's or daughter's background?

White [ ] White British [ ] White Irish [ ] White Other [ ]

Mixed Ethnic Background
White & Black Caribbean [ ]
White & Black African [ ]
White & Asian [ ]
Any other mixed background [ ]

Black or Black British
Caribbean [ ]
African [ ]
Any other Black background [ ]

Asian or Asian British
Indian [ ]
Pakistani [ ]
Bangladeshi [ ]
Any other Asian background [ ]

Chinese or any other Ethnic Group
Chinese [ ]
Fijian [ ]
Any other (please indicate) [ ]

Question 7
Are they (please complete just one option):

a. still in basic recruit training [ ]
b. waiting to re-enter training [ ]
c. in technical training [ ]
d. with an operational unit/regiment/ship [ ]
e. out of the services [ ]
Appendices

Question 8
If waiting to re-enter training are they:
   a. injured  
   b. suspended  
   c. waiting for a course

Question 9
If they have left the services, please explain why:
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

Question 10
If they are still in the services, with which unit are they?
__________________________________________________________________________

The following questions ask about events before your son or daughter left for training:

Question 11
Were you given sufficient information about general service life before your son or daughter left for training?
Yes ☐ No ☐

Question 12
In your opinion, was your son or daughter given sufficient information about what the training would involve before they left home?
Yes ☐ No ☐

Question 13
Did you have an address to write to your son or daughter?
Before they left ☐ After they arrived ☐ Never ☐

Question 14
Did you have a contact name and address for the training unit staff?
Yes ☐ No ☐

Question 15
Did you have a telephone number for your son or daughter?
A unit telephone number ☐ Their mobile ☐ None ☐
Question 16
In your opinion, how prepared was your son or daughter for the training?

a. Physically
   very well prepared □ adequately prepared □ not well prepared □

b. Understanding what they were about to undertake
   very well prepared □ adequately prepared □ not well prepared □

c. Emotionally
   very well prepared □ adequately prepared □ not well prepared □

The following questions ask about experiences during training:

Question 17
Were you able to contact your son or daughter easily during their training?  
Yes □ No □

Question 18
Were you able to contact them directly, rather than through the training staff?  
Yes □ No □

Question 19
If you had any difficulties contacting your son or daughter, please explain the difficulties:
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

Question 20
Did you ever have to contact your son’s or daughter’s training unit?  
Yes □ No □

Question 21
If you did contact the training unit, how was your query dealt with?
   very well □ satisfactorily □ poorly □ I couldn’t get hold of anyone □
Appendices

Question 22
To the best of your knowledge, did your son or daughter suffer from bullying during their training?
(bullying is when one or more people use their rank, status, strength or strength in numbers to upset or frighten others)

Yes ☐ No ☐

Question 23
To the best of your knowledge, did your son or daughter suffer from harassment during their training?
(harassment includes any unwanted, unreasonable or offensive behaviour that makes a person or people feel offended, humiliated, frightened or threatened)

Yes ☐ No ☐

Question 24
To the best of your knowledge, did your son or daughter suffer from discrimination during training?
(discrimination is when a person is treated less favourably because of their gender, race, religion, or age)

Yes ☐ No ☐

Question 25
If your son or daughter suffered from bullying, harassment or discrimination, did they make a formal complaint?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Question 26
If they made a formal complaint then, in your opinion, how was it dealt with?

very well ☐ satisfactorily ☐ unsatisfactorily ☐

The following questions ask about your son’s or daughter’s general experience in the services:

Question 27
How satisfied are you in the way that the services cared for your son or daughter?

very satisfied ☐ satisfied ☐ unsatisfied ☐

Question 28
In your opinion, how good was the care support at the training unit (someone to turn to, military or civilian, and to give help if your son or daughter had problems)?

very good ☐ satisfactory ☐ unsatisfactory ☐
Question 29
In your opinion, how good were the social facilities at the training unit?

- good □
- satisfactory □
- unsatisfactory □
- not sure □

Question 30
In your opinion, how good was the living accommodation at the training unit?

