



This annual publication presents figures on the number of **Cadets** and **Adult Volunteers** in the Cadet Forces sponsored by the Ministry of Defence (MOD).

Statistics are provided for the Community Cadets (the **Sea Cadet Corps** and **Volunteer Cadet Corps**, **Army Cadet Force** and **Air Training Corps**) and the **Combined Cadet Force**. More detailed statistics and historic time series can be found in the [Excel Tables](#).

This publication is part of a series of MOD Sponsored Cadet Forces Statistics annual bulletins. Previous statistics on cadets can be found in earlier publications.

Key Points and Trends

▼ **73 320**

Number of Community Cadets

At 1 April 2022

Decrease of 720 (-1%) since 1 April 2021

▲ **50 760**

Number of Cadets in the Combined Cadet Force

At 1 April 2022

Increase of 4 680 (+10%) since 1 April 2021

▼ **21 930**

Number of Adult Volunteers in the Community Cadets

At 1 April 2022

Decrease of 2 270 (-9%) since 1 April 2021

▲ **4 030**

Number of Adult Volunteers in the Combined Cadet Force

At 1 April 2022

Increase of 760 (23%) since 1 April 2021

◀▶ **33%**

Proportion of female Cadets in the Community Cadets

At 1 April 2022

Remained at 33% since 1 April 2021

▲ **37%**

Proportion of female Cadets in the Combined Cadet Force

At 1 April 2022

Increase of 1% since 1 April 2021

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Background quality report:

<https://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	
Background and Context	page 3	
Community Cadet Forces	page 4	(NS)
Combined Cadet Force	page 6	(NS)
Further Information	page 8	
Glossary	page 9	

Supplementary tables containing further statistics can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/mod-sponsored-cadet-forces-statistics-2022>

The Background Quality Report is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/tri-service-personnel-bulletin-background-quality-reports>

Introduction

This annual publication presents figures on the number of **Cadets** and **Adult Volunteers** in the Cadet Forces sponsored by the Ministry of Defence (MOD). It includes age and gender breakdowns of the Cadets, and gender breakdowns of the Adult Volunteers.

The MOD sponsors and supports five Cadet Forces (voluntary youth organisations). They comprise the Community Cadets (**Sea Cadet Corps**, **Volunteer Cadet Corps**, **Army Cadet Force** and **Air Training Corps**) and the school-based **Combined Cadet Force**, whose contingents contain one or more sections from the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, Army or Royal Air Force.

The Cadet Forces provide young people with interesting and challenging activities as part of a stimulating syllabus that develops valuable life skills. In addition, the Cadet Forces encourage young people to take an interest in Defence and the Armed Forces and, for those considering careers in the Services, shows them the various opportunities that exist.

The Cadet Forces are not part of the Armed Forces, and members of the Cadet Forces do not have any liability for military service or compulsory training in the Armed Forces (Regular or Reserve). The Cadet Forces are not conduits for entry into the Armed Forces – this position is clearly stated in the UK’s commitment to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on cadet activity, affecting normal joining and retention patterns. This continues to present challenges for the volunteer led MOD Sponsored Cadet Forces who are showing determination, drive and initiative in working towards a full recovery.

The next edition of this publication is provisionally scheduled to be released on GOV.UK at 9.30am on 25th May 2023. 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. This publication has since undergone a change in presentation following a public consultation, though the underlying methodology of producing the data remains unchanged. 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.

Background and Context

Key Policies

The MOD Outcome Delivery Plan

[The MOD Outcome Delivery Plan](#): 2021 to 2022 states in its strategic enablers that the MOD will sustain the five MOD Sponsored Cadet Forces across the UK and work with the Department for Education (DfE) and devolved administrations to further invest in the Cadet Expansion Programme.

Cadet Force Strategy

The Cadet Force Strategy was initiated in March 2015 and updated in June 2018, to look out to 2025. It is a tri-service strategy which encompasses the strategic intent for the MOD Sponsored Cadet Forces and ensures a coherent direction of travel and unity of effort. The Cadet Force Strategy Vision is for 'a challenging and stimulating contemporary cadet experience that develops and inspires young people within a safe environment'. The strategy recognises that the critical success factor for the Cadet Forces is the continuing commitment of sufficient, capable and motivated Adult Volunteers to deliver the cadet experience.

