Thank you for your letter, received on 6 November 2014, in response to my letter of 26 September on the education of service personnel. You wrote to request further information on the Cost Benefit Analysis of the recruitment of under 18 year olds to the Armed Forces; a copy of the report on the initial review regarding delivery options for education and training for senior military personnel; and an update on the outcome of the subsequently commissioned training needs analysis of Defence officials at three and four star. I will address each of those points in turn.

After further consideration of your request, and of the continued Parliamentary and lobby group interest, we have now agreed to publish the Department’s Cost Benefit Analysis of Army Junior Entry. My Honourable Friend the Minister for Reserves made a commitment to place this in the Library of the House yesterday and a copy was sent to you at the same time. You also asked for our views on Child Soldiers International’s 2013 report. This concluded that Junior Entry (those entering the Army aged between 16 and 17 or in some cases 17.5) was less cost-effective than Standard Entry. It specifically stated that ‘raising the minimum recruitment age to 18 years would save approximately £94 million per annum and decrease trainee drop-out rates’. We do not recognise these figures. Their report also fails to recognise the number of wider benefits that the individual, the Armed Forces, and society can gain from service. As I said in my previous letter, our own cost/benefit analysis study led me to conclude that the Junior Entry scheme provides a highly valuable, vocational training opportunity for those wishing to follow an Army career.

As requested, I enclose a copy of the Senior Military Officer’s Education (SMO) review paper, which was reported to the Defence Training Board (DTB) in October 2013. As you will see, it recommended follow-on work to expand and further define the requirement for the training and education for senior leaders in Defence. This work was subsequently expanded to include Defence Senior Civil Servants and commenced in June 2014. Key stakeholders will consider a
career development pathway for the education and training requirement of senior Defence leaders at three and four star at a series of workshops, ahead of a report being written for the Defence People and Training Board in April 2015. You will note that there has been a three-month delay since my last letter which was unforeseen at the time of writing.

I hope that you find my response helpful.

THE RT HON MICHAEL FALLON MP
4 Oct 13

DTB Members

REVIEW OF THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF SENIOR MILITARY OFFICERS (SMO)

ISSUE
1. The optimisation of the education and training of Senior Military Officers to enhance their ability to operate in the strategic domain at 2 and above.

NOTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS
2. a. The DTB is requested to note that:
   (1) The key delivery vehicles for SMO Education; the HCSC, DSLP, PINNACLE and RCDS have been reviewed and contain very limited duplication; taken together they represent an excellent baseline for SMO;
   (2) Outside this core, PGE opportunities are not essential, but offer valuable breadth to SMO.
   (3) A single Defence Authority for the coherent delivery of Defence through career development is desirable (this might be the same Defence Authority with responsibility for the requirement, or alternatively it might sit separately in the delivery domain) and that this should be addressed within the CDP development work currently underway.
   b. But that:
   (1) There is no 'core' Defence through career development model preparing SMO;
   (2) The only mandated SMO education package is the 2 week DSLP;
   (3) HCSC and Pinnacle courses have primacy amongst Career Managers for top talent;
   (4) RCDS is an under used resource, which is employed as a parking-lot for talented SMO;
   (5) PGE opportunities differ between Services and there was evidence that the policy established at DTB 4 has not been followed consistently.
   c. The DTB is recommended to agree that:
   (1) The current delineation between ACSC, HCSC and RCDS continues, but that a programme of continuous improvement work is conducted to scrutinise the requirement and conduct appropriate training needs analysis, with particular focus on RCDS as the SMO strategic enabler. The latter should be subject to appropriate validation.
   (2) On balance, PGE should remain a single Service responsibility, but with more effective scrutiny through TEPAG and DTEG.
   (3) The requirement issue for SMO Education needs to be passed to the SPB.

BACKGROUND

3. In terms of the continuum of education from entry to the threshold for the SMO cadre post ACSC, the Services have evolved separate and distinct models for through career development. There has never been a strong central or Joint voice in setting 'core' requirements on either the

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1 In this sense, mandatory training such as single service briefing courses are not included.
Armed Forces or Civil Services. This point was made at the DTB of 14 Mar where I was tasked to review the requirement and delivery options for education and training above ACSC of senior military personnel within Defence3.

