



This statistical release presents information relating to the gender, ethnicity, nationality, religion and age of Military Personnel employed by the Ministry of Defence (MOD). This publication meets the Department's obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty to provide information on its workforce identified by the Equality Act 2010.

Information is provided on the number of Military Personnel in (defined as the **strength**), joining (**intake**) and leaving (**outflow**) the UK Armed Forces. Statistics are included for **UK Regular Forces** and **Future Reserves 2020 (FR20)** personnel. Further statistics can be found in the **Excel Tables** which accompany this report.

Some statistics which were previously published in the **Diversity Dashboard (Military)**, **Annual** and **Quarterly Personnel Reports**, **Service Personnel Bulletin 2.01**, **Annual maternity report** and the **UK Reserve Forces and Cadets** report can now be found in this publication.

Key Points and Trends

Gender

- ▲ **11.2%** **Female representation in the UK Regular Forces**
As at 1 October 2021
This has increased by 0.2 percentage points compared with 1 October 2020 (11.0%)
- ▲ **15.4%** **Female representation in the Future Reserves 2020**
As at 1 October 2021
This has increased by 0.4 percentage points compared with 1 October 2020 (15.0%)
- ▲ **12.7%** **Of total intake into the combined UK Regular Forces and the Future Reserves 2020 were female**
In the 12 months to 30 September 2021
This has increased by 0.5 percentage points compared with 30 September 2020 (12.2%)

Ethnicity

- ▲ **9.4%** **Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) representation in the UK Regular Forces**
As at 1 October 2021
This has increased by 0.3 percentage points compared with 1 October 2020 (9.1%)
- ▲ **5.8%** **BAME representation in the Future Reserves 2020**
As at 1 October 2021
This has increased by 0.2 percentage points compared with 1 October 2020 (5.6%)
- ▼ **8.0%** **Of total intake into the combined UK Regular Forces and Future Reserves 2020 were BAME**
In the 12 months to 30 September 2021
This has decreased by 3.2 percentage points compared with 30 September 2020 (11.2%)

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Background quality report: www.gov.uk/government/statistics/tri-service-personnel-bulletin-background-quality-reports

Would you like to be added to our **contact list**, so that we can inform you about updates to these statistics and consult you if we are thinking of making changes? You can subscribe to updates by emailing Analysis-Tri-Service@mod.gov.uk

Contents

Introduction	Page 2
Measuring Performance	Page 3
Gender	Page 5 (National Statistic) ¹
Ethnic Origin and Nationality	Page 7 (National Statistic) ¹
Religion	Page 9 (National Statistic) ¹
Age	Page 10 (National Statistic) ¹
Sexual Orientation	Page 12
Maternity	Page 13
Background and Context	Page 15
Further Information and Definitions	Page 16

¹Nationality strength statistics and all intake and outflow statistics by diversity characteristics are not National Statistics for the Future Reserves 2020.

A full glossary and other supporting documents are available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/armed-forces-monthly-service-personnel-statistics-supplementary-documents>

Supplementary tables containing further statistics can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/uk-armed-forces-biannual-diversity-statistics-index>

Introduction

This publication contains diversity information on the strength, intake and outflow of the UK Regular Forces and the Future Reserves 2020 (FR20) population, both overall and for each of the Services, including the **Royal Navy/Royal Marines (RN/RM)**, **Army** and **Royal Air Force (RAF)**. Statistics are for trained and untrained personnel unless otherwise stated. Ethnic origin and religion data are self-reported on the Joint Personnel Administration (JPA) database. Any percentages or figures quoted within this report relate to those with a known ethnic origin, religion or nationality unless otherwise stated.

Detailed statistics and historic time series can be found in the **Excel tables** which accompany this report; further historic statistics will be added in due course. In the meantime, historic statistics can be found in the following archived publications: **Monthly**, **Quarterly** and **Annual** Personnel Reports, **UK Reserve Forces and Cadets**, **Service Personnel Bulletin 2.01**, **Service and Civilian Bulletin 2.03**, **UK Armed Forces Maternity Report**, **Diversity Dashboard (Military)** and **Quarterly** and **Annual Location Statistics**. The **glossary** contains definitions of terminology used in this publication. The next edition of this publication is provisionally scheduled to be published on GOV.UK at 9:30am on 16th June 2022. A calendar of upcoming MOD statistical releases can be found on **GOV.UK**.

A National Statistics publication

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. The MOD continues to seek feedback from users to ensure this publication is meeting user needs.

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods; and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

Measuring Performance

Background

Currently, there are no publicly declared Armed Forces recruitment targets for women and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME), after the April 2020 targets came to a completion.

For definitions of the **UK Regulars, Future Reserves 2020** and **Intake** see notes at the bottom of this page.

Defence remains dedicated to achieving a more diverse workforce to promote a diverse and inclusive culture, allowing everyone to reach their potential, and ensuring the armed forces better reflect the society they serve. Defence is undertaking a wide range of activities to increase the number of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) and female recruits into the Armed Forces.

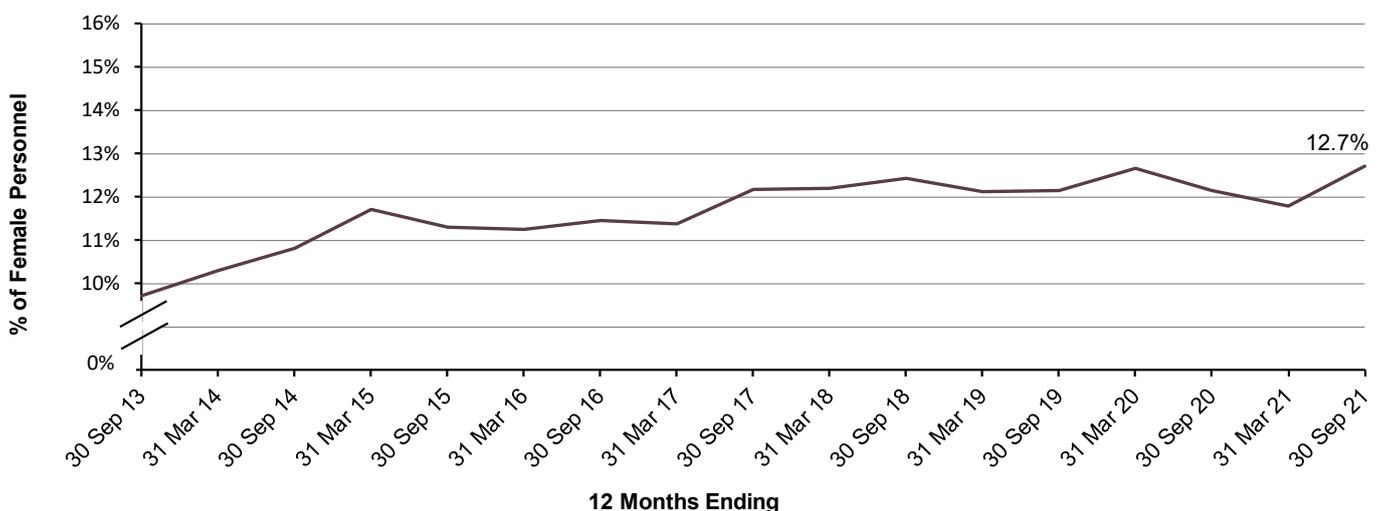
Statistics on ethnic origin are self-declared by personnel and are as recorded on the Joint Personnel Administration (JPA) database. Please see Excel Tables 30 and 31 and the single departmental plan for more information: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ministry-of-defence-outcome-delivery-plan/ministry-of-defence-outcome-delivery-plan-2021-to-2022>.

Female Intake

Figure 1 shows that since the 12 months ending 31 March 2016, the proportion of females joining the UK Regular Forces and Future Reserves 2020 has increased by 1.5 percentage points from 11.2 per cent to 12.7 per cent. After an initial increase of 0.8 percentage points for the 12 months ending 30 September 2017, Female Intake in UK Regular Forces and Future Reserves 2020 remained stable at just over 12 per cent. It has increased in the most recent 12 months ending 30 September 2021 to 12.7 per cent, up from 12.2 per cent at 30 September 2020.

This is due to an increase in intake for all three services, Navy, Army, and Royal Air Force in UK Regular Forces and Future Reserves 2020, all of which increased in the latest 12-month period by 0.5, 0.2 and 2.7 percentage points, from the 12 months ending 30 September 2020, where they sat at 11.8, 11.2 and 17 per cent respectively.