Cadet Expansion Programme

The joint MOD/DfE Cadet Expansion Programme (CEP) was launched in June 2012, with an initial aim of establishing 100 new cadet units in English state-funded secondary schools by September 2015. Following successful delivery of this target the Government committed £50m from LIBOR fines to cover set up costs, uniforms, equipment and training to grow the total number of cadet units in schools across the UK to 500 by March 2020. The number of schools across the UK with cadet units has almost doubled since the start of the program, now with more units in state schools than in independent schools.

In September 2018 the MOD announced the Government's ambition to increase the number of cadets in school units from c.43,000 to 60,000 (by 2024).

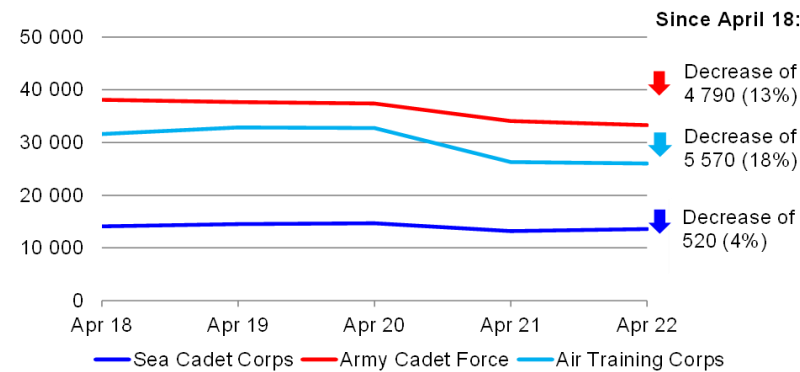
Safeguarding

Safeguarding young people is a key priority and we have robust procedures in place to protect cadets. This includes mandatory security and background checks for all adults who work with children, rigorous disclosure procedures and regular safeguarding training. The MOD's approach to Safeguarding is set out in its Cadet Forces Safeguarding Framework 2019.

Community Cadets

As at 1 April 2022, there were 73,320 cadets in the Community Cadets, made up of 13,580 Sea Cadets, 400 Volunteer Cadet Corps, 33,300 Army Cadets and 26,040 Air Cadets. The number of cadets remained relatively stable between 1 April 2018 and 1 April 2020 before a decrease between 1 April 2020 and 1 April 2022 (see Figure 1), with the impact of COVID-19 and periods of lockdown reflected in the figures. Since 1 April 2021, the number of Army Cadets has decreased by 780 (2%), the number of Air Cadets has decreased by 260 (1%) and the number of Sea Cadets has increased by 360 (3%). Most young people join cadets between the ages 9 and 13, the number of total cadets in the community cadets has risen across these age groups since 1 April 2021 (see Table 2 in [Excel Tables](#)). Volunteer Cadet Corps numbers are not shown in Figure 1 due to their relatively small size.

Figure 1: Number of Cadets in the Community Cadets



Community Cadet Forces include the Sea Cadet Corps (SCC), Volunteer Cadet Corps (VCC), Army Cadet Force (ACF) and Air Training Corps (ATC). (See [glossary](#)).

Gender

The proportion of Female cadets in the Community Cadet Forces has increased slightly, rising to 33% at 1 April 2022 compared with 32% at 1 April 2018. However, while the number of female cadets decreased (see Figure 2), the rise in the proportion of female cadets can be partly attributed to the decrease in the number of male cadets over the same period.