4. I approached this task by analysing relevant work, including DOC Audits4, government reports and Service policies. My team interviewed Commandant RCDS and Director HCSC and developed TOR, approved at 2* by DTEG5 (Annex A), which focused the Review on areas for improvement noted by Min AF, in particular how Defence targets its education and the role of RCDS6. Three workshops were held to reconcile current practice with Defence policies in JSP 822. Deductions from the workshops and statistical analysis led to the report, discussed by DTEG on 17 Sep7.

5. Overview. SMO education is delivered mainly through centralised courses. Originally, RCDS was the ‘jewel in the crown’ preparing SMO for strategic level appointments. However, in the post 9/11 era, HCSC became the gateway to operational command and to senior Defence appointments. To meet TELIC/HERRICK requirements, HCSC focused on ‘Operational Ways’ rather than ‘Strategic Ends’, which arguably has led to a situation where SMO are not specifically prepared for the strategic appointments8, which may follow operational success. Business-related courses (Means) delivered by DA-CMT for Defence Leadership appointments add value to SMO education, but these are unpopular with potential SMO9 and not championed by career managers. The Review also considered NATO courses, PINNACLE and mandatory de-centralised SMO T&E, which continue to be managed by competent authorities within Commands.

KEY FINDINGS

6. The Ownership Problem. This issue crosses Personnel and Training Defence Lines of Development (DLOD) boundaries and tests the effectiveness of the Delegated Operating Model (DOM). Individual Services employ and manage their SMO in different ways. For example, the RN manages individuals using competence, experience, qualifications and report characteristics; the Army categorises appointments in career fields; and the RAF has introduced a new career model under Project SIRIUS. Different levels of objectivity applied during these processes lead to separate approaches to T&E; for example, RN covers SMO education in Book of Reference 83410. At the heart of the problem is a perception that we do not appear to venerate education highly11; this was illustrated at the first workshop, when Service Secretaries described RCDS now as a career ‘lay-by’.

7. Incoherencies. The Review identified other incoherencies in the Governance of SMO Education. Defence is not following best practice policies laid down in JSP 822. The Defence Systems Approach to Training (DSAT) is not applied consistently to all SMO education. There is neither a nominated Defence “owner”, nor a rigorous Defence Requirement for SMO education and there is no formal external validation or assurance of SMO courses. In addition, the principles to support PGE evaluation, agreed at DTB 4, have not been applied consistently in 2013.

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3 TESRR/04/01_01/DTB6 dated 21 Mar 13; Action 6.3 from DTB6 Record of Decisions.
4 DOC Audits 03/05 (HCSC) and 2/10 (Joint Staff T&E), which stated that “RCDS is under-valued by Defence... and unless this changes, it faces inexorable decline”.
5 HO/SOT/ESRR/04_01_01/DTEG dated 22 May 13; DTEG 2 Record of Decisions.
7 HO/SOT/ESRR/04_01_01/DTEG dated 23 Sep ROD made at the 3rd meeting of DTEG held in MoD MB on 17 Sep.
8 Strategic thinking and strategy-making has been an area of relative weakness. VCDS address at the Wilton Park Conference on Transformation and Professional Military Education, 14 May 2013.
9 An illustration of the unpopularity of these courses is from the JSCSC survey of current ACSC students, of whom only 2% would elect to complete a business “means” module compared to strategic “ends” or operational “ways” modules.
10 RN and RM Officer Training Regulations dated Feb 2013; Chapter 4 Staff Courses Defence Fellowships and Degrees.
11 The Review consulted with Defence Studies teams and discovered similar examples in all 3 Services to the case of Dan Jarvis MP, who applied as an Army Major in 2009 for the MPhil course at Cambridge, but was told by his career manager that he would be better served in an infantry major’s post when he had already filled OP4 posts at RD, LF and P/HQ.
8. **Ownership Options.** JSP 822 provides the framework for cases where T&E is delivered as part of capability development. SMO Education should be owned by a Defence Authority (in this sense a Training Requirements Authority (TRA)). As SMO education is inextricably linked to career paths, CDP has a natural locus because he not only chairs the DTB, but represents the overall Personnel capability at a strategic level. Alternatively the Levene model might suggest that a JFC appointment should be nominated. This will need to be addressed within the CDP review work reporting by Apr 14, but a DTB view would be very helpful.