Figure 1: Female Intake for UK Regular Forces and Future Reserves 2020, in the years to 30 September 2021



Notes

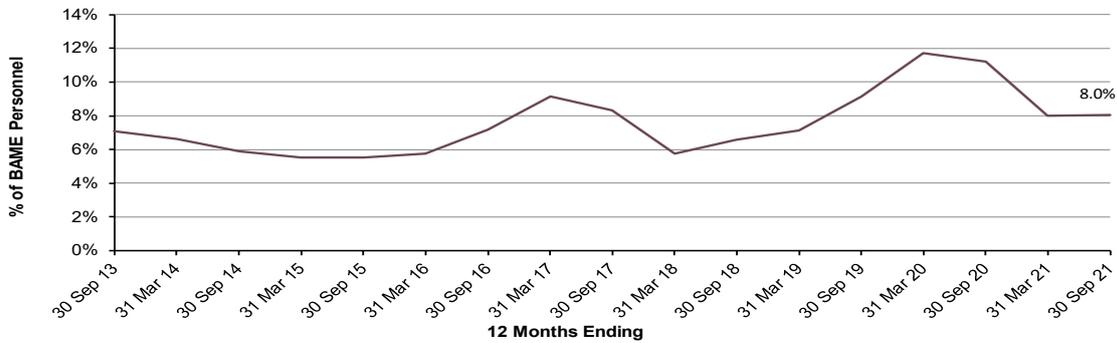
- UK Regulars comprise Full time Service personnel, including Nursing Services, but excluding Full Time Reserve Service (FTRS) personnel, Gurkhas, mobilised Reservists, Military Provost Guard Service (MPGS), Locally Engaged Personnel (LEP), Non Regular Permanent Staff (NRPS), High Readiness Reserve (HRR) and Expeditionary Forces Institute (EFI) personnel. Unless otherwise stated, includes trained and untrained personnel.
- Intake to UK Regular Forces comprises new entrants, re-entrants, direct trained entrants (including Professionally Qualified Officers) and intake from the reserves. It excludes all movements within the Regular Forces; including flows from the untrained to trained strength, transfers between Services and flows from Ranks to Officer due to promotion.
- Future Reserves 2020 includes volunteer reserves who are mobilised, HRR and volunteer reserve personnel serving on ADC or FTRS contracts. Sponsored Reserves who provide a more cost effective solution than volunteer reserves are also included in the Army Reserve FR20. Non Regular Permanent Staff (NRPS), Expeditionary Forces Institute (EFI) and University Officer Cadets and Regular Reservists are excluded.
- Intake to Future Reserves 2020 Forces comprises new entrants, Regular to Reserve transfers, Reserve re-joiners, and Reserve personnel joining from another part of the Reserves that are not included in the FR20 target population.

Measuring Performance

BAME Intake

Figure 2 shows that since the 12 months ending 31 March 2016, the proportion of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) personnel joining the UK Regular Forces and Future Reserves 2020 has increased by 2.3 percentage points from 5.7 per cent, to its current position at 8 per cent. However, this is a decrease of 3.2 percentage points, from 11.2 per cent captured at the 12-month period ending 30 September 2020.

Figure 2: BAME Intake for UK Regular Forces and Future Reserves 2020, in the years to 30 September 2021



The recent decrease in the percentage of BAME personnel joining the UK Regulars and Future Reserves 2020 is mirrored in the decrease in the number of personnel joining the Armed Forces from Irish and Commonwealth countries. The main contributor being the intake to the UK Regular Forces. The change in Commonwealth intake is due to a policy change which is explained further in Figure 3 and related paragraphs.

A total of 96.1 per cent of intake into the UK Regular Forces and the Future Reserves 2020 combined, had a known ethnicity on intake in the 12 months to 30 September 2021.

Figure 3 shows that in the 12 months ending 30 September 2021, BAME intake to the UK Regular Forces from Irish and Commonwealth countries has decreased by 640 personnel when compared against the same 12 month period last year ending 30 September 2020, of which 400 were Army Regulars.

Figure 3: BAME intake to UK Regular Forces from Irish and Commonwealth countries



In July 2013, the MOD re-imposed a five-year UK residency criteria for Commonwealth citizens wishing to join the Armed Forces; having previously waived the criteria in 1998. In May 2016 a limited waiver of the residency was introduced to allow the recruitment of up to 200 Commonwealth citizens per annum into skill shortage roles.

On 5 November 2018, the MOD announced that it has now removed the five-year residency criteria for up to 1,350 personnel per year. This announcement may have caused the subsequent increase in the commonwealth intake up to 31 March 2020 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/armed-forces-to-step-up-commonwealth-recruitment>).

The Army has approval to recruit soldiers from overseas with a focus on Commonwealth countries. Where appropriate these recruits are recorded under our BAME inflow statistics. In 2020, COVID-19 travel restrictions affected the ability of individuals to travel to the UK and join the Army. This has resulted in a reduction in BAME inflow when compared with the numbers achieved in recent years.

Gender

UK Regular Forces and Future Reserves 2020 Strengths

At 1 October 2021, 11.2 per cent of the UK Regular Forces were female (16,710 personnel), as part of a longer-term increasing trend since April 2017. Figure 4 shows that the RAF has the greatest proportion of female personnel in the UK Regular Forces. The nature of the roles is different in each of the Services, which is partly explained by restrictions on the historic roles available to women. It was announced these restrictions would be lifted in 2016 (see Background, page 15).

For full definitions on **UK Regular Forces** and **Future Reserves 2020** see [Glossary](#)

In comparison, 15.4 per cent of the Future Reserves 2020 were female (5,700 personnel), 4.2 percentage points higher than the UK Regular Forces. The number of females in the Future Reserves 2020 was increasing faster than the males resulting in an increasing proportion of females since 1 October 2012. Figure 4 shows that the RAF continues to have the greatest female representation in the Future Reserves 2020, which first occurred on 1 October 2013.

Figure 4: Proportion of Females in the UK Regular Forces and Future Reserves 2020, at 1 October 2021

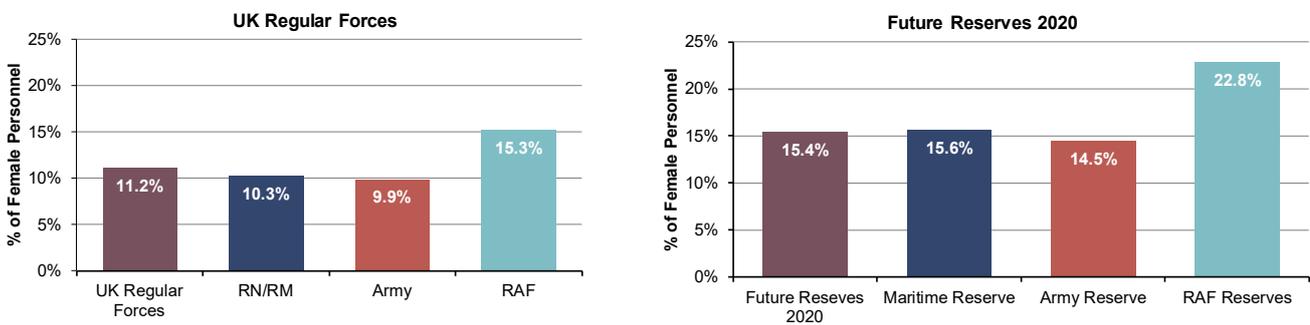
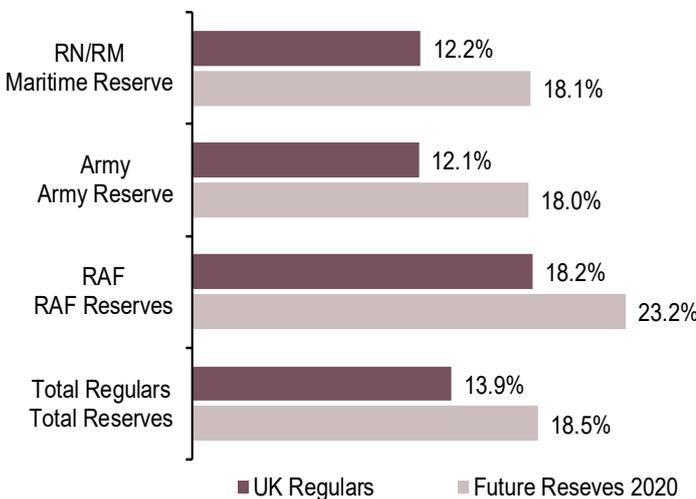


Figure 5: Proportion of Female Officers in the UK Regulars and Future Reserves 2020, as at 1 October 2021



At 1 October 2021 there was a greater proportion of female Officers in the Future Reserves 2020 (18.5 per cent) than the UK Regular Forces (13.9 per cent). Furthermore, Future Reserves 2020 has a higher female representation of Officers in every Service as shown in Figure 5. This pattern has remained stable since October 2012.