Figure 2: Number of Cadets in the Community Cadets by Gender

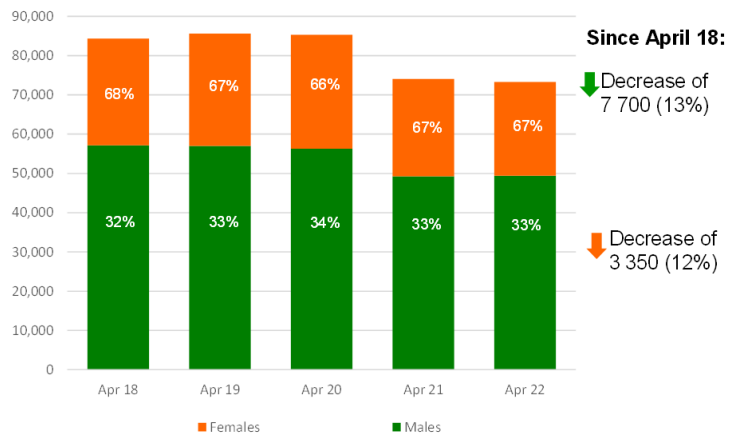
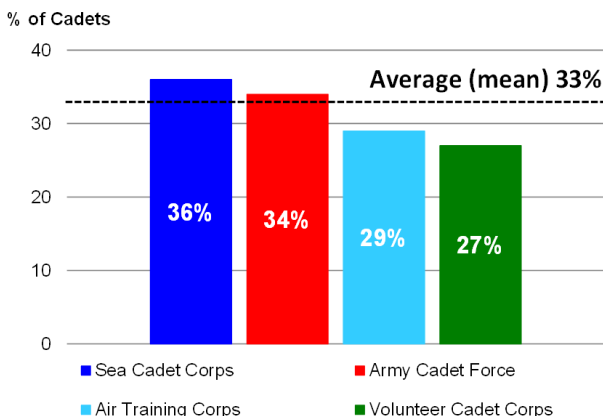


Figure 3: Proportion of Female Cadets in the Community Cadets as at 1 April 22



The Sea Cadet Corps had the highest proportion of female cadets at 1 April 2022 (36%) compared with the Army Cadet Force (34%), the Air Training Corps (29%) and the Volunteer Cadet Corps (27%) shown in Figure 3. Following slight increases to the number of female cadets in years 2016 to 2020 the SCC, ACF and ATC reached their highest number of female cadets at 1 April 2020 before the decrease in total Community cadets.

Community Cadets

Age

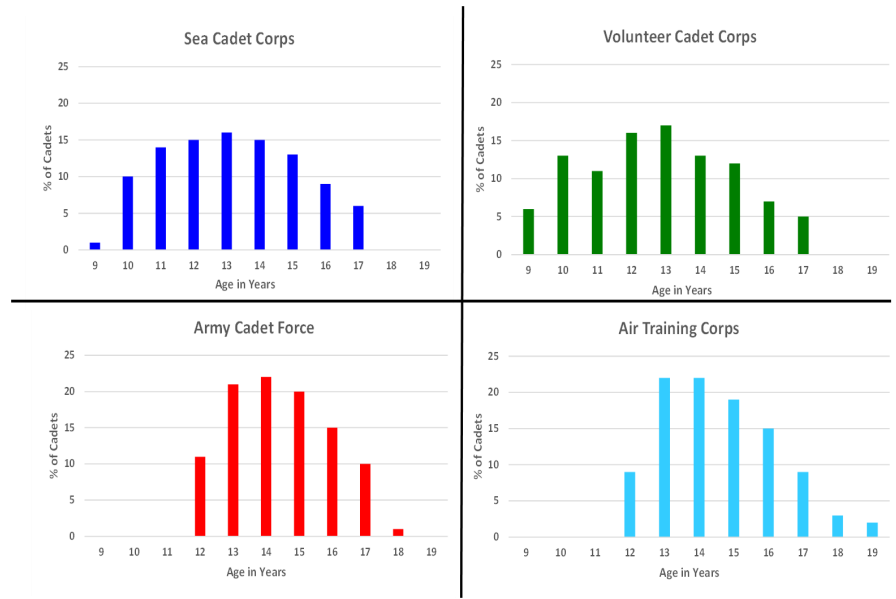
Each of the Cadet Forces has different age restrictions¹ and as a result different age distributions are observed.