9. **Requirement Options.** Following the Review workshops, DTEG agreed the key elements of the requirement as: a performance statement; competencies; qualifications and eligibility informing the size of the cohort. They also agreed a high level statement of requirement as: **Identify, develop and exploit military talent to sustain and improve the body of knowledge and understanding to Defence, in order to influence and communicate better strategic decisions.** Further work is required to analyse essential job specifications, reflecting expectations by COS that all officers reaching 3* level should have attended RCDS. The New Employment Model (NEM) is attempting to bring coherence to Tri-Service career management policy as one strand of the wider programme work to enhance attractiveness of the ‘offer’ to Service Personnel through TACOS revisions. Parallel work is being undertaken by Services, such as the Army 2020 Project 21 Knowledge Skills and Experience (KSE). However, DTEG members were concerned about the probability of securing Tri-Service agreement for KSE and agreed a cognitive skills framework based on Bloom’s taxonomy, used both in the RN’s Thinking Skills For Leaders and the Army’s Higher Education Policy Framework Paper. By placing SMO Education on a programme footing, this framework can be incorporated in a rigorous requirement, along with Business Skills developed by HRD.

10. **What Is Taught.** DTEG agreed that the ACSC baseline of Ends, Ways and Means should be at the core of what is taught to SMO. Academic input focuses on international theory, political science, military history and their derivations, including conflict studies, international security, contemporary warfare and strategic studies. There are clear differences in how these are taught at UK universities and so the requirement should balance the optimal pathway to include an understanding of how ‘states’ behave and what is ‘power’ in terms of sovereignty. It was judged that these studies should be at Master’s level, which dictates course length. HCSC teaches UK Defence doctrine, operational art and campaign planning, whereas RCDS focuses on strategic analysis and strategy making. RCDS has reinvigorated their syllabus, balancing rigorous learning, formal assessments and the opportunity for reflection, in order to meet the revised mission. While an HCSC exercise centres on CJJI aspects of an operation, an RCDS exercise develops a strategic narrative on a problem such as Bio-Security. Both are important and complementary, thus differentiation between RCDS and HCSC should be preserved within Def Ac. Furthermore, Def Ac has ‘mapped’ RCDS and HCSC and there is now little overlap between the two courses.

11. **Validation.** The Review discovered that external RCDS customer engagement is not formalised. JFC ownership has led to a new Def Ac governance structure implemented in 2013. This is creating a clear delineation of delivery authorities into education sub-portfolios supported by two 3* CEBs covering the bulk of Def Ac courses; one for Command, Leadership and Management (CLM) and one for Fin Mil Cap. This governance model will report as required to DTB, although feedback may be provided to the 2* DTEG. This new structure complements recent Def Ac work to ensure appropriate linkages and effective coherency between its courses and provides an opportunity for strategic education, such as that provided by the RCDS, to be included formally in the CLM CEB.

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12. Within the context of this Policy, the term capability also describes individual T&E outputs and activities, which in themselves may not generate capability e.g. Physical Education, Equality and Diversity, Shouting Policy.
14. These form diametrically opposed elements of Rationalist and Post-Structuralist arguments in international theory.
16. To prepare selected SMO and government officials as well as appropriate individuals from the private sector, from UK and elsewhere for senior leadership and management roles. We do this by developing strategic understanding and the capacity for strategic thinking through rigorous analysis of the international security agenda; the levers that provide for security, stability and prosperity; the key tenets of leadership at the national strategic level.
12. **PGE**\(^7\). Following DOC's recommendations, the PGE Policy and Stakeholder Group (PGS) was established with policy defined in JSP 898 (Catalogue of Defence Policies with Impact on T&E). Recently, the PGS has been subsumed by TEPAG with support from a Def Ac chaired Working Group with members representing customer TLBs. The role of Def Ac is both advisor and co-ordinator, in order to achieve best value for Defence. While PGE policy has undoubtedly improved, several coherency challenges remain extant. Single Services own their individual policies and have differing approaches when selecting personnel for courses, particularly in the area of Fellowships undertaken by Service Personnel. While the RAF aims to send high calibre SO1s with potential for 1\(^*\) to MPhil courses, the Army is moving towards nominating talented OF3/4 officers. There is a risk that Service empowerment could lead to different pathways to SMO advancement; however on balance, it is judged that PGE opportunities such as the HDSP, Hudson and CAS Fellowships should continue to be managed by Service Commands as laid down in their individual DINs. DTEG also agreed that SMO should not be career limited because they miss early opportunities to complete a Master's degree, so taught Masters Degrees may best be directed to the OF3/OF4/OF5 level, with Fellowship research linked clearly to the value to Defence.

