From the Chair, Rory Stewart MP

Rt Hon Michael Fallon MP,
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The Armed Forces Covenant in Action? Part 4: Education of Service Personnel

The Defence Committee published the Government Response to its Report on the Education of Service Personnel in October 2013. As you will be aware, the Committee routinely follows up the outcome of inquiries six to nine months after the Government Response. We read with interest the latest Ofsted Report—Welfare and duty of care in Armed Forces initial training. It was good to see the continued improvement in the ratings of individual establishments. We would find it useful to see the MoD response to the Ofsted Report and any resulting action plan.

I would be very grateful for a progress report on the actions detailed in the Government Response. In particular, we would be grateful for fuller information on:

- The results of the cost-benefit analysis of the policy on recruiting soldiers under the age of 18 years—we would like a copy of the report on the analysis and the outcome of MoD’s deliberations on the results;
- Why Ofsted found that there was a lack of progress in getting all instructors trained before their posting? We recommended that all trainers should complete the course before they take up post and it has been the subject of a repeated Ofsted recommendations, we would details of how many instructors have taken up post before qualification in the last five years;
- We also supported the Ofsted recommendation that the MoD should institute a system of observation and feedback to all instructors, again Ofsted reports that there has been little progress in meeting this recommendation. Could you let us know why this is and what you intend to do about it;
• The Review of the Higher Command and Staff Course and the response of the Defence Training Board to this Review—we were promised a copy of the Review in the Government Response; and

• The outcomes of the pilot programmes of civilian qualifications for those in existence at the time of our inquiry and for any further new ones, we would also like to know if the Armed Forces have plans for further pilots.

I would be grateful if we could have your reply by Friday 12 September 2014.

CHAIR