There is a higher proportion of younger cadets than older cadets in the Community Cadet Forces.

The Sea Cadet Corps and the Volunteer Cadet Corps largest age group are 13 year olds (16% and 17% respectively). The Army Cadet Force largest age group are 14 year olds (22%) and the Air Training Corps largest age groups are 13 and 14 year olds (22%).

¹ See **glossary** for age limits.

Figure 4: Age Distribution of Cadets in the Community Cadets as at 1 April 22



Adult Volunteers

As at 1 April 2022, there were 21,930 Adult Volunteers in the Community Cadets, made up of 4,140 in the Sea Cadet Corps, 120 in the Volunteer Cadet Corps, 8,100 in the Army Cadet Force and 9,570 in the Air Training Corps. Figure 5 shows the changes in Adult Volunteer numbers across the Community Cadets since 1 April 2018, with the impact of COVID-19 and periods of lockdown reflected in the figures. Volunteer Cadet Corps numbers are not shown in Figure 5 due to small numbers.

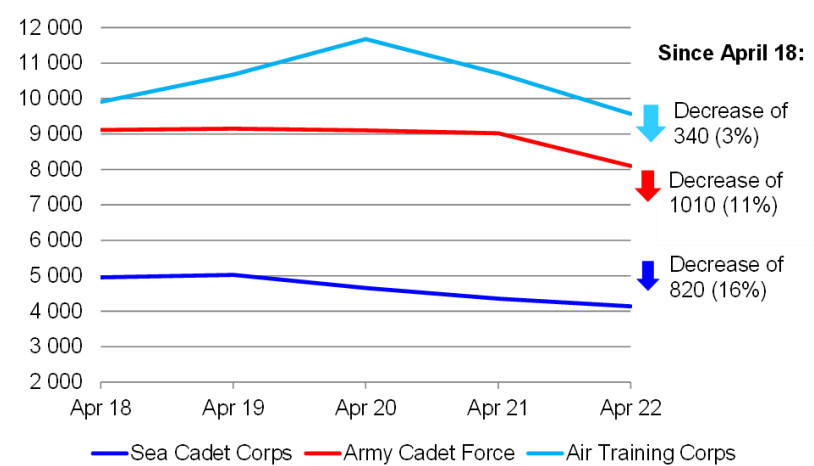
Adult Volunteers include uniformed and non-uniformed volunteers. (See **glossary**).

Adult Volunteers Gender

The Sea Cadet Corps had the highest proportion of female Adult Volunteers at 1 April 2022 with 34%, followed by the Air Training Corps and the Army Cadet Force each with 30%.

While there is a greater proportion of males in both the Uniformed and Non-Uniformed Volunteers, the gender difference is greater in the Uniformed population (72% male) compared with Non-Uniformed Volunteers (64% male).

Figure 5: Number of Adult Volunteers in the Community Cadets



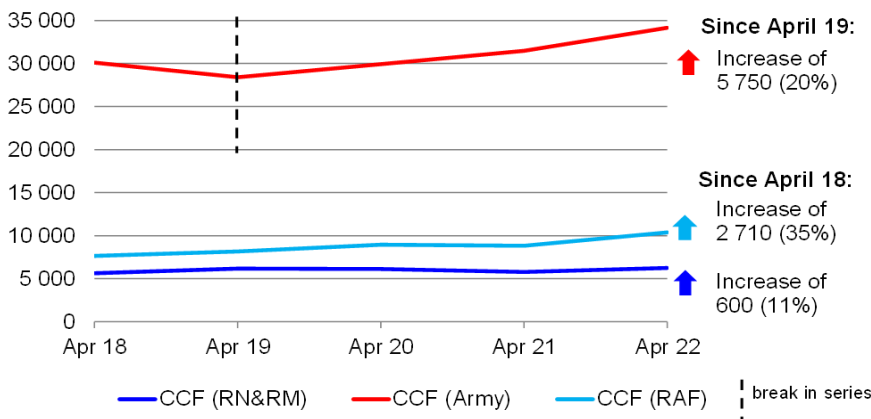
Adult to Cadet Ratio

Overall there are three times (3.3) as many Cadets to Adult Volunteers at 1 April 2022 with variations between Cadet Forces. Please note this does not reflect the ratios of cadets to adult volunteers during training activities which are set out in JSP 814.