From October 2012 to October 2020, there was a sharp increase of 8.4 percentage points in the proportion of female Officers in the RAF Reserves. This decreased in the latest 12 months, by 1.9 percentage points in October 2021. The proportion in the Maritime Reserve and Army Reserve have increased by 1 and 0.2 percentage points respectively.

Figure 6: UK Regular Forces split by Gender and NATO Rank, as at 1 October 2021

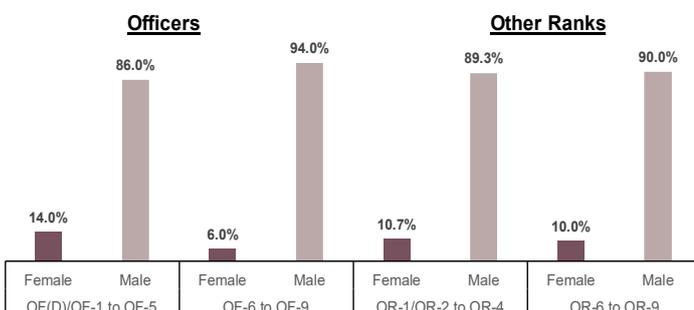


Figure 6 shows the representation of females in the UK Regular Forces by NATO rank. Within Other Ranks, there is a similar proportion of females across the Senior (10 per cent) and Junior (10.7 per cent) NATO ranks. However, within the Officers Rank, female representation in Junior Officer ranks is 8 percentage points higher than the Senior Officers.

Gender

Intake and Outflow

Intake is defined as the number of personnel joining the strength, and **outflow** is the number leaving.

UK Regular Forces

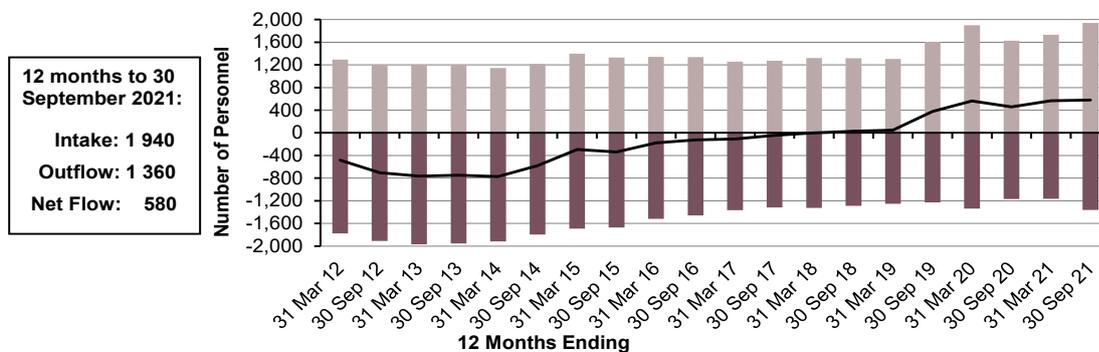
In the 12 months to 30 September 2021, 1,940 female personnel joined the UK Regular Forces; 11.4 per cent of total intake. This has increased by 0.2 percentage points compared with the 12 months to 30 September 2020 (11.2 per cent). Intake of female personnel is higher for Officers (17.5 per cent), than for Other Ranks (10.8 per cent).

In the 12 months to 30 September 2021, female intake was:

- ⇒ 420 personnel (10.8 per cent) into the RN/RM
- ⇒ 1,030 personnel (9.7 per cent) into the Army
- ⇒ 490 personnel (19.3 per cent) into the RAF

Figure 7 shows that more females are joining the UK Regular forces than those who are leaving. Female personnel accounted for 9.8 per cent of all outflow from the UK Regular Forces in the 12 months to 30 September 2021.

Figure 7: Female Intake to, Outflow and Net flow from the UK Regular Forces, in years, leading to the 12 months ending 30 September 2021



Future Reserves 2020

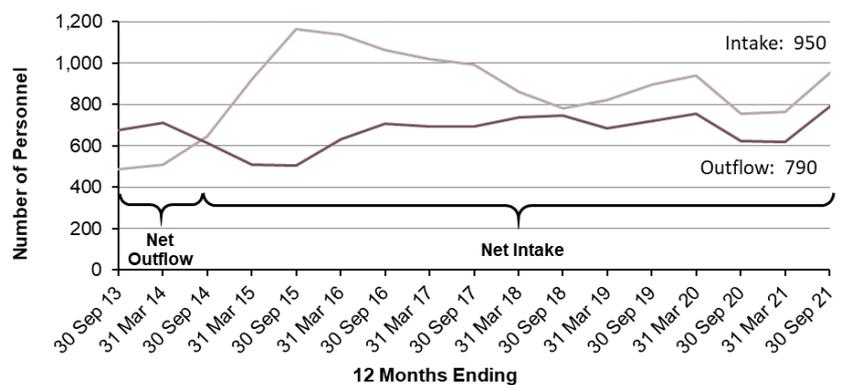
In the 12 months to 30 September 2021, 950 female personnel joined the Future Reserves 2020; this is 16.7 per cent of total intake.

In the 12 months to 30 September 2021, female intake was:

- ⇒ 150 personnel (20.1 per cent) into the FR20 Maritime Reserve population
- ⇒ 690 personnel (15.5 per cent) into the FR20 Army Reserve population
- ⇒ 110 personnel (21.8 per cent) into the FR20 RAF Reserve population

Figure 8: Female Intake to and Outflow from the Future Reserves 2020, in the years to 30 September

Figure 8 shows that the number of females joining the Future Reserves 2020 has increased by 190 personnel since the 12 months to 30 September 2020. The number of female personnel joining the Future Reserves 2020 (intake) was initially lower than the number of females leaving (outflow). Since October 2014, more people have been joining than leaving; hence the female strength of the Future Reserves 2020 has increased. Since 31 March 2021, both the intake and outflow of female personnel has increased.



Ethnic Origin and Nationality

UK Regular Forces and Future Reserves 2020 Strengths

Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) personnel accounted for 9.4 per cent of the UK Regular Forces (14,010 personnel), at 1 October 2021. Since 2009, Gurkha personnel have been able to transfer into the Army; and the number of trade trained personnel reporting a Nepalese nationality has increased from 520 as at 1 April 2012 to 880 as at 1 October 2019, almost all of whom are UK Regular personnel in the Army, see Table 5a. It has steadily been decreasing since this period, where it has now fallen to 580 as at 1 October 2021.

Declaration of **ethnic origin** is not mandatory for Armed Forces personnel. These statistics relate to personnel with a **known ethnicity**. At 1 October 2021, the percentage of personnel who declared an ethnicity was:

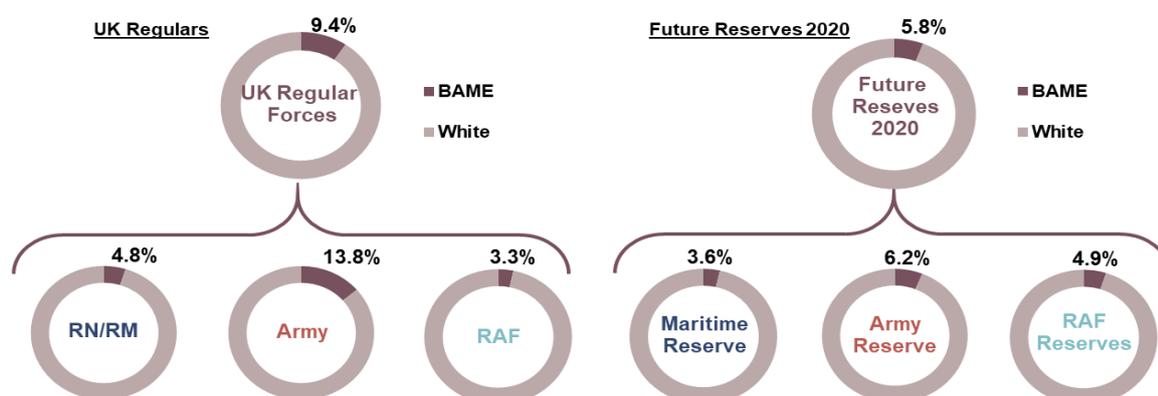
UK Regulars Forces	99.3%
Future Reserves 2020	98.9%

As at 1 October 2021, 5.8 per cent of the Future Reserves 2020 (2,120 personnel) declared a BAME ethnicity.

For both the UK Regular Forces and the Future Reserves 2020, the Army and Army Reserve represent the largest parts of the UK Armed forces and have the greatest proportion of BAME personnel; accounting for approximately 81 per cent of all BAME personnel.