13. **Resource Implications.** The Review notes that British SMO education has a very high international reputation and that costs are mitigated by income generated from international students. However, an increased focus on VfM and a heightened awareness of cost issues at all levels present significant challenges because there is currently no common approach to the evaluation of output costs. This is being addressed by the Fin Mil Cap Cost Leadership project, which aims to validate and endorse a methodology across all DLODs and will enable Service Commands to manage their own budgets with more effective Rol decisions at the appropriate level. To ensure VfM is considered formally in support of academic analysis of candidate's proposals, PGE decision-making boards should use Rol and Rol tools (cost modelling, length of Service remaining, etc.). If central oversight of the full spectrum of SMO Education and Training requirements and deliverables is required, then a small programme office could be established within TESRR with a dedicated military SO2 and civilian C2, but given resource constraints this is not recommended.

**CONCLUSION**

14. The SMO Education Review has provided a benchmark from which to assess the development of military officers at and beyond OF5. The Review has taken account of related studies and projects, including: the NEM Programme; RN's 'Human Capability Based Approach to SMO Education'; the Army's Project 21 and their Strategy for Higher Education; and the RAF's Project SIRIUS. While civilian personnel development was outside the scope of this Review, important lessons have been learned from the Defence Reform work and account has been taken of Future Reserves policies. Overall, we will need to share best practice whilst driving forward improvements in a coherent manner, while still enabling Single Service culture to endure.

15. The Review has adhered to the TOR agreed by DTEG members. Time has been short, and there has been understandable reticence in contemplating change without sedulous (and time consuming) requirement review followed by training needs analysis and then Bol work to address resource. Nevertheless the findings on the coherence of the current package have been encouraging, and the high level statement of requirement and 4 key elements agreed by DTEG are important way markers. Career paths are owned by Single Services; therefore, the ability to set a pathway that drives effective talent management depends on close co-ordination between Personnel and Training DLODs and so I will take this forward with Service Secretaries at my meeting with them on 8 Oct. Different appointing behaviour with respect to the RCDS is key here, but this may in turn drive a requirement to focus again on the length and structure of the latter if we are to get all the right people through, noting that we already accommodate modular attendance for some.

**ACDS (Pers & Trg)**

\(^7\) PGE is defined as "Masters or doctoral studies leading to a full or partial qualification, i.e. all education at Level 7 or above on the Quality Assurance Agency\(^7\) Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland".
ANNEX:

A. SMO Education Review – Terms of Reference.
A REVIEW OF THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF SENIOR MILITARY OFFICERS (SMO)

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Over the next 5 years, it is predicted that the number of SMO at OF5 and above (c1600) serving in the Armed Forces will reduce by at least 10%. Individual Services employ and manage their SMO in different ways. For example the Army categorises appointments in career fields (e.g. Combat, Defence Policy, Technical, Logistics, Human Resources) and the RAF has introduced a model based on mainstream and executive stream SMO. These Service differences lead to separate approaches to training and education (T&E) requirements, listed in individual job specifications and agreed between employing officers and Defence/Service Secretaries.

2. Historically, T&E of SMO has been delivered through centralised and hierarchical Defence courses including: the one year academic course at the Royal College of Defence Studies, based at Seaford House in Central London; the 15 week Higher Command and Staff Course at the Joint Services Command and Staff College; a range of strategic business courses run by the College of Management and Technology; and de-centralised fellowships and university post graduate degree courses, covered by the Higher Defence Studies Programme, a Tri-Service programme established in the MoD Policy Area in 1980, which funded the first 10 years of the MPhil in International Relations at Cambridge. Academic input tends to be focused on international theory, political science, military history and their derivations including conflict studies, international security, contemporary warfare, strategic studies, etc. Additionally, there are shorter interventions such as a mandatory SMO course for Army OF5/6 officers at Warminster and UK PINNACLE for 2* officers.

3. Despite “customer” consensus about the benefits of these courses, some of the incoherence identified by DOC in the 2010 audit of Joint Staff T&E remains. Subsequent studies such as the Defence Reform Unit review of T&E and the Defence Training Board (DTB) review of the Advanced Command and Staff Course (ACSC) combined with continuing resource pressure has led DTB to agree an action for ACDS (Pers & Trg) “to review the requirement and delivery options for education and training above ACSC of senior military personnel within Defence”.