Combined Cadet Force

As at 1 April 2022, there were 50,760 cadets in the Combined Cadet Force (CCF), made up of 6,240 cadets in the RN and RM sections, 34,140 in the Army sections and 10,370 in the RAF sections. CCF (Army) improved their approach to accounting for cadet numbers at 1 April 2019, hence figures before and after 1 April 2019 are not directly comparable for CCF (Army). We have not revised figures before the 1 April 2019 count for CCF (Army) cadets but it is possible that it was an over-estimate of the true number. Since 1 April 2018 the total number of cadets in the RN and RM sections and the RAF sections has increased and since 1 April 2019 the total number of cadets in the Army sections has also increased (see figure 6). Since 1 April 2021, the number of cadets in the RN and RM sections has increased by 470 (8%), the number of cadets in the Army sections has increased by 2,670 (8%) and the number of cadets in the RAF sections has increased by 1,540 (18%).

Figure 6: Number of Cadets in the Combined Cadet Force



Combined Cadet Force (CCF) is a school-based youth organisation, comprising one or more sections from the RN and RM, Army and RAF. (See [glossary](#)).

Gender

The proportion of Female cadets in the CCF has increased slightly, rising to 37% at 1 April 2022 compared with 34% at 1 April 2019. While the overall number of male and female cadets has increased, the increase of female cadets is higher than the increase of male cadets compared with 1 April 2019 (see Figure 7). The proportion of female cadets is the highest it has been in the period since 1 April 2007.

Figure 7: Number of Cadets in the Combined Cadet Force by Gender

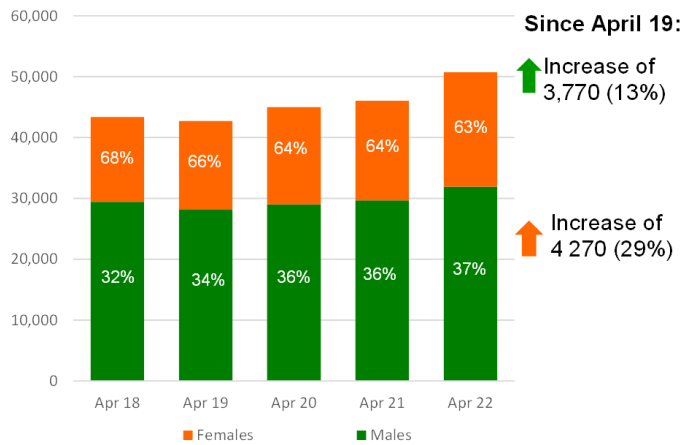
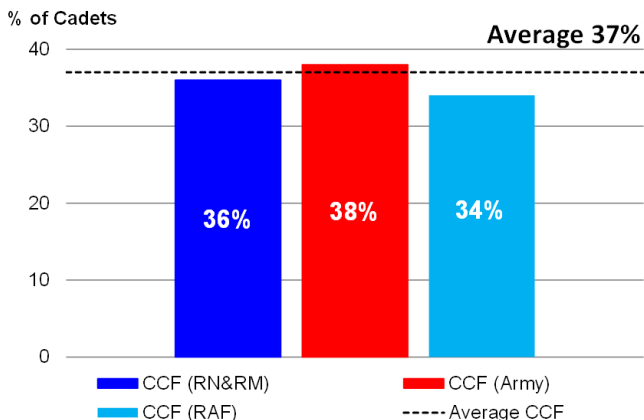


Figure 8: Proportion of Female Cadets in the Combined Cadet Force as at 1 April 22