As at 1 October 2021, 95.6 per cent of the UK Regular Forces and 99 per cent of the Future Reserves 2020 had a UK Nationality. The difference in Nationality between the UK Regular Forces and the Future Reserves 2020 can partially be explained by different eligibility requirements (see background page 15).

Figure 9: Ethnicity of UK Regular and Future Reserves 2020 Personnel as at 1 October 2021

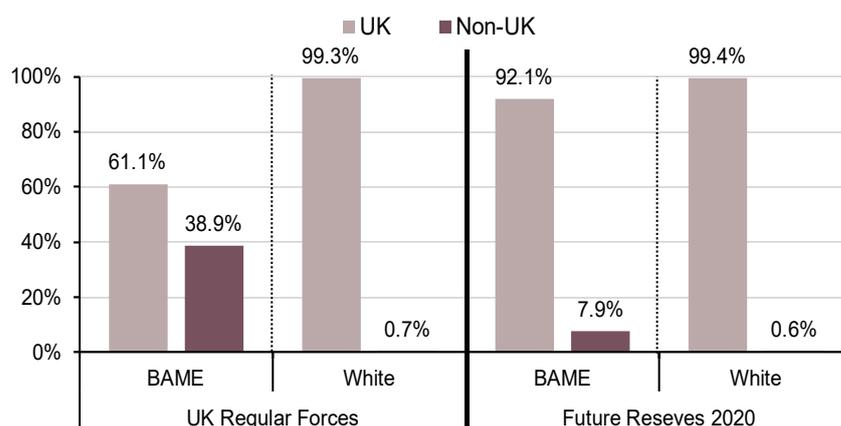


At 1 October 2021, BAME personnel represented:

- ⇒ 2.8 per cent of Officers and 11 per cent of Other Ranks in the UK Regular Forces.
- ⇒ 4.6 per cent of Officers and 6.1 per cent of Other Ranks in the Future Reserves 2020.

As shown in Figure 10 over a third (38.9 per cent) of BAME personnel in UK regular forces did not have UK Nationality compared to only 7.9 per cent of BAME personnel in the Future Reserves 2020.

Figure 10: Percentage of BAME and White personnel with UK and Non-UK Nationalities as at 1 October 2021



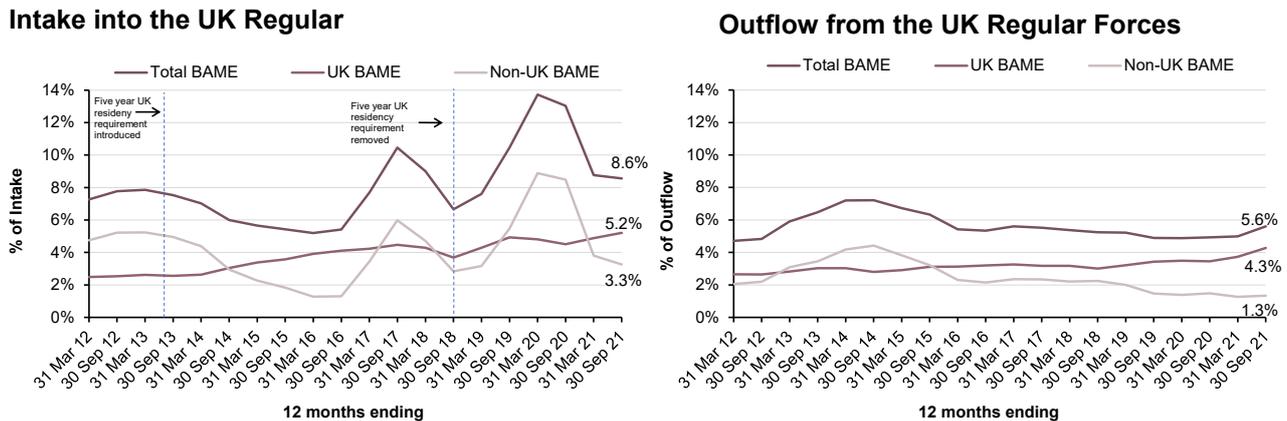
Ethnic Origin and Nationality

Intake and Outflow

UK Regular Forces

BAME personnel accounted for 8.6 per cent of intake into the UK Regular Forces in the 12 months to 30 September 2021, see Figure 11. In the 12 months ending 30 September 2021, the proportion of BAME personnel of a Non-UK Nationality joining the UK Regular Forces has decreased from 65.3 per cent to 38.5 per cent against the same time period last year, which is largely explained by the COVID-19 pandemic affecting the ability of individuals to travel to the UK and join the Armed Forces. UK BAME intake has remained stable.

Figure 11: BAME, UK BAME and Non-UK BAME Intake to and Outflow from UK Regular Forces



BAME personnel represented 5.6 per cent of outflow from the UK Regular Forces in the 12 months to 30 September 2021, and has remained stable since the 12 months ending 31 March 2020. Prior to this, there was a steady decreasing trend since the 12 months ending 31 March 2014 (Figure 11). The outflow of BAME personnel has not increased in line with the spike seen in intake of BAME personnel, which is likely due to the minimum term of service before they can outflow voluntarily.

Future Reserves 2020

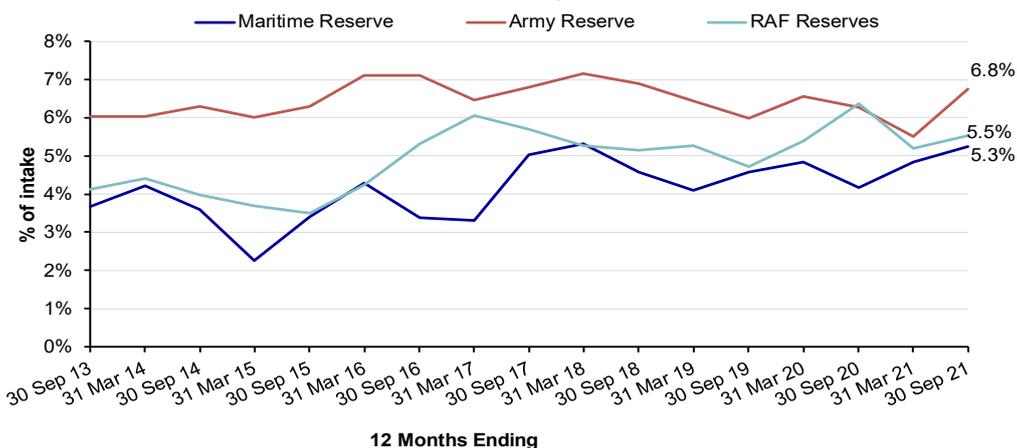
BAME personnel represent 6.4 per cent of intake in the 12 months ending 30 September 2021, this has increased by 0.5 percentage points since the 12 months ending 30 September 2020.

Figure 12 shows that since the 12 months ending 30 September 2020 the proportion of intake who are BAME into:

- ⇒ The FR20 Maritime Reserve population has increased by 1.1 percentage points to 5.3 per cent
- ⇒ The FR20 Army Reserve population has increased by 0.5 percentage points to 6.8 per cent
- ⇒ The FR20 RAF Reserve population has decreased by 0.9 percentage points to 5.5 per cent

The Army has now returned to having the largest proportion of BAME intake, despite having a significant decrease of Commonwealth hires due to the COVID-19 restrictions on travel to the UK, and therefore their ability to join the Armed Forces.

Figure 12: BAME intake to the Future Reserve 2020 by Service



Religion

UK Regular Forces and Future Reserves 2020 Strengths

At 1 October 2021, 61.1 per cent of the UK Regular Forces and 68.8 per cent of the Future Reserves 2020 declared a Christian religion. Both have seen a decrease in the last year of 2.8 and 1.9 percentage points respectively, which is also in line with the long term decreasing trend.