4. Taking account of previous research and the New Employment Model, Hq TESRR is to lead the review of SMO education and training, focusing on Service needs and the following areas:

- Update key data, including costs and mapping SMO requirements for each Service.
- Recommend options to co-ordinate Defence and Service Requirements for higher level education and training for OF5 officers and above for FY 14/15 and beyond, including RCDS and HCSC.
- Recommend options for the future delivery of education and training, including a hierarchy of courses, accreditation and assurance.

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1 Education defined as developing an individual’s intellectual capacity, knowledge and understanding; equipping them to come to reasoned decisions, judgements and conclusions, including in unpredictable and complex circumstances and situations.
2 Information provided by DASA statistics and Service Commands.
3 DOC Audit 2/10
5 The 2010 DOC Audit led to the staffing of 2 papers: Balance of Investment for Post-Graduate Education (PGE) dated 14 Mar 11, and Future Delivery of MOD-Funded Post Graduate Education (PGE) dated 27 Jul 11. Key reference documents are listed at Annex B.
6 This should be done law the FMC TOM adhering to principles of Cost Leadership and Management, using verified and validated data.
5. The review team is to update TEPAG and DTEG members and widen this stakeholder group to include Service Secretaries, partners across government and civilian academic providers. A final report is to be circulated to DTB members in Oct 13.

6. In applying strategic coherency, any recommendations must be compliant with the Defence Vision and Operating Model, the Defence Joint Operating Concept, the New Employment Model, Future Reserves (FR) 20 work and pan-government/Joint Services policies.

7. The review is to hold 3 stakeholder workshops to consider:

- Existing Senior Officer Job Specifications and Requirements by end May, to include Service Secretaries/Head Office/Defence Policy Career Field representatives. This event should allow discussion of: the link between strategic education and high rank; selection policies and criteria; talent management; subsequent employment; the roles of HCSC and RCDS and the optimal balance in terms of Ends, Ways and Means.

- Governance and Resource issues in early Jun to include Service Commands. This event should include discussion of: decision making processes; sponsorship; programmed funding; risk; capitation rates.

- Delivery Options by end Jun, to include DEFAC/Civilian Academic Providers. This event should include discussion of: Training Needs Analysis; the Defence Statement of Requirement; distance learning and distributed training; length of courses; accreditation and assurance.

8. The following assumptions will apply:

- Senior military personnel are defined as officers at OF5 and above, regular and reserve.

- The number of SMOs\(^7\) will decrease by at least 10% over the next 4 years.

- SMO T&E requirements will increase commensurate with Defence and Security complexity.

- Decreasing Defence T&E resources will attract pan-government value for money analysis.

- The review will build on endorsed changes to the Advanced Command and Staff Course (ACSC) in 2014\(^6\) and focus on T&E interventions based on Ends, Ways and Means, relating to Joint Operations and Defence Policy (or Service equivalent).

- Specialist training, such as medical and engineering will not be included in the review.

- Research doctorates sponsored by Defence (e.g. dstl projects) will not be considered.

- The review will build on DOC audits of the Higher Command and Staff Course\(^9\) and Joint Staff Training and Education\(^10\) and other relevant work (see below and Annex B).

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ACDS (Pers & Trg)

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\(^7\) DASA statistics reveal the current number of SMO as c1600, approximately 9% of the total number of officers.

\(^6\) Maintaining the Intellectual Edge: Ensuring the Advanced Command and Staff Course meets the needs of Future Force 2020; Jan 2013.

\(^9\) DOC Audit 03/05.

\(^10\) DOC Audit 2/10.
ANNEX A TO
REVIEW OF THE EDUCATION
AND TRAINING OF SMO
DATED 4 OCT

A REVIEW OF THE EDUCATION\(^1\) AND TRAINING OF SENIOR MILITARY OFFICERS (SMO)

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3. Despite “customer” consensus about the benefits of these courses, some of the incoherence identified by DOC in the 2010 audit of Joint Staff T&E\(^3\) remains. Subsequent studies such as the Defence Reform Unit review of T&E and the Defence Training Board (DTB) review of the Advanced Command and Staff Course (ACSC) combined with continuing resource pressure has led DTB to agree an action for ACDS (Pers & Trg) “to review the requirement and delivery options for education and training above ACSC of senior military personnel within Defence”\(^4\).

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- **The review will build on endorsed changes to the Advanced Command and Staff Course (ACSC) in 2014**\(^8\) **and focus on T&E interventions based on Ends, Ways and Means, relating to Joint Operations and Defence Policy (or Service equivalent).**

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