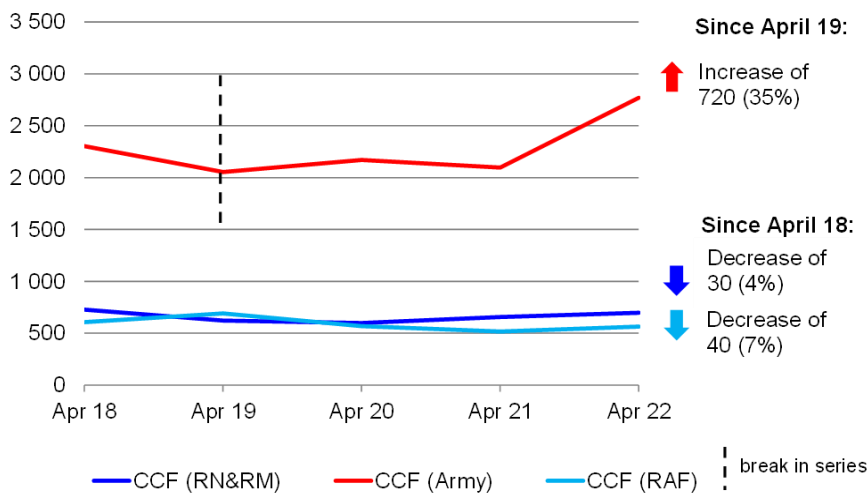
At 1 April 2022, the Army had the highest proportion of female cadets (38%), compared with the RN and RM (36%) and the RAF (34%). The proportion of female cadets has increased across the CCF for all three single Services since 1 April 2018.

Combined Cadet Force

Adult Volunteers

As at 1 April 2022, there were 4,030 Adult Volunteers in the Combined Cadet Force (CCF), made up of 700 in the RN and RM sections, 2,770 in the Army sections and 560 in the RAF sections. Figure 9 shows the changes in Adult Volunteers across the CCF since 1 April 2018. CCF (Army) improved their approach to accounting for Adult Volunteers numbers at 1 April 2019, hence figures before and after 1 April 2019 are not directly comparable for CCF (Army). We have not revised figures before the 1 April 2019 count for CCF (Army) Adult Volunteers but it is possible that it was an over-estimate of the true number. Since 1 April 2021, the number of Adult Volunteers in the RN and RM sections has increased by 40 (6%), the number of Adult Volunteers in the Army sections has increased by 670 (32%) and the number of Adult Volunteers in the RAF sections has increased by 50 (9%).

Figure 9: Number of Adult Volunteers in the Combined Cadet Force



Combined Cadet Force (CCF) is a school-based youth organisation, comprising one or more sections from the RN and RM, Army and RAF.
(See [glossary](#)).

Adult Volunteers Gender

The RAF and RN and RM sections had the highest proportion of female Adult Volunteers at 1 April 2022 (36%), compared with the Army (33%). While there is a greater proportion of males in both the Uniformed and Non-Uniformed Volunteers, the gender difference is greater in the Uniformed Volunteers (66% male) compared with Non-Uniformed population (61% male).

Adult to Cadet Ratio

Overall there are thirteen (12.6) times as many Combined Cadet Force Cadets to Adult Volunteer at 1 Apr 2022 with variations between sections. Please note this does not reflect the ratios of cadets to adult volunteers during training activities which are set out in JSP 814.

Further Information

Rounding

Figures in this publication 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”.

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 zero decimal place.

Revisions:

There have been no revisions in this edition.

Data sources:

Data are derived from two management information systems which the individual Cadet Force Headquarters use to administer their Cadets and Cadet Force Adult Volunteers.

These systems undergo continuous improvements in data quality and coverage. These improvements are not considered material enough at this time to warrant a break in series.

Data quality:

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the suspension of face-to-face cadet activity in 2020 and 2021, which severely disrupted engagement with Cadets and Adult Volunteers. Some administrative processes, including onboarding Cadets and Adult Volunteers are likely to have been delayed as a result.

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.

Contact Us

Analysis (Tri-Service) welcomes 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>

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Glossary

Air Training Corps (ATC) aims to promote and encourage an interest in aviation and the Royal Air Force among young people from age 12 up to 20 years, by providing training which may be useful both in the services and in civilian life.