- good □
- satisfactory □
- unsatisfactory □
- not sure □

Question 31
In your opinion, what was particularly **good** about the training unit?

- ____________________________________________________________________________
- ____________________________________________________________________________
- ____________________________________________________________________________

Question 32
In your opinion, what was **unsatisfactory** about the training unit?

- ____________________________________________________________________________
- ____________________________________________________________________________
- ____________________________________________________________________________

Question 33
If you have **any other comments** about your son’s or daughter’s time in training that you feel might be of interest to us, please add them below:

- ____________________________________________________________________________
- ____________________________________________________________________________
- ____________________________________________________________________________
- ____________________________________________________________________________
- ____________________________________________________________________________
- ____________________________________________________________________________
- ____________________________________________________________________________

Thank you very much for completing this questionnaire
Appendices

Appendix 4

Terms of Reference for the Ministry of Defence Duty of Care Inspection by the Adult Learning Inspectorate

Introduction
The Minister of State for the Armed Forces (The Rt Hon Adam Ingram MP) announced on 24 May 2004 the appointment of the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) to conduct independent inspection and oversight of the armed forces’ training establishments. A memorandum of understanding will be drawn up with the ALI for an annual rolling programme of independent inspections to include the initial training establishments. The first inspections will begin in October 2004 and will focus on the care and welfare of recruits in initial training.

The appointment of the ALI follows a report by the Surrey Police into the deaths of four young soldiers at Deepcut Barracks, which among its recommendations included independent oversight of the standards of care for young soldiers.

The Minister commissioned the Director of Operational Capability (DOC) in October 2002 to conduct an audit of initial training across the armed forces, followed by a reappraisal in summer 2003. The DOC will carry out a further audit in autumn 2004 on the progress made.

The House of Commons Defence Select Committee (HCDC) is also carrying out an inquiry into the three armed services and how well they look after their recruits and how effective are the systems of support. The HCDC will report in early 2005.

Terms of Reference
The ALI inspection of duty of care and welfare will:

- Identify the effectiveness of the care, welfare and support given to recruits and trainees during initial training in the armed forces
- Identify the effectiveness of the management of the care, welfare and support to recruits and trainees during initial training in the armed forces
- Inspect a sample of the training of trainers and officer training
- Seek evidence from current recruits and trainees, those who failed to complete training, their parents or guardians and all relevant stakeholders
- Use the Common Inspection Framework (the national framework for inspection of post-16 education and training) to measure standards of initial training relevant to the context of initial training in the armed forces
- Make reference to the national care standards and the consultation document ‘Every Child Matters’
- Make judgements on the strengths and areas for development of the initial training
- Inspect and re-inspect, where appropriate, all phase 1 initial training establishments and a sample of phase 2 and phase 3 units
- Research background literature and data
- Research initial training arrangements for the armed forces and uniformed services in comparable western countries
- Inspect independent of the DOC and HCDC audits
- Liaise with DGTE on the schedule of visits to avoid compromising the integrity of inspection with the DOC and HCDC audits
- Report on the progress of the inspections monthly
- Publish the final report to the Minister by Easter 2005 including the findings from individual units, and recommendations
- Oversee the implementation of action plans resulting from inspection
Scope of the Inspection
The ALI inspection will start in Autumn 2004 and will include all phase 1 initial training establishments and a sample of phase 2 and phase 3 establishments. In August and September the ALI will notify and prepare the chosen establishments for inspection. Up to twenty-five establishments will be inspected between 18 October 2004 and 7 March 2005. Inspections will consist of announced and unannounced inspections. Follow up visits may take place where necessary. In addition the ALI will meet with the three training agencies, a sample of recruitment centres and a sample of support agencies to further research the care and support to recruits and trainees. The ALI reserves the right to change the schedule of inspection in light of evidence during the period of inspection.

