Dear Tobias,

The Committee fully recognises the important contribution made by Commonwealth citizens to the military, which is underlined by Britain already employing some 4,500 Commonwealth nationals in the Armed Forces. The MoD’s announcement last November that Britain’s military will increase the number of Commonwealth recruits to 1,350 each year indicates that the long-held military links with Commonwealth countries is set to continue.

The Committee is therefore concerned about the difficulties apparently faced by some Commonwealth soldiers in relocating their families to the United Kingdom. As you will be aware, the Sunday Times reported on 10 February that Commonwealth soldiers enlisted in the British Army are paid too little after basic training to meet the Home Office threshold necessary to relocate their families. The report suggests that:

- Soldiers are having to take on second jobs to earn the minimum required under visa rules to bring their families to the UK;
- The MoD has been pushing for a rule change to waive the minimum income requirements for foreign soldiers but the Home Office has not engaged with the issue; and,
- Soldiers and their families are turning to immigration tribunals to challenge the policy.

The Committee would be grateful if you could address the following questions, providing a breakdown by Command:

1. How many currently enlisted Commonwealth military personnel have families, and how many of these families have been relocated to the UK?

2. Since 2016, how many Commonwealth military personnel are you aware of who have been unable to relocate their families to the UK?
3. Since 2016, how many Commonwealth military personnel have requested permission to take up part-time work to help them relocate their families?

4. Since 2016, how many Commonwealth military personnel or their families have taken their cases to an immigration tribunal?
   a. In how many cases did the tribunal rule in the applicant’s favour?
   b. How many such cases are pending?

5. When did the MoD first raise with the Home Office the issue of waiving the minimum income requirements for Commonwealth military personnel to relocate their families, what is the current status of discussions on this issue, and when do you expect to reach an agreement with the Home Office?

We have also been told that a disproportionate number of non-UK nationals in the Armed Forces have faced disciplinary proceedings for misdemeanours as they approach the end of their service, which might affect any subsequent application for UK citizenship. The Committee would be grateful if you could also provide:

6. The number of non-UK nationals who served in the military in each of the last five years who faced disciplinary proceedings during the final 12 months of their service, including the type of misdemeanour, and how many were disciplined as a result.

7. The number of non-UK nationals who served in the military in each of the last five years who were reported for misdemeanours during the final 12 months of their service for whom this was the first time they had faced disciplinary proceedings.

I should be grateful for a response to this letter by Tuesday 9 April.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

Rt Hon. Dr Julian Lewis
Chairman of the Committee