26th September 2014

Dear Rory,

Thank you for your letter of 15 July which requested both an update on the actions outlined in our government response to your report on the education of service personnel and our response to the Ofsted Report on Armed Forces initial training.

I have set out in the attached annex our detailed response to the points which you raised. I would like to make it clear at the outset that MOD takes its responsibilities in these areas very seriously and has made, and is continuing to make, significant progress. As much of this work is not yet complete, it has not been possible to report back to you definitively on the final outcome. However, I hope that you are encouraged on the progress that I am able to report.

I apologise that, at this busy time, we are sending this response after your requested deadline, and also for any inconvenience this may have caused.

Yours sincerely,

THE RT HON MICHAEL FALLON MP

Rory Stewart OBE MP
Chair
House of Commons Defence Committee
House of Commons
London
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MOD RESPONSE TO OFSTED REPORT

The MOD does not respond formally to the Ofsted Report so I am unable to provide you with our response. As you may know, the MOD commissions Ofsted to provide independent external assurance of the welfare and care provision in Armed Forces initial training (Phase 1 and 2). The annual graded inspections conducted by Ofsted enable an impartial view of the welfare and care provided to recruits and trainees, including those aged under 18. These are presented to Parliament and the public as well as serving to support the Armed Forces’ own continuous improvement agenda. Each report contains a number of recommendations and the consequent actions are delivered by Training Establishments and single Service Headquarters as part of their continuous improvement agenda and risk management processes. In addition, key recommendations are used to conduct research initiatives in order to refresh and further improve existing MOD personnel and training policies.

Ofsted are fully engaged with our continuous improvement agenda and will review how their key recommendations are being taken forward as part of the following year’s inspection programme. In the next round of inspections, Ofsted will, for the first time, inspect Training Headquarters in order to focus on the effectiveness of leadership and management to provide systems for welfare and duty of care and in making improvements.

UNDER 18s

You will recall that I wrote to you separately on 1st August 2014 with the results of the cost-benefit analysis of recruiting soldiers under the age of 18. The study led me to conclude that the scheme provides a highly valuable, vocational training opportunity for those wishing to follow an Army career.

DEFENCE INSTRUCTOR TRAINING AND MONITORING

Over the last five years, there has been a consistent trend whereby 80-90% of instructors are qualified within three months of arriving in post, with Manning shortages and operational commitments generating peaks and troughs throughout the training year. We do not hold information on how many instructors have taken up post before qualification in the last five years.

The Ministry of Defence has recognised that it is necessary to undertake a wholesale review of instructor training and development and, accordingly, has established the Defence Training Capability Project. This will widen the support that is provided to new Defence trainers, who will be required to complete a Workplace Portfolio. Defence trainers will only be awarded full competency as a Practitioner once the Workplace Portfolio is completed. New Defence Trainers and legacy staff will be monitored and developed by Defence Training Supervisors, for whom a new Defence
Training Supervisor course has been designed. The first courses are being piloted in October this year. As part of the project, a new Defence Trainer Capability Policy was agreed in July 2014 which includes a phased (next 2-3 years) widening of the scope of Defence trainers who receive formal instructor training and are supported through work place supervision and continuing professional development. Ofsted has been engaged throughout the Project and has provided guidance on the development of the policy and courses.

In addition, a Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (dstl) research project has been initiated to look at how we employ, select and reward Defence trainers. Outcomes will develop options for more effective employment of Defence instructors by single Service manning authorities; initial findings are due in the autumn.

DEFENCE LEADERS’ TRAINING AND EDUCATION

In the Government response of October 2013 we agreed to inform the Committee of the outcome of the review of the Higher Command and Staff Course, and the response of the Defence Training Board. In the same month, the Defence Training Board took a review paper regarding delivery options for education and training for senior military personnel. This included the Higher Command and Staff Course. However, upon further consideration, and aligned to the Chief of Defence Personnel’s authority for all Defence personnel and training (military and civilian) it was considered that further work was required to expand on the initial review. This work, now referred to as the Defence Leaders Training Education Review (DeLTER), will look more broadly at the knowledge, skills, experience and behaviours required of future senior leaders in Defence. As part of this work a training needs analysis (TNA) of 32 Defence officials at 3½*/4* level (military and civilian) was carried out between 25 June and 1 August 2014. The findings of this TNA will support further work in the autumn to ascertain the current developmental training and education provision for our senior personnel and establish if there are any gaps in the existing training provision. The conclusions of the Review are due to be reported to the Defence People and Training Board in January 2015. We will honour our commitment to inform the Committee of the outcome of this review, and the response of the Defence Training Board, once this has completed. This outcome of this review will also inform the wider work within the department on the New Employment Model.