Methodology
Themes
Inspectors will investigate two main themes throughout the inspection:

- The impact of the initial training and the arrangements for care and welfare for recruits, trainees and their families
- The adequacy of the organisation of initial training and welfare on recruits, trainees and their families

Inspectors will focus on such issues as:
- Recruitment and selection
- Initial advice and guidance
- Culture of the armed services promoted to recruits and trainees
- Training, assessment and feedback
- Administration of initial training
- Supervision, discipline, bullying and harassment
- Welfare support from services and referral agencies
- Relationships and development of social skills
- Health and wellbeing including mental health
- Failure and withdrawal of recruits and trainees
- Management response to failure and withdrawal
- Management of equality of opportunity and diversity
- Management of bullying, harassment, self-harm and accidental death
- Testing and support for basic skills
- Scope and accuracy of record-keeping
- Record-keeping for health and safety
- Access to firearms and rules for guard duties
- Accident and near-miss recording
- Implementation of procedures to support complaints
- Use of records to monitor trends
- Accommodation and domestic arrangements
- Social facilities and entertainment
- Physical conditioning and fitness
- Health, wellbeing and nutrition
- Communication, use of jargon
- Implementation of policy and procedures

Preparation
The ALI will produce guidance to the establishments on the process and content of inspection. Inspectors will work with each chosen establishment to ensure they are fully prepared for the inspection and to keep them fully informed of the developing findings. Each establishment will have feedback each day. Interim key strengths and weaknesses will be fed back to each unit at the end of inspection. Urgent issues will be notified to the commanding officer and if appropriate the Minister. In December inspection findings to date will be summarised for the Minister. A report will be produced for each establishment inspection which will form an annex to the final published report. Reports remain confidential to the ALI and the establishment until publication.

Nominee
Each establishment will have one nominee, who will liaise regularly with the inspection team, before and during the inspection. Training for nominees will commence in September 2004. The nominee is likely to be the second in command of an establishment, with sufficient
authority to provide evidence for the inspection and effectively support the inspection team.

**Inspection teams**

Inspection teams will consist of experienced and specialist inspectors in post-16 education and training including specialists in care, health and physical fitness. Each team will be led by one of three lead inspectors previously involved in the MOD pilot inspections of summer 2003. Inspectors from Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) and the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) may also be members of the team.

**Site visits**

Inspectors will typically spend a week, which may include weekends, at an establishment, interviewing, observing, reviewing documents and feeding back to the commanding officer and nominated linked officer. Inspectors will access the breadth of a recruit’s experience during their time in initial training. This will include out of hours and silent hours. Establishments may be visited more than once. Some visits will be unannounced at short notice.

**Interviews**

Inspectors will complete private, confidential and un-attributable interviews with recruits, instructors, welfare support staff, agency staff and commanding officers. Feedback will also be sought from parents of teenage recruits and other relevant parties. Interviews will include telephone and questionnaire methods. Welfare and training sessions will be observed and graded according to the Common Inspection Framework.

**Evidence**

Evidence gathered from inspection will remain confidential to the ALI. Findings will not be attributable to individuals. All evidence will be triangulated prior to the establishment of judgements.

**Reporting and accountability**

The ALI will report each month on the progress and outcomes of the inspection to the Minister. Interim findings will be presented in December 2004. The final report will be presented by 24 March 2005.

The ALI will communicate regularly with DGTE officers and civilian staff for administrative purposes, to ensure the smooth running of the inspection. The ALI will be mindful to maintaining the independence of inspection at all times.

**Report publication**

The final report will be published at a date to be confirmed by the Minister in Spring 2005. The final report will include annexes of the individual unit reports.
Appendix 5

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**NOTE**

In addition to documents in the public domain, an extensive range of restricted-access documentation was provided by the Ministry of Defence, the Director General Training & Education (DGTE), the Army Training and Recruitment Agency (ATRA), the Training Group Defence Agency (TGDA), the Naval Recruiting and Training Agency (NRTA) and the individual training establishments for scrutiny by the Adult Learning Inspectorate. A thorough review of related armed forces recruitment literature was also undertaken.
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