Army Cadet Force (ACF) through a broad range of challenging, educational and adventurous activities gives young people from age 12 up to 20 years the opportunity to develop leadership and team-working skills, builds their confidence and helps them develop physically, mentally and socially.

Cadet Forces The MOD sponsors and supports five Cadet Forces (military-themed voluntary youth organisations). The Cadet Forces comprise the Sea Cadet Corps (SCC), the Volunteer Cadet Corps (VCC), Combined Cadet Force (CCF), Army Cadet Force (ACF) and Air Training Corps (ATC). The Cadet Forces are not part of the Armed Forces and have no operational role; nor are they conduits for entry into the Armed Forces.

Cadet Force Adult Volunteers (CFAVs) The Cadet Forces could not exist without the support of adults who volunteer to help train cadets, run meetings, activities and events. No previous military experience is necessary and adult volunteers are not liable for military call up. The term CFAV includes uniformed and non-uniformed volunteers in cadet facing, supervisory roles, involved in regulated activity. Volunteers not included within this publications figures include: Unit Management Trustees, Service Helpers, Parents and Supporters Association, Civilian Committee Members and Honorary Members. Like cadets, the adult volunteers can obtain vocational qualifications linked to community, social action and volunteering during their time with the cadets.

Combined Cadet Force (CCF) is a unique educational partnership which operates in schools across the UK. Through military-themed activities, cadets have the opportunity to develop skills such as leadership, self-reliance, resourcefulness, endurance and perseverance. CCF contingents contain one or more Royal Navy, Royal Marines, Army or Royal Air Force sections, which promote the aims and values of the Services they represent.

Community Cadets comprise the Sea Cadet Corps, the Volunteer Cadet Corps, the Army Cadet Force and the Air Training Corps.

Ministry of Defence (MOD) is the United Kingdom government department responsible for the development and implementation of government defence policy and the headquarters of the British Armed Forces. The principal objective of the MOD is to defend the United Kingdom and its interests. The MOD also manages day to day running of the Armed Forces, contingency planning and defence procurement.

Royal Air Force Air Cadets (RAFAC) includes CCF (RAF) and the Air Training Corps (ATC).

Sea Cadet Corps (SCC) (including Royal Marines Cadets) aims to give young people from age 12 up to their 18th birthday the best possible start in life through nautical adventure and fun. There is also a Junior Section for young people between 9 and 12 years. Sea Cadets is the largest national maritime voluntary youth charity, which is part-sponsored by and follows the customs and traditions of the Royal Navy.

Volunteer Cadet Corps (VCC) aims to provide opportunities for young people, from aged 9 up to their 18th birthday, to develop into dependable and useful members of society, employing the traditions of the Royal Navy (RN) and Royal Marines (RM), as the basis for their activities. VCC units (RN & RM) are based at Royal Naval service establishments and are organised and run by volunteers including serving members of the RN and RM. The VCC's status changed in 2017 to become the fifth MOD sponsored cadet force.

Glossary

Cadet Force	Lower age limit	Upper age limit	Comments
Sea Cadet Corps	9 years (9-12 years for Junior Sea Cadets) (13 years for Royal Marines Cadets)	18th birthday	The lower age limit was lowered from 10 years old in 2022.
Volunteer Cadet Corps	9 years	18th birthday	-
Combined Cadet Force	Year 8 ¹ or later at the discretion of the Head, noting specific restrictions may apply for individual sections.	To the end of the summer holiday of their final year of school.	-
Army Cadet Force	12 years.	20th birthday (for staff cadets) 18th birthday (otherwise)	The upper age limit was lowered from 18 years 9 months in September 2015. Staff cadets, aged 18 – 20 years were introduced at the end of 2019. The Requirement to be in Year 8 or later was removed on 1 April 2022.
Air Training Corps	12 years and in Year 8 ¹	20th birthday (for staff cadets) 18th birthday (otherwise)	The lower age limit was lowered from 13 years in September 2014.

¹ S2 in Scotland and Year 9 in Northern Ireland