Declaration of **Religion** is not mandatory for Armed Forces personnel. These statistics only relate to personnel who have made a declaration. At 1 October 2021 the proportion of personnel who had made a declaration was:

UK Regular Forces	99.5%
Future Reserves 2020	98.4%

Figure 13: Religion of the UK Regular Forces and Future Reserves 2020 as at 1 October 2021

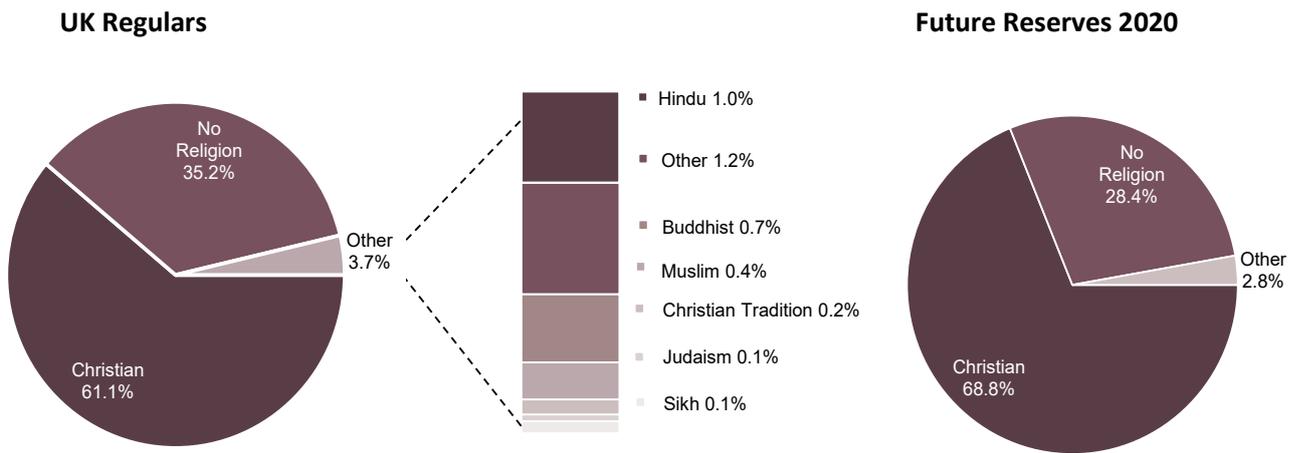


Figure 14: UK Regular and Future Reserves 2020 declaring no religion 1 October 2012– 1 October 2021

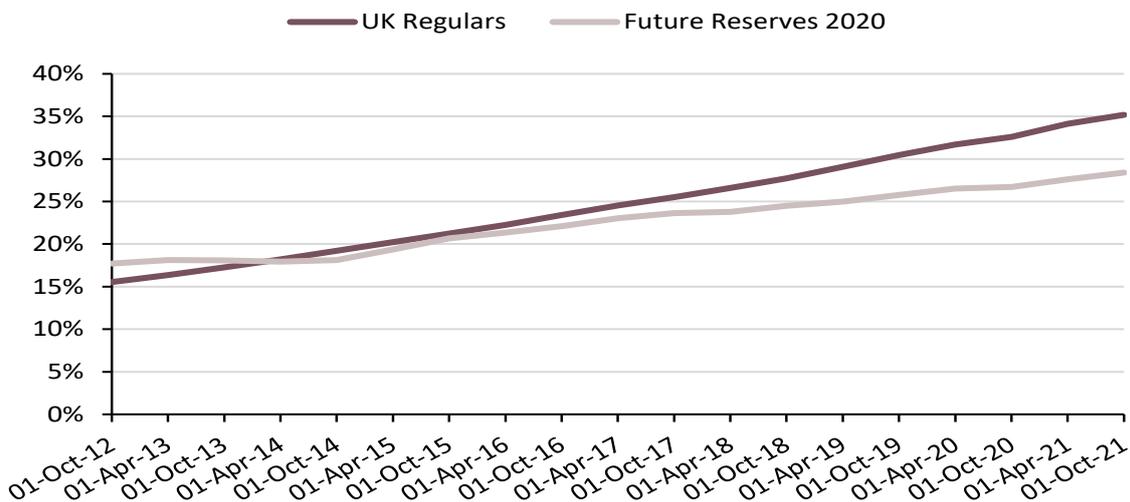


Figure 14 shows the percentage of UK Regular and Future Reserve 2020 personnel who declare “No Religion” on JPA. It shows an increasing trend in both UK Regulars and Future Reserve 2020. In the UK Regulars it has increased from 15.5 per cent as at 1 October 2012, to 35.2 per cent at 1 October 2021. Similarly, for the reserves it has increased from 17.7 per cent as at 1 October 2012 to 28.4 per cent at 1 October 2021.

Age

UK Regular Forces and Future Reserves 2020 Strengths

As at 1 October 2021, 26.1 per cent of the UK Regular Forces and 10.6 per cent of the Future Reserves 2020 were under 25 years old. In the last year, this has increased by 1.2 percentage points in the UK Regulars and decreased by 0.3 percentage points in the Future Reserves 2020. Of the Officers, 7.5 per cent of the UK Regular Forces and 5.2 per cent of the Future Reserves 2020 were under 25 years old. Of the Other Ranks 30.5 per cent in the UK Regular Forces and 12.1 per cent in the Future Reserves 2020 were under the age of 25.

Average age statistics are calculated using the mean. Age is age at last birthday. Average ages as at 1 October 2021 were:

	Total	Officer	Other Ranks
UK Regular Forces	31	37	30
Future Reserves 2020	38	44	36

Figure 15 indicates that Officers in the UK Regulars are generally younger than Officers in the Future Reserves 2020. As at 1 October 2021 the average age for Officers in the UK Regular Forces was 37 years old compared to the Future Reserves 2020 where the average age was 44 years old.

Figure 16 shows that the average age of Other Ranks in the UK Regular Forces is also younger than the Future Reserves 2020. As at 1 October 2021 the average age for the UK Regular Forces Other Ranks was 6 years younger than the Future Reserves 2020.

In the 12 months to 31 March 2021, nearly 50% of those joining the Future Reserves 2020 had previously served in the UK Armed Forces ([Quarterly Service Personnel Statistics](#), table 7b). This does explain, in part, why the age profile is higher for the Future Reserves 2020.

Figure 15: Age of Officers in the UK Regular Forces and the Future Reserves 2020, as at 1 October 2021

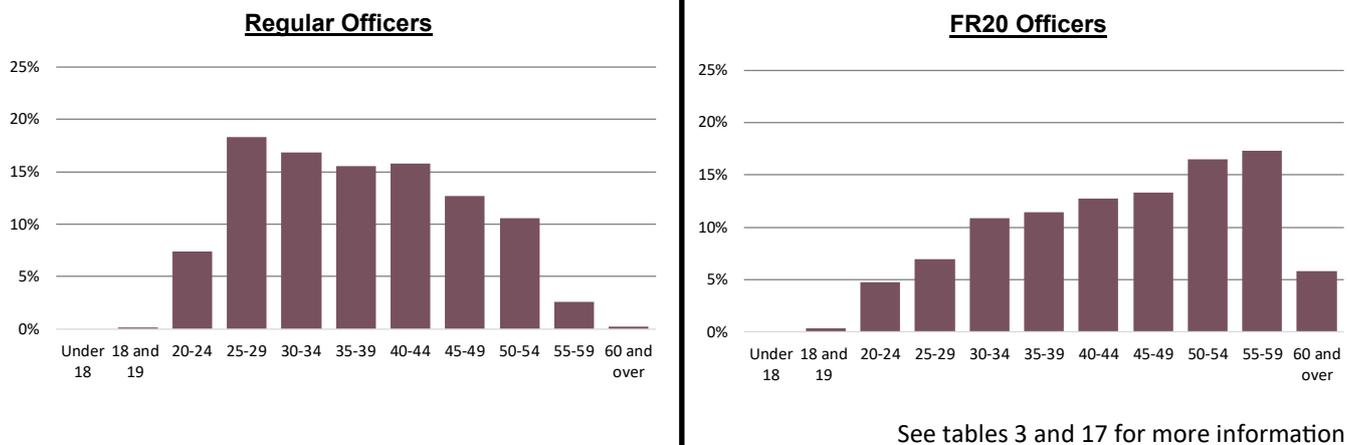
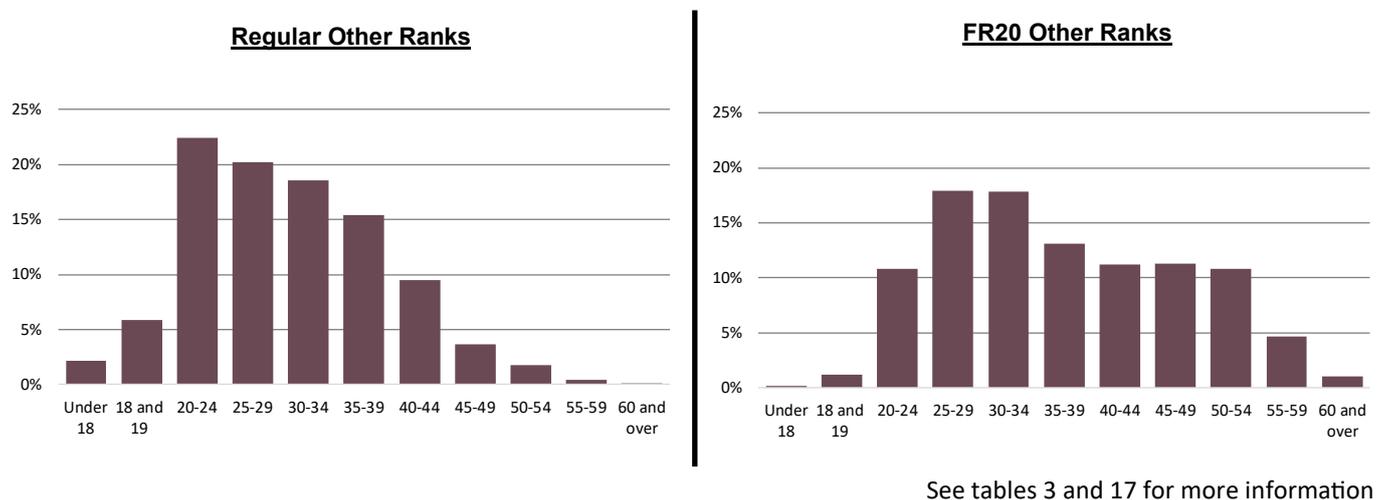