CIVILIAN QUALIFICATIONS

The Army programme to provide professional recognition for Combat Medical Technicians (CMTs) is delivered via the University of Cumbria as the academic provider in conjunction with the Yorkshire, South West, North West and South Central Ambulance Services as Clinical Placement Providers. Commenced in October 2012, to date the pilot programmes have trained 183 CMTs (including 2 Reserve soldiers) as Emergency Medical Technicians attaining a Level 4 award in Pre-Hospital Emergency Care. An additional 2 Royal Navy and 1 RAF students have accessed the pilot courses. A total of 64 Army students have progressed from the Level 4 course to the
Foundation Degree in Paramedic Practice to become Registered Practitioners with the Health and Care Professions Council. The first cohort of 24 Army Paramedic students will graduate from the University of Cumbria on 27 November 2014 with 4 delayed students graduating in February 2015. Two individuals did not complete the programme. The second cohort of 34 Army students commenced in June 2014 and is expected to graduate in November 2015; this cohort includes 1 Reserve soldier. Funding has been secured to continue the delivery of the training programme in the training year April 2015 – April 2016.

More widely, Defence offers accreditation opportunities across the full spectrum of training and education. These opportunities are either fully funded if mandatory, or, if elective, a range of schemes are available to reduce the cost to the service person.

The following information outlines the education policy for Service personnel, broken down by each Single Service:

Royal Navy

During academic year 12/13, over 10,000 qualifications were awarded to Naval Service personnel, and the 13/14 total is likely to exceed this. Qualifications were awarded in subjects ranging from RYA (Royal Yachting Association) sailing through to Masters degrees and post graduate diplomas. 100% of new Naval recruits undertake a Level 2 Apprenticeship, either during Phase 2 (Royal Navy) or Phase 1 (Royal Marines) – approx 2200 new registrations per year. Additionally, a wide range of elective education and training opportunities are available. A number of Institutions, Universities and Colleges offer Naval Service personnel Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) or Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) for their Naval training through opportunities such as Learning at Work Degrees, Membership of Institutions or City & Guild Professional Recognition Awards.

Royal Air Force

Almost all RAF training, education and experience is accredited against civilian qualifications. Wherever possible, courses are directly accredited against a civilian equivalent qualification. For example, all command, management and leadership courses are accredited by both the Chartered Management Institute and the Institute of Leadership and Management against their qualifications from Level 2 to Level 7. Where courses are not suitable for accreditation, due to either being too short or too specialised for civilian recognition, Defence now has the potential to offer its own nationally recognised qualifications via the Defence Awarding Organisation. All airmen recruits will gain a Level 2 or Level 3 apprenticeship or equivalent qualification within 2 years of joining the RAF. In academic year 13/14 1200 apprenticeships were gained and some 1700 individuals gained further accredited qualifications from Level 2 to Level 7.

Army
The Army Skills offer to Regular and Reserve personnel and their current and future civilian employers is that throughout a soldier's Army career the Army will provide opportunities for them to gain civilian qualifications as a result of Army training and service – and will pay for them. These qualifications range from Level 1-8 on the Qualifications Credit Framework (QCF) and include academic and vocational qualifications for pan-Army training and service. It is estimated that over 15,000 personnel will access these opportunities over the next 12 months.

I hope that the above detail gives reassurance as to how seriously we take the education of our Service personnel, and the steps we are taking to continually improve our offer in this area. I recognise there is more to do in some areas, and we continue to value the opportunity that the Ofsted reports provide to take stock of where we are and what more we need to do to ensure the best possible educational and welfare outcomes in our Service personnel and establishments.