Figure 16: Age of Other Ranks in the UK Regular Forces and the Future Reserves 2020, as at 1 October 2021



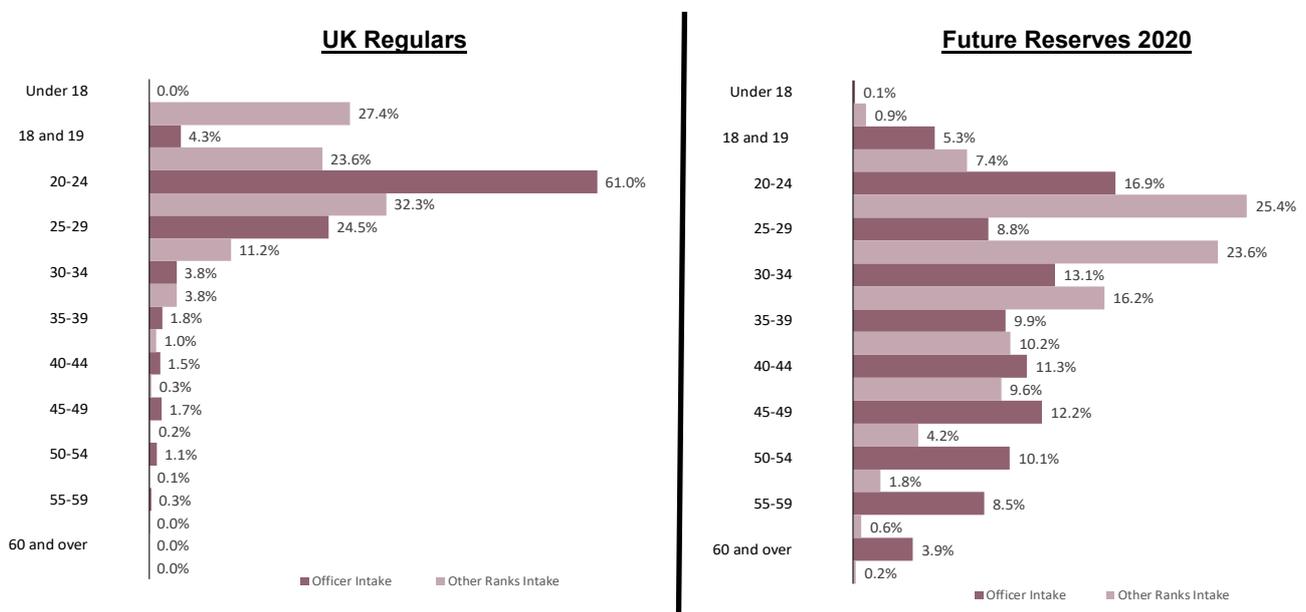
Age

Intake and Outflow

In the 12 months ending 30 September 2021, 8.2 per cent of intake to the UK Regular Forces were Officers (1,400 personnel). Figure 17 shows that, of this total, 10.2 per cent were aged 30 and over and the remaining 89.8 per cent were aged 18 to 29. UK Regular Officer intake age profiles are heavily influenced by personnel joining having left higher education, with 61 per cent of all officer intake occurring between ages 20 and 24. Similarly regular Other Ranks are heavily influenced by those leaving secondary or tertiary education with 51 per cent of UK Regular Other Ranks joining under the age of 20. There has been a large increase in the 12 months to 30 September 2021 against the same period to 30 September 2020, where the intake of Other Ranks in the UK Regular Forces, under the age of 18, has increased by 11.3 percentage points.

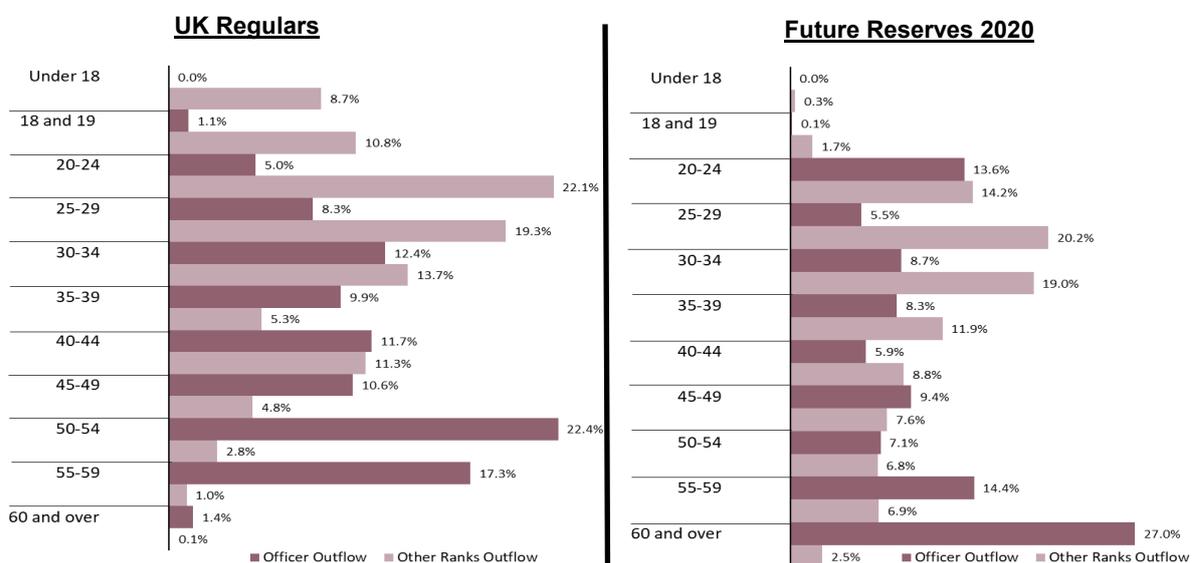
In the 12 months ending 30 September 2021, 12.6 per cent of intake to the Future Reserves 2020 were Officers (720 personnel). Figure 17 shows that, of this total, 68.9 per cent were aged 30 and over and the remaining 31.1 per cent were aged 18 to 29. Within this time period, Officers aged 20-24 had the highest intake and 60 and overs had the largest outflow. There is a larger intake of personnel in the age group of over 50 in comparison to the UK Regular Forces, this could be explained by the different eligibility requirements between UK Regulars Forces and Future Reserves 2020.

Figure 17: UK Regulars and Future Reserves 2020 intake by Age for the 12 months ending 30 September 2021



The first point at which Regular personnel can leave voluntarily is normally after 4 years of Service for personnel aged over 18; each Service has slightly different guidelines.

Figure 18: UK Regulars and Future Reserves 2020 outflow by Age for the 12 months ending 30 September 2021



Sexual Orientation (Declaration Rates)

UK Regular Forces

As at 1 October 2021, 26 per cent of Regular service personnel declared a sexual orientation. There were 30.2 per cent of Officers and 25 per cent of Other Ranks declaring a sexual orientation.

Figure 19 shows a service breakdown of the overall declaration rate across the UK Regular Forces, with Army having the highest rate (28.4 per cent), followed by RAF and Royal Navy/Royal Marines at 23.4 and 22.6 per cent respectively.

Future Reserves 2020

As at 1 October 2021, 7.7 per cent of FR20 service personnel have declared a sexual orientation. The declaration rate is higher amongst officers (14.3 per cent) when compared with Other Ranks (5.9 per cent).

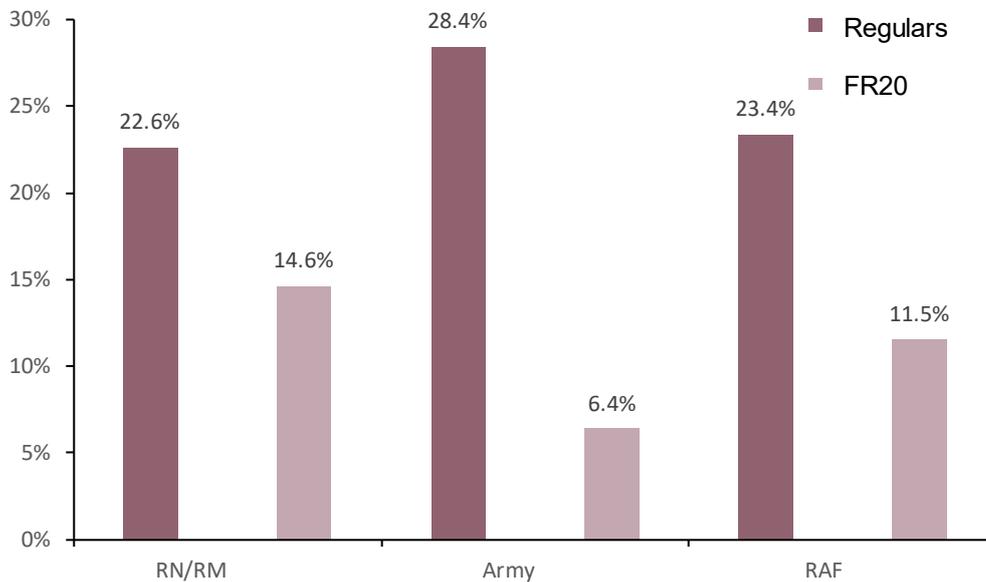
Figure 19 shows the breakdown of the declaration rate by each service. FR20 Maritime Reserve have the highest proportion (14.6 per cent), followed by FR20 RAF Reserves and FR20 Army Reserves at 11.5 and 6.4 per cent respectively.

There is a larger difference between the declaration rates of the UK Regular Forces and the Future Reserves 2020, than is seen between the services.

Declaration of **sexual orientation** is not mandatory for Armed Forces personnel. These statistics relate to personnel with a **known** sexual orientation. As at 1 October 2021, the percentage of personnel who declared a sexual orientation was:

UK Regular Forces	26.0%
Future Reserves 2020	7.7%

Figure 19: Declaration rate across UK Regular Forces and Future Reserves 2020 split by service, as at 1 October 2021



The sexual orientation breakdowns, recorded on JPA, will be provided in future edition of this publication once declaration rates reach a high enough percentage to be representative.

Maternity

Background

In August 1990, the Ministry of Defence (MOD) underwent a change in policy so that female service personnel who became pregnant did not have to leave the Services. They were given the right to return to work after a period of unpaid leave in line with the statutory provisions for civilian women.

At present, female service personnel are entitled to 26 weeks of Ordinary Maternity Leave and 26 weeks of Additional Maternity Leave. Servicewomen who have completed a year's continuous service by the Qualifying Week (the 15th week before the beginning of the week in which the baby is due) and who return to duty to complete a Return of Service commitment following their maternity leave, receive 26 weeks' full pay, 13 weeks of Additional Maternity Leave paid at the statutory pay rate, followed by 13 weeks' of unpaid leave. (Servicewomen who do not meet the criteria of a year's continuous service receive statutory pay for 39 weeks). These statistics cover both Ordinary and Additional Maternity Leave.

Tables outlining the number and percentage returning from maternity leave are presented by the number of weeks that female service personnel return within (see [Excel Tables](#)). The category 27 weeks or less includes all those taking up to and including the limit for fully paid Ordinary Maternity Leave, the category 27 to 40 weeks encompasses personnel also taking up to and including the limit of paid Additional Maternity Leave and More than 40 weeks includes all personnel taking fully paid Ordinary and Additional Maternity leave and some or all of the further 13 weeks unpaid Additional Maternity leave.

In April 2015, Shared Parental Leave was introduced for members of the armed forces. This allows eligible parents to choose how to share the care of their child during child's first year following birth or adoption and is designed to give parents more flexibility in deciding how best to care for their child. Statistics in this publication do not encompass shared parental leave.

A mother must take the two week compulsory maternity leave period and an adopter must take the first two weeks of adoption leave before they can end their maternity or adoption leave. The balance of leave, up to 50 weeks, can be converted into Shared Parental Leave and shared between the parents. Qualifying parents can also share up to 37 weeks' of pay between them. The armed forces scheme offers up to 26 weeks of full pay for qualifying parents.

This report contains numbers and percentages for personnel taking maternity leave, returning from maternity leave, not returning from maternity leave, returning then leaving the Services and still in Service as at 1 October 2021.

Further Data Quality Information

The statistics reported are for UK Regular Forces personnel and therefore exclude Gurkhas, Full Time Reserve Service personnel and mobilised reservists. Because the statistics require at least 1 year passing after the end of the calendar year, to include all those returning and allow monitoring of the exits of those who returned, statistics for calendar year 2020 are published in this release.

Statistics are provided tracking the population that returned after maternity leave for each calendar year with detail of those returning then leaving service (and within what timescale) and those still on strength. Exit information in this report is based on outflow figures up to 30 September 2021. Due to the fact these categories are dependent on the passing of several years since they took maternity leave, these categories change and update year on year between reports.

Note: The Maternity statistics contained within this publication do not include Shared Parental Leave data.

Maternity

Personnel Taking Maternity Leave

During 2020, 730 female Service personnel took maternity leave; this is 4.6 per cent of the strength of female personnel for the year. This is an decrease of 0.2 percentage points in comparison with 2019 where 4.8 per cent of female personnel took maternity leave.

Figure 20: Percentage of Female Officers and Other Ranks Personnel Taking Maternity Leave

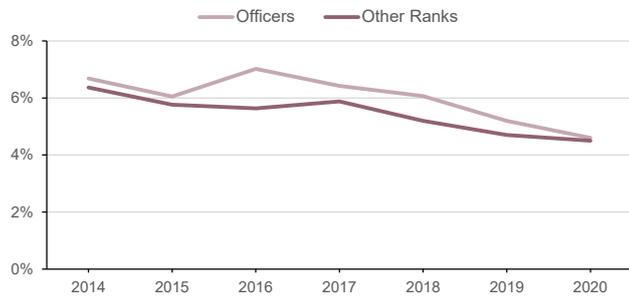


Figure 20 shows that there was little difference between the percentage of Officers (4.6 per cent) who took maternity leave in 2020 compared with Other Ranks (4.5 per cent).

The peak (in 2016) in percentage of Officers is driven by an increase in the number of female Officers in the Royal Navy/Royal Marines taking Maternity leave.

Figure 21: Percentage of Female Personnel Taking Maternity Leave by Service, in 2020

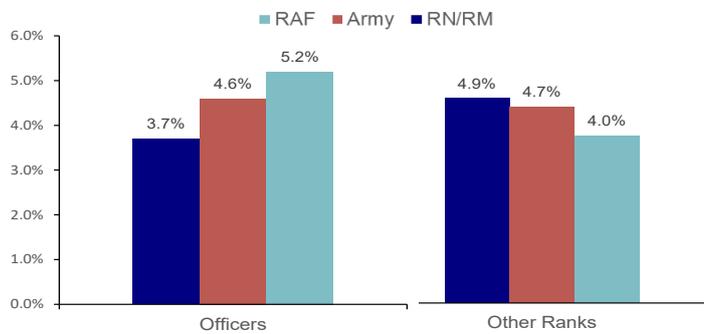


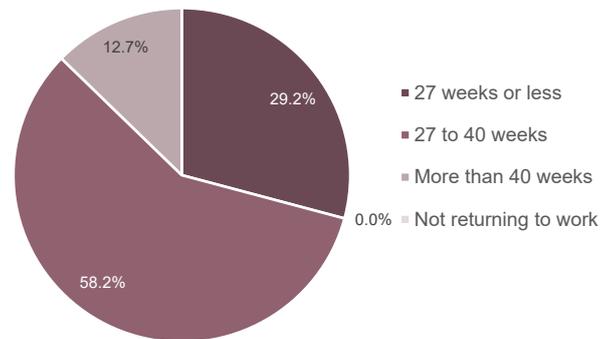
Figure 21 shows that amongst Officers, the RAF has the highest proportion of women taking maternity leave (5.2 per cent), followed by the Army (4.6 per cent) and the RN/RM (3.7 per cent). Within the Other Ranks, the RN/RM has the highest proportion of women taking maternity leave (4.9 per cent) followed by the Army (4.7 per cent) and the RAF (4 per cent).

Figure 22: percentage of personnel returning from Maternity Leave within, as at 1 October 2021

Personnel Returning to Work

Overall, as at 1 October 2021 of the personnel that went on maternity leave during 2020, 100 per cent returned to work making it the highest proportion to date.

Overall, as at 1 October 2021, of the female personnel that went on maternity leave during 2020, the majority returned to work between 27 to 40 weeks, shown in Figure 22.



Retention of Personnel Following Maternity Leave

Of the overall female personnel taking maternity leave in 2020, 0 per cent did not return to work. As at 1 October 2021, 46.3 per cent of those who took maternity leave in 2015 and returned have now left service.

Of the overall female personnel returning to work after maternity leave in 2016, 13.5 per cent returned for a year or less before leaving. This proportion has remained broadly flat across the succeeding years to 2017-19. Equivalent analysis cannot be undertaken for personnel that took maternity in 2020 as enough time has not elapsed.

There are many reasons why Service personnel may choose to leave the Armed Forces. In the statistics above, personnel choosing not to return to work, or later choosing to leave Service, may be due to factors unrelated to maternity leave.

Background and Context

Diversity statistics are reported to meet the Department's obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty to provide information on its workforce in relation to the protected characteristics identified by the Equality Act 2010. Further information relating to the Public Sector Equality Duty can be found at: <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/public-sector-equality-duty/>

MOD publicises the importance placed on the Armed Forces being appropriately representative of the diverse society they exist to defend; and states that 'operational effectiveness depends on cohesion and teamwork, which are enhanced by treating everyone fairly, with dignity and respect'.

Army Trained Strength

On 29th June 2016, the MOD [announced](#) that the Army will in future plan to use Regular and Reserve Phase 1 trained personnel in response to crises within the UK. Following this, the term 'Trained Strength' will include all Army personnel trained in the core function of their Service (i.e. those who have completed Phase 1 training). The MOD has [consulted](#) on these changes and the resultant impact it will have on this publication and a consultation response was published on 7 November 2016.

Army personnel who have completed Phase 1 training (basic Service training) but not Phase 2 training (trade training), are now considered Trained personnel. This change will enable the Army to meet the SDSR 15 commitment to improve support to UK resilience. The Trained Strength definition for the Royal Navy, RAF, Maritime Reserve and RAF Reserves has not changed, reflecting the requirement for their personnel to complete Phase 2 training to be able to fulfil the core function of their respective Services.

Recent changes to the structure of the UK Armed Forces

In order to meet the manpower reduction targets set out in SDSR 2010, the [Three Month Exercise \(3ME\)](#) and [Army 2020 \(A2020\)](#), a redundancy programme coupled with adjusted recruiting (intake) and contract extensions were set. The redundancy programme is now complete.

On 23rd November 2015, the MoD published the National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015. SDSR 2015 outlines plans to uplift the size of the Regular Armed Forces, setting targets for a strength of 82,000 for the Army, and increasing the Royal Navy/Royal Marines (RN/RM) and RAF by a total of 700 personnel. The [SDSR 2015 Defence Key Facts](#) booklet announced new targets for 2020 for each of the Services.

In parallel, there have been increases in the Reserve populations; the [Future Reserves 2020 \(FR20\)](#) programme aims to increase the size of the Reserve Forces. Further personnel statistics and information on these changes can be found in [Quarterly Service Personnel Statistics](#).

Gender

The former Prime Minister announced on 8 July 2016 that the exemption on women serving in ground close combat roles would be lifted, with roles opening up on an incremental basis starting with the Royal Armoured Corps. The decision to lift the exclusion was on the basis of equality of opportunity and maximising talent. Roles that were previously excluded to women were the Royal Marines General Service, the Household Cavalry and Royal Armoured Corps, the Infantry and the Royal Air Force Regiment. From November 2016 women are able to join the Royal Armoured Corps, both Regular and Reserve. The RAF brought this forward and the RAF Regiment opened to women on 1 September 2017. The remaining ground close combat roles opened to women in late 2018, after additional health mitigations were put in place. There are no quotas for women joining GCC roles and applications are treated in the same way as for all other roles; additionally, there has been no lowering of standards for women joining GCC roles. Since 2019 all roles with the Armed Forces have been open to women, with the exception of Gurkhas. The Armed Forces are exempt from elements of the employment provisions of the Equality Act 2010 for reasons of combat effectiveness.

Ethnic origin and Nationality

Under the SDSR 2010, one of the areas reviewed was the Commonwealth recruitment rules. The MOD reintroduced the five-years UK residency requirement for future new recruits from Commonwealth countries in July 2013. This did not affect personnel already serving, or going through the recruitment process at the time of the announcement, those from the Republic of Ireland or for the Brigade of Gurkhas.

In November 2018, MOD removed the five year UK residency requirement for Commonwealth citizens wishing to apply to join the Regular Armed Forces, increasing recruitment to up to 1,350 per annum across Defence. This five year UK residency requirement was imposed in July 2013, although a limited waiver occurred in May 2016, allowing up to 200 Commonwealth personnel to be recruited per annum to fill skill shortage roles. Similarly to the July 2013 and May 2016 changes, the November 18 change was announced via a Written Ministerial Statement (WMS): <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-11-05/debates/449397f0-59b4-4bfb-be27-970593fcd29e/WrittenStatements>
<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Lords/2018-11-05/HLWS1035/>

www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-residency-rules-for-armed-forces-recruits

www.gov.uk/government/publications/armed-forces-arf/armed-forces-arf--2

Information on the nationality eligibility criteria for each of the Services is available at:

<http://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/careers/joining/get-ready-to-join>

<http://www.army.mod.uk/join/How-to-join.aspx>

<https://www.raf.mod.uk/recruitment/how-to-apply/eligibility-check/>

Further Information

Symbols

	Discontinuity in time series
*	not applicable
..	not available
–	Zero
~	5 or fewer
p	Provisional
e	Estimate
r	Revised

Italic figures are used for percentages and other rates, except where otherwise indicated.

Rounding

Figures in this publication (apart from some gender statistics) have been rounded to the nearest 10, though numbers ending in a “5” have been rounded to the nearest multiple of 20 to prevent the systematic bias caused by always rounding numbers upwards. For example; a value of “25” would be rounded down to “20” and a value of “15” would be rounded up to “20”.

Additionally, totals and sub-totals are rounded separately and so may not equal the sums of their rounded parts. Percentages are calculated from unrounded data and presented to one decimal place.

The MOD Disclosure Control and Rounding policy is published on GOV.UK at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/defence-statistics-policies>

Revisions

Corrections to the published statistics will be made if errors are found, or if figures change as a result of improvements to methodology or changes to definitions. When making corrections, we will follow the Ministry of Defence [Statistics Revisions and Corrections Policy](#). All corrected figures will be identified by the symbol “r”, and an explanation will be given of the reason for and size of the revision. Corrections which would have a significant impact on the utility of the statistics will be corrected as soon as possible, by reissuing the publication. Minor errors will also be corrected, but for convenience these corrections may be timed to coincide with the next annual release of the publication.

There are no regular planned revisions of this Bulletin.

Further Information

Useful definitions

Christian includes personnel declaring a Christian or Christian Tradition religion.

No religion includes personnel who have self-identified as having no religion on JPA, including personnel declaring themselves as Agnostic, Atheist, Humanist and Secularist. This does not include personnel with an unrecorded religion.

UK Nationality includes any individuals whose nationality is recorded on the Joint Personnel Administration (JPA) database as Anguilla, Bermuda, British, British Hong Kong, British Overseas Territories, British Antarctic Territory, British Indian Ocean Territory, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Falkland Islands, Gibraltar, Montserrat, Pitcairn Islands, Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands or Turks and Caicos Islands. More details can be found on the gov.uk website.

A full glossary is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/armed-forces-monthly-service-personnel-statistics-supplementary-documents>

Contact Us

Analysis (Tri-Service) welcome feedback on our statistical products. If you have any comments or questions about this publication or about our statistics in general, you can contact us as follows:

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If you require information which is not available within this or other available publications, you may wish to submit a Request for Information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to the Ministry of Defence. For more information, see:

<https://www.gov.uk/make-a-freedom-of-information-request/the-freedom-of-information-act>

Other contact points within Defence Statistics are:

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Naval Service Workforce	023 9262 8738	Analysis-Navy@mod.gov.uk
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RAF Workforce	01494 496822	Analysis-Air@mod.gov.uk
Tri-Service Workforce	020 7807 8896	Analysis-Tri-Service@mod.gov.uk
Civilian Workforce	020 7218 1359	DefStrat-Stat-Civ Enquiries@mod.gov.uk
Health Information	030 6798 4423	Analysis-Health-PQ-FOI@mod.gov